



Velociraptors May Have Hunted Alone

Why did the dinosaurs die out?

- One theory is that a mountain-sized meteor struck the Earth roughly 66 million years ago.
- It would have thrown a deadly amount of gas and vaporized rock into the atmosphere, which made it hard for plants and animals to survive.

If you're interested in dinosaurs, then, you probably have a favourite. Maybe you think the **Tyrannosaurus rex** was the king of dinosaurs? Or maybe a humble herbivore, like the **triceratops**, is your frontrunner?

However, if your carnivore of choice happens to be a velociraptor, then you might not know it as well as you thought.

Recent findings suggest that these famous carnivores were a different size to the ones made famous in modern TV shows, books and films, like *Jurassic Park*. They were also feathered and did not hunt in packs!

Despite **paleontologists** studying them for decades, we are still learning lots of new things about dinosaurs.

This is done by carefully studying dinosaur remains, such as their bones, footprints and their poop! These fossils are then compared to modern animals, which allows scientists to puzzle out what these reptiles might have been like.

When trying to **infer** more about velociraptors, the scientists looked at the teeth of a raptor that lived about 115 to 108 million years ago.

Joseph Frederickson, who worked on the study, said, "If we can look at the diet of young raptors versus old raptors, we can come up with a **hypothesis** for whether they hunted in groups".

Their findings showed differences in the smaller and bigger teeth. This suggests that the

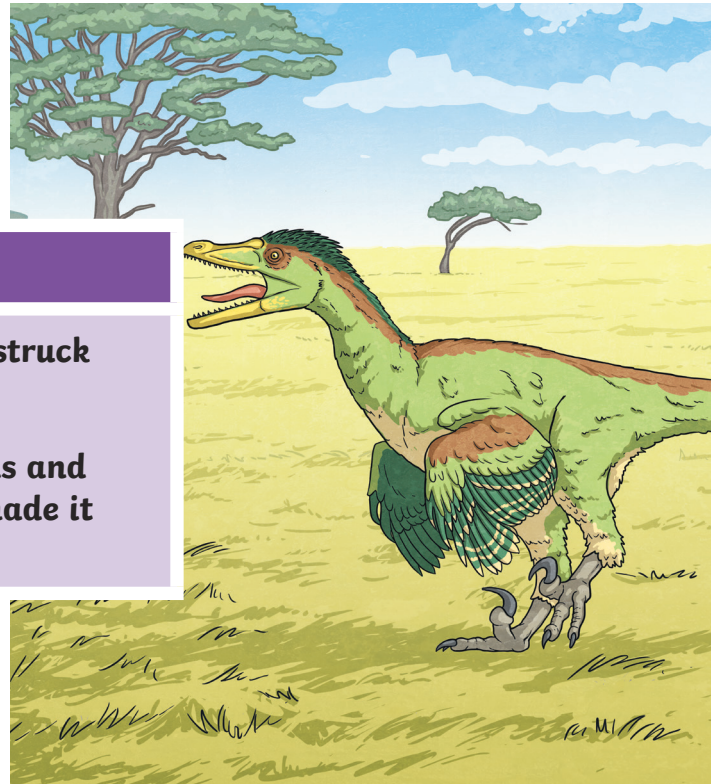


Illustration: Velicraptor.

raptors had a different **diet** as they grew.

Animals that hunt in packs do not typically show such a variety in their diets as they grow which suggests velociraptor "young were not being fed by the adults".

Therefore, they argue that this would have made velociraptors more like modern-day Komodo dragons - hunting alone - and less like

Glossary

paleontologists

Scientists who study fossils to find out about prehistoric creatures.

infer

Use the available evidence to come to a conclusion.

hypothesis

An idea which could be the answer but hasn't been proved yet.

diet

The kinds of foods that a person or animal eats.

Questions

1. Which modern-day animal were velociraptors compared to in the article.

2. 'This is done by carefully studying dinosaur **remains**, such as their bones, footprints and their poop!'

Tick which definition is closest in meaning to the word '**remains**' in this sentence.

- ☐ Stay
- ☐ Refuse to leave
- ☐ Carry on
- ☐ The parts left over after other parts have been lost

3. Which part of the dinosaur helped scientists know what they ate?

4. Find two examples from the article of how our current understanding of velociraptors has changed from the images of them in movies?

1.

2.

5. 'Or maybe a humble herbivore, like the triceratops, is your frontrunner?'

Tick which language feature is being used in this sentence.

- ☐ personification
- ☐ rhyme
- ☐ simile
- ☐ alliteration

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 15 words or fewer.

Answers

1. Which modern-day animal were velociraptors compared to in the article.

Komodo dragons

2. 'This is done by carefully studying dinosaur **remains**, such as their bones, footprints and their poop!'

Tick which definition is closest in meaning to the word '**remains**' in this sentence.

☐ Stay

☐ Refuse to leave

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☒ **The parts left over after other parts have been lost**

3. Which part of the dinosaur helped scientists know what they ate?

The teeth

4. Find two examples from the article of how our current understanding of velociraptors has changed from the images of them in movies?

Accept any two of the following: They are a different size than we used to think; we now think they had feathers; we now think they hunted alone and not in packs; we now think their diet changed during their lives; we now think that the adults did not help feed their young.

5. 'Or maybe a humble herbivore, like the triceratops, is your frontrunner?'

Tick which language feature is being used in this sentence.

☐ personification

☐ rhyme

☐ simile

☒ **alliteration**

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 15 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer which includes the key information, e.g. Some scientists now think that velociraptors did not hunt in packs but hunted alone.