Dinosaurs — Earth's Prehistoric Giants

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Dinosaurs were among the most extraordinary **creature**s ever to walk the Earth. These **ancient** reptiles dominated the planet for more than 165 million years — a span so vast it is almost impossible to imagine. Although we think of them as monsters from a forgotten world, dinosaurs were actually a remarkably diverse group, ranging from ferocious hunters the size of a city bus to gentle plant-eaters no bigger than a domestic chicken.

The most important way we learn about dinosaurs is through **fossil**s — the preserved remains of ancient life locked inside layers of sedimentary rock. When a dinosaur died, its soft tissue decayed, but the hard **bone**s sometimes survived long enough to be buried and slowly mineralized over millions of years. **Scientist**s who specialize in studying fossils are called paleontologists, and their careful field work keeps revealing new species and rewriting our understanding of prehistoric life on Earth.

Not all dinosaurs were **predator**s. They are broadly divided into two groups: herbivores, which ate only plants, and carnivores, which hunted other animals for food. Some **predator**s, like Tyrannosaurus rex, were among the largest land **creature**s that ever existed, using enormous jaws and powerful legs to take down prey. Others, like Velociraptor, were small but deadly — fast, clever hunters that likely worked in coordinated packs.

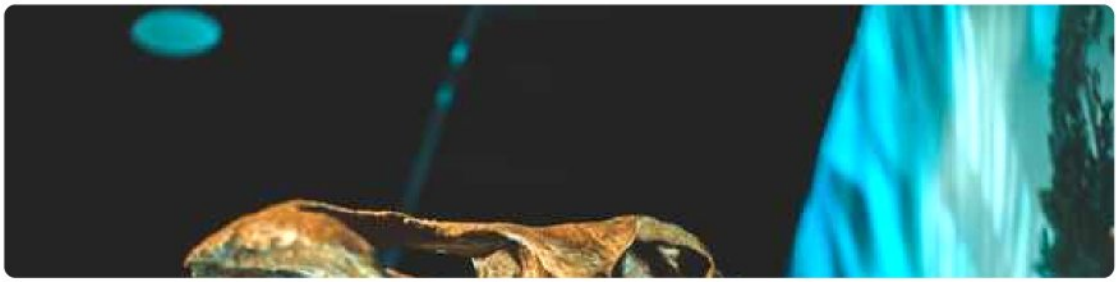
One of the most surprising things **scientist**s have recently **discover**ed is that many dinosaurs actually had feathers. Modern birds are living dinosaurs — direct descendants of small, feathered theropods that managed to **survive** the mass extinction event. This remarkable discovery means that the next time you see a hawk or a sparrow, you are looking at a true dinosaur. Not all of these magnificent **creature**s vanished — some evolved wings and now fill the skies above us.

About 66 million years ago, a massive asteroid hit Earth and caused a dramatic **climate** shift, blocking sunlight and collapsing food chains worldwide. Non-bird dinosaurs could not adapt and became **extinct** in a geological instant. Yet their story is far from finished. Every year, new **fossil**s are pulled from **ancient** rock, and **scientist**s continue to **discover** facts that rewrite what we thought we knew about these magnificent animals that once ruled our world.

A. Vocabulary

1. ancient ____ a. no longer existing anywhere on Earth; having died out completely as a specie

2. bone ____	b. to continue to live through a dangerous or very difficult situation
3. climate ____	c. a person who studies science through observation and careful experiment
4. discover ____	d. very old; belonging to a time long ago in the past
5. survive ____	e. the hard tissue that forms the internal skeleton of an animal's body
6. creature ____	f. the typical pattern of weather conditions in a region over a long period
7. scientist ____	g. to find or learn something for the first time
8. fossil ____	h. a living being, especially an animal
9. extinct ____	i. the preserved remains or traces of an ancient organism found inside rock
10. predator ____	j. an animal that hunts and kills other animals for food



B. True or False

1. Dinosaurs ruled the Earth for more than 165 million years. ____
2. All dinosaurs were large predatory hunters. ____
3. Fossils are preserved remains found inside layers of rock. ____
4. Scientists who study fossils are called paleontologists. ____
5. Modern birds are direct descendants of feathered dinosaurs. ____
6. Every dinosaur species became completely extinct 66 million years ago. ____
7. Tyrannosaurus rex was a plant-eating herbivore. ____
8. A dramatic climate shift followed the asteroid impact. ____
9. Scientists continue to discover new dinosaur species today. ____

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: extinct, fossil, predator, scientist, climate

1. Paleontologists are _____s who study the preserved remains of ancient life.

2. A _____ is the preserved remains of an ancient organism found locked inside rock.

3. Tyrannosaurus rex was one of the most powerful _____s that ever lived.

4. The asteroid impact caused a dramatic _____ shift that collapsed food chains worldwide.

5. Species that no longer exist anywhere on Earth are described as _____.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. How long did dinosaurs dominate the Earth, and why does this make them remarkable as a group?
2. How do fossils form, and why do bones survive when the rest of the dinosaur's body does not?
3. What is the difference between herbivorous and carnivorous dinosaurs? Give an example of each.
4. What evidence shows that birds are actually living dinosaurs?
5. What caused non-bird dinosaurs to become extinct, and why does their story still matter today?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Some scientists argue that birds should officially be classified as dinosaurs, not as a separate class of animals. Do you agree? What evidence supports this view?
2. If we could use DNA technology to bring back an extinct dinosaur species, should we? What are the strongest arguments for and against?
3. The asteroid that killed the dinosaurs was a random event from space. Does knowing that extinction can happen so suddenly change how you think about protecting endangered species today?

Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-d, 2-e, 3-f, 4-g, 5-b, 6-h, 7-c, 8-i, 9-a, 10-j

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-F, 8-T, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-scientist, 2-fossil, 3-predator, 4-climate, 5-extinct

D. Comprehension:

1. Dinosaurs dominated the Earth for over 165 million years, making them one of the most successful groups of animals in the planet's history — surviving far longer than humans have existed.
2. When a dinosaur died, soft tissue decayed, but hard bones were sometimes buried before they broke down. Over millions of years, minerals replaced the bone material, turning it into a fossil preserved inside rock.
3. Herbivorous dinosaurs ate only plants; examples include Brachiosaurus and Triceratops. Carnivorous dinosaurs hunted other animals for food; examples include Tyrannosaurus rex and Velociraptor.
4. Scientists have discovered that many dinosaurs had feathers. Modern birds are the direct descendants of small feathered theropod dinosaurs that survived the mass extinction, meaning birds are technically a living group of dinosaurs.
5. A massive asteroid struck Earth 66 million years ago, triggering a climate shift that blocked sunlight and destroyed food chains. Non-bird dinosaurs could not adapt and died out. Their story still matters because their fossils reveal how life evolves, thrives, and can suddenly disappear — lessons relevant to biodiversity and conservation today.