

GLOSSARY

adaptation	a modification of an organism or its parts that makes it more fit for existence under the conditions of its environment; This heritable trait is passed from generation to generation.	evolution	a theory that the various present types of animals and plants on Earth developed from simple organisms and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations
behavior	anything that an organism does involving action and/or response to stimulation	excavate	to carefully dig up buried objects to find information about the past
bi	two	extinct	no longer existing
biodiversity	the variability of all living organisms (including animal and plant species); of the genes of all these organisms; and of the terrestrial, aquatic, and marine ecosystems of which they are part	extinction	the condition of being extinct or no longer existing
cartilage	a type of tough, flexible tissue	fossil	a remnant, impression, or trace of an organism of past geologic ages that has been preserved in Earth's crust
cephal(o)	head	fossil dig	scientific investigation of fossil sites
cerat(o)	horn	fossil record	the total collection of fossils in the world
climate change	gradual changes in all the interconnected weather elements on our planet	geologic timeline	a representation that is used to describe Earth's history, especially as recorded in rock
conical	cone-shaped	GPS (Global Positioning System)	a system of satellites and receiving devices used to determine the location of something on Earth
conservation	planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect	habitat	the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows
Cretaceous period	the last period of the Mesozoic era from 145 to 65 million years ago (mya); considered the last period of the age of dinosaurs	ichthy	fish
data	the information collected during a scientific study	inference	an explanation derived by reasoning; to derive as a conclusion from facts or premises
deep time	the theory that Earth is billions of years old and has had a long history of development and change	intact	undamaged
endangered species	a species threatened with extinction	invertebrate	a group of animals without a backbone that has an exoskeleton or is soft-bodied
evidence	data that can be measured, observed, examined, and analyzed to support a conclusion	jacket	a protective casing made out of plaster that is used to transport fossil specimens
		landmass	a large area of land

late Cretaceous the second half of the Cretaceous period, from 105 to 65 million years ago (mya)

marine reptiles a group of mostly large, carnivorous animals many of which lived in the oceans during the Mesozoic era

mega large

micro small

mosasaur giant marine reptile that lived during the Cretaceous period

mya million years ago

observation the act of noting and recording phenomena, actions, or events, often involving measurement with instruments

odon or oden tooth

ops eye or face

paleontologist a scientist who studies past geological periods as known from fossil remains

paleontology a science dealing with life of past geological periods as known from fossil remains

ped or pes foot

predator an animal that hunts other animals for food

prehistoric “before history;” the period of time (making up most of Earth’s history) that occurred before the invention of written records

prey an animal that is hunted and eaten by other animals

prospect to explore for useful or valuable things, such as fossils

remains bones and other animal parts found in paleontological sites

reptile a cold-blooded vertebrate animal that usually has scales and claws; includes prehistoric land, air, and water creatures

rex king

rhino nose

saur(us) lizard

scavenge to feed on dead or decaying matter

seaway shallow inland waterway connected to the ocean

sedimentary rock a rock made from the consolidation of solid fragments, as of other rocks or organic remains, like small shells, or by precipitation of minerals from solution

site map a map depicting the details of a site, usually made by recording all observable surface features

Smoky Hill Chalk an area of the Smoky Hill river valley in western Kansas that contains numerous outcroppings of soft, white, sedimentary rock known as chalk

SuperCroc a nickname for *Sarcosuchus imperator*, an extinct genus of crocodile and one of the largest reptiles that ever lived

sustainability the use of resources in such a manner that they will never be exhausted

tri three

tyrann tyrant

uni one

vertebrae the bones that make up the spinal column, or backbone, of an animal

vertebrate a group of animals with backbones; includes fish, amphibians, mammals, birds, and reptiles

vor(e) eat

Western Interior Sea (Seaway) a large, inland sea that split the continent of what is now North America into two parts during most of the early and late Cretaceous period; also called the Cretaceous Seaway, the Niobrara Sea, and the North American Inland Sea