

# Organisms of the Past

Fill in the blanks.  Reading Skill: Compare and Contrast - questions 8, 12

## How Are Skeletons Used to Compare Organisms?

1. Any evidence of an organism that lived in the past is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Fossils are often \_\_\_\_\_ preserved in rock.
3. Change in living things over time is called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The first ancestor of the horse was about the size of a small \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You can tell the \_\_\_\_\_ of a fossil by studying the rock layer in which the fossil is found.
6. The oldest fossils are found in the oldest rock layers, which are at the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Younger fossils are found in later, \_\_\_\_\_ rock layers.

## Can Organisms That Seem Different Be Related?

8. Scientists compare \_\_\_\_\_ to understand what is similar and what is different about organisms.
9. Whale flipper bones are much more like human \_\_\_\_\_ bones than they are like shark fins.
10. Whales and humans are both \_\_\_\_\_.

## What Are Some Other Clues?

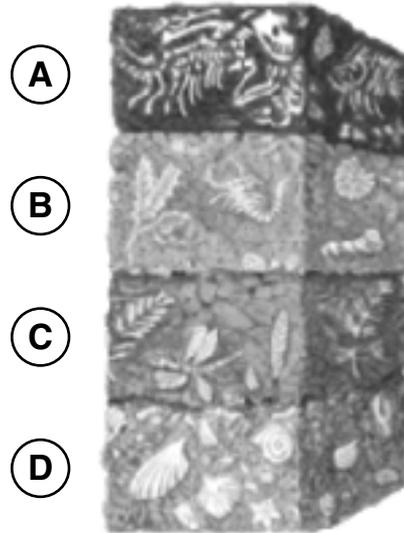
11. An undeveloped animal or plant is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
12. By comparing fossil embryos with each other and with modern embryos, scientists can classify \_\_\_\_\_ organisms.
13. The human tailbone is an example of a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ structure.

**Why Do Organisms Become Extinct?**

14. Fossils show that there have been many \_\_\_\_\_.
15. A mass extinction is when many different species die out at about the \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Some scientists believe dinosaurs became extinct when a giant \_\_\_\_\_ hit Earth.
17. The meteorite would have created great clouds of dust that blocked \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Some scientists believe dinosaurs could have spread deadly \_\_\_\_\_ as they moved about Earth.
19. People use pesticides and \_\_\_\_\_, destroy places where animals live, and use up resources.
20. The actions of people cause many species to become \_\_\_\_\_, or in danger of becoming extinct.

# What Does Other Fossil Evidence Tell You?

The diagram shows different rock layers. Different kinds of fossils are contained in each layer. Fossils found in layer A are the youngest. Fossils found in layer D are the oldest. Each layer is labeled with a letter.

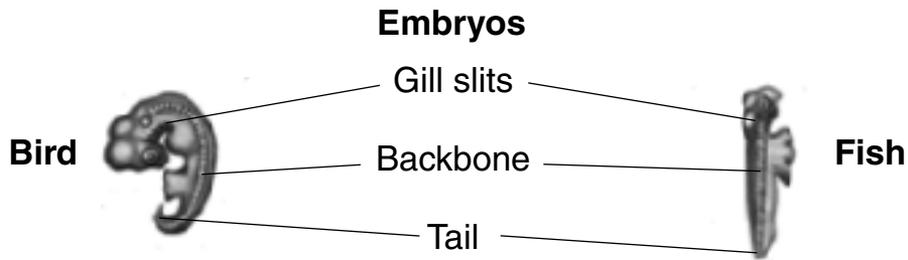


Answer these questions about the diagram above.

1. Fossils found in layer A are younger than fossils found in layer B. Which rock layer contains fossils older than layer C? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which layers contain fossils that are younger than the fossils found in layer C? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which layers contain fossils that are older than the fossils found in layer B? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which layers contain fossils that are older than the fossils found in layer A? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which layers contain fossils that are younger than the fossils found in layer D? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Suppose a new rock layer was added to the top of this column. How would the age of fossils in this layer compare with the fossils found in layers A to D?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# What Are Some Other Clues?

The drawing shows the embryo of a bird and the embryo of a fish. The lines point to similar traits.



What do you notice as you compare these two embryos?

Answer these questions about the diagram above.

1. What types of embryos are shown in the drawing?

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2. What traits do each of the embryos share?

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3. Which of these traits is lost after a bird is born?

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4. Why do you think scientists study embryos?

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# Organisms of the Past

Fill in the blanks.

1. Any evidence of an organism that lived in the past is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Change in living things over time is called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Many fossils are skeletons preserved in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Scientists can learn the \_\_\_\_\_ of a fossil by comparing it with other fossils.
5. The oldest fossils are in the oldest rock layers, which are at the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The youngest fossils are found in later, \_\_\_\_\_ rock layers.
7. Scientists compare limbs to see if organisms might be \_\_\_\_\_.
8. An undeveloped animal or plant is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
9. A time when many different species die out is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Some scientists believe the extinction of dinosaurs occurred after a giant meteorite hit Earth, causing great clouds of dust to block \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Knowing how organisms have changed over time helps scientists \_\_\_\_\_ living and extinct organisms.

## Vocabulary

age  
sunlight  
embryo  
fossil  
upper  
classify  
mass  
extinction  
evolution  
related  
rock  
bottom

# Organisms of the Past

## Vocabulary

dust

sunlight

mass

fossils

volcanoes

meteorite

alive

deadly

extinction

Fill in the blanks.

When organisms become extinct, they are no longer \_\_\_\_\_ on Earth. Millions of years ago, there was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ extinction of dinosaurs. Some scientists believe it occurred after a giant \_\_\_\_\_ hit Earth, causing great clouds of dust to block \_\_\_\_\_. Other scientists think \_\_\_\_\_ erupted. This would have created great \_\_\_\_\_ clouds that blocked sunlight. Some other scientists think dinosaurs could have spread \_\_\_\_\_ diseases. Perhaps a combination of these events caused the dinosaurs' \_\_\_\_\_. Even though dinosaurs are extinct, scientists continue to learn about them by studying \_\_\_\_\_.