

Fossil Dig Worksheet



Name: ANSWER KEY

1) In Layer A, examine each fossil and then fill in the answers below.

	One trait this fossil has is...
Fossil 1	<i>long legs for walking OR fingers and toes for grasping tree limbs OR a tail for balancing and grasping tree limbs.</i>
Fossil 2	<i>wings/feathers for flying through the air OR legs for walking on tree limbs and the ground.</i>
Fossil 3	<i>wings for flying through the air OR legs for walking or holding onto plants.</i>

2) I think the fossils found in Layer A lived **ON LAND** / **IN THE WATER** when they were alive. I think

this because...

LESS sophisticated answer:

the animals in Layer A have traits that help them live on land, but not in the water.

MORE sophisticated answer:

the fossils of the animals that lived in the habitat of Layer A have traits that help them to survive on land or in the air. When they were alive these animals must have lived in a habitat that was mostly dry land.

3) For each fossil in Layer B, fill in the blanks below.

	One trait this fossil has is...
Fossil 4	<i>fins for swimming through the water OR gills for breathing in the water.</i>
Fossil 5	<i>limbs for crawling on the ocean floor OR a hard outer skeleton to protect it from predators.</i>
Fossil 6	<i>a hard outer skeleton to protect it from predators.</i>

4) I think the habitat **DID** / **DID NOT** change between Layer A and Layer B. I think this because...

LESS sophisticated answer:

the animals in Layer A have traits that help them live on land. The animals in Layer B have traits that help them live in the water.

MORE sophisticated answer:

the fossils found in Layer A are very different from the fossils found in Layer B. The fossils in Layer A have traits that helped them live on land, but the fossils in Layer B have traits that helped them live in the water (ocean). So the habitat must have changed from a place with water (an ocean) to a place with mostly dry land.

mystery science

Where can you find whales in a desert?



This is a monkey fossil.

1

Layer A

2

This is a bird or feathered dinosaur fossil.

This is a bird or feathered dinosaur fossil.

Though there are a few snakes that live in the sea, most snakes live on land so we chose to place this fossil snake in Layer A.

3

This is a dragonfly fossil.

4

This is a bony fish fossil.

Layer B

This frog fossil could come from either Layer A or Layer B. Frogs need water for their offspring to survive (Layer B), but they do not live in salt water habitats. So some students may choose to place this fossil in Layer A. We think either placement can be supported through student reasoning.

5

This is a sea star fossil.

6

This is a sea snail fossil.

This is a turtle fossil. The front flippers of this turtle fossil helped it swim through the once aquatic habitat of Layer B.