

DINOSAURS: FACT & FICTION

- 1 You learned about dinosaurs in school. Maybe you have seen them in a **museum**. But how much do you really know about these animals?

Were dinosaurs just big reptiles?

- 5 For years, scientists thought dinosaurs were big, dumb,¹ and cold-blooded—in other words, just **giant** reptiles. Some dinosaurs *were* huge. But many were about the size of modern-day birds or dogs. Were dinosaurs warm- or cold-blooded? Paleontologists are not sure. But they believe
- 10 some were intelligent. Of course, no dinosaur was as smart as a human or even a monkey. However, some smaller dinosaurs—like the two-meter (six-foot) *Troodon*—had fairly large brains.

Was *Tyrannosaurus rex* a powerful predator?

- 15 Some scientists think the **opposite** is true. In the movies, *T. rex* is often a **speedy** giant, but in fact, this dinosaur could not run very fast. **Physically**, it was too large. **In reality**, *T. rex* probably moved as fast as an elephant. Also, *T. rex* had very small arms. Without strong legs
- 20 or arms, this dinosaur probably wasn't a powerful **hunter**. It may have been a scavenger instead, only eating animals that were already dead.

Did an asteroid kill the dinosaurs?

- 25 An asteroid hit Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula about 65 million years ago. It created a 180-kilometer (110-mile) wide crater called "Chicxulub." Many believe this asteroid caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. But even before this, dinosaurs were already dying out² around the world, for many reasons. At the end of the Cretaceous period, for example, the global **climate**
- 30 was changing: the Earth's temperature was getting colder.

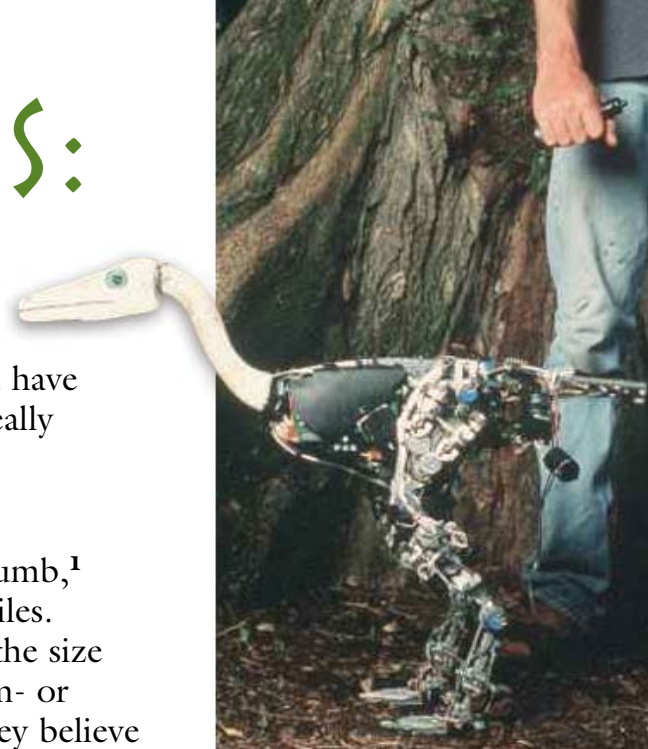
Are all dinosaurs now extinct?

- Dinosaurs **completely** disappeared about 65 million years ago. However, scientists believe modern-day birds are descendants³ of certain dinosaurs. If this is true, then dinosaurs' **relatives**
- 35 are still walking—and flying—among us!

¹ If a person or animal is **dumb**, it is not smart.

² If something **dies out** or becomes **extinct**, it becomes less common and finally disappears.

³ Your **descendants** are people in later generations who are related to you.



▲ A scientist with a mechanical *Troodon*

▼ *Tyrannosaurus rex*



▲ A crater caused by an asteroid hitting the Earth in Australia