



After an animal dies, layers of sediments are deposited on top of earlier layers. The massive weight of the water and upper layers press down on the bones, forming an impression of their shape.

In order to fossilize, a plant or animal is buried by sediment. Over time, the sediment hardens into sedimentary rock. Most of the time, this happens under water. That's why most fossils are found in areas once covered by oceans.

Trapped animals and insects have fossilized in ice, tree sap, and tar. Mammoths were trapped and fossilized in ice.





Many mammoths were trapped and fossilized in tar pits. The La Brea tar pits in Los Angeles has the world's largest collection of ice age animal and plant fossils in the world.



Replica of a mammoth at La Brea tar pits.