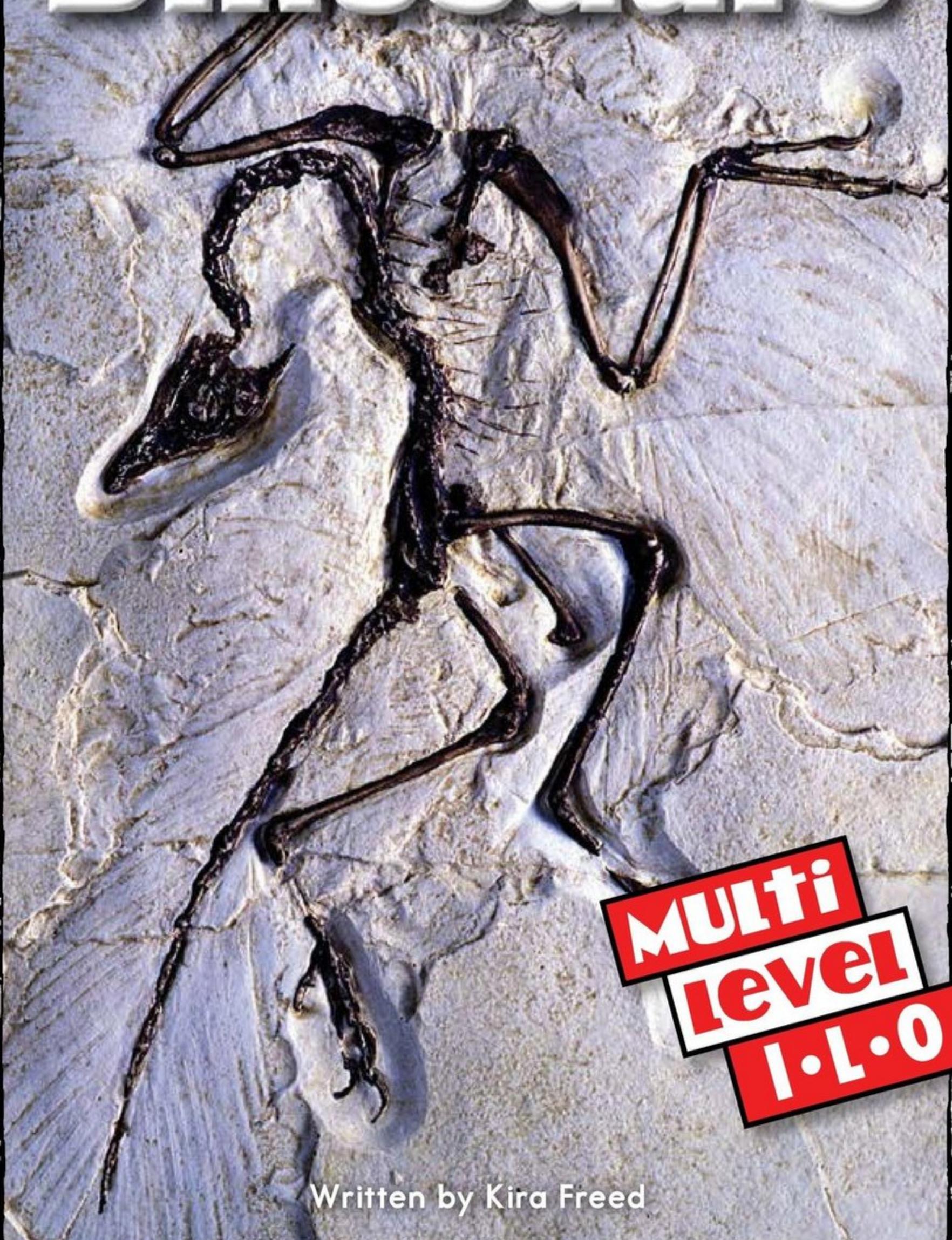


LEVELED Book • L

Discovering Dinosaurs



MULTI
level
I-L-O

Written by Kira Freed

Discovering Dinosaurs



Written by Kira Freed

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Focus Question

What are fossils, and how have they helped us learn about dinosaurs?

Words to Know

dinosaurs
examine
extinct

fossils
museum
remains

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Many dinosaur fossils are on display in natural history museums.

Finding Fossils

How do we know **dinosaurs** lived on Earth? Scientists discover **fossils** in rocks all over the world. Studying fossils helps them learn about dinosaurs. They study what dinosaurs looked like, where they lived, and what they ate.

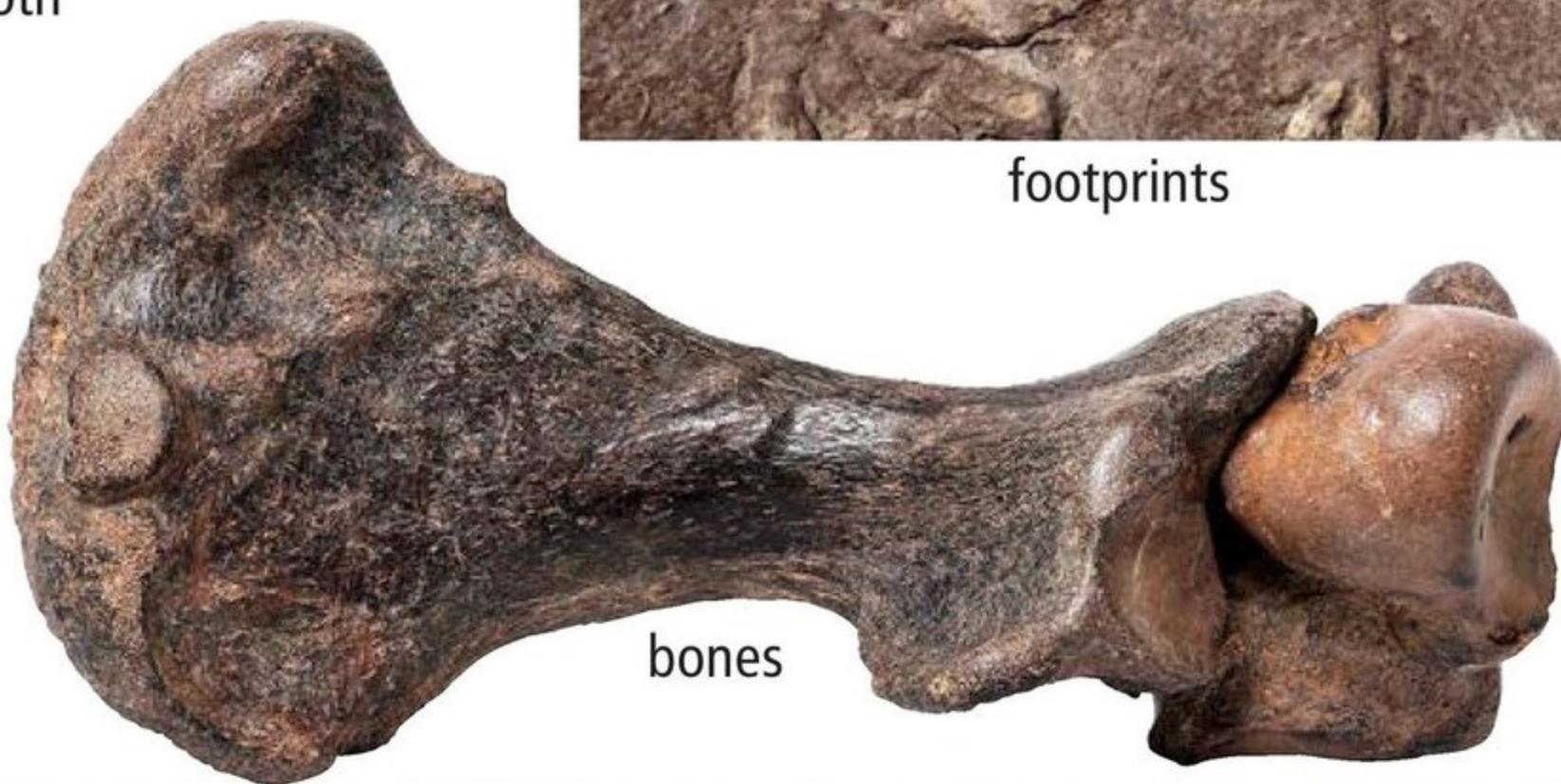
Fossils are the **remains** of plants or animals from long ago that have turned to stone. Scientists have found many different types of dinosaur fossils, including bones, footprints, teeth, nests, and eggs.



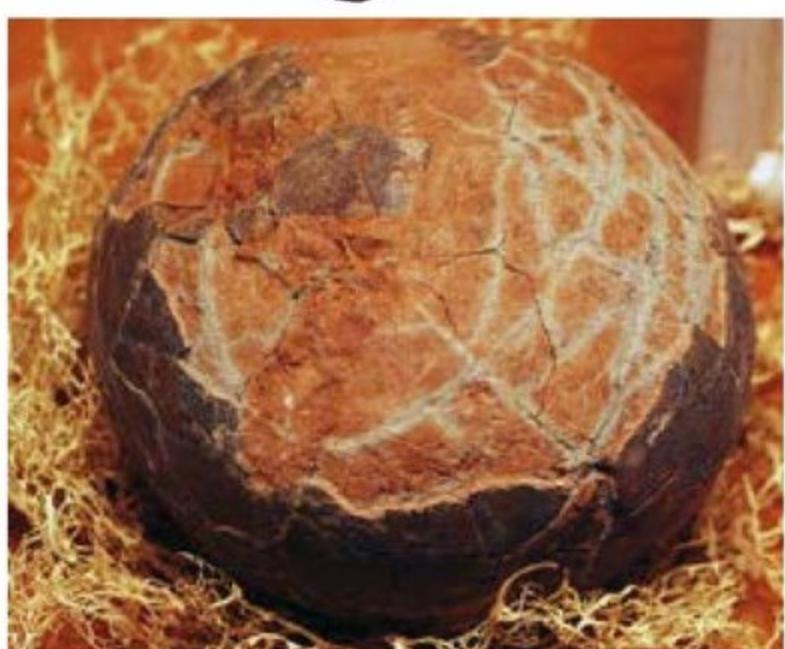
tooth



footprints



bones



egg



skeleton

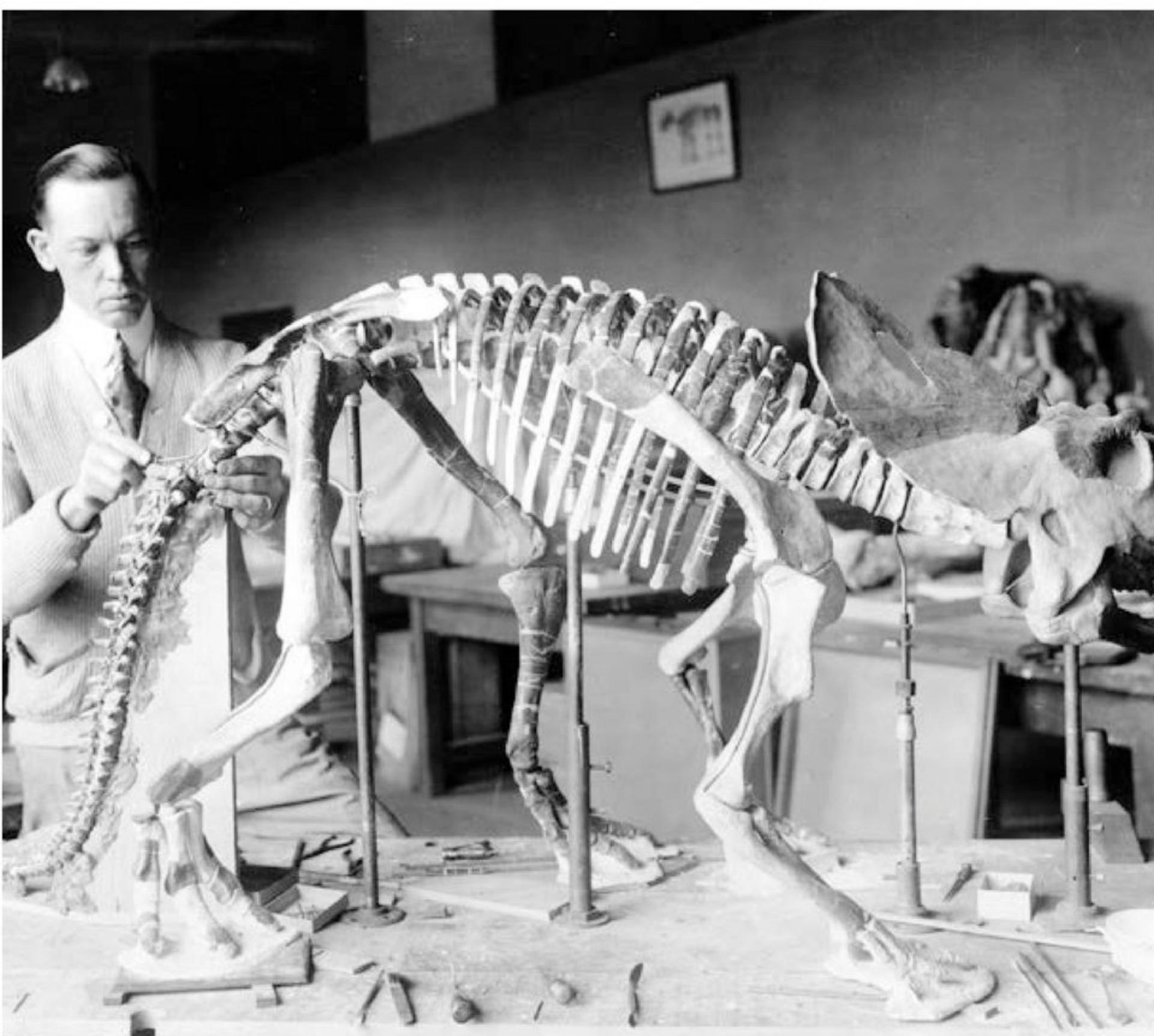
These scientists are excavating, or carefully digging, fossils out of the ground. After recording information about the fossils, the scientists will wrap them to keep them safe. Then the scientists will take them to a **museum**.



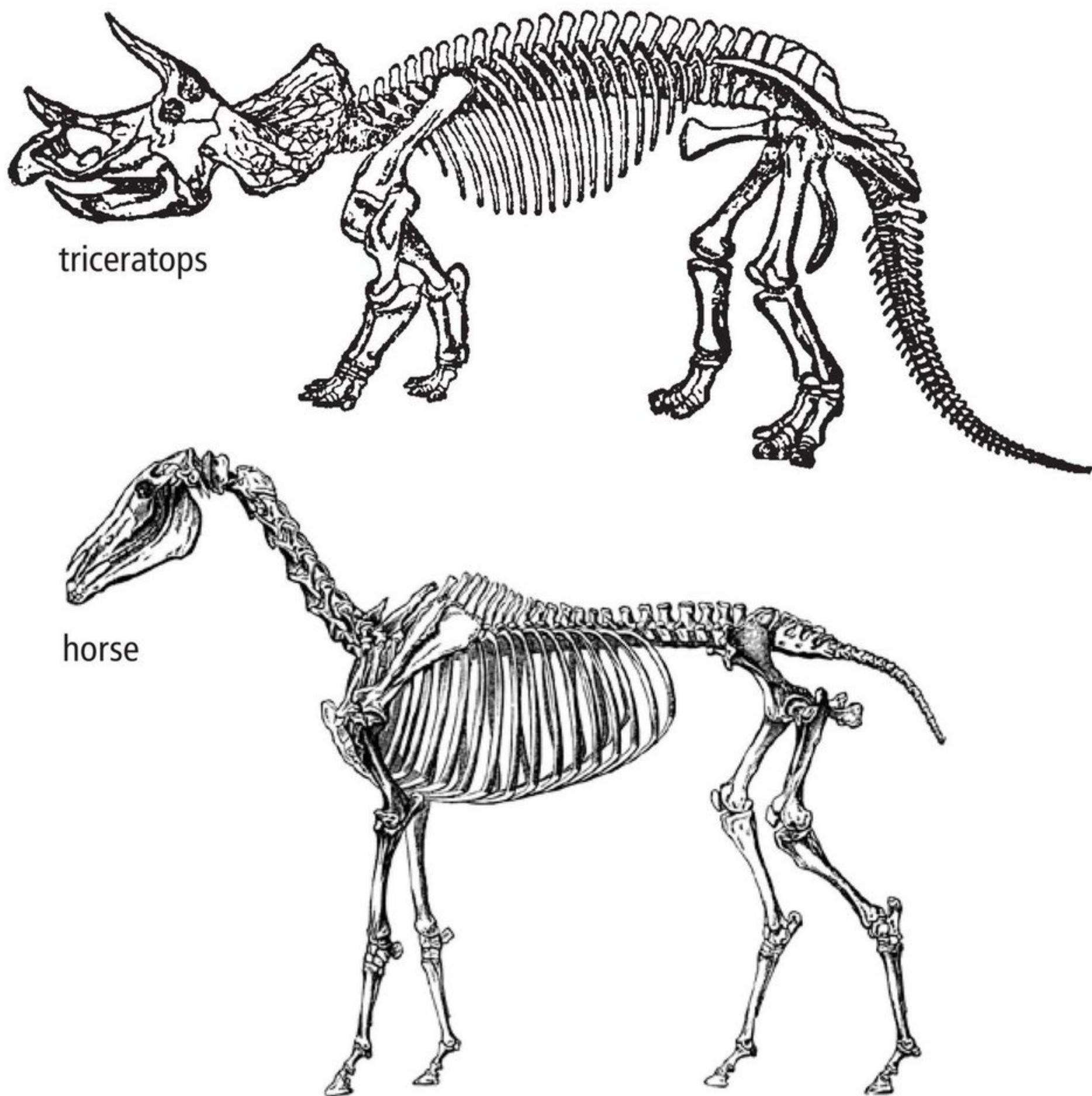
Scientists clear dirt and rock away from a leg bone fossil.

Scientists will study the fossils. They'll **examine** the shape and color of the fossils. They'll also consider where the fossils were discovered and how deep underground they were discovered.

Scientists can sometimes fit bone fossils together to form a complete skeleton. Most dinosaurs had hundreds of bones, so it is difficult to find all of them. Scientists use other dinosaur skeletons to help them piece together the fossils and understand the missing bones.



A scientist fits triceratops bone fossils together.



Triceratops and horse skeletons look the same in some ways.

Learning from Fossils

Although dinosaurs are **extinct**, the skeletons of other animals help scientists understand dinosaur skeletons. Some dinosaur bones may be bigger than those of animals alive today. However, many are still shaped the same.

Many different types of dinosaurs roamed Earth. Scientists study fossils to learn how dinosaurs moved around. Some dinosaurs walked on two or four legs, and some used wings to fly.



walking dinosaur

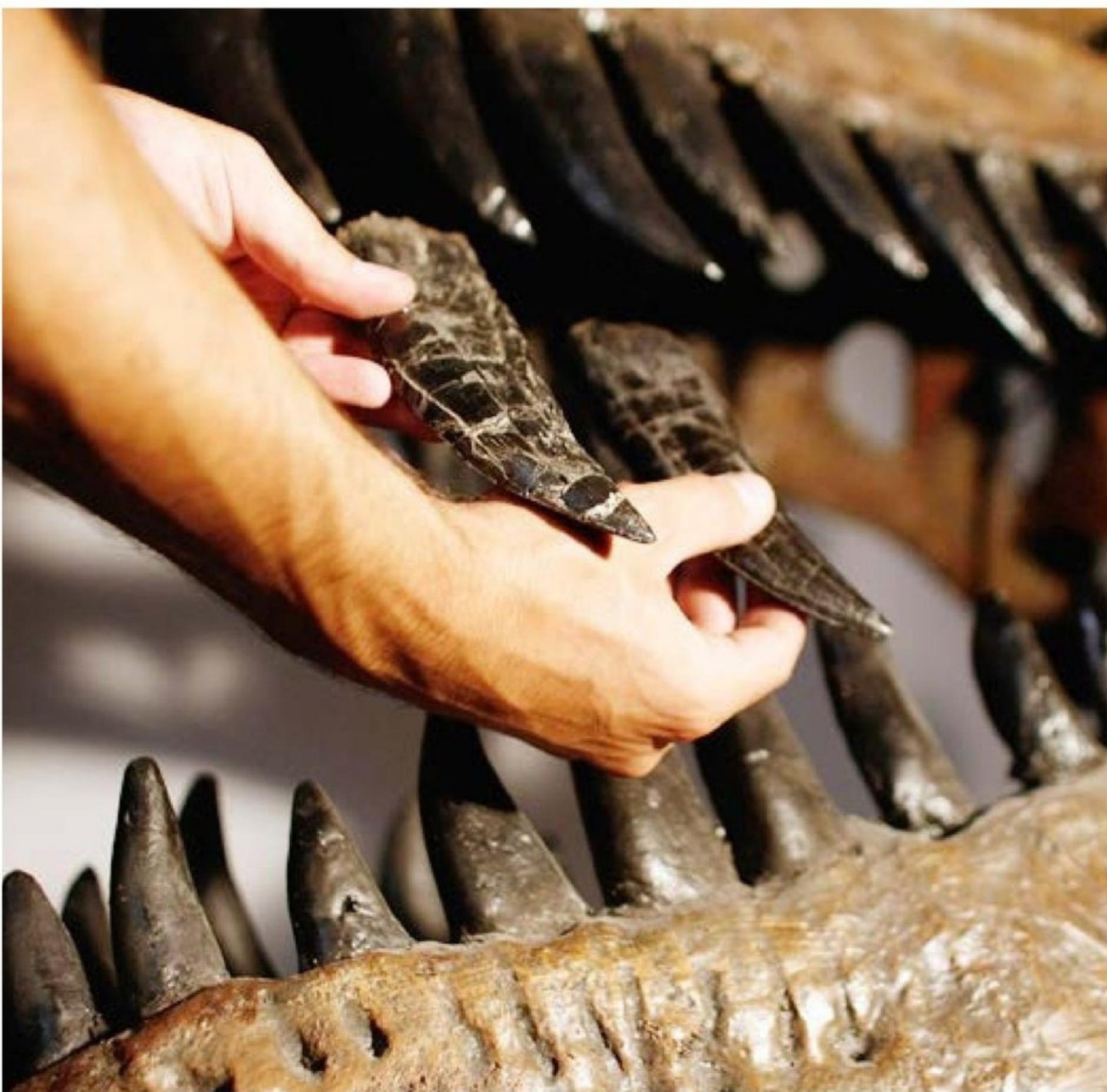


flying dinosaur

As dinosaurs moved around Earth, they left tracks behind. Scientists study fossil footprints to learn how fast or slow dinosaurs moved. Footprints also give clues about how big or small the dinosaur leaving the tracks might have been.



A large group of dinosaur footprints were found together in China.



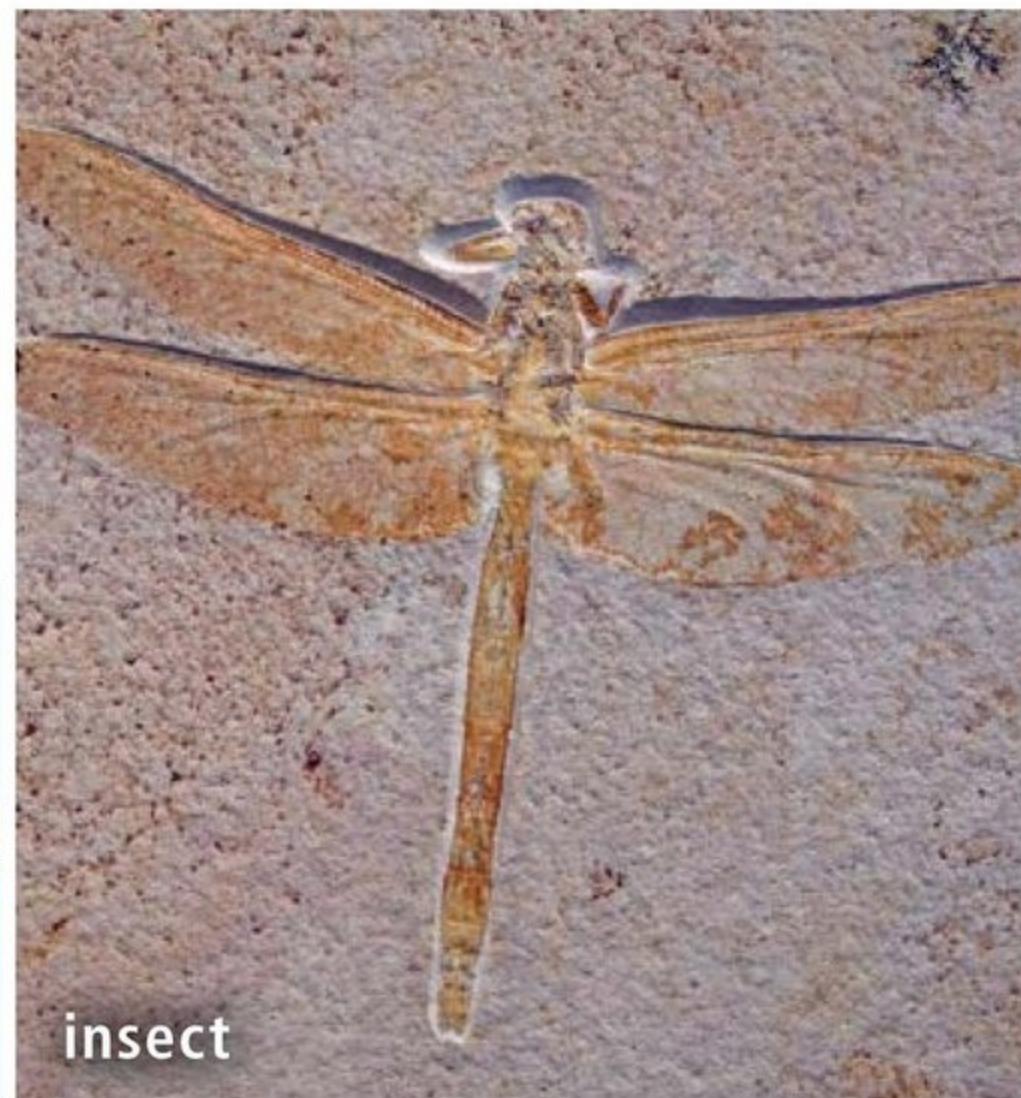
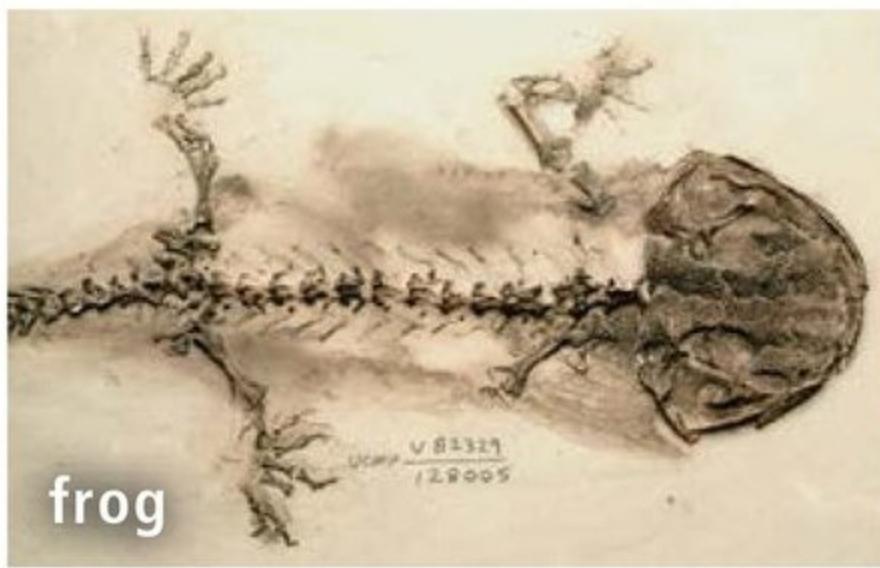
Some of the sharp teeth of this meat-eating dinosaur are as large as a human hand.

Scientists study fossil teeth to learn about the diets of dinosaurs. Many dinosaurs grew new teeth to replace those they had worn down or lost. Some dinosaurs had razor-sharp teeth that helped them cut through meat or plants. Others had flat teeth that they used to grind their food.

Scientists learn about dinosaur babies from fossil nests and eggs. Dinosaur eggs came in many different shapes and sizes. Some dinosaurs laid over twenty eggs at a time, while others laid only a few eggs. Like birds, some dinosaurs may have sat on their nests until their eggs hatched.

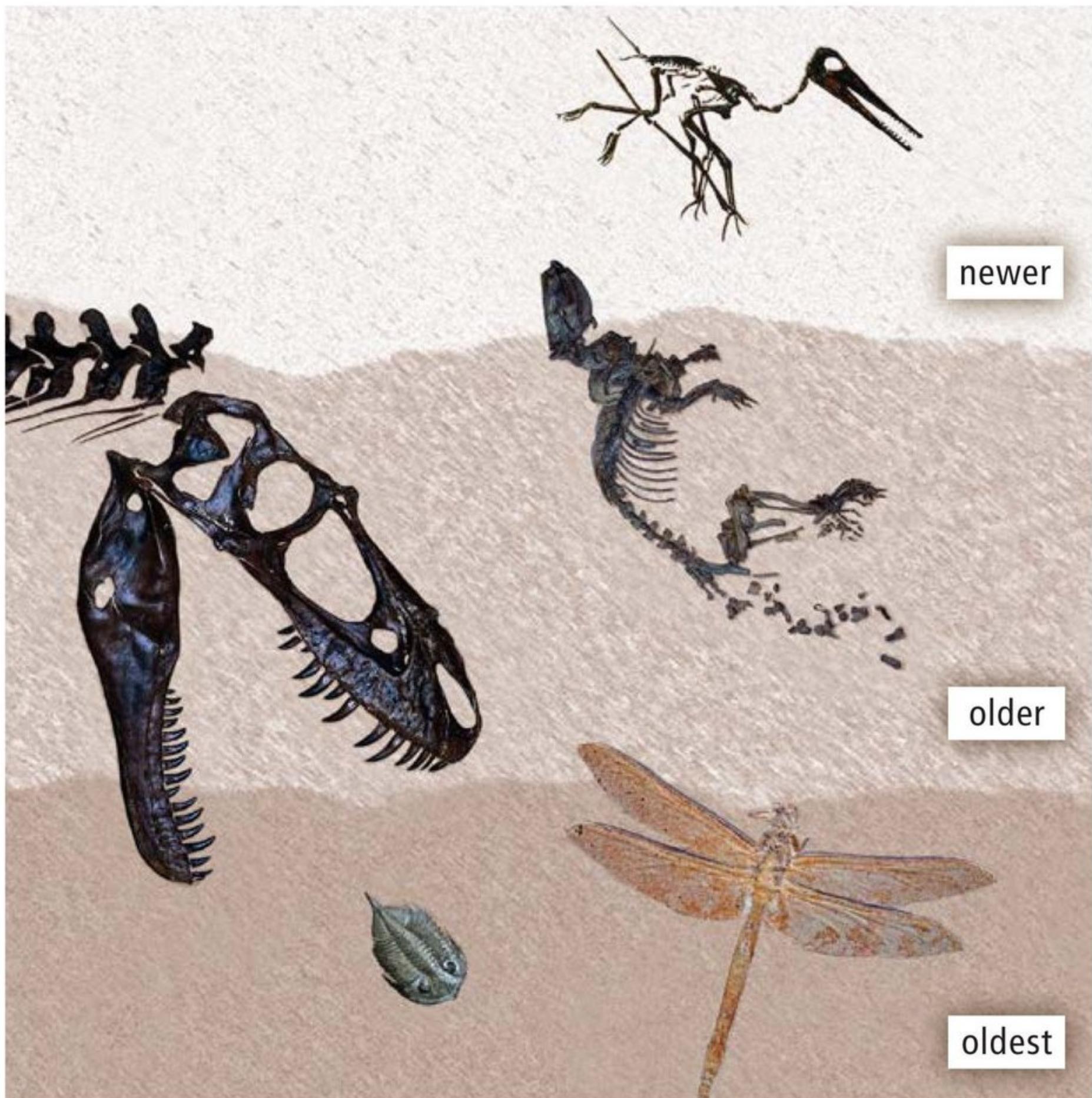


This fossil nest holds large dinosaur eggs.



Scientists find fossils of plants, fish, insects, and other animals in the same rocks as dinosaur fossils.

These fossils help them learn what Earth was like when dinosaurs lived here. It's also easier for scientists to find the age of the other fossils than dinosaur fossils. The other fossils are more complete than dinosaur fossils. They're also found more often. Scientists can estimate the age of dinosaur fossils based on the age of the other fossils.



Layers of rock show where dinosaur fossils are found.

How Long Ago?

Scientists can do tests to determine the age of fossils. Older fossils are found in rocks deep in the ground. Newer fossils are discovered in rocks closer to the surface. The oldest dinosaurs lived around 230 million years ago.

Scientists aren't sure how or why dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. Studying dinosaur fossils helps scientists look for clues to understand what happened.



Footprints of a large three-toed dinosaur were found in Germany.

Glossary

dinosaurs (*n.*) large groups of reptiles that roamed Earth until they became extinct over 65 million years ago (p. 4)

examine (*v.*) to look at something carefully to learn more about it (p. 6)

extinct (*adj.*) no longer living; completely wiped out (p. 8)

fossils (*n.*) remains of plants or animals that turned to stone over time (p. 4)

museum (*n.*) a building used to store and show things that are important to history, science, or art (p. 6)

remains (*n.*) the material that is left after a living thing dies or after something is finished (p. 5)

Discovering Dinosaurs

A *Reading A-Z Level L Leveled Book*

Word Count: 516

Connections

Writing and Art

Imagine you are a scientist studying dinosaurs and have discovered new fossils. Draw a picture of your discovery and write a postcard home about it.

Science and Art

Create a list of different types of fossils. Draw a picture of two examples and discuss with a partner what scientists can learn from these fossils.

The logo for Reading A-Z features the word "Reading" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font. The letter "R" has a small sun-like icon with rays above it. To the right of "Reading" is "A-Z" in a smaller, bold, red sans-serif font.

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