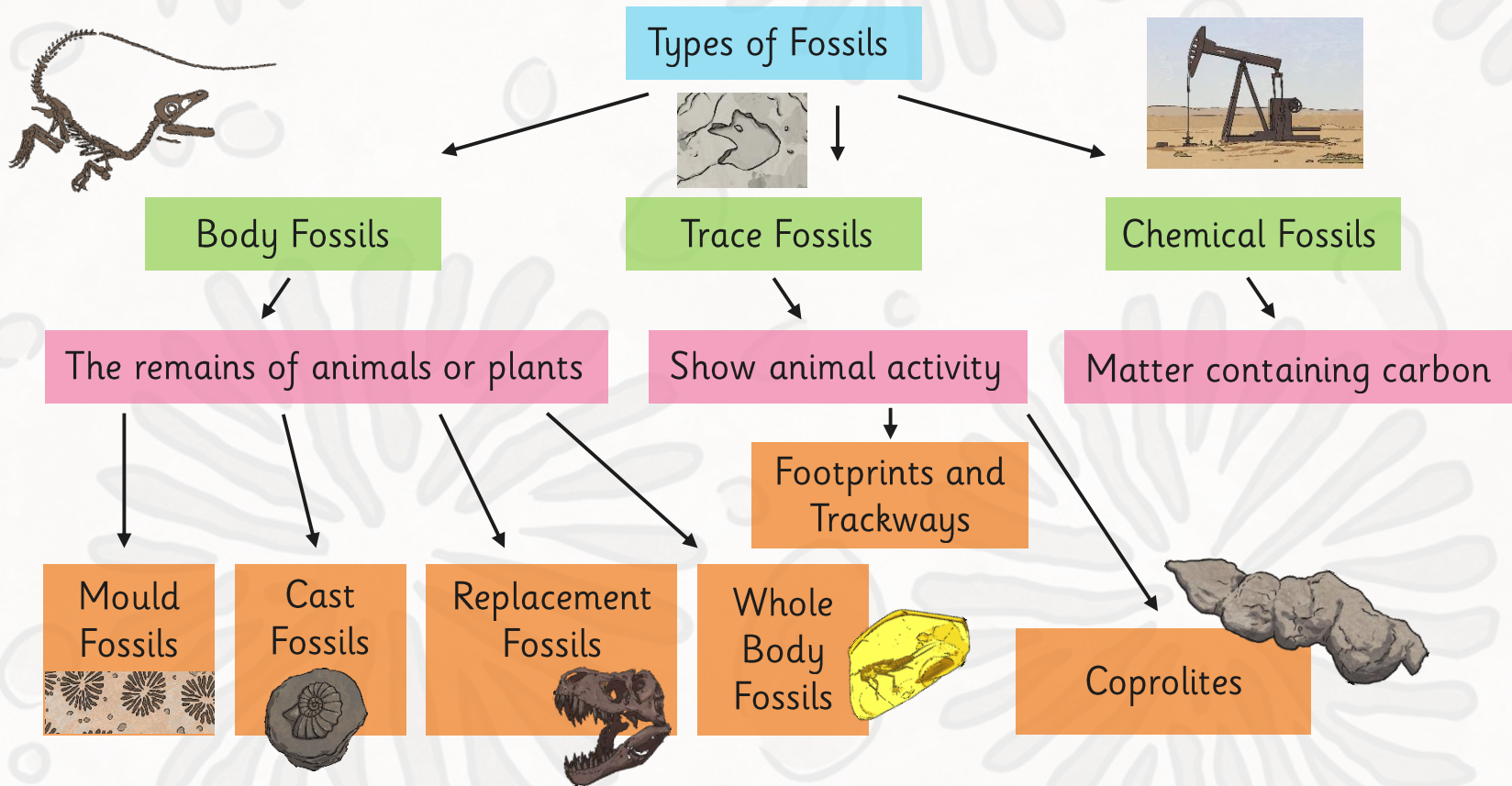


Mary Anning

twinkl

Types of Fossils

Before we find out about Mary Anning, let's see what you remember about the different types of fossils. Can you work out what types of fossils are hidden under the shapes?



Mary Anning

So who was Mary Anning and what did she find that was so important?

While watching the video see if you can work out the types of fossils she found.

What have you learnt about Mary Anning?

What types of fossils did she find?

How did she learn about fossils?

Why were her finds so important?

Why do you think she was not credited with finding the fossils?

Click me to watch the video!

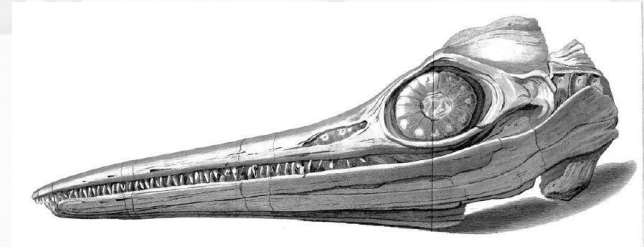


Mary Anning and Palaeontology

In Mary Anning's lifetime palaeontology (the study of fossils) was still a very new field of ideas and theories.

The fossils Mary Anning found were important for a number of reasons:

- Her major finds included the first ichthyosaur skull (and then whole skeleton), a complete plesiosaur skeleton and a partial skeleton of a pterosaur.
- The fossils provided evidence that some animals had become extinct.



Ichthyosaur skull



A sketch of a plesiosaur

Mary Anning and Palaeontology

- Many scientists visited Mary Anning and she was able to help them understand more about the fossils she had found.
- She discovered 'bezoar' stones in the abdominal area of the ichthyosaur. These contained fish bones. She discussed her findings with William Buckland (a geologist and palaeontologist) who identified them as faeces and named them coprolites (which is now a type of trace fossil).



A model of a plesiosaur

Mary Anning and Palaeontology

The area where she collected her fossils is now known as the Jurassic Coast, due to the large number of pre-historic sea creatures found in that area.

She didn't chance upon the fossils. She realised that they were found at the Blue Lias cliffs.

These cliffs are made from layers of shale and limestone which formed over 200 million years ago!

As with all discoveries, there is an element of chance. Mary Anning lived in Lyme Regis.



Mary Anning and Palaeontology

She also knew to search after a storm, as this eroded the rocks. This made it easier to hunt for fossils as they became more exposed.

In addition, she knew that she would have to search soon after the storm so that the smaller fossils were not washed away to the sea.

She was most definitely an expert fossil hunter!

