

Dinosaurs

Reading comprehension

Y6

DIFFICULTY : MEDIUM

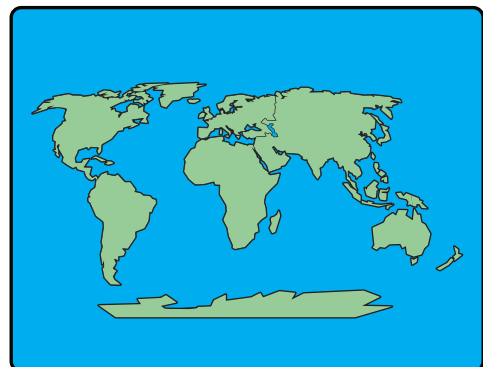
Dinosaurs roamed planet Earth for over 150 million years, then they died out extremely quickly. The name dinosaur means terrible lizard and some species were fierce predators, while others were peaceful, plant-eating animals. During the age of the dinosaurs, Earth looked very different to what it does now, and this had a big impact on the size and type of dinosaur that existed.

The Age of Dinosaurs

The age of the dinosaurs is known as the Mesozoic era, stretching from 248 to 65 million years ago. This era is divided further into three different time spans: The Triassic, the Jurassic and the Cretaceous. At the start of the Mesozoic era, the Earth looked very different. The continents were joined together to form one large continent called Pangaea. A large ocean – Panthalassa, surrounded this giant continent.



Pangaea



Now

Flora and Fauna

During the Triassic era, Pangaea covered one third of the Earth's surface and the middle of the continent was one large desert that was extremely hot in summer and freezing during the winter, so only the toughest dinosaurs and plant species could survive this harsh environment.

Over millions of years, as Pangaea began to break up into two continents, more lush, tropical vegetation began to grow. In turn, taller, stronger dinosaurs developed to take advantage of the new growths. During the Jurassic period plant life thrived, along with insects such as flies, wasps and earwigs.

Triassic

The Triassic period lasted for approximately 48 million years. The earliest dinosaurs in this period were very small, and often walked on two legs. An early omnivore (eats plants and animals) was the Eoraptor. It was light, very quick and lived on an area of land now known as Argentina. One of the earliest flying dinosaurs was the Eudimorphodon. It had a wingspan of approximately 1 meter that resembled the wings of a bat and as a piscivore, it had a jaw packed full of teeth for crushing fish.



Jurassic

As the planet became warmer and Pangaea slowly began to separate, dinosaurs and their supportive vegetation flourished and as a result, dinosaurs known as sauropods grew extremely large. The Jurassic period lasted for approximately 65 million years and many well-known dinosaurs such as the Diplodocus and the Stegosaurus existed during this time.

The Brachiosaurus was thought to be the world's largest dinosaur before the discovery of Dreadnoughtus which some scientists say is the largest dinosaur. The Brachiosaurus walked on four legs, had a long neck, a small head and ate fruit and leaves. Fossils of the Brachiosaurus have been found in America and Africa and there is a full-size replica in O'Hare Airport in Chicago.

Cretaceous

During the Cretaceous period, gigantic meat eating dinosaurs ruled the land. Most other creatures lived in fear of these fearsome carnivores. One of the most formidable dinosaurs was the Tyrannosaurus Rex, which had 60 razor sharp teeth. However the largest flesh-eating dinosaur was the Giganotosaurus, which had three fingers on each hand compared to two on the Tyrannosaurus.

One of the most well-known dinosaurs, the Triceratops had three horns made of bone protruding from its head. It had a large neck frill, which some experts think was to keep them cool, while others think it was to ward off enemies by making them look bigger. Triceratops was a herbivore, eating only plants and shrubs.

Death of the Dinosaurs

There are many different theories as to how and why dinosaurs died out so suddenly 65 million years ago. One theory is that a huge asteroid that hit the Earth around the Gulf of Mexico changed the environment so dramatically, that dinosaurs couldn't survive in the altered world. It is believed that the rock and dust from the impact would have blocked out a lot of the sun and most animals and plants wouldn't be able to survive. Another popular theory is that many of the world's volcanoes erupted in a short space of time causing poisonous fumes to fill the air. There is evidence to suggest both theories are correct, however neither theory explains fully the destruction of the dinosaurs. Some scientists believe a combination of the two theories could be more accurate. One thing for certain is that the dinosaurs became extinct in a relatively quick space of time compared to their long existence.



1) What does the word Dinosaur mean?

2) What was the large ocean that surrounded Pangaea called?

3) When did dinosaurs become extinct?

4) Why is an image of Earth 65 million years ago and now included in the text?

5) What does 'The age of the dinosaurs' refer to?

6) Which dinosaur is thought to be the largest?

7) Look at the Triassic section. Read the sentence beginning, 'It had a wingspan'. Which word tells you that the Eudimorphodon's wingspan looked like a bats?

8) Why would a large frill intimidate predators of a Triceratops?

9) Tick one box for each statement to indicate whether you think it is true or false.

	True	False
The Earth was one large land mass called Pangaea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Triceratops was a carnivore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All scientists agree a large meteor killed the dinosaurs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) Look in the section titled Flora and fauna. What made dinosaurs taller and stronger?

11) Draw a line connecting the dinosaur to the diet.

Herbivore

Eoraptor

Carnivore

Eudimorphodon

Pescivore

Triceratops

Omnivore

Tyrannosaurus Rex

12) In the section named 'Cretaceous'. Write down an example of a simile.

13) In the Jurassic section, what does the word 'flourished' suggest about the vegetation?

14) Dinosaurs in the cretaceous period were terrifying. Find and copy two words that support this statement.

1) What does the word Dinosaur mean?

Terrible lizard

2) What was the large ocean that surrounded Pangaea called?

Panthalassa

3) When did dinosaurs become extinct?

65 million years ago

4) Why is an image of Earth 65 million years ago and now included in the text?

So we can understand how the Earth was different and compare the images.

5) What does 'The age of the dinosaurs' refer to?

The time when dinosaurs lived on Earth.

6) Which dinosaur is thought to be the largest?

Dreadnoughtus

7) Look at the Triassic section. Read the sentence beginning, 'It had a wingspan'. Which word tells you that the Eudimorphodon's wingspan looked like a bats?

Resembled

8) Why would a large frill intimidate predators of a Triceratops?

It would make them appear larger.

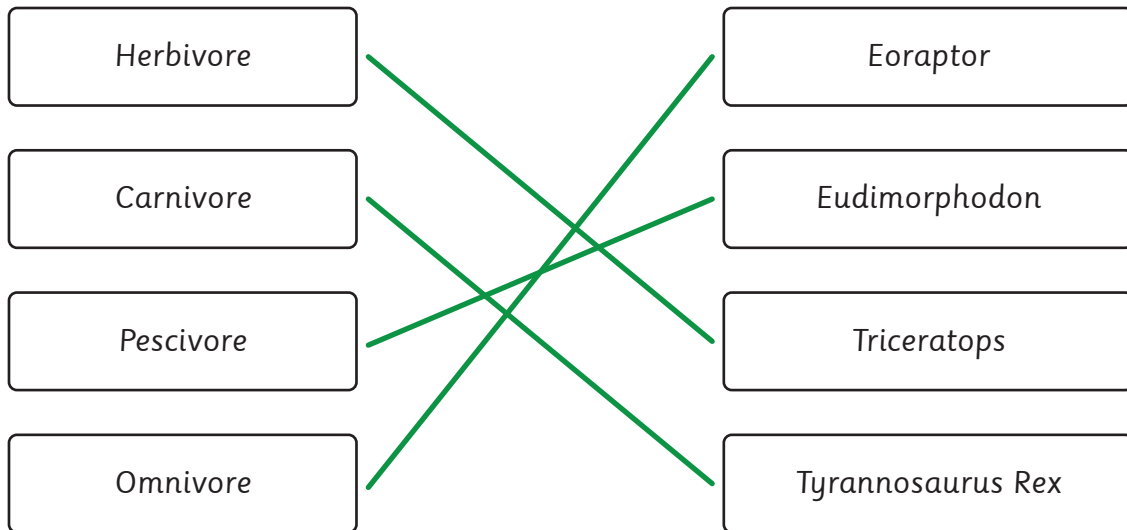
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10) Look in the section titled Flora and fauna. What made dinosaurs taller and stronger?

There was more nutritious food available.

11) Draw a line connecting the dinosaur to the diet.



12) In the section named 'Cretaceous'. Write down an example of a simile.

Razor-sharp teeth

13) In the Jurassic section, what does the word 'flourished' suggest about the vegetation?

The plants grew quickly in a healthy way.

14) Dinosaurs in the cretaceous period were terrifying. Find and copy two words that support this statement.

1) Fearsome 2) Formidable.