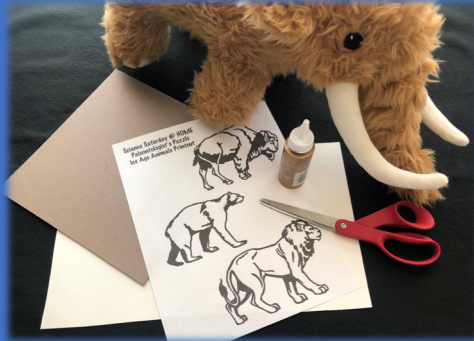
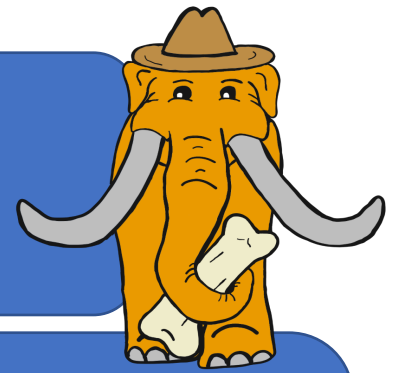


# Science Saturday @ HOME

## Paleontologist's Puzzle



### Gathering Supplies:

Print out of Ice Age Animals

or paper to draw your own animal

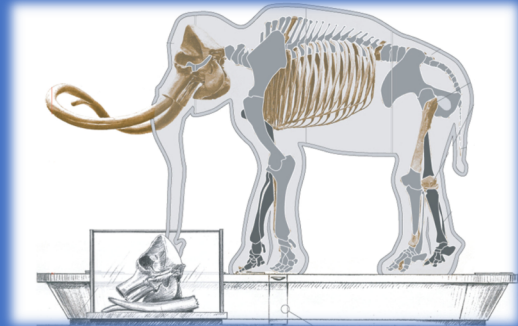
Cardboard or Poster board

Scissors

Glue

## Paleontologist's Puzzle!

Paleontologists rarely find a whole fossilized skeleton. Usually they find only a single bone or even a fragment of a bone. So how do they figure out what kind of animal the fossil belongs to?



Paleontologists will look very closely for characteristics of certain types of bone. Leg bones and ribs look very different from each other. From there they can often identify what group of animals the fossils came from, eventually narrowing it down to a specific animal or species. By comparing their fossils to known fossils from other locations they can put together a picture of what the whole animal looked like. Sometimes paleontologists will look at living animals to compare bone structure and give a better idea of what the fossilized animal looked and acted like. There are also sites where fossils from different animals may become mixed together, so paleontologists have to carefully identify what animal each fossil belongs to.

Here at the Western Science Center a single distinctive tooth was found and identified as belonging to a short-face bear. Because paleontologists were able to identify this one tooth we know that there were short-face bears roaming the valley during the Ice Ages.

## Try This! Make Your Own Paleontologist's Puzzle.

1. Print and cut out the Ice Age animals or draw 2 to 3 Ice Age animals your self.
2. Glue the animals onto pieces of cardboard or poster board and let the glue dry.
3. Cut the animals into strips about an  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch wide. If your cardboard is too stiff, ask an adult for help.
4. Now create your fossil site by mixing up all of the strips and dropping them on a table.
5. Start putting the different animals back together. Could some pieces be mistaken for other animals? Is it easier to tell which animal a piece belongs to if you know what the whole animal looks like? If you only had one piece how hard would it be to tell which animal it belongs to?
6. Try having other family members put the animals together without telling them which animals they have. Have some fun with your own Paleontologist's Puzzle.

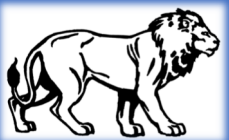
### About Your Ice Age Animals



The ancient bison grazed in the valleys eating grasses, shrubs and woody plants. Ancient bison became extinct about 10,000 years ago.



The short-faced bear weighed over 2,000 pounds. They stood 5 feet tall at the shoulder. When standing on their back legs they were over 11 feet tall.



The North American lion was bigger than the African lion that you might see in a zoo today. North American lions are extinct.