**What are fossils?**

Fossils are formed when things that have lived are trapped within rock - they can be animals or plants. Under very special conditions, the living material will be replaced with rock, creating a hard rocky replica which is waiting to be discovered thousands of years later.

**So, why are fossils important?**

When we look at a fossil, we’re actually looking back in time. Mary Anning’s fossils showed us creatures that no longer exist on Earth. Looking at fossils can give us an understanding of what lived on Earth thousands of years ago, and may give us clues about **EVOLUTION**.

**Fascinating facts about Mary**

- Mary was a CELEBRITY, but she only ever left her home town once.
- Mary had a dog called TRAY who fell off a cliff.
- As a baby, Mary survived a LIGHTNING BOLT that killed three other people.
- Mary’s family was very poor and spent most of their time on the beach looking for shells that they could sell on their beach stall.

**Ichthyosaurus**

- Mary was just 11 when she and her brother, Joseph, spotted a skull on the beach (like the one on the right), and she soon uncovered the first whole skeleton of an **ICHTHYOSAUR** (left)!
- This fossil can now be found at the Natural History Museum in London.

**What is that?!**

Mary Anning’s fossil-hunting helped change the way people thought about the world. Mary Anning was not trained as a scientist, but her fossil finds changed science! Famous scientists came to see her. They wanted to see the fossils she found.