

# Palaeontology

Read through this information about palaeontology and then answer the questions on page 2.

## Fossil Hunting Then and Now

Palaeontology has come a long way since Mary Anning's time.

We now know that there were animals who lived millions of years ago, the most fascinating of which are the dinosaurs!

We understand more about dinosaurs, how they might have looked, what they ate and how they lived.

It is thought that the dinosaurs became extinct due to a falling asteroid. The impact of the asteroid was so huge that it changed the climate (weather) around the world.

The climate became colder and the dinosaurs were unable to survive.

Finding fossils was, and still is, a dangerous activity. Falling rocks, slippery and sometimes unstable surfaces mean that it is necessary to take precautions when finding fossils.

Mary Anning narrowly missed being killed by a landslide (where lots of rocks fall at once from the cliff). Unfortunately her dog Trey was buried underneath the rocks and died as a result.

Modern palaeontologists don't often go out searching for fossils like Mary Anning did. They search existing sites where fossils have been found. They take safety precautions, like wearing a hard hat and checking the times of tides, so they don't become isolated in remote locations.

New fossils sites are usually found by accident by people who are not palaeontologists at all!

## Did You Know?

Not all dinosaurs are dead! All the birds (including chickens) that are alive today are related to those dinosaurs! Even the dinosaurs that did not fly, like the T-Rex, have similarities with modern birds, including hollow bones!



# Palaeontology

1. What are palaeontologists?

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2. What kind of animals lived millions of year ago?

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3. What does the word 'extinct' mean?

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4. Why can fossil hunting be a dangerous activity?

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5. What do modern palaeontologists do to keep safe?

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6. Why has a 'Did You Know?' box been included?

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