HISTORY ACTIVITY: Snake Stones and Devils’ Fingers
Fossils and Folklore

TIME NEEDED: 40 - 60 minutes
AGE: Year 3 to Year 6

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Knowledge: History and folklore, paleoart
Skills: Observation, scientific exploration, drawing, imagination

MATERIALS
Fossils (i.e. ammonites, belemnites, gryphaea, shells, echinoids) A4 plain paper, crayons for rubbings, pencils, rubbers.

ACTIVITY:
How did people in England understand fossils before we knew they were the remains of ancient creatures? Victorian people believed the world was only 6000 years old and there were no extinct creatures. Find out about a famous fossil folklore story here.

• Look at your fossil, its outline and shadow. View it from the side, below and above. Look carefully at patterns, lines and shapes. Take some rubbings and draw around the stone.
• Put yourself in the shoes of people who lived 300 years ago. Imagine you are seeing this unusual stone for the first time and know nothing about it. Use your imagination to think about what it might be, maybe something mysterious from the past.
• Write a short paragraph for how you might use the rock, if you lived in old times.
FOLLOW UP

Did other places in the world have explanations for fossils?
Maybe the Greek Cyclops was based on dinosaur fossils.
Was the Griffin actually a Protoceratops?