

Fossils and Dinosaurs

The Age of Dinosaurs

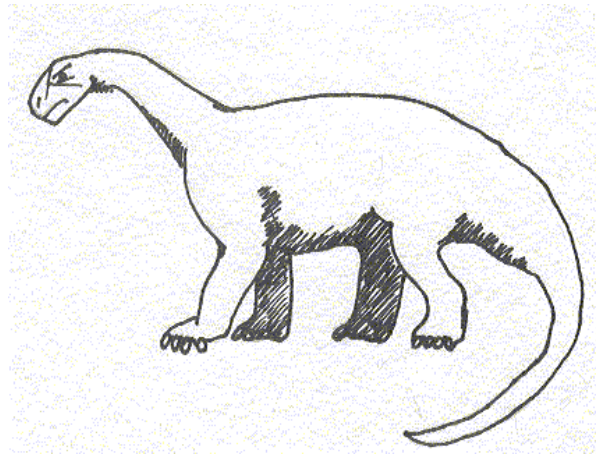


Illustration by Lynn M. Hanousek

Today, human beings control the earth. Millions of years ago, before humans existed, dinosaurs ruled the earth. Their fossils have been found all over the world. They ruled the earth for 160 million years. That is much longer than people have been here.

Dinosaurs became extinct long before humans existed. Humans and dinosaurs never lived at the same time. Dinosaurs ruled the earth until an unknown **catastrophic**¹ event made them extinct.

Many scientists believe that a very long time ago, all of the continents were one. As time went by, the continents drifted apart. This explains why dinosaur fossils can be found all over the world. The weather was warmer and more stable than it is today. The temperature would barely rise or fall throughout the year. Therefore, there were no seasons.

Dinosaurs were not alone on the planet. Small mammals and birds existed. There were many reptiles, such as crocodiles and lizards, roaming about. Some fish, sharks and shellfish were living as well. The earth had many plants. There was plenty of food to go around and the earth's creatures maintained a balanced food chain.

No one is sure why the dinosaurs became extinct. There are many theories, but none have been proven.

¹ **catastrophic**: a sudden disaster

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, it is likely that dinosaur fossils are found everywhere because

- a. they lived in many different places
- b. they moved around often
- c. people moved the fossils around
- d. the continents drifted apart

2. Paragraph 3 begins, “Many scientists believed...” What does paragraph 3 mostly describe?

- a. How the earth’s continents and weather were different during the time of dinosaurs
- b. How dinosaurs became extinct
- c. Animals that lived at the same time as dinosaurs
- d. How dinosaurs changed the earth

3. Which conclusion is supported by information in the passage?

- a. There was plenty of food to go around during the age of dinosaurs.
- b. There was a lack of plant and animal diversity during the time of dinosaurs.
- c. Dinosaurs only lived in one section of the earth.
- d. Dinosaurs became extinct when humans came into existence.

4. Read the following sentences: “The weather was warmer and more stable than it is today. The temperature would barely rise or fall throughout the year. Therefore, there were no seasons.”

As used in the sentence, the word **stable** means

- a. uncomfortable
- b. not likely to change
- c. very extreme
- d. threatening

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- a. How life would be different if dinosaurs were still alive
- b. The places where scientists have found fossils
- c. What dinosaurs ate
- d. The age of dinosaurs before their extinction

6. How was the Earth's weather different when dinosaurs were alive?

7. The author writes that many scientists believe that a very long time ago, all of the continents "were one." Explain what that means using evidence in the text.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Dinosaur fossils have been found all over the earth by humans _____ the continents drifted apart after dinosaurs went extinct.

- a. even though
- b. however
- c. because
- d. yet

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Dinosaurs became extinct millions of years ago because of an unknown catastrophic event.

What? dinosaurs

Did what? _____

When? _____

Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** drift (*verb*): to be carried somewhere by the movement of water or wind.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 640

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage describes the time period when dinosaurs were still living on earth. The passage also describes the extinction of dinosaurs after an unknown catastrophic event.

1. According to the passage, it is likely that dinosaur fossils are found everywhere because
 - a. they lived in many different places
 - b. they moved around often
 - c. people moved the fossils around
 - d. **the continents drifted apart**
2. Paragraph 3 begins, “Many scientists believed...” What does paragraph 3 mostly describe?
 - a. **How the earth’s continents and weather were different during the time of dinosaurs**
 - b. How dinosaurs became extinct
 - c. Animals that lived at the same time as dinosaurs
 - d. How dinosaurs changed the earth
3. Which conclusion is supported by information in the passage?
 - a. **There was plenty of food to go around during the age of dinosaurs.**
 - b. There was a lack of plant and animal diversity during the time of dinosaurs.
 - c. Dinosaurs only lived in one section of the earth.
 - d. Dinosaurs became extinct when humans came into existence.
4. Read the following sentences: “The weather was warmer and more stable than it is today. The temperature would barely rise or fall throughout the year. Therefore, there were no seasons.”

As used in the sentence, the word **stable** means

- a. uncomfortable
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5. What is this passage mostly about?

- a. How life would be different if dinosaurs were still alive
- b. The places where scientists have found fossils
- c. What dinosaurs ate
- d. **The age of dinosaurs before their extinction**

6. How was the Earth's weather different when dinosaurs were alive?

Suggested answer: It was warmer and more stable than it is today as the temperature would barely rise or fall throughout the year. There were no seasons.

7. The author writes that many scientists believe that a very long time ago, all of the continents "were one." Explain what that means using evidence in the text.

Suggested answer: This means that all of the continents were joined together as one land mass. Then the author explains that the continents drifted apart, or became separated from one another, which explains why dinosaur fossils can be found all over the world.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Dinosaur fossils have been found all over the earth by humans _____ the continents drifted apart after dinosaurs went extinct.

- a. even though
- b. however
- c. **because**
- d. yet

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Dinosaurs became extinct millions of years ago because of an unknown catastrophic event.

What? dinosaurs

Did what? **became extinct**

When? **millions of years ago**

Why? **because of an unknown catastrophic event**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** drift (*verb*): to be carried somewhere by the movement of water or wind.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.