



Science. 3rd Grade. Exploring the World of Dinosaurs and Ancient Animals

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Dinosaurs are a very popular character often seen in big hit movies and cartoon animations for kids. They also come in a full spectrum of playthings from fluffy stuffed toys to battery operated robots that walk and growl.

Fun Facts About Dinosaurs

What are dinosaurs anyway?

First off, dinosaurs are reptiles. They are a large and diverse group of scaled / bony plated vertebrates that have roamed the Earth some time about 245 million to 65 million years ago. The word dinosaur is a combination of the Greek words deinos which means terrible and sauros which means lizard. The term was coined in 1841 by Sir Richard Owen, an English biologist and paleontologist who is known for his outstanding contributions in the study of fossil animals.

Dubbed as terrible lizards, one might easily think that the closest relatives of dinosaurs are lizards. Although all reptiles and lizards are considered close relatives of dinosaurs, the closest is the Tuatara Lizard. The Tuatara is the only living member of the order Rhynchocephilia which is a group of reptiles that thrived alongside dinosaurs. However, it is important to let your child know that Tuatara is neither a lizard nor an iguana. It is a distinct reptile that is endemic to New Zealand. Compared to lizards that thrive in a warm climate, the Tuataras prefer a much cooler weather and don't have external ears.



DINOSAUR FACTS



Read these dinosaur facts and answer the questions below. Check the correct answer.

The word 'dinosaur' means 'terrible lizard'.

Dinosaurs were reptiles. They lived from 250 million years ago until 65 million years ago.

A huge asteroid or massive volcanic eruption may have caused the extinction of dinosaurs.

There were many different types of dinosaurs.

Some dinosaurs were carnivores, some were herbivores. Some dinosaurs had armor, horns or spikes on their tale.



What does the word dinosaur mean?

☐

terrible
lizard

☐

large
lizard

☐

beautiful
lizard

How long ago did dinosaurs become extinct?

☐

250 million
years ago

☐

160 million
years ago

☐

65 million
years ago

What group of animals did dinosaurs belong in?

☐

mammals

☐

reptiles

☐

amphibians

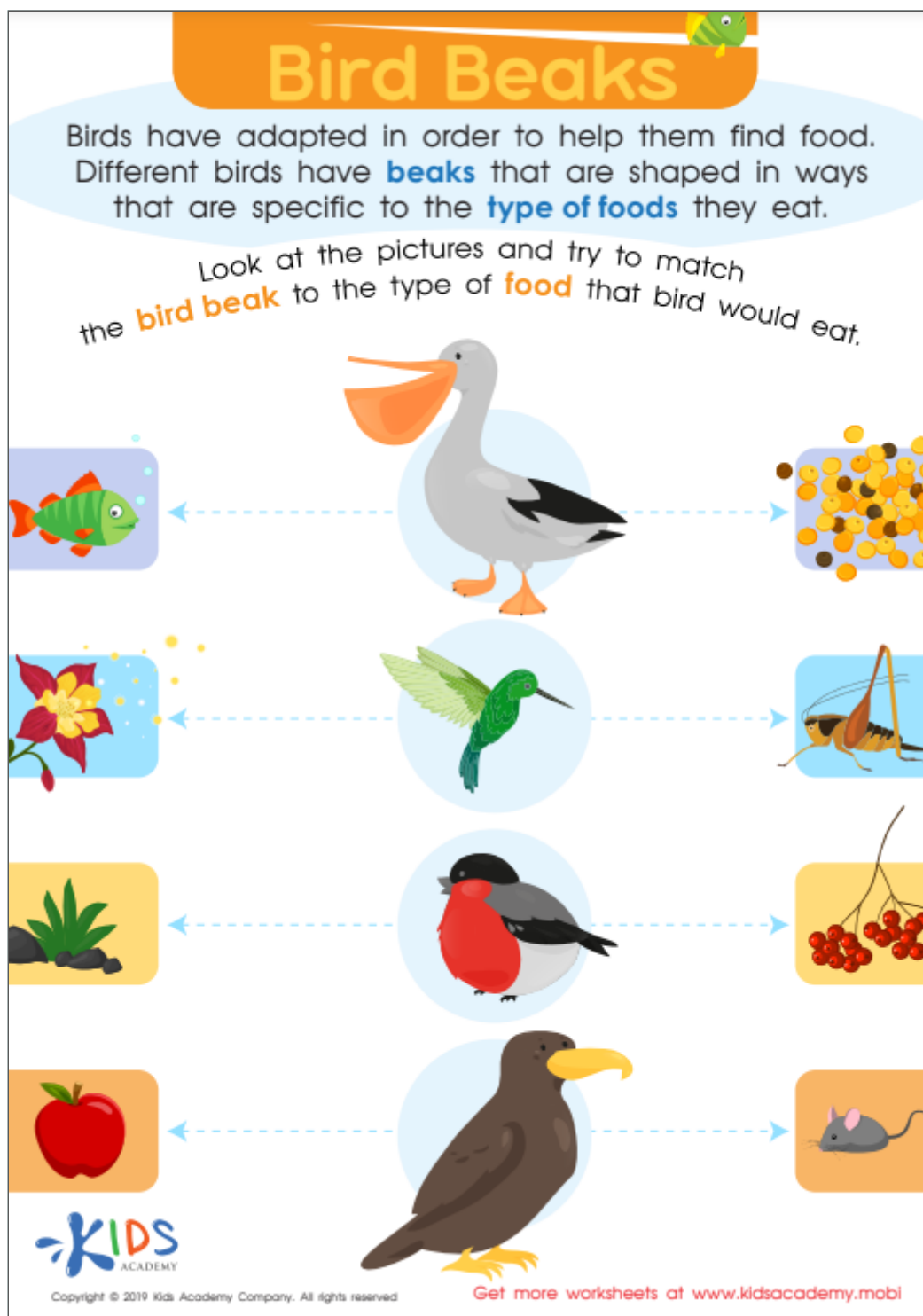
Another reptile that's closely related to dinosaurs are the crocodiles. These carnivorous semi-aquatic reptiles first appeared around 240 million years ago and came from one of the two groups of species that evolved from archosaurs - an ancestor of dinosaurs which existed around 250 million years ago.

With the help of the [Kids Academy Dinosaur Facts](#) worksheet, retaining and supporting knowledge acquisition on key facts that revolve around the ancient life of these prehistoric giants will be much more fun and engaging. This interactive workbook is designed to effectively catch the interest of children and keep them motivated in learning new information about the colossal reptiles.

How Dinosaurs Became Birds

Unlike the Tuataras and the crocodiles, the birds are thought to be the direct descendants of dinosaurs. According to experts and fossil evidence, birds are a member of a group of dinosaurs known as Theropods. These bipedal dinosaurs characteristically have hollow bones and three-toed limbs. Popular theropods are the Tyrannosaurus Rex or simply T.Rex and the velociraptor. Specifically, modern birds are maniraptoran theropods and its evolution is linked through the fossil evidence of archaeopteryx - a dinosaur with feathered wings.

Being the only living dinosaurs of today, birds have had their fair share of physical transformations as part of an evolutionary process. This [Bird Beaks](#) worksheet will help your child secure a better grasp on the various shapes of beaks and how they are used in finding different forms of food. Through traceable lines, children can match each unique beak to the appropriate type of food that the bird eats.



More Ancient Animals

Apart from dinosaurs, there are lots of other creatures that can also be considered as ancient animals. These are critters that thrived for millions of years alongside dinosaurs or long after the great giants died - some continue to live alongside humans even to this day while others are already considered to be extinct. There are millions of different animal species and a large chunk of these have gone extinct. Extinction is an occurrence wherein a particular species dies out. There are various factors that cause extinction and these include climate change, loss of habitat, exploitation such hunting, and the presence of invasive species.

Extinct Ancient Animals





Next to dinosaurs, the mammoth is probably one of the most popular ancient animals that have gone extinct. Currently there are about 10 recognized species of these colossal animals and these include the African Mammoth, American Mastodon, Steppe Mammoth, and the Woolly Mammoth. The mammoth can grow to as high as 14 feet at the shoulder and can weigh up to six tons. Mammoths first appeared five million years ago and went extinct around 10,000 years ago due to climate change and hunting by early humans.

Another popular extinct ancient animal is the ferocious smilodon or more popularly known as the saber-toothed tiger. Compared to modern day big cats, smilodon has a more muscular build with longer front legs and a pair of at least 8-inch long elongated upper canine teeth hence the name saber-tooth. These mega hunters first appeared two million years ago and died out at the end of the last ice age along with the mammoths due to extreme environmental changes and significant decline of its prey which include Woolly Mammoths and Giant Sloths.

Like the mammoths and the saber-toothed tigers, giant ground sloths also died out at the end of the last Ice Age. These literally gentle giants first thrived around 35 million years ago and grew to as much as 12 feet tall and weighed about four tons. These cool [Kids Academy worksheets](#) on [Ancient Animals](#) and [Animal Extinction](#) will be a fun way for children to have a better understanding and appreciation on the concept of extinction, about the animals that have lived in the ancient world, and their significant connection to some modern day animals.

ANCIENT ANIMALS



Mammoths, ground sloths and saber-toothed tigers lived during ancient times. They no longer exist, but were very similar to animals still living today.

Look at the ancient animal and check the animal that is similar.



ANIMAL EXTINCTION



Extinction is when animals that once lived no longer exist. Ancient animals such as mammoths are extinct. **Conservation** helps to protect animals from extinction. People can conserve animals by keeping their habitats clean and safe. Read each question and check the correct answer.

1. What is it called when animals that once lived no longer exist?

☐

conservation

☐

hibernation

☐

extinction

2. Which of these animals is extinct?

☐

mammoth

☐

monkey

☐

mouse



3. Conservation _____ animals.

☐

captures

☐

protects

☐

endangers

4. People can conserve animals by _____.

☐

going to the zoo

☐

keeping them as pets

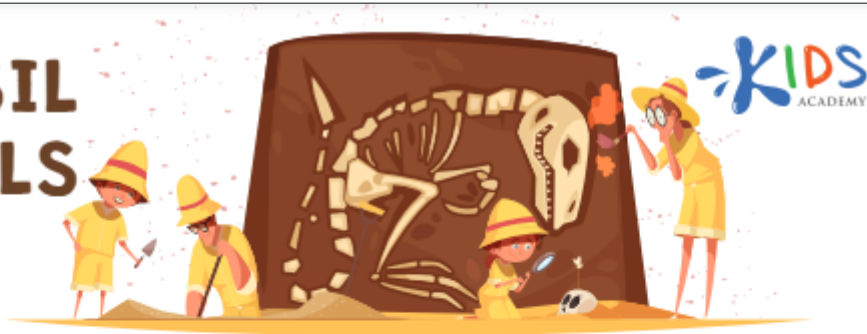
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keeping their habitats safe

Paleontology for Kids

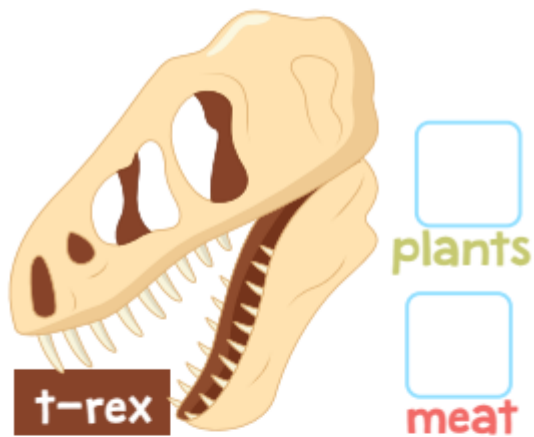
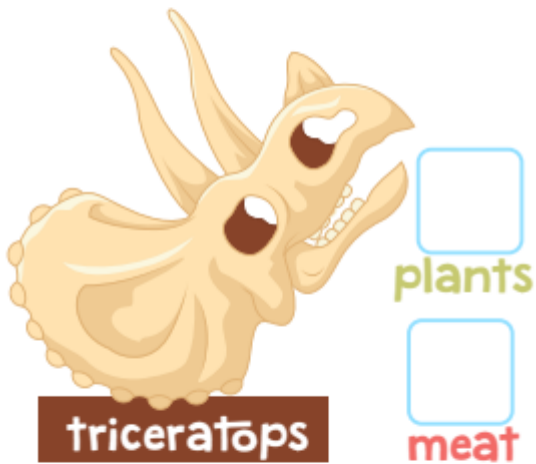
Paleontology is a branch of Science that studies ancient life which include not only dinosaurs and the giants of the last Ice Age but also prehistoric plants, insects, and microbes. These [cool lessons](#) and worksheets on [Studying Fossils and Fossil Skulls](#) are an exciting way for your child to explore mind blowing ancient secrets.

FOSSIL SKULLS



Scientists use **fossils** in order to learn about creatures that lived long ago.

Look at the dinosaur fossils and check off whether those dinosaurs were **meat** or **plant eaters** based on their **teeth**.



Studying FOSSILS

Scientists can learn a lot about the past by studying fossils. **Fossils** are the preserved remains of plants and animals. For preserved remains to be considered fossils, they have to be over **10,000** years old. Scientists called **paleontologists**, study fossils in order to try to learn about plants and animals that lived on the earth thousands of years ago. By studying **dinosaur fossils**, a scientist can make claims about how it looked, what it ate, and how it moved.



After reading the passage check off if the statement is true or false.

1. In order for remains to be considered a fossil, they must be 1,000 years old.

☐

True

☐

False

2. By studying fossils, scientists can make claims about what a dinosaur ate.

☐

True

☐

False

3. Scientists who study fossils are called paleontologists.

☐

True

☐

False

Through the help of this guide, children will be able to enjoy exploring the world of science, especially in appreciating the history of ancient animals. The aforementioned [Kids Academy](http://www.kidsacademy.mobi) worksheets are specially designed to enforce learning and make it more fun and engaging.