

Extinct!

Dinosaurs fell victim to mass extinction

What possible causes were there?



Student Introduction

- ▶ Many factors could cause the extinction of a species
- ▶ There may be 'abiotic' or 'biotic' factors involved
- ▶ Can you figure out what the likely cause of the dinosaurs' extinction was?

A huge range of factors can cause a species to become extinct

Abiotic factors such as climate change, volcanic activity and fire can destroy a species, as can **biotic** factors such as disease and predation

As you look around the museum, what evidence can you find that provides possible reasons for dinosaur extinction?

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A mass extinction is an event when huge number of species go extinct in a relatively short period of evolutionary time.

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- ✓ Pollution
- ✓ Hunting
- ✓ Introduction of new species
- ✓ Habitat loss

The disappearance of the dinosaurs is regarded as a **mass extinction**.

Questions to consider (make notes in your books or below):

1. How long were the dinosaurs present on earth?

Look around the museum and find out when early dinosaur fossils suggest they first appeared on Earth and when they went extinct. Work out how long they were present on Earth.

2. What are the implications of mass extinctions? What do scientists think happened to the surviving species? Explain why these species were then able to evolve.

3. What is a niche?

A niche is the role that an organism has within an ecosystem. It refers to all areas of an organism's place within a particular ecosystem, such as what it feeds on and what feeds on it. Use this information to explain why other animals may not have evolved whilst dinosaurs dominated the Earth.

Quiz

1. What term is used to describe a species that no longer exists?

- A - endangered
- B - evolved
- C - extinct
- D - adapted

2. What percentage of species are believed to have gone extinct since life emerged on Earth?

- A - 50%
- B - 75%
- C - 90%
- D - 99%

3. Which of these would not cause a

- A - climate change
- B - new predators
- C - new competitors
- D - new disease

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4. What is the name given to scientists who study fossils?

- A - geologists
- B - mineralogists
- C - pianists
- D - palaeontologists

5. Which of these best describes a fossil?

- A - bones
- B - dead animals
- C - mineralised remains of organisms
- D - rotting organisms

Considering extinction today

What do you think are the biggest risks to plant and animal species on Earth today?

Which animal/plant species do you consider to be most 'at risk'? Explain why.



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