Video question script, KS2: Circus activity 1: How could I become fossilised?

Question/Activity	Likely response	Rationale
When teaching about the Earth we often use practical activities to explore Earth processes. This example asks how we might become fossilised.		Preparation for bridging from the living animal to the fossil
What is this?	A stick person	Concrete preparation = asking them to describe the item
Ask: What would happen if this person fell into a nearby river or the sea and died – how might they become fossilised? What things might make the chances of fossilisation difficult? Pause the video and discuss. *[Diagram of a body with its skeleton* (*This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0, Author Bernhard Ungerer.)]* [*Photo of a tooth – usually the last part of a human to be left and so is the part most often fossilised.* (*I, Werneuchen the copyright holder of this work, hereby release it into the public domain.)*]	Allow time for thinking, and then replace photo with diagram of skeleton as in ESEU workbook. Some possible answers: • the current drags the body along the bottom, scratching the skin so that blood runs into the water; • creatures start eating at the scratches and at other softer parts of the body like the eyes; • small water creatures enter through any holes and start eating from the inside; • after a few days, decay of food in the stomach produces gas so that the body floats to the surface and is carried along; • fish and other creatures attack any weak points and gradually begin to remove the skin; • when the skin and other soft parts like the guts and lungs have been removed, the body sinks to the bottom again and the muscles start to rot; • as the muscles rot and are eaten, most bones are still held together by ligaments – but these begin to decay so that small bones begin to separate; • currents roll or drag the bones along the bottom grinding them down and breaking them up – first the smaller bones and then the larger ones; • eventually, all that is left is the hardest part of the body, the teeth; • these too are rolled around, worn down and broken up – so that finally nothing is left; • this is what happens to perhaps 99.99% of dead creatures – they are eaten and broken up and are not fossilised. Very often all that is left is the teeth, which are made of very resistant material (+Tooth picture from ESEU pack)	Pupils are asked to use their thinking skills to imagine how a body might decay – 'bridging' between the characteristics of a living body and how it might behave after death.
Ask if I want to become fossilised myself, as completely as possible – what should I do? *[Photos of volcanic ash cone, South Sandwich Islands and climbers on Glittertind,*	The best chances of fossilisation are: • where there is no activity to drag bodies along or break them up; being completely covered really quickly with sediment e.g in an underwater landslide, buried in cool volcanic ash, (Photo), buried in thick ice (Photo) or in	As above

Norway, P. Kennett. Photo of peat bog, near A57, Snake summit, Peak District, Dr. J. Cripps]	a peat bog (Photo) • this will keep out oxygen, so that animals that might eat the body can't live there; • and where there is no oxygen the bacteria that might rot the body can't live there either. So dying on a road, or on a hillside would give no chance, but there is a better way.	
The picture shows the remains of a man who was buried in a peat bog, about 6000 years ago, where he lay undisturbed and where oxygen couldn't get to the body. Is he a true fossil? [*Photo: 4th century BC Tollund Man, found preserved in a peat bog in Denmark*. (*Tollundmanden i Sil eborgmuseet. PG Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation license)*]	Picture of Tollund Man. Although his remains show the processes of fossilisation, he is not regarded as a true fossil, because he lived less than 10,000 years ago.	Bridging to previous knowledge, maybe involving metacognition