

The Great Fossil Hunters



The Challenge

Today you are going to become Fossil Hunters (palaeontologists).

Your challenge is to:

- be able to explain what fossils are, how they are formed and why they are important.
- create your own mould and cast fossil.
- excavate a fossil safely and in one piece using carefully selected tools.

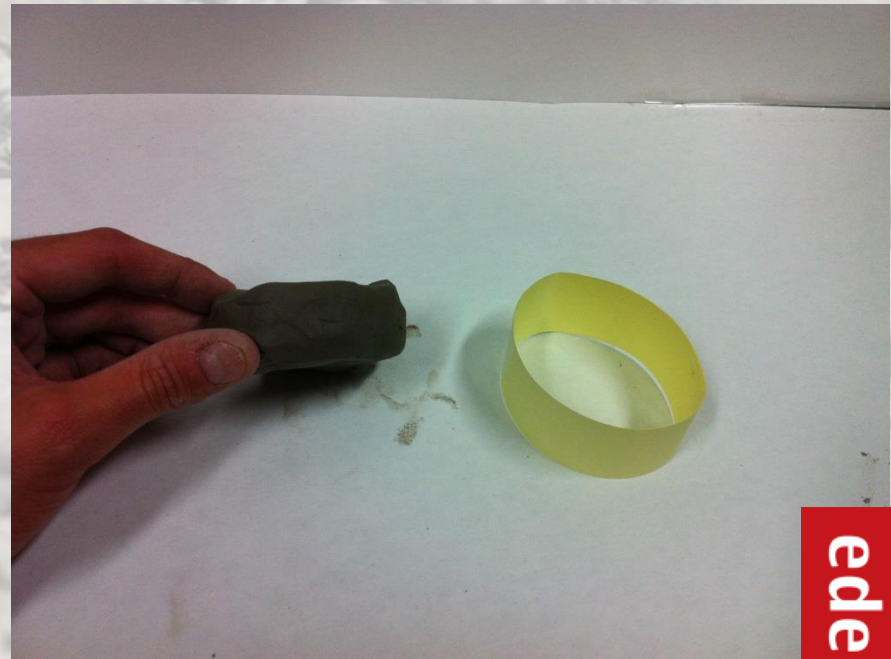
Here's what you need to get started



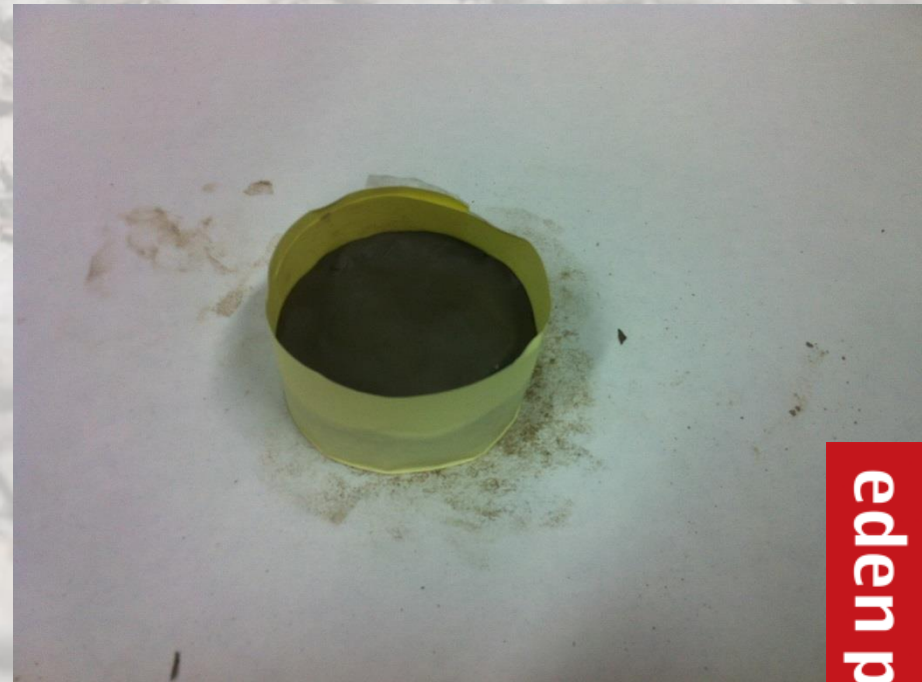
Take the clay, sticky tape and strip of paper



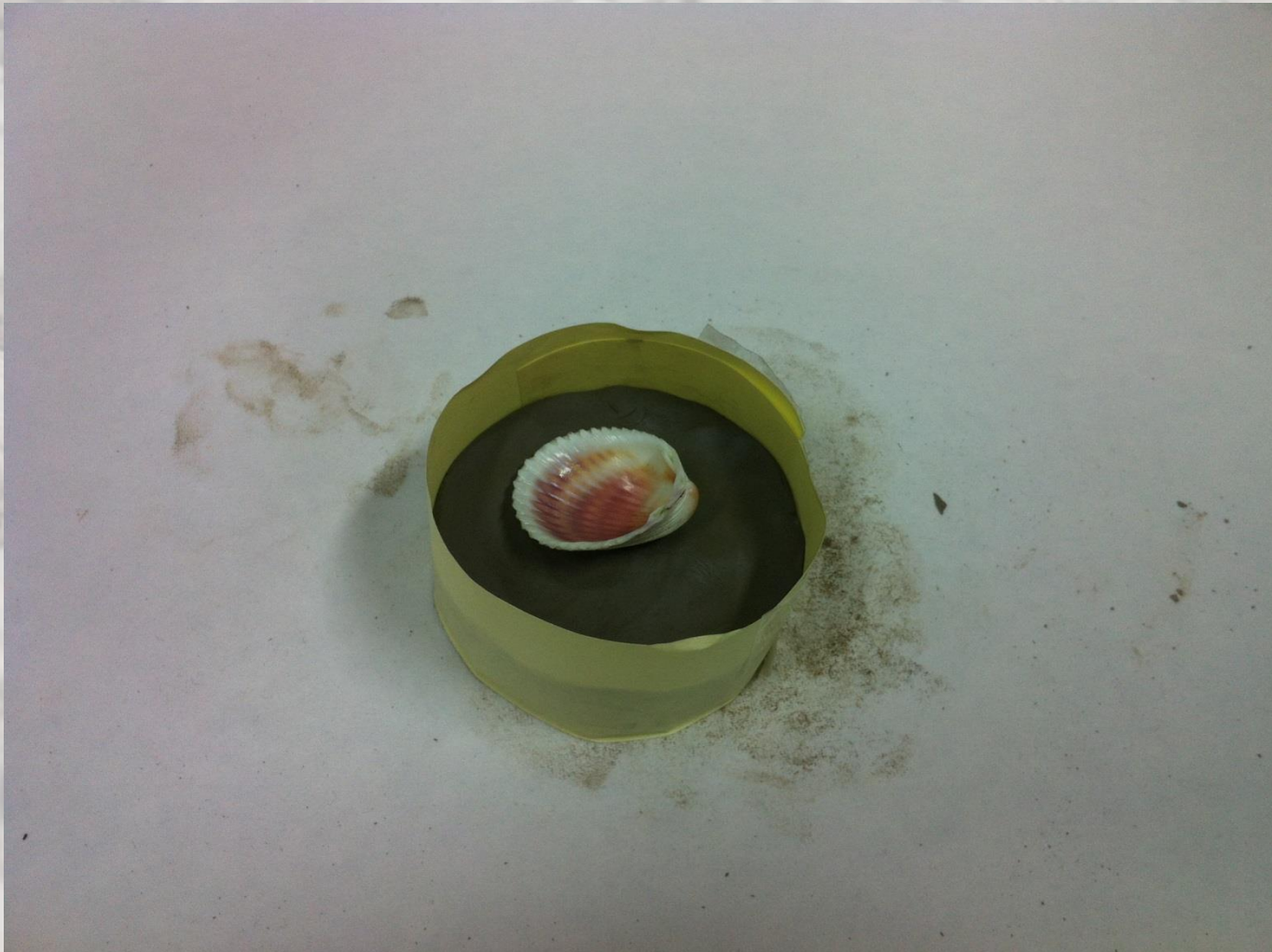
Tape the paper into loop and flatten
the clay into a disk



Put the disk into the loop of paper and push the clay down so that it fills the loop, there are no gaps and the surface is flat.



Take a shell - remember to record
which shell you used



It can be useful to wipe a very small dab of washing up liquid onto the outside of the shell with your finger. This will stop the shell sticking to the clay.



Slowly and firmly push the shell into
the clay



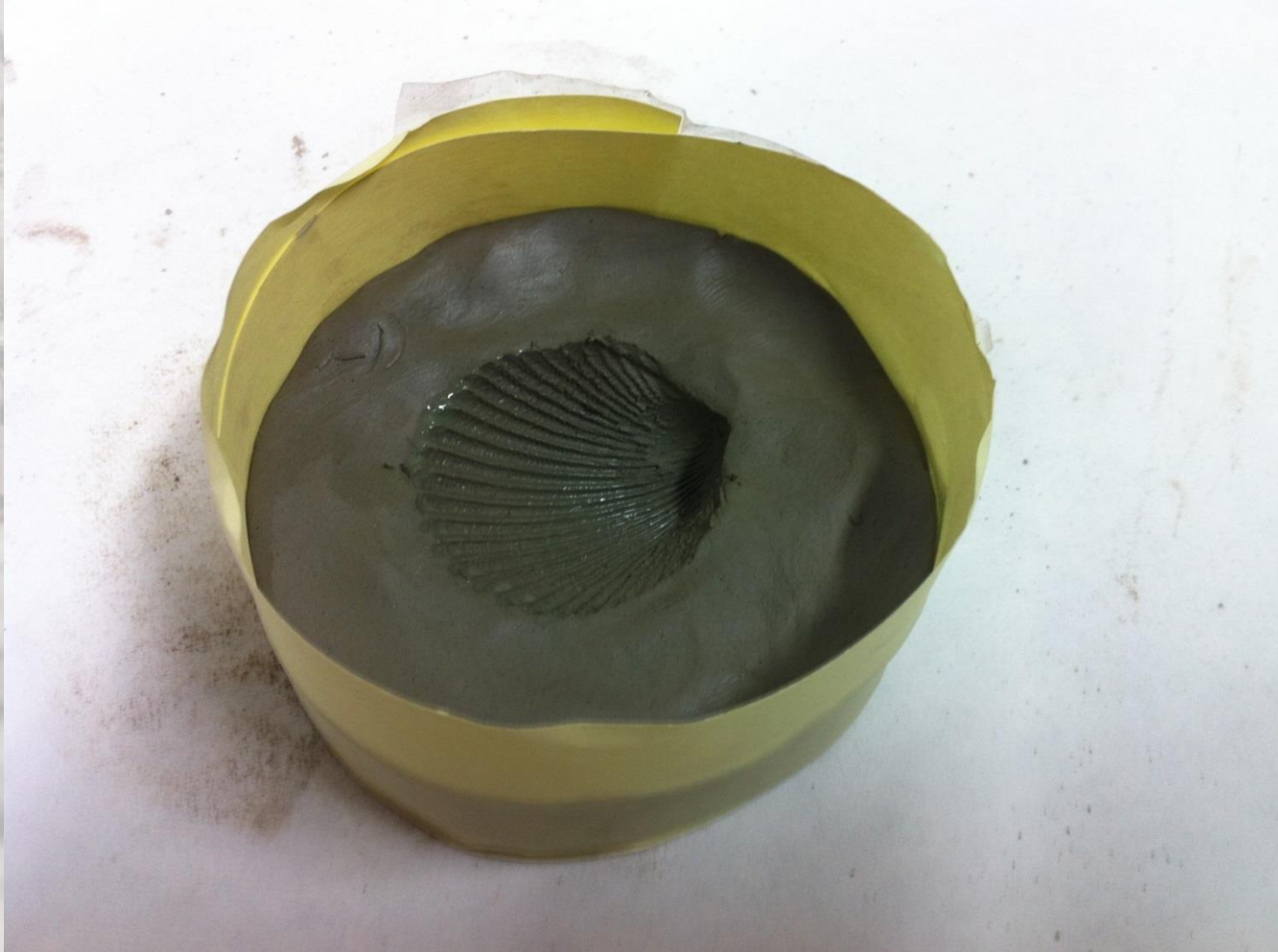
Remove the shell from the clay.
Gently rock it to loosen it.



Easy does it! Don't damage the mould.



Very gently wipe away any excess washing up liquid from the clay



Time to mix up the plaster of Paris

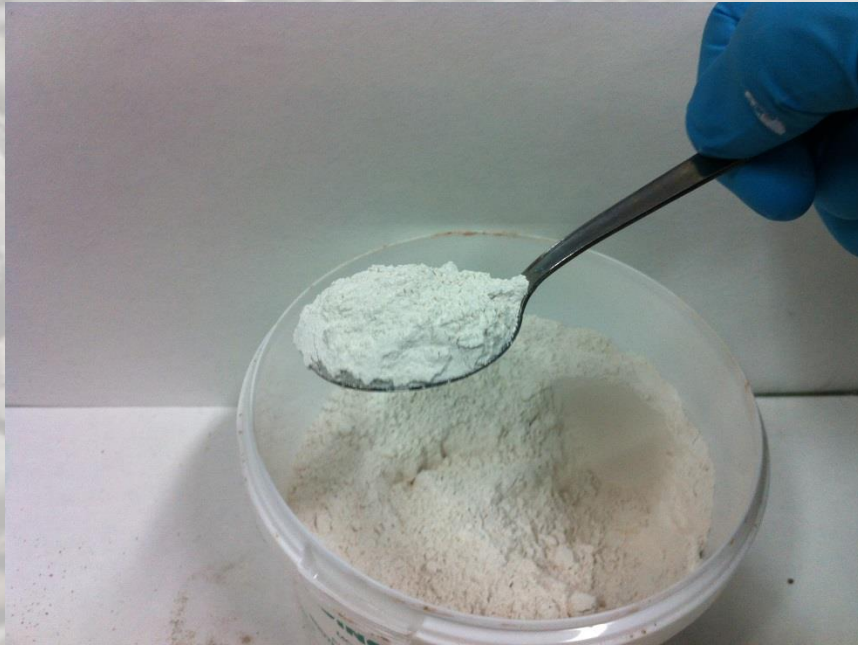


Remember your goggles and gloves

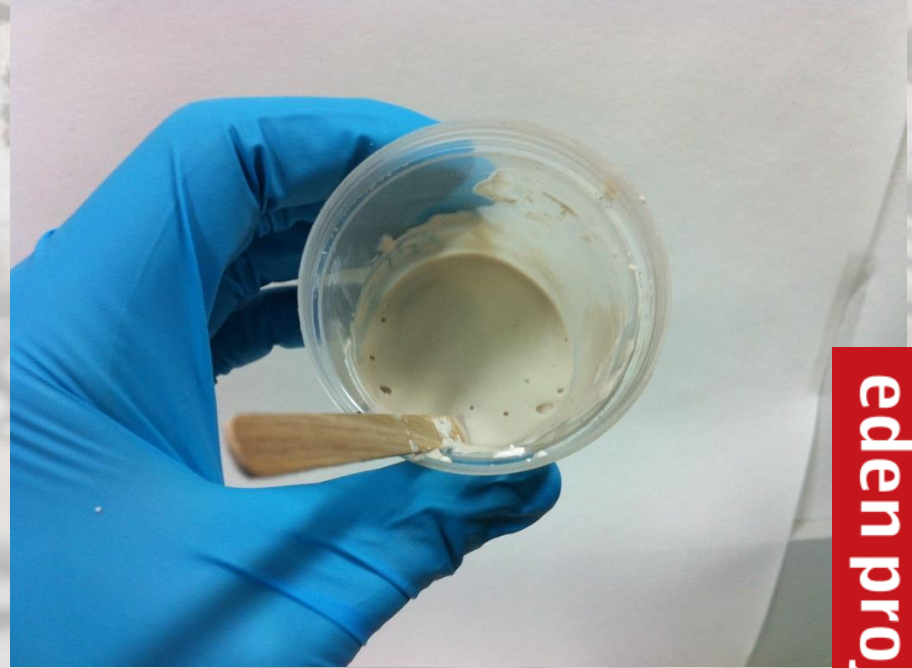


If plaster of Paris gets on your skin then wash it off right away.
Report any spillages to your teacher.

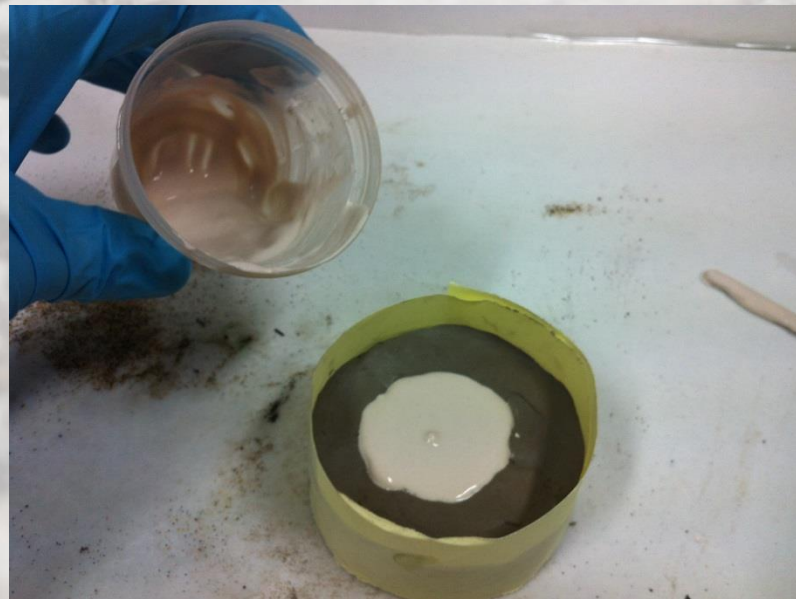
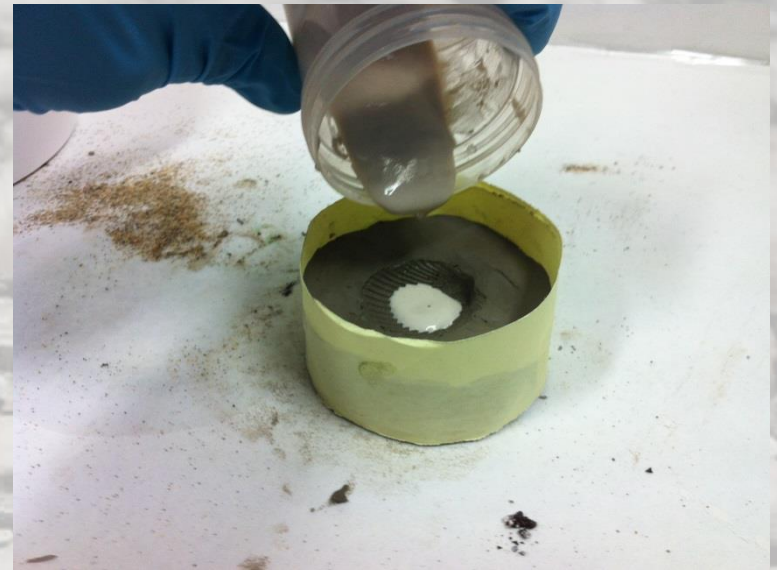
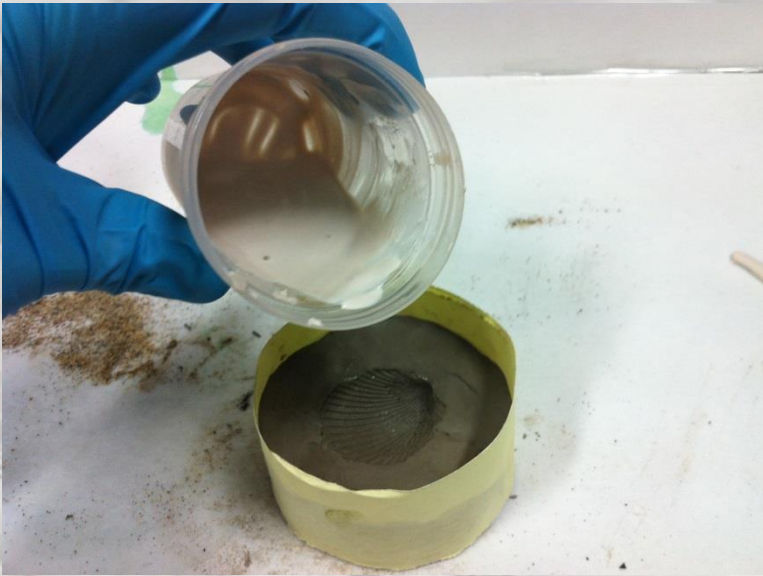
Take 3 teaspoons of the powder and put it in a yogurt pot or something similar.



Add water very slowly and mix until you have a slurry with no lumps. It should be runny enough so that you can pour it.



Pour the plaster of Paris into the mould



After a few minutes sprinkle a layer of sand on top



Remove the paper from the outside



Make very small holes in the clay to help with the drying process



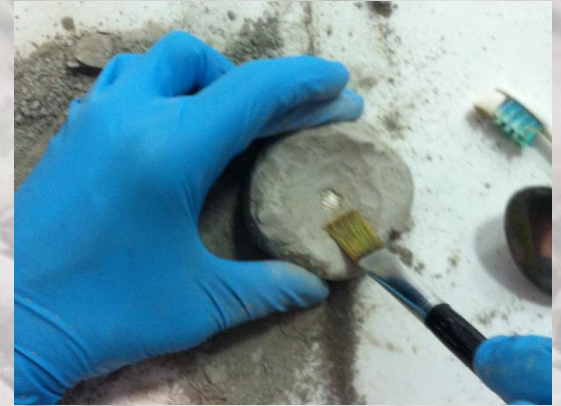
The clay needs to dry out so leave it somewhere warm.



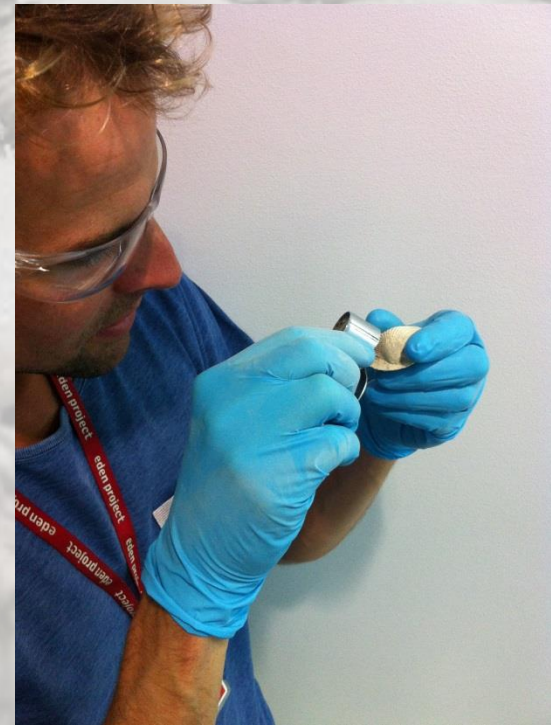
Excavating a fossil: Tools of the Trade



Excavating a Fossil



Can you find the shell that was used to make the fossil?



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