



2.5 Billion T. Rex Have Roamed Earth

Discussion > Advanced 7



Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

roam	To travel or move over a large area.
[verb]	<i>Ex: Hundreds of elephants roam the area in summer.</i>

maturity	The state or period of being fully grown.
[noun]	<i>Ex: It takes roughly a month for this type of insect to reach maturity.</i>

density	The number of people or things in a place.
[noun]	<i>Ex: The city has a high population density.</i>



double-take	A second reaction to something after first failing to notice anything unusual, interesting, etc.
[noun]	<i>Ex: His mom did a double-take when he came home with dyed hair.</i>

underscore	To emphasize or show how important something is.
[verb]	<i>Ex: These findings underscore the need for governments to take urgent action to address global warming.</i>

carnivore	An animal that eats meat.
[noun]	<i>Ex: Lions are carnivores and can eat over 25 kilograms of meat in one day.</i>



Exercise 2 – Reading

Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.

2.5 Billion T. Rex Have Roamed Earth

One Tyrannosaurus rex seems scary enough. Now imagine 2.5 billion of them. That's how many of the dinosaurs probably roamed Earth over the course of a couple million years, a new study has found.

Using calculations based on body size, sexual maturity and the creatures' energy needs, a team at the University of California, Berkeley figured out just how many T. rexes lived over 127,000 generations, according to a study in Science.

The species roamed North America for about 1.2 million to 3.6 million years, meaning the T. rex population density was small at any one time. There would have been about two in an area the size of Washington, D.C., or 3,800 in California, the study said.



"Probably like a lot of people, I literally did a double-take to make sure that my eyes hadn't deceived me when I first read that 2.5 billion T. rexes have ever lived," said Kristi Curry Rogers of Macalester College, who wasn't part of the study.

Study lead author Charles Marshall said the estimate underscores how lucky the world is to know about T. rexes at all. About 100 or so T. rex fossils have been found — 32 of them with enough material to figure out that they are adults. If there were 2.5 million T. rex instead of 2.5 billion, we would probably have never known they existed, he said.

This is the first time researchers have worked out a number for the T. rex population, but it's just an estimate. The Berkeley team said the total population could be as little as 140 million or as much as 42 billion with 2.5 billion as the middle value.

The science about the biggest land-living carnivores of all time is important, "but the truth, as I see it, is that this kind of thing is just very cool," said Purdue University geology professor James Farlow.



Exercise 3 – Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your tutor.

1. What are your thoughts on the study's findings?
2. Have you seen many dinosaur skeletons or fossils in any of the museums you've been to?
3. Did you have a favorite dinosaur growing up?
4. What's the coolest scientific discovery you've heard about recently?
5. What's the most frightening creature you've seen in person?
6. In your opinion, what are the most fascinating animals that ever lived? Why do you think so?
7. What extinct animals do you wish you had a chance to see in person? Why?
8. If you could travel back in time, what periods would you be interested in visiting? Why?