



Solitary Raptor



Why did the dinosaurs die out?

- One theory is that a meteor struck the Earth roughly 66 million years ago.
- It would have changed the atmosphere which made it hard for plants and animals to survive.

Illustration: Velciraaptor

Scientists Rethink Velociraptors

Recent findings suggest that the way velociraptors have been represented in modern TV shows, books and films, like *Jurassic Park*, might not be **accurate**.

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

It is now believed that velociraptors had feathers rather than scales and they were smaller than they have been shown on screen. New evidence also suggests that they did not hunt in packs!

When trying to learn more about a velociraptor's **diet**, palaeontologists 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".

He explained that their findings showed differences in the smaller and bigger teeth. This suggests that the 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. This suggests that 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 pack animals which hunted together. Who would have thought? You can't trust everything you see in the movies.

Glossary

accurate	Correct in all details.
paleontologists	Scientists who study fossils to find out more about dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures.
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. 'Therefore, they **argue** that this would have made velociraptors more like modern-day Komodo dragons - hunting alone - and less like pack animals which hunted together.'
Tick which definition is closest in meaning to the word '**argue**' in this sentence.
 - ☐ fight
 - ☐ disagree
 - ☐ prattle
 - ☐ give their view
3. Which part of the fossil was used to help scientists learn more about what the velociraptors ate?

4. Find one example from the article of how our current understanding of velociraptors has changed from the images of them in movies.

5. Tick which language feature is being used in this sentence. '**Who would have thought?**'
 - ☐ rhetorical question
 - ☐ rhyme
 - ☐ simile
 - ☐ personification
6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 words or fewer.

Answers

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

Komodo dragons

2. 'Therefore, they **argue** that this would have made velociraptors more like modern-day Komodo dragons - hunting alone - and less like pack animals which hunted together.' Tick which definition is closest in meaning to the word '**argue**' in this sentence.

- ☐ fight
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ prattle
- ☒ **give their view**

3. Which part of the fossil was used to help scientists learn more about what the velociraptors ate?

The teeth

4. Find one example from the article of how our current understanding of velociraptors has changed from the images of them in movies.

Accept any of the following: They are smaller; they had feathers, not scales; 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. Tick which language feature is being used in this sentence. '**Who would have thought?**'

- ☒ **rhetorical question**
- ☐ rhyme
- ☐ simile
- ☐ personification

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 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 on their own.