

# ANCIENT CREATURES

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

TOPIC: Creatures of the Mesozoic Era

THEME: Mesozoic habitats and their inhabitants, focusing on adaptations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: From dinosaurs to flying reptiles to sea creatures, life was abundant during the Mesozoic Era. In this program, students discover the incredible diversity of prehistoric creatures that lived during this time, the habitats they occupied and how they adapted to their environment. Students explore these topics through a magnet diorama game, building a creature, and hands-on fossils.

AUDIENCE: Kindergarten – Grade 2

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Kindergarten	Environment and Community Awareness
Grade 1	Science: Needs of Animals and Plants
Grade 2	Science: Small Crawling and Flying Animals

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify which creatures are dinosaurs and those that are not dinosaurs by their characteristics.
2. Interpret body parts as adaptations to specific habitats.
3. Place creatures in the appropriate environment within Mesozoic habitats.

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## SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

### 1. PROGRAM TERMINOLOGY

The following are some terms that you may want to go over with your class before attending this program.

**Adaptation:** adjustment to environmental conditions (body parts that lets an animal live in a certain place).

**Ancient:** existence of many years; referring to a remote period; to a time in early history (really old).

**Bird:** warm-blooded animal with feathers and wings; may or may not fly.

**Environment:** what is around a plant or animal; where it lives.

**Extinct:** group of plants or animals that is no longer living; died out.

**Fish:** animal lives in water; breathes with gills.

**Fossil:** preserved remains or traces of ancient life.

**Habitat:** the part of the physical environment in which an animal or plant lives (its home).

**Insect:** small, segmented animals with three body parts and six legs.

**Mammal:** warm-blooded animal that feeds its offspring milk.

**Mesozoic:** era of geological time between the Palaeozoic and Cenozoic eras; made up of three periods — Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous (Age of Reptiles, Age of Dinosaurs).

**Palaeontologist:** one who studies ancient life through fossils

**Palaeontology:** the study of ancient life, based on the fossil record.

**Reptile:** animal with scales; breathes with lungs; cold-blooded.

**Time scale:** showing the events of the Earth's history (like a calendar of Earth's life).

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## **SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

### 2. NOT JUST DINOSAURS

Let's see what the students know about the creatures that lived in the past with the dinosaurs. Brainstorm as many creatures as you can. Lead the children into thinking about groups of animals like fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, birds, insects, etc. The Ancient Creatures program will link this information to what lived with the dinosaurs.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/mesozoic/>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/dinoclassification/Notdinos.html>

### 3. MESOZOIC TIMELINE

Provide the students with a roll of paper and assist them with a scale where a unit of length is equal to an increment of millions of years. The Mesozoic Era covered the time from about 252 – 66 million years ago. Have them measure the correct length of paper, noting the three periods: Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous. On the timeline, have the students add images of animals and major events in time. Make sure that the age in millions of years is noted on the timeline.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/mesozoic/>

#### *Links to Other Websites*

*Links to websites are provided solely for your convenience. The Royal Tyrrell Museum does not endorse, authorize, approve, certify, maintain, or control these external Internet addresses and does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, efficacy or timeliness of the sites listed.*

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## **POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

### 1. MESOZOIC MURAL

At the end of the Ancient Creatures program, the Museum Science Educator will provide the teacher with a paper landscape mural and a set of four black line masters of ancient creatures discussed in the program. The teacher can set aside classroom time for the students to colour and decorate the mural and creatures and then place the creatures in the right habitat.