

Ice Age Tusk Found
NewsDepth January 29, 2009
Classroom Activities
Classroom Lesson Plans



Overview:

What started as an afternoon of rockhounding in the riverbed behind his Perris home ended with Greg Riecke discovering a tusk of either a mammoth or a mastodon that experts say likely dates back to the last Ice Age -- 16,000 to 2 million years ago. Riecke, a part-time plumber who regularly combs the flood channel for gold with a metal detector, said in the past he has found oyster shells, coral and what he believes might be a dinosaur or shark tooth. This, he admits however, is the biggest thing he has ever found. Mastodons and mammoths were among dozens of mammals that roamed the Inland valleys during the Pleistocene period, just before the arrival of humans. Students in this week's lessons will learn more about Mastodons and mammoths and the Ice Age from where they came.

Grade Level: 3-4

Subjects: Science, History and Language Arts

Standards:

Students will be able to write informational reports that includes fact and examples.

Students will be able to differentiate between the life cycles of different animals.
Students will be able to explore how fossils provide evidence about animals that lived a long time ago.



Classroom Activities:

- **Activity #1 Ice Age – The Hook**
 - If available, show Scenes 3 and 4 from the original “ICE AGE” animated movie. In those two scenes we find Sid the Sloth running for his life from two very perturbed rhinos. Sid is rescued by Manny the Mammoth (voiced by Ray Romano of Everybody Loves Raymond) who hoists up and heaves the two Rhinos over the edge of the cliff with his trunk and his tusks. This is an entertaining way to show students the size of the tusks and how they may have been put to good use.

In the Bonus features on Disc 2, Ray is the subject of the special feature, “Behind the Scenes” and the students can learn even more about the animated creature Manny in the Ice Age Movie.

- Questions: Who can tell me what a mammoth is? A mastodon? Know the difference? Mammoths had longer tusks than mastodons, a wider head, a sloping back, flat, chewing teeth, a trunk with two finger-like projections, and were mostly taller. Mastodons evolved earlier and lasted longer in geologic time.
- Visit this site http://www.pe.com/localnews/inland/stories/PE_News_Local_S_fossil21.4cd7f80.html and watch the interview with Greg Riecke who discovered a tusk while digging for gold behind his home in California that experts say likely dates back to the last Ice Age -- 16,000 to 2 million years ago. The tusk is that of either a mastodon or a mammoth. This is the site for the picture at the beginning of the lesson. A gallery of other photos is also available at that site.
- Visit this site that will give you more information on the mammoths and mastodons: <http://www.zoomdinosaurs.com/subjects/mammals/mammoth/> (You will find printouts there as well).
- Just for fun visit <http://www.athropolis.com/jokes2.htm> which provides you with a plethora of clever jokes about Mammoth and Mastodon.

2. Activity #2 Land of the Mammoth Interactive

- A mere 11,000 years ago, Earth still supported many mammoth sized mammals that thrived for millions of years. Then, most of them quickly died away. What happened? This online interactive allows students to click on the icons to meet the ice age giants that made it the doorstep of modern times.
- Go to the Discovery Channel’s online site to experience it excellent interactive titled “The Land of the Mammoth: Ice Age Giants” <http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/landofmammoth/eyecandy/main.html>
- Students can also discover information about the Saber Toothed Tiger and the Sloth who were two of the Main Characters in Ice Age Part 1.

3. Activity #3 Seven Steppes to a Woollier Mammoth

- Your mission: To help woolly mammoth evolve from the small, pig-like animal of the Eocene epoch into the furry elephant that roamed the Asian steppes during the Pleistocene epoch! Play a game to help the woolly mammoth evolve through the steps of evolution. <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/woollymammoth/steppe1.html>
- Also while at that site you can see a Woolly migration map as well as access additional Woolly Web links. You can also learn about their migration patterns or join the expedition as they unearth the woolly mammoth in Siberia.

4. Activity #4 A Mammoth Dig

- This activity comes to you via Newton's Apple Science Site. It features an excellent video that documents mammoth and mastodon historic findings and has an accompanying lesson that will help young students better discover the information about the survival of the mammoth.
- <http://www.newtonsapple.tv/TeacherGuide.php?id=1666>

5. Activity #5 Bringing the Bones to Life

- Now that you have seen the videos of the tusks and have learned more about the mammoths and mastodons, here is a writing activity for you. (If your students did not participate in any of the other activities, just use the sites for reference, in particular:
<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/landofmammoth/eyecandy/main.html> and
<http://www.zoomdinosaurs.com/subjects/mammals/mammoth/>
- The discovered tusks belonged to a real mastodon who lived thousands of years ago. Draw a picture of what you think the animal whose tusks were found looked like. Give your mammoth a name. Then write a one page short informative report including a vivid description of your mammoth. Tell us:
 - In detail what you looked like – your dimensions
 - Where you lived, how long you lived and any facts about your habitat
 - What you ate and what ate you and why you might have disappeared

Additional Resources

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/newsforyou/newsforyou029.shtml

Students will learn facts about the Ice Age and mammals who lived during that period.

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/11/1122_051122_mammoth.html

Article by National Geographic titled "Woolly Mammoth Tusks Yield Clues to Animal's Lives"

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/science/>

NewsHour's feature "DNA Discovery May Bring Long-extinct Woolly Mammoth Back to Life"

<http://www.athropolis.com/links/iceage.htm>

Ice Age Links including many mammoth links

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Woolly-mammoth>

Encyclopedia information about the Woolly Mammoth

