Fossil Comparisons

Scientific investigation is one of the broadest components of the ***Virginia Science Standards of Learning***. One of the simplest ways to organize and classify fossil casts is through basic observation. The fossil casts can be described, grouped, and analyzed from a basic level, helping to acquaint students with the fossil molds.

The following ***Virginia Science Standards of Learning*** may be met with this activity:

K.1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of scientific reasoning, logic, and the nature of science by planning and conducting investigations in which
a) basic characteristics or properties of objects are identified by direct observation
c) a set of objects is sequenced according to size
d) a set of objects is separated into two groups based on a single physical characteristic
e) nonstandard units are used to measure the length, mass, and volume of common objects

1.1 a) the senses are used to observe differences in physical properties

2.1 a) observations and predictions are made and questions are formed

3.1 c) objects with similar characteristics or properties are classified into at least two sets and two subsets
h) data are gathered, charted, graphed, and analyzed

4.1 a) distinctions are made among observations, conclusions, inferences, and predictions
b) objects or events are classified and arranged according to characteristics or properties

5.1 g) data are collected, recorded, analyzed, and communicated using proper graphical representations and metric measurements

Activity:

Pair students, giving each pair a clipboard and paper on which they will record measurements, describe the fossil, draw the fossil, and possibly categorize the fossil.

Older students may be challenged by using formal instruments and making more detailed observations and drawings. Students may work independently and later compare their findings.

Rotating stations may be arranged so that each group of students has uninterrupted time with the fossils to make their analyses.

 Ashley Wolfe