

Mystery Fossil

If you only have 20 minutes, or want to do a more informal lesson, here are investigation questions for each of the four activity boxes. (For activities with two questions, do either one or both!) These questions are designed to promote close observation and spark curiosity.

Investigation Question: How do animals use their pointy body parts?

Show students one, two, or three of the mystery objects that are all dinosaur casts. Tell them that they are going to try and figure out what they are and what they were used for. Then pass out the other objects from the activity box, or arrange them on a table. These are all body parts of modern animals and have one thing in common with the mystery fossils: they are all pointy. Have students touch and observe them and discuss what animals they might have belonged to and how they were used by the animals.

Generally, animals use pointy body parts for defense, fighting, gripping, getting food, or attracting a mate.

Reveal the answers with the mystery slide show or use the chart on the right.

Using this information, what do they think the mystery fossils are? *(Stegosaurus tail spike probably used for defense, Iguanadon thumb spike probably used for defense, triceratops brow horn probably used for fighting or defense.)*

	Body Part	Used for...
	African porcupine quill	protection
	hippopotamus tooth	fighting
	goat horn	protection
	Harpy eagle	gripping
	giant anteater claw	getting food
	Grizzly bear tooth	eating
	alligator tooth	eating
	steenbok horn	defense and fighting