

Did you know?

- Dinosaurs were the dominant vertebrates on Earth for about 130 million years during the Mesozoic Era. This era was divided into the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods.
- Small, fast-moving dinosaurs appeared for the first time in the Triassic period (248–208 million years ago).
- During the Jurassic period (208–146 million years ago), more dinosaurs – some of the biggest of all – roamed the Earth.
- Dinosaurs flourished in the Cretaceous period (146–65 million years ago). At the end of the Mesozoic era, the dinosaurs died out in a large-scale mass extinction.
- A scientist who studies dinosaurs and ancient life is known as a palaeontologist (pay-lee-on-tol-o-jist).
- The word ‘dinosaur’ comes from the Greek language and means ‘terrible lizard’. It was first used by an English palaeontologist, Richard Owen, in 1842, referring to the dinosaurs’ impressive size rather than their scary looks!
- Of the 700+ species of dinosaur identified and named so far, around 90% have been discovered since 1990.
- Dinosaurs lived on every continent of the world – even Antarctica.
- The longest dinosaur that has been discovered was the *Seismosaurus*, measuring over 40 metres from nose to tail tip. That’s as long as five buses!
- At 80 tonnes, *Brachiosaurus* was the heaviest dinosaur, weighing as much as 17 African elephants!
- The name ‘dinosaur’ only refers to land-dwelling reptiles. Flying animals such as pterodactyls and water-based reptiles such as plesiosaurs weren’t dinosaurs but were reptiles that lived in the age of the dinosaurs.
- Some of the largest dinosaurs (such as *Brachiosaurus* and *Apatosaurus*) were plant eaters.
- A *Tyrannosaurus rex* had over 60 conical teeth, each growing up to nearly 25 cm. This meant it could devour a massive 230 kg of meat in one bite.
- Many plant-eating dinosaurs had natural weapons. The *Stegosaurus* is famous for its tail spikes, and the *Triceratops* had three sharp horns on the front of its head shield.