

MEET THEM

15 MINS



Ellen is based at the Natural History Museum and University College London but has travelled all over the world to do her research. Ellen is an evolutionary biologist, has loved whales since she was 6 years old and likes to try and answer questions like ‘why and how did whales lose their legs?’ and ‘will whales go extinct because of climate change?’

**First watch Ellen talk about her career.**

**Discuss:**

- Any thoughts about the video?
- What do you think of Ellen’s career?
- Why and how do **you** think whales lost their legs?



ACTIVITIES

40 MINS

MAKE

*Ingredients: different pasta shapes, sticky tack/playdough/clay.*

**Ellen’s work involves looking at fossils. In this activity, you will create your own fossil.**

1. Start by rolling out blu tack/ playdough/ clay onto a flat surface, it should be about ½ cm thick.
2. Press pasta shapes into the clay/ playdough to make a dinosaur fossil.
  - For example, penne rigate would work great for the ribs of the dinosaur fossil.
3. Then remove the pasta shapes to leave an imprint that looks like a fossil.

If you don’t have different pasta shapes, find different textured items that you could use instead. [Here is an example of a dinosaur fossil you could try and recreate.](#)

OR

EXPLORE

*Ingredients: paper, pens, internet access.*

**As you saw in Ellen’s video, some of her job involves coding. In this activity, you will have a go at coding just like Ellen. We will code a story using Scratch to help Ellen learn more about how whales evolved.**

1. Watch [this video from Science Insider](#), and take notes about how whales have evolved over 50 million years.
2. Head to [Scratch.mit.edu](https://scratch.mit.edu) and code a sprite to tell us about how whales have evolved. Use your school email to register, it’s free. Get as creative as you like with your storytelling.
  - If you haven’t used Scratch before, you might want to [watch this video from Cool Scratch Tutorials](#) to learn the basics of Scratch.
3. Present your stories back to the whole class. Don’t forget, you can enter your Scratch project into the About Us coding competition!



**Tip:** You might want to re-watch the video a few times to make sure your notes are correct.

