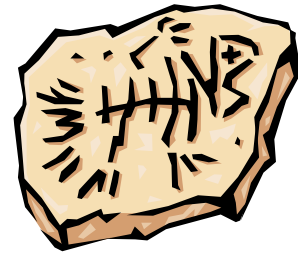




Fossils



Ⓢ What are fossils?

Fossils are any remains, trace, or imprint of a plant or animal that has been preserved in the Earth's crust since some past geological or prehistoric time. They can be any evidence of past life.

Ⓢ What types of fossils are used to find oil & gas?

The types of fossils used in searching for oil & gas are called foraminifera. These are good fossils to look for because there tends to be plenty of them. When they were alive a very long time ago, they lived in environments that today, can be good sources for oil & gas. Scientists can look at the fossils and the rock around them to try to find out how old they are. By finding out the fossil and rock ages, they can tell if it might be a good place to look for oil or gas.

Ⓢ How old are the fossils in the Gulf of Mexico?

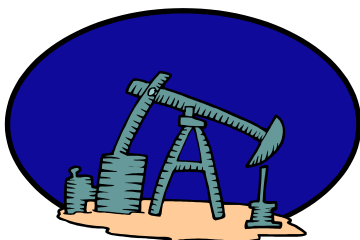
The fossils in the Gulf of Mexico have a very wide range of ages. The old ones can be as old as 160 Million (160,000,000) years old, which means they were around in the Jurassic Period. The youngest fossils are around 10 Thousand (10,000) years old, and were alive at the end of the last Ice Age.

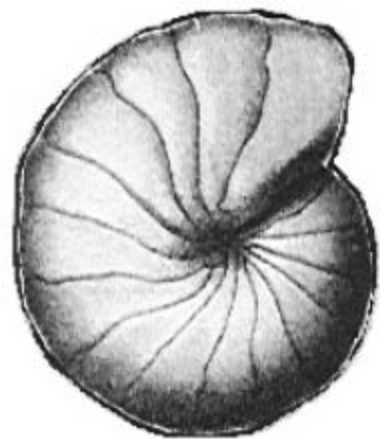
Ⓢ How small can the fossils be?

The fossils can be very small. Sometimes they can't be seen with your own eyes! Some are as small as an ink dot. Because they are so small, they are put into classes with different names. One group of small ones is called microfossils. Another group of even smaller fossils is called nanofossils and they require very powerful microscopes to be seen. Just by the name of the group, scientists can estimate how small the fossil will be before they ever even look at it.

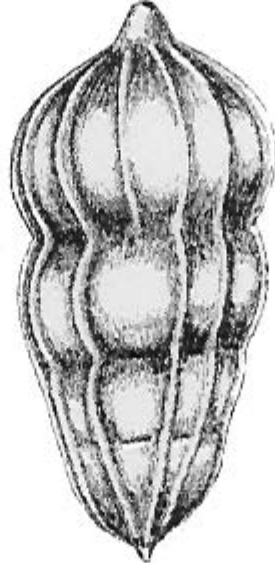
Ⓢ How can we see the fossils if they are so small?

Microscopes are used to magnify the tiny fossils to a size at which we can see them. Some fossils can be seen on the slide with your eyes, but they are still too small to see their physical details unless you look at them through the microscope.





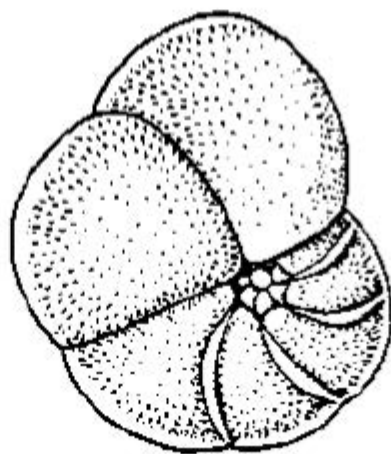
Cyclammia cancellata



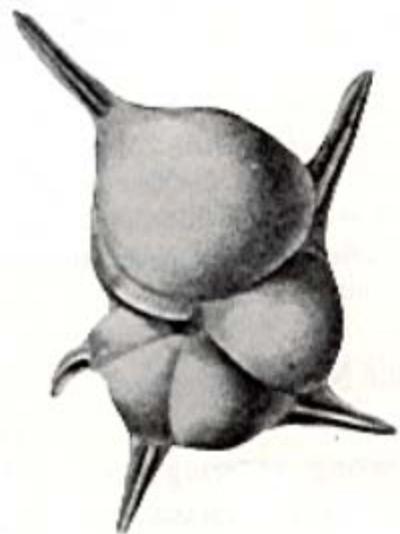
Nodosaria blanpiedi



Planulina harangensis



Discorbis gravelli



Hantkenina alabamensis



Rectuvigerina multicostata



Globigerina venezuelana



Textularia "16"



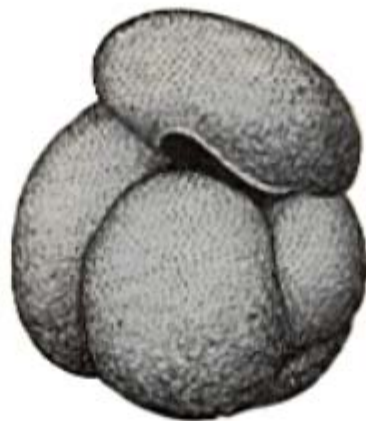
Uvigerina hispida



Marginulina howei



Bolivina "3"



Globigerinoides conglobatus