



Explorer Classroom Event Guide: Grades 3-8 Ancient Tar Pits | Alexis Mychajliw

Explorer Classroom is for everyone! This guide is designed for your students or family to get the most out of Explorer Classroom. After the event, please share your thoughts, activities, and learnings with us on Twitter [@NatGeoEducation](https://twitter.com/NatGeoEducation) using **#ExplorerClassroom**.

December 3, 2020, 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM ET

BEFORE YOU TUNE IN

SIGN UP

Register [here!](#)

BEFORE THE EVENT

If you plan to share this event with students virtually or encourage their participation independently, check out our tips for kids working Independently (p.7) in the [Family Guide to Using National Geographic Education Resources](#) and our virtual tips throughout this guide.

This event is recommended for learners in grades 3-8. As a group, build your background knowledge prior to the event with one of these activities or any combination of the linked resources that best fits your needs:

- ❑ **Read** the biography for ecologist and paleontologist [Alexis Mychajliw](#) to familiarize yourself and your students with her work.
- ❑ **Read** [Tar Pits of the World](#) from La Brea Tar Pits to learn about tar pits around the globe and understand why it's important to explore them.
- ❑ **Watch** [The Tar Pit](#) (4:07) to discover why scientists call tar pits the perfect preservative for fossilized remains.
- ❑ **Explore** [Fossils: Facts](#) from Idaho Public Television to discover different types of fossils, where fossils are found, what fossils can tell us, and other cool facts.
- ❑ **Brainstorm** questions for the Explorer that either focus on the person themselves, or their work. Help your learner revise their questions making sure they 1) only ask one thing; 2) have a clear purpose; and 3) are specific. You may need to work together through a few drafts to arrive at a solid final question. Review questions together and select two favorites to ask on-air (if you [registered](#)) or via **Twitter** [@NatGeoEducation](https://twitter.com/NatGeoEducation) using [#ExplorerClassroom](#).

DURING THE EVENT

As you listen, have students take notes using one of the graphic organizers listed below.

- ❑ [Two-Column Chart](#): Print copies or ask your students to draw their own two-column chart. Have your students write things they are learning in one column and in the other, write questions about that information, or draw something related to it.
- ❑ [Cause-and-Effect Diagram](#): Have your students use this organizer to identify what happened (effect) and why it happened (cause).

AFTER THE EVENT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Debriefing as a class or a family is an important part of the learning journey. Discussion helps learners process ideas, reflect, and make new connections. Use these questions to help provide context to the event. The questions are open-ended and designed to facilitate a discussion about the event you just participated in together. You know your students best! Modify these questions as necessary to spark conversation.

1. What was one new thing you learned during the Explorer Classroom event you didn't know before? What is one question you still have?
2. Why is exploration important?
3. What is something you would like to explore? Why?
4. What skills, tools, or knowledge would you need to explore?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

We encourage students to reflect on what they've learned from the Explorer during the event by completing one of the following tasks and sharing their work with the class, a friend, or family member. Share their great work with us on Twitter—[@NatGeoEducation](#) [#ExplorerClassroom](#)—so the Explorer can see how much they've learned!

- Draw a picture illustrating one thing you learned from the Explorer.
- Act out what you learned about the Explorer and their work. Consider making your own Explorer Classroom presentation at home like they did!
- Record yourself talking about what you learned from the Explorer and how you could help. Share it with a friend and invite them to watch the recording of the show.
- Write a short news article to tell others what the Explorer is working on and why that work is important.

Virtual Tip: During class video time (e.g. Zoom or Google Hangouts) students can share their drawings or their acting or article in a virtual show-and-tell.

EXTENSION RESOURCES

Try one of these resources and keep your students exploring with National Geographic Education.

- *Join in the Explorer's Mission:* What are you passionate about? Take some time to talk to your friends about your passion and help spread the word, like Alexis does with her work!
- [Prehistoric Animals](#): Scientists study fossil remains of bones, tracks, and dung to learn about dinosaurs and you can too on this website from National Geographic Kids.
- The [Fossil Record](#) helps paleontologists, archaeologists, and geologists place important events and species in the appropriate geologic era. Dig into this collection of resources to learn more.
- To watch past Explorer Classroom events, check out this [YouTube playlist](#).

Looking for more ways to engage your students online, in-person, or at home? Find more on our [Learn Anywhere](#) page or in our [Resource Library](#).