

Paleontology Then and Now

How is paleontology today different from paleontology in the 19th century? In this activity, you’ll compare what you saw in the video “Beyond the Story: Into the World of a Paleontologist” with what you read in the article “The Girl Who Discovered the Dinosaurs.”

Directions: Answer the questions in the chart below, based on the video and the article, to compare Mary Anning’s and Susan Butts’s experiences.

“The Girl Who Discovered the Dinosaurs”	“Beyond the Story: Into the World of a Paleontologist”
1. What did Mary Anning find in 1811? What did it help scientists understand?	1. What does Susan Butts study? What does her work help scientists understand?
2. How did Mary uncover fossils?	2. What tools do Susan Butts and other paleontologists use to study fossils?
3. Where did Mary dig for fossils?	3. Where does Susan Butts dig for fossils?
4. How did being a woman in paleontology affect Mary?	4. What can you infer about how women in paleontology are regarded today?
5. What did the work of paleontologists mainly reveal in Mary Anning’s time?	5. Today, what does paleontology help us understand in addition to the distant past? What “big mystery” is it helping Susan Butts and others solve?

Time travel! Using details from above, write a letter to be sent through a time machine to Mary Anning. Tell her what today’s paleontologists—like Susan Butts—do, and how the work is different from the work that Mary did.