Evolving Knowledge
7th Grade

Concepts

- Changes in the process of excavation at the Tar Pits have shifted the way we picture Ice Age Los Angeles.
- Microfossils are significant in helping us understand the environment of Ice Age Los Angeles.

Objectives

- Students will understand that our knowledge of Ice Age Los Angeles has changed as our research methods have changed.
- Students will understand that small fossils give us clues about the environment.
- Students will compare the paleontological focus of early excavations to the focus of modern and current excavations at the La Brea Tar Pits.

Outline

1. Students will use the worksheet to discover the changes in research at the La Brea Tar Pits over the past 100 years, and then use the information they find to answer the big question: “How has our idea of Pleistocene Los Angeles changed over the past 100 years?”
Museum Visit

During their visit to the Museum, students will work in small groups to explore Pit 91, Project 23, and the exhibits of the Page Museum. Using evidence found within the Museum’s displays and in the Park, students will fill in the chart and answer:

- What were excavators interested in?
- What kinds of tools did they use?
- What types of fossils did they find?
- What were their conclusions about Pleistocene LA?

for both the early excavations (1913 - 1915) and modern and current excavations (1969-Present).

They will then use the information they gathered to answer the big question:

- How has our idea of Pleistocene Los Angeles changed over the past 100 years?

Helpful Hints

The Los Angeles High School Mural (1937) shows us how scientists pictured Ice Age LA based on information from early excavations (1913 - 1915) and is located near the school check in desk. The Mark Hallett Mural (1988) shows how the study of microfossils has refined our idea of the Pleistocene environment, based on evidence from excavations 1969 - present and is located in between the Columbian Mammoth and the dire wolves.
| What did they conclude about Pleistocene LA? | (Compare Los Angeles High School Mural with Mark Hallett Mural) |
| What types of fossils did they find? | (Museum, Pit 91, Project 23, Fishbowl Lab) |
| What kinds of tools did they use? | (Pit 91, Fishbowl Lab, Project 23) |
| Who were the excavators? | (Museum, Pit 91, Fishbowl Lab, Project 23) |

Investigate 1913-1915 Excavations

Use the location hints in the chart below to answer each question for both the historic and modern excavations at the Tar Pits.
Expand...

How has our idea of Pleistocene Los Angeles changed over the past 100 years? How have changes in research methods helped us evolve our knowledge of this place?