



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Fossils! Digging Up Dinosaurs

Week of May 31–Jun 4 • 13 minutes a day • ages 2.5–6

fossil • bone • dig • rock • old

Everything you need, one page per day

Week Overview

 Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week. One page per day, in your hand, at the circle. Every script here is word-for-word the same as the teachers' page.

Five words they'll own by Friday

fossil

bone

dig

rock

old

Littles (2.5–3)

One word + a gesture is a win: **“Dig!”** (scoop-scoop), **“Bone!”** (hold it up), **“Old!”** (stroke a long beard).

Bigs (4–6)

Sentence frames: **“I can dig.”** · **“This rock is very old.”** · **“I found a fossil!”** · **“A bird is a little dinosaur.”**

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

The week at a glance

- Mon** **A Fossil in the Rock** — Magic Box: a real fossil (or a shell pressed into clay). Game: what's under the sand? Shelf: Tray 2 · Excavation (the sand bowl walks straight over).
- Tue** **Bones Make a Dinosaur** — Magic Box: a clean bone. Game: build the skeleton on the wall. Shelf: Tray 3 · Fossil 3-part cards (the bone sits on the tray).
- Wed** **Dig, Brush, Find** — Magic Box: a trowel and a soft brush. Game: brush it gently (the quietest game of the year). Shelf: Tray 1 · Make a fossil (the clay and the pressing objects).
- Thu** **Old and New** — Magic Box: yesterday's clay fossils, now dry. Game: old or new? Shelf: Tray 4 · Old → New timeline (the two sorting signs, shrunk).
- Fri** **The Whole May Story** — the whole month in one box. Game: the May finale quick-fire + awards. Full song, top to bottom.

The 13 minutes, every day

- 2 min** **Magic Box hook** — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek.
- 4 min** **Teach** — the day's word, dramatised with the object. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 min** **Song** — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 min** **Game.**
- 1 min** **Close** — whisper → normal → shout.

MONDAY

Day 1 • A Fossil in the Rock

Today's words: **fossil** • **rock** • **old**

Grab: one real fossil in the Magic Box — or press a shell hard into air-dry clay tonight and let it set. Also: a washing-up bowl of dry sand with three shells and a small bone buried in it, and one soft paintbrush.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Shake the box. It goes *clunk* — heavy today. Hold it to your ear. Whole class chants:

EVERYONE “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Peek in. Frown. Pull out... a rock. Look disappointed. Then turn it over and gasp.

TEACHER “A rock. Just a boring rock... *(turn it)* WAIT. Look **INSIDE** the rock! A shell! In the **ROCK!**” *(hold it high, walk it slowly round the circle so every child sees)* “That is a **FOSSIL.**”

Everyone presses two palms together, hard, and opens them. **“Fossil!”**

4 MIN TEACH • A FOSSIL IS A VERY OLD PICTURE IN A ROCK

Three words, three gestures, three times each, getting faster:

fossil *(press two palms together, then open them like a book)*

rock *(knock two knuckles together — knock, knock)*

old *(stroke a long, long beard down to your knees)*

Now the story chant. Do it slow and low the first time, then let them join:

A dinosaur walked here, long ago... *(slow, heavy stomps)*

She left her **bones** down below. *(crouch, pat the floor)*

The mud went hard, the mud went **rock**, *(press fists together, squeeze)*

And now we **dig** — knock, knock, knock! *(knock the floor three times)*

Littles say the one bold word with the gesture — **“Rock!”** Bigs say the whole line, then the frame: **“This rock is very old.”**

Teacher fails: *hold the fossil up, say “Mmm, a cookie!” and pretend to bite it. Ouch. Wait. Let them shout “NO! It’s a ROCK!” twice before you believe them.*

3 MIN GAME • WHAT'S UNDER THE SAND?

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Put the sand bowl in the middle. Nobody touches it yet.

TEACHER “Something is hiding. Something OLD. Who wants to dig?”

One child at a time, fingers only, three scoops. Whole class chants with the scoops: **“Dig! Dig! Dig!”** When something appears, they all freeze and whisper it:

EVERYONE *(whisper)* “A bone...”

Found things go on a cloth beside the bowl, in a row. Four diggers, then stop — leave them wanting it. Bigs announce their find: **“I found a shell!”**

This bowl is Tray 2 on the shelf — carry it straight from the circle to the cultural shelf with the brush and a skeleton card, and it works itself all week.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everyone digs on the spot, whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE “I found a fossil... I found a fossil... I FOUND A FOSSIL!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *Fossil (Bill Thomson) — wordless, so they tell it. Point and ask “What’s that?” and let the class narrate the whole book.*

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice with the actions, then Monday's verse — “A fossil, a fossil — a stone that's old, / a dinosaur story waiting to be told!” — then the chorus again. Full song on page 8.

TUESDAY

Day 2 • Bones Make a Dinosaur

Today's words: **bone** • **skeleton** • **big**

Grab: one clean bone in the Magic Box (a model bone, or a chicken drumstick bone boiled and scrubbed white). Also: a big dinosaur skeleton outline drawn on butcher paper and taped to the wall, eight paper bone shapes cut out, blu-tack.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant. This time the box *rattles* — shake it four times and let them hear it.

EVERYONE “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Reach in slowly. Pull out the bone. Hold it up like a treasure.

TEACHER “A BONE! (*knock it gently on the floor — tok, tok*) Hard! Not squishy. Whose bone?” (*long pause*) “... I have bones TOO!”

Everyone knocks their own arm: tok, tok. **“Bone!”**

4 MIN TEACH • I HAVE BONES, THE DINOSAUR HAD BONES

Hunt for your own bones. Knock gently and name each one — head bone, arm bone, leg bone, ribs. Then the chant:

Knock, knock — hard! That’s my **bone**, (*tap your own forearm twice*)

deep inside me, all my own. (*hug yourself*)

A dinosaur had bones like me — (*stomp twice*)

but hers were big as a TREE! (*arms up as high and wide as they go*)

Now the word **skeleton**: all your bones together. Say it in three claps — SKEL-E-TON — and let them clap it back three times.

Littles: **“Bone!”** and a knock is plenty. Bigs: **“This is my arm bone.”** and **“Bones make a skeleton.”**

Teacher fails: knock on your **tummy** and announce “bone!” — it goes boof, not tok. They will fall over. Let them move your hand to your elbow themselves.

3 MIN GAME • BUILD THE SKELETON

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” The empty dinosaur outline is on the wall. It has no bones. That is very sad.

Hand one paper bone to one child. They stick it anywhere on the outline while the class chants **“Bone! Bone! Bone!”** — then everybody roars once. Next child.

TEACHER “Where does this one go? Leg? Neck? Tail?” (*hold it in the wrong place first, always*)

Bigs place and say: **“The leg bone goes here.”** Littles place and shout: **“Bone!”** Eight bones, eight roars, done. *Wonky is fine. A skeleton with the head on the tail is funnier and just as much language. Leave it on the wall all week — Friday’s finale points at it.*

1 MIN CLOSE

Stack your fists one on top of the other, growing taller, whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE “Bones make a dinosaur... bones make a dinosaur... BONES MAKE A DINOSAUR!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *Dinosaur Bones (Bob Barner)* — short, rhyming, and every page is a bone. Knock on your own arm each time the book says “bone”.

Today’s song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Tuesday’s verse — “Bones, bones — one, two, three, / put them back — a dinosaur for me!” — then the chorus again. Full song on page 8.

WEDNESDAY

Day 3 • Dig, Brush, Find

Today's words: **dig** • **brush** • **slow**

Grab: a small trowel (or a metal spoon) and a soft paintbrush in the Magic Box. Also: yesterday's sand bowl with one shell buried; air-dry clay rolled into flat discs, one per child; shells, leaves and one plastic dinosaur foot to press; a damp cloth.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant, but whisper it today — today is a quiet day.

EVERYONE (*whispering*) "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Out comes a spoon. And a paintbrush. Look at them. Look confused.

TEACHER "A spoon? Is it lunch? (*pretend to eat*) ... No. These are the fossil hunter's tools. This one **digs** (*scoop*) and this one **brushes** (*soft sweep across your palm*). Slow hands. Quiet hands."

Everyone scoops twice, then brushes twice. **"Dig! Brush!"**

4 MIN TEACH • SLOW HANDS FIND FOSSILS

Two rules, and they are the whole lesson: **dig slow, brush soft**. Say each rule, do it, then have them do it in the air.

Dig, dig — but not too fast, (*three small scoops, tiny ones*)

brush, brush — make it last. (*three feather-soft sweeps*)

Slow hands, quiet hands, (*hands go completely still in your lap*)

look what's in my hands! (*open both palms wide*)

Now the clay. Every child gets a disc and presses **one** thing into it — a shell, a leaf, or the dinosaur foot — then lifts it off and looks at the print. That mark is a fossil.

Littles: **"Press!"** and **"Dig!"** Bigs: **"I can dig."** and **"I made a fossil."**

Teacher fails: attack the sand bowl with the brush like you're sweeping a floor — sand everywhere. Gasp. **"SLOW!"** They will police you all week for this one.

3 MIN GAME • BRUSH IT GENTLY

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" One shell is buried in the sand. One brush. One child at a time, ten seconds each — and the whole class counts the seconds in a **whisper**.

EVERYONE (*whispering, slowly*) "One... two... three..."

When the shell finally appears, everybody exhales **"Ohhhh!"** and the finder holds it up.

TEACHER "What did you find?"

"Shell!" Bigs: **"I found a shell in the sand."**

This is the quietest game of the year and they love it. Whispering is a game, not a rule — and the concentration is real Montessori work.

1 MIN CLOSE

Slow scooping hands, whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE "Dig it up... dig it up... DIG IT UP!"

Got 3 spare minutes? Digging for Dinosaurs (Judith Curran / any board-book version) — stop on every tool and let them name it: "Brush!" "Spoon!". Lay the clay discs out flat to dry — they go in tomorrow's Magic Box.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Wednesday's verse — "Dig with a spoon, brush with a brush, / slowly, slowly — no big rush!" — sung at half speed. Full song on page 8.

THURSDAY

Day 4 • Old and New

Today's words: **old** • **new** • **bird**

Grab: yesterday's dried clay fossils in the Magic Box. Also: two paper mats or hoops labelled **Old!** and **New!** (print pack pages 12–13); a plastic dinosaur toy, a real bone, a leaf, a shoe, a shell; and one feather.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant. Shake it carefully — today the box is precious.

EVERYONE “What's in the box? What's in the box?”

Lift out the clay discs, one by one, and give each child their own back.

TEACHER “Yesterday this was soft. Today it is... (*knock on it — tok*) **HARD!** It's a rock now. **YOU** made a fossil.”

Everybody knocks their own disc: tok, tok. **“Fossil!”**

4 MIN TEACH • OLD, NEW — AND THE DINOSAUR THAT FLEW AWAY

Old, old, old — a long time ago, (*roll both hands backwards, over and over*)
before you, before me, before the snow! (*point at a child, at yourself, wiggle fingers down*)

New, new, new — that's today! (*one big clap*)

Old things sleep and new things play! (*hands to cheek, sleeping — then jump up*)

Now the reveal. Hold up the feather. Go very quiet.

TEACHER “The dinosaurs... did they **ALL** go away?” (*shake your head slowly*) “Some got small. Some got feathers. Some got wings... and they flew.” (*let the feather drop and float*) “Look out of the window. That bird? That bird is a little dinosaur.”

Everybody flaps. Littles: **“Bird!”** Bigs: **“A bird is a little dinosaur.”**

Teacher fails: put the shiny plastic dinosaur toy carefully on the **Old!** mat and look very pleased with yourself. Wait for the riot.

3 MIN GAME • OLD OR NEW?

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” The two mats go on the floor, far apart. You hold up one thing at a time.

TEACHER “A bone from the ground... OLD or NEW?”

“OLD!” (*everyone strokes the long beard*) — then one child walks it to the mat.

Run through: the fossil, the plastic toy, the leaf, the shoe, the shell, the feather. Bigs say the sentence as they place it: **“This rock is very old.”** / **“My shoe is new.”**

Trap them once with the shell — a shell can be new (from the beach) **or** old (in a rock). “It depends!” is a wonderful thing for a five-year-old to discover.

1 MIN CLOSE

Beard-stroke, whisper → normal → shout — then drop straight back to a whisper for the last line:

EVERYONE “Old, old, old... old, old, old... OLD, OLD, OLD!” (*then, whispering*) “...and a bird is a dinosaur.”

Got 3 spare minutes? Any dinosaur-to-bird picture book, or just the window. Watch one real bird together for sixty seconds and whisper “dinosaur”.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Thursday's verse — “Old, old, old — so long ago, / before you, before me — a long time ago!” Tell them tomorrow is the **WHOLE** song. Full song on page 8.

Day 5 • The Whole May Story

Today's words: **all five weeks** — bang · star · sun · rocket · dinosaur · fossil

Grab: the whole month in one Magic Box — a torch, a black cloth with star stickers, a ball (the sun), a paper rocket, a toy dinosaur, a fossil, a feather. Also: the five theme posters from May on the wall in order, and the awards sheet (print pack page 17), one half per child.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box is **heavy**. Stagger under it. Drop it (gently). Box chant, twice, because today is big.

EVERYONE “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Open the lid and look inside for a long moment without saying anything.

TEACHER “...**Everything**. The whole of May is in this box.”

Take out one thing — the torch. Switch it on. **“Light!”** Put it down. That is all for now; the rest come out in the game.

4 MIN TEACH • THE STORY OF EVERYTHING, IN SEVEN MOVES

Stand up. Everyone stands. Seven moves, in order — you say it, they do it with you:

It went **BANG!** (*crouch tiny, then explode arms open*)

The **stars** came out... (*twinkle ten fingers, high*)

The **sun** and the planets went round and round... (*spin slowly once*)

A **rocket** went up — blast off! (*hands together, shoot up on tiptoes*)

The **dinosaurs** stomped — ROAR! (*three big stomps and a roar*)

They left their bones... a **fossil** in the rock. (*crouch, press palms, open them*)

And a **bird** flew away. (*flap, and everyone sits down again*)

Do it three times: slow, normal, then as fast as you can — the fast one falls apart in laughter, which is the point. Littles ride along on the actions and shout the bold words. Bigs get the joining words: **“First it went bang, then the stars came out.”**

Teacher fails: *do the seven moves in the wrong order — put the rocket before the stars. They have watched these five weeks happen. They will fix you, loudly, and that correction is your assessment.*

3 MIN GAME • THE MAY FINALE QUICK-FIRE

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Now the box empties. Hold up one prop. They shout the word. Fast, no thinking.

TEACHER (*torch on*) → **“Light!”** (*star cloth*) → **“Star!”** (*ball*) → **“Sun!”**

...rocket → **“Blast off!”** ...dinosaur → **“ROAR!”** ...fossil → **“Fossil!”** ...feather → **“Bird!”**

Second lap: hand the props out. Each child holds one, stands in the story order along the wall under the five posters, and says their word when you point. Bigs add the sentence: **“I have the rocket. It goes up!”**

Then the awards: every child gets their palaeontologist badge and one line read out loud about what they found this week.

Photograph the line-up under the five posters. It is the single best parent photo of the whole month — put it straight on the wall next to the wrap-up sheet.

1 MIN CLOSE

Crouch tiny for the whisper, grow all week long, explode on the shout:

EVERYONE “It went bang... and here we are... HERE WE ARE!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *Re-read any one book from the whole month and let them choose which. They will choose the dinosaur one.*

★ Theme Song · “Dig, Dig, Dig”

The one song of the week — sung at every circle. Same chorus daily, one new verse each morning, full song on Friday.

C (0003)

F (2010)

G7 (0212)

Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“dig — dig — dig-a-dig”). Can't manage it yet? Four slow downs per bar works fine — the kids only hear the fun.

Tempo: a steady digging pace — slower than last week's stomp. Every “dig” is a scoop, so the beat is in their arms before it's in your uke. Chant it once with no ukulele first.

CHORUS — SING IT EVERY SINGLE DAY

- C** Dig, dig, dig in the **F** sand, (both hands scoop, scoop, scoop)
- C** what is **G7** in my **C** hand? (open both palms, look surprised)
- C** A bone! A shell! A **F** rock so old! (hold up one, two, three fingers)
- G7** A fossil — worth more than **C** gold! (hug it to your chest)

Sing the chorus twice each time. On the final “gold!” everyone hugs their treasure in tight.

ONE VERSE A DAY — VERSES USE ONLY C AND G7

Monday · A Fossil in the Rock

- C** A fossil, a fossil — a stone that's old, (press palms, then stroke a long beard)
- G7** a dinosaur story waiting to be **C** told! (open palms like a book)

Tuesday · Bones Make a Dinosaur

- C** Bones, bones — one, two, three, (count three fingers)
- G7** put them back — a dinosaur for **C** me! (stack your fists up tall, then one ROAR)

Wednesday · Dig, Brush, Find

- C** Dig with a spoon, brush with a brush, (scoop, then a soft sweep)
- G7** slowly, slowly — no big **C** rush! (everything in slow motion, then freeze)

Thursday · Old and New

- C** Old, old, old — so long ago, (roll both hands backwards)
- G7** before you, before me — a long time **C** ago! (point, point, hands far apart)

Friday · The May Finale

- C** Stars and planets, rockets too, (twinkle, spin, shoot up)
- G7** dinosaurs and fossils — I **C** love you! (stomp, press palms, hands on heart)

The build: each day sing chorus → today's verse → chorus. By Friday they know five verses without ever “learning” the song — Friday's finale is the whole thing top to bottom, and it doubles as the review of the entire month.

IF YOU'RE BRAND NEW TO UKULELE

Practice this loop for five minutes tonight: **C** (4 strums) → **F** (4 strums) → **C** → **G7** → **C**. That's the entire song — and it's the same three shapes you have used all month, so if you played “Blast Off!” you can already play this one. C is one finger, and the verses are just C and G7.