

Homework 5: A Natural History Note

Objective: Create a **one-page** “Natural History Note” on a dinosaur *from the clades we’ve studied* (Saurischia—excluding Theropoda—and Ornithischia). This note should provide a comprehensive overview of the dinosaur, including its physical characteristics, diet, habitat, evolutionary relationships, and any other notable features. An example is shown on the next page - you are not allowed to copy the example...

Instructions:

1. Selection:

- Choose your favorite dinosaur from the Saurischia (excluding Theropoda) or Ornithischia clades covered so far.

2. Research:

- Gather information on your selected dinosaur from the course materials. If necessary, you can supplement with reputable sources like scientific journals, museum websites, or educational institutions.

3. Content to Include:

- **Name and Meaning:** The dinosaur’s name and the meaning of its name.
- **Physical Characteristics:** Size, weight, distinctive physical features (like horns, plates, feathers).
- **Diet:** What it ate and any known feeding behaviors.
- **Habitat:** The environment it lived in (forest, desert, coastal, etc.).
- **Evolutionary Relationships:** Its place within either the Saurischia (excluding Theropoda) or Ornithischia clade and any key evolutionary traits.
- **Temporal Range:** The period or epochs during which it lived.
- **Interesting Facts:** Any unique behaviors, paleontological discoveries, or roles in its ecosystem.

4. Presentation:

- Your Natural History Note can include drawings, diagrams, or bullet points—whatever best conveys the information. Make organized and easy to read.

Submission: Submit your Natural History Note on Catcourses. One page max, PDF format.

Grading Criteria: - Completeness and accuracy of the information provided. - Clarity and organization of the presentation. - Creativity/Clarity in the layout and how information is visually represented.

Example Assignment: A Natural History Note - Stegosaurus

Name and Meaning: Stegosaurus, meaning “roof lizard” or “covered lizard” due to its distinctive back plates.

Physical Characteristics: - Length: Up to 9 meters (30 feet). - Weight: Approximately 5,000 kilograms (5.5 tons). - Notable features include a double row of large, bony plates along its back and spiked tail (thagomizer) used for defense.

Diet: Herbivorous, feeding on low-lying plants. Evidence suggests it might not have been able to chew its food thoroughly.

Habitat: Lived in what is now North America, in semi-arid, open environments with seasonal droughts.

Evolutionary Relationships: Part of the Thyreophora subgroup within the Ornithischia clade, showcasing significant developments in dinosaur defense mechanisms.

Temporal Range: Late Jurassic Period, about 155 to 150 million years ago.

Interesting Facts: - The function of its plates has been debated; they may have been used for thermoregulation, defense, or display. - Recent studies suggest the plates had blood vessels, supporting the thermoregulation theory. - The spiked tail (thagomizer) was likely a defensive tool against predators.

Reflection: (Optional) I chose Stegosaurus because its iconic plates and spikes embody the fascinating variety of evolutionary adaptations dinosaurs developed. Learning about it highlights the complex interplay between form, function, and environment in dinosaur evolution.

Note - your natural history note can use other details, but should be limited to one page.