

Year 5

When Reptiles Ruled 3

Retrieval 2b

The creatures of the Age of Reptiles lived in a world that was far different from ours. For one thing, the climate was very different. About 200 million years ago, it was warm and humid all over Earth. Oceans, inland seas, lakes, rivers and streams were bordered with thick, green jungles and hot, humid lowlands and swamps. Everywhere in this ancient world, reptiles large and small roamed the land, swam the seas and flew through the air.

Then, about 65 to 70 million years ago, the great Age of Reptiles came to an end. In a relatively short time, all the giant plant-eating and meat-eating dinosaurs disappeared forever. A few kinds of reptiles, such as turtles and lizards, survived to the present day. What happened to the creatures that had dominated the Earth for so many millions of years? Scientists can only guess. Perhaps climate change had something to do with it. The warm, humid weather of the Age of Reptiles slowly turned cooler and, in some places, much colder. The hot, humid lowlands dried out. The lakes, rivers and marshes grew smaller and smaller. In time, the huge plant-eating beasts simply ran out of food and began to die. As the plant-eaters died, the meat-eaters lost their food source. The meat-eating dinosaurs could not survive by catching and eating small reptiles, so the fierce meat-eaters began to die too. When their surroundings began to change, dinosaurs were unable to change along with them. They could not adapt to the new climate.

Towards the end of the Age of Reptiles, a new kind of animal, the mammal, appeared on Earth. These warm-blooded animals were tiny, furry creatures about the size of today's mice and rats. Some scientists believe that these small mammals ate dinosaur eggs. Mammals were too small to be seriously hunted by giant, meat-eating dinosaurs, so the tiny mammals quickly grew in number. These mammals had two important advantages over the reptiles. First, they had better brains. Second, and perhaps even more important, they were warm-blooded. This meant that their internal body temperature stayed the same no matter what the outside air temperature measured. The cold-blooded reptiles had to rely on the warmth of outside air to keep their own bodies warm. As the air temperature grew cooler towards the end of the Age of Reptiles, the body temperature of mammals remained constant. The cold air did not bother mammals, but it did cause reptiles' body temperature to drop. As a reptile's body temperature drops, the creature moves more and more slowly. A cold reptile is unable to hunt for food or protect itself as well as when it is warm.

The great Age of Reptiles came to an end and the Age of Mammals began. It is hard to believe that giant sea reptiles or 180,000-pound dinosaurs once walked the Earth. But we can see proof of their existence in natural history museums. Skeletons, teeth, footprints and other remains of these ancient creatures are on display for everyone to see.

Questions

1 What was very different about the Age of Reptiles from our world?

2 Look at the first paragraph.

Find **three** places the reptiles roamed:

1.

2.

3.

3 Complete the table below with facts from the text.

| | |
|---|--|
| When it was warm and humid on Earth: | |
| How long ago the Age of Reptiles ended: | |
| The number of advantages mammals had over reptiles: | |

4 Look at the second paragraph. Which **two** types of reptiles survived to present day?

1.

2.

5 Choose the best group of words to fit the sentences using information found in the third paragraph.

Draw a circle around your choice.

(a) Mammals...

were
cold-blooded

were
warm-blooded

ate sea
turtle eggs

were
large

(b) Cold-blooded reptiles...

moved quicker
when cold

had a body temperature
that stayed the same

hunted better
when it was cold

hunted better
when it was warm

6 Look at the paragraph beginning 'Then, about 65 to 70 million years ago, the great Age of Reptiles came to an end...'

Why were meat-eating dinosaurs not able to survive?

7 Look at the whole text.

Number the following 1 -5 to show the order in which you first read about them.

turtles and lizards

natural history museums

mammals

climate

Age of Mammals

8

Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

| | True | False |
|--|------|-------|
| Some dinosaurs could swim. | | |
| Scientists made a good guess about why the dinosaurs became extinct. | | |
| Reptiles had two advantages over mammals. | | |
| Reptiles are better predators when they are cold. | | |

Answers

1 What was very different about the Age of Reptiles from our world?

The climate.

2 Look at the first paragraph.

Find **three** places the reptiles roamed:

Land.

Sea.

Air.

3 Complete the table below with facts from the text.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| When it was warm and humid on Earth: | 200 million years ago |
| How long ago the Age of Reptiles ended: | 65-70 million years ago |
| The number of advantages mammals had over reptiles: | Two |

4 Look at the second paragraph. Which **two** types of reptiles survived to present day?

Turtles.

Lizards.

5 Choose the best group of words to fit the sentences using information found in the third paragraph.

Draw a circle around your choice.

(a) Mammals...

Four rounded rectangular buttons are shown. The second button, containing the text "were warm-blooded", is circled in pink.

were cold-blooded **were warm-blooded** ate sea turtle eggs were large

(b) Cold-blooded reptiles...

Four rounded rectangular buttons are shown. The fourth button, containing the text "hunted better when it was warm", is circled in pink.

moved quicker when cold had a body temperature that stayed the same hunted better when it was cold **hunted better when it was warm**

6 Look at the paragraph beginning 'Then, about 65 to 70 million years ago, the great Age of Reptiles came to an end...'

Why were meat-eating dinosaurs not able to survive?

They lost their food source (when the plant-eaters died).

They could not survive by eating small reptiles.

There was nothing for them to eat.

7 Look at the whole text.

Number the following 1–5 to show the order in which you first read about them.

A large rounded rectangular box contains five items, each with a numbered square next to it:

- 2** turtles and lizards
- 3** mammals
- 4** Age of Mammals
- 5** natural history museums
- 1** climate

8 Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

| | True | False |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Some dinosaurs could swim. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scientists made a good guess about why the dinosaurs became extinct. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reptiles had two advantages over mammals. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Reptiles are better predators when they are cold. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |