



Te Kura

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU
THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL



Dinosaurs

2014/1

IRO218





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What was the world like when dinosaurs were alive?

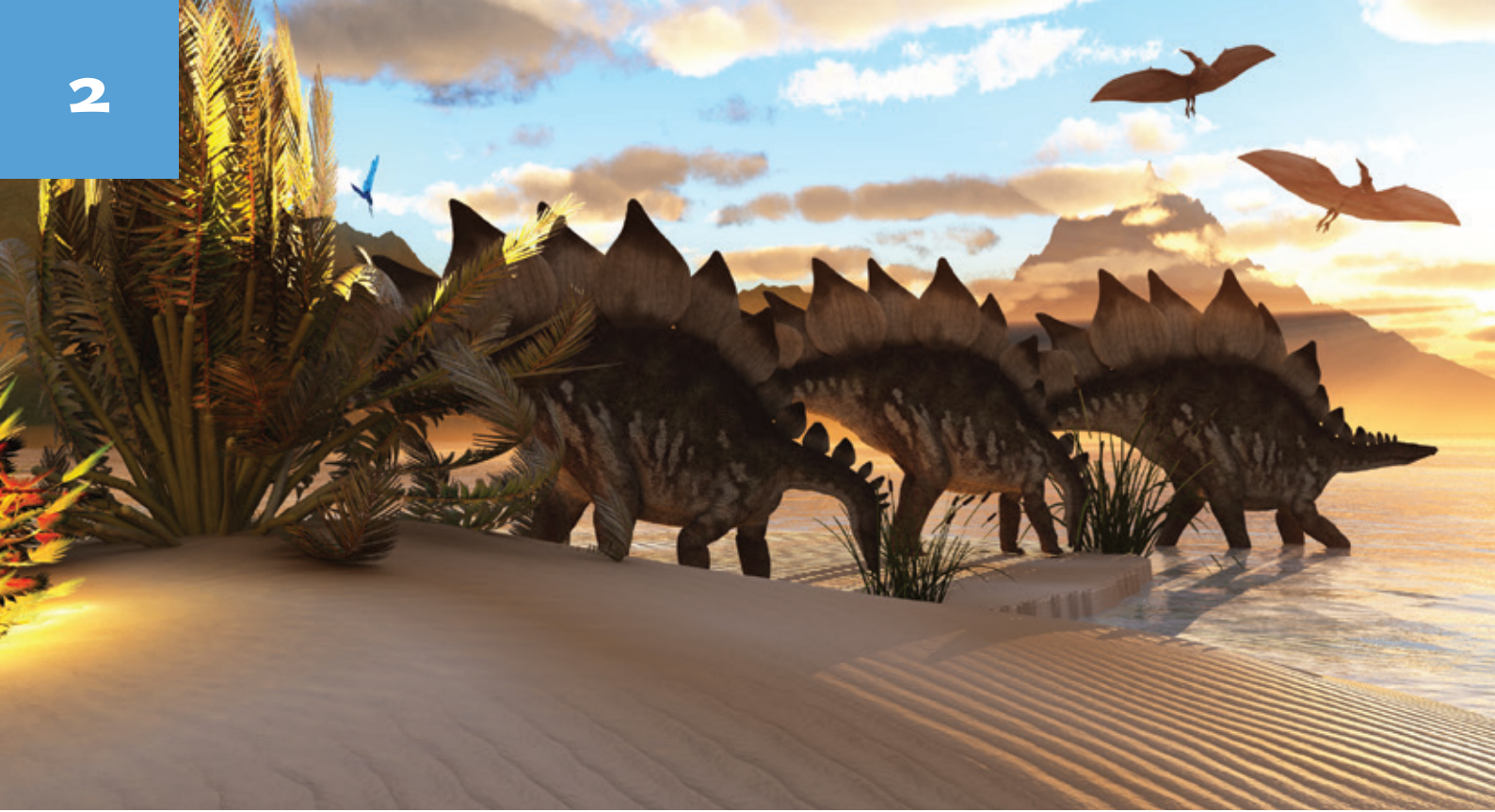
How long ago did dinosaurs live?

How do we know so much about dinosaurs?

Why did dinosaurs disappear?



Read on to find the answers to these and other questions.



This is the way the world looked millions of years ago. It was hot. There were volcanoes, rainy jungles, and lots of plants.

There were no people and most of the animals were reptiles.



Some flew in the air.
Some swam in the sea.

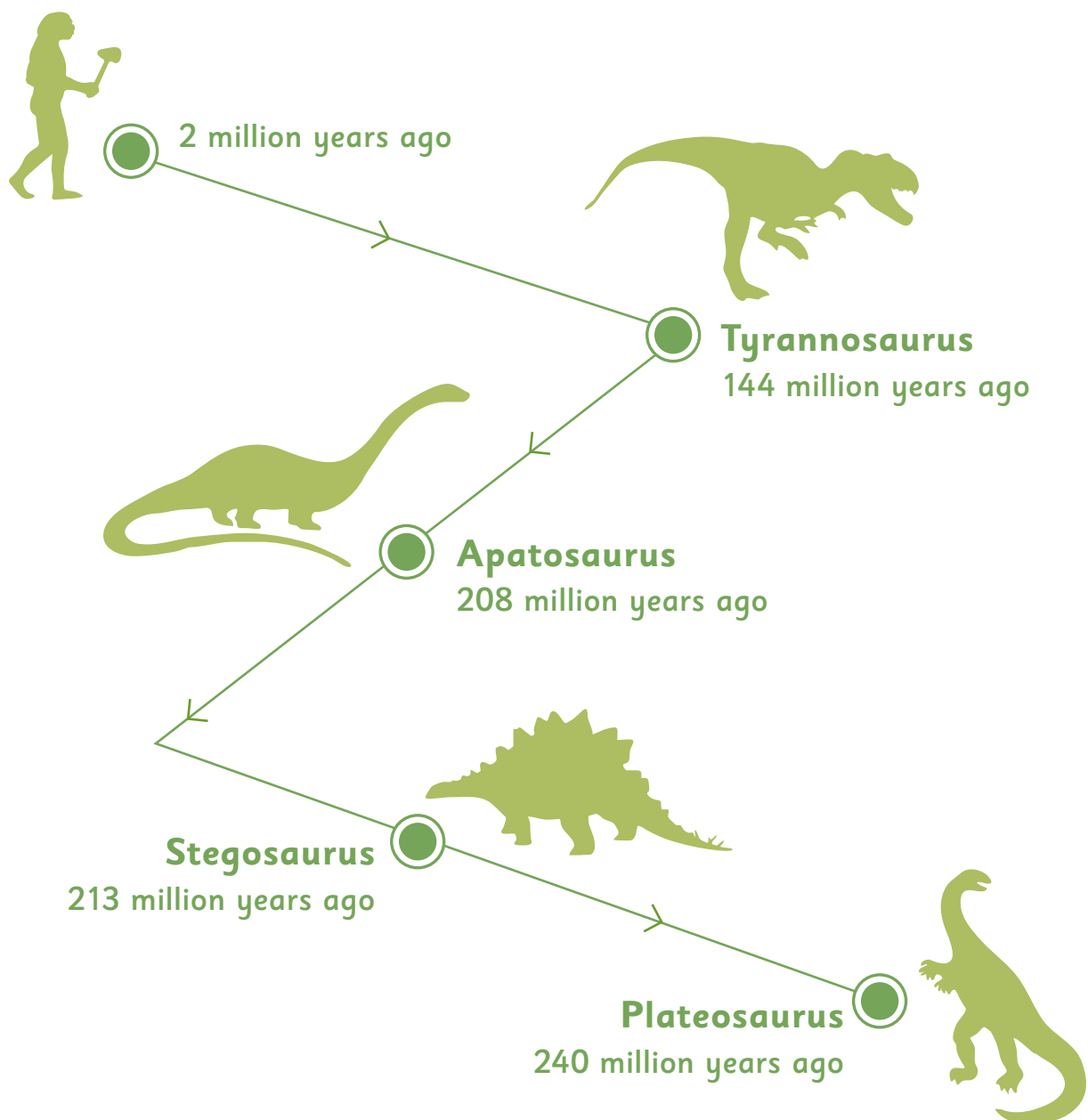


Some lived on the land.
The land reptiles were called dinosaurs.



How long ago did dinosaurs live?

Dinosaurs lived millions and millions of years ago. They first appeared about 230 million years ago. The last ones died out 65 million years ago.



Dinosaurs lived on the earth for a very long time.

How many different sorts of dinosaurs were there?

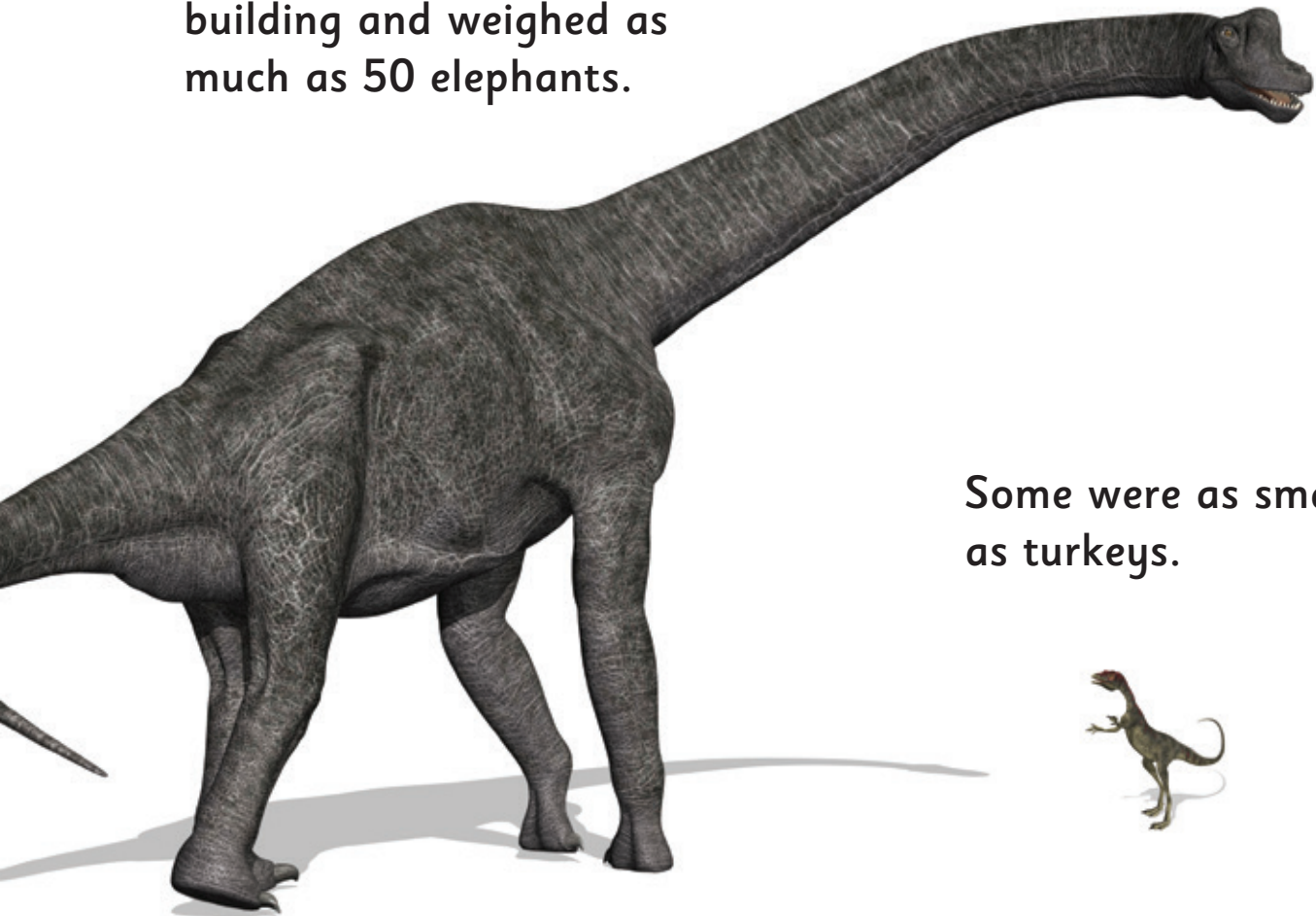
There were over 300 different sorts of dinosaurs and scientists are finding more all the time. Different dinosaurs lived at different times.

Most dinosaurs were herbivores.
They ate plants.

Some were carnivores.
They ate meat.



Some were tall enough
to look over a 3 storey
building and weighed as
much as 50 elephants.



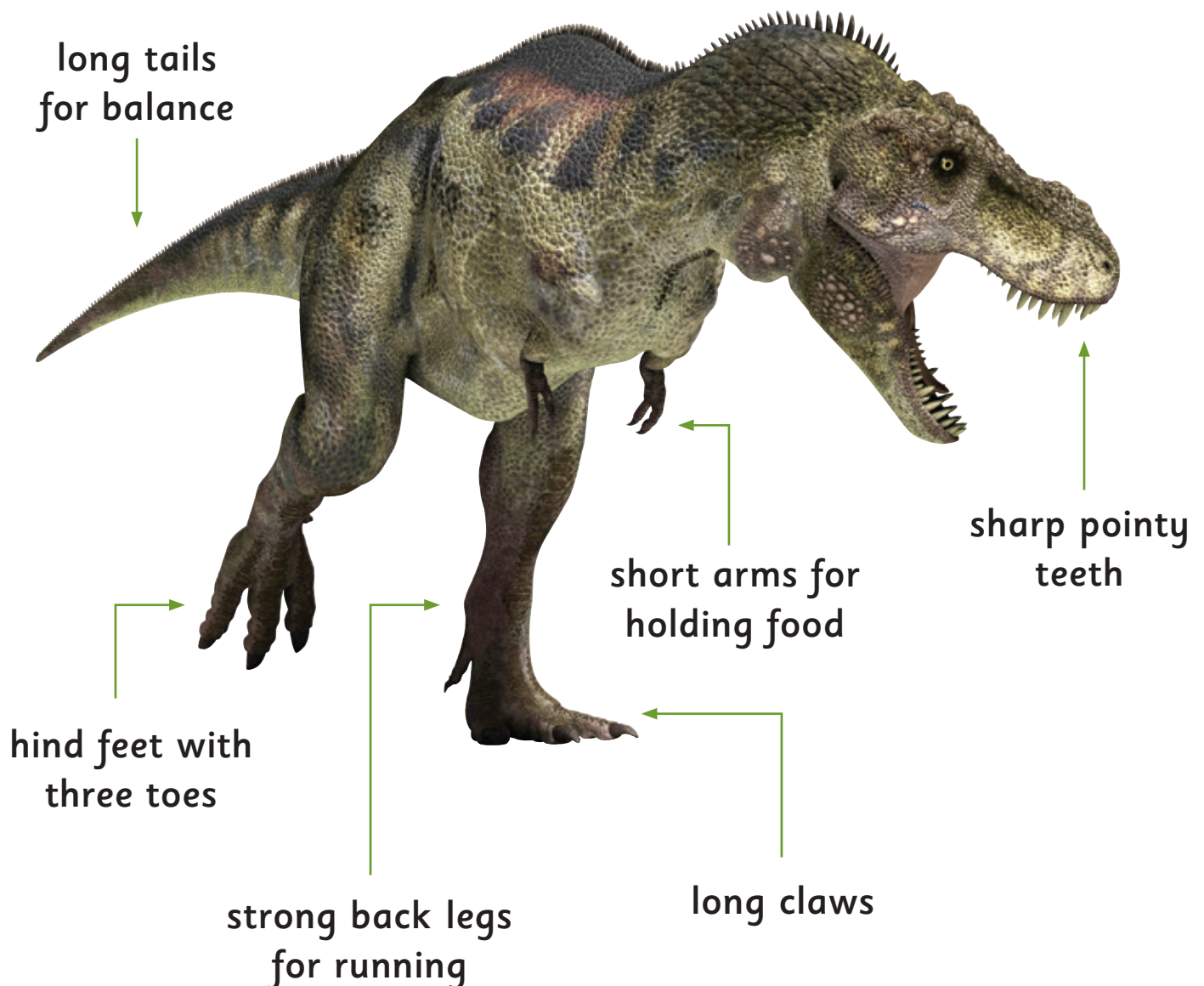
Some were as small
as turkeys.



Tyrannosaurus Rex

Tyrannosaurus was known as king of the dinosaurs. It was big and fierce. A person would have only come up to its knee. Tyrannosaurus was a carnivore with 60 razor sharp teeth.

Most meat eating dinosaurs had:



Stegosaurus

Stegosaurus was a herbivore, a plant eater. It had a small head and small teeth.

Its brain was the size of a walnut.



Stegosaurus had plates on its back and spikes on its tail.

Scientists used to think the plates were for protection but now they think they helped the dinosaur keep cool.

Plant eating dinosaurs came in many different shapes.

Some had a mouth with special flat teeth for chewing tough plants.

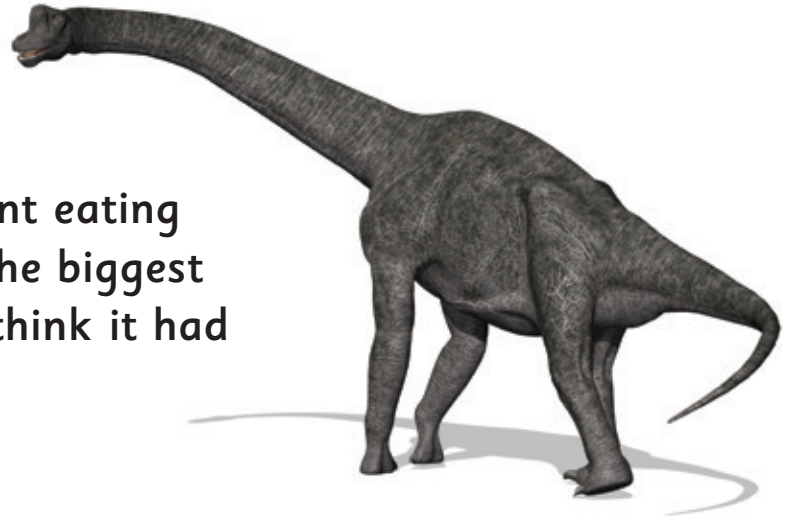
Others swallowed stones to help digest their food.



Some had five fingers on their hands for holding plants. Some had long legs for running away. Others had bony plates for protection.

Brachiosaurus

Brachiosaurus was a plant eating dinosaur. It was one of the biggest dinosaurs. Why do you think it had a long neck?



Iguanodon

Iguanodon was also very big. It stood on its back legs. It had four fingers and a spiked thumb. What do you think it used the spike for?



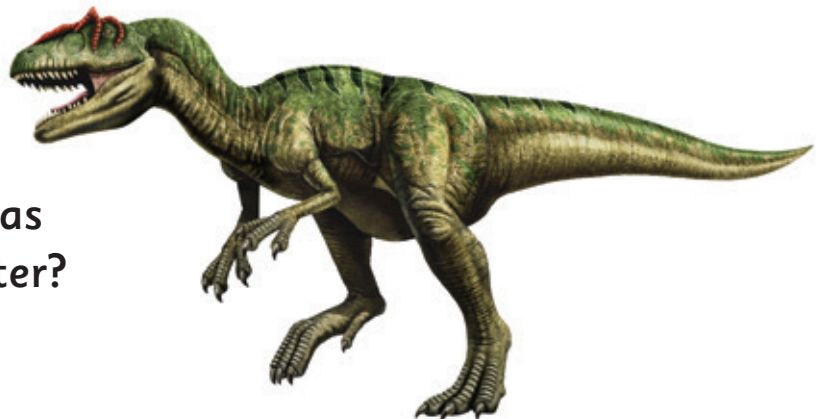
Triceratops

Triceratops had bony horns and a collar. Why would it need these things?



Allosaurus

Do you think Allosaurus was a plant eater or a meat eater? How can you tell?



What happened to the dinosaurs?

About 65 million years ago all the dinosaurs disappeared along with many flying and sea reptiles.

Scientists are not sure but they think a giant rock, called a meteorite came from outer space and smashed into the earth.



Great clouds of dust went up into the sky blocking out the sun for months or maybe even years.

Without sunlight, plants around the world died.

The plant eating dinosaurs had nothing to eat, so they died. Then the meat eating dinosaurs had nothing to eat, and they died too.

Eventually the skies cleared and plants started growing again but it was too late – the dinosaurs were gone.

They had become extinct.



How do we know about dinosaurs?

We know about dinosaurs because bones and skeletons have been found.



Bones and skeletons of animals that have died out long ago are called fossils.

They are sometimes found in rocks, deserts or dried river beds.





Looking at fossils helps scientists find out where and when dinosaurs lived and what they ate.

They have even found fossilised eggs so they know dinosaurs hatched out of eggs.



The largest dinosaur egg found was the size of a football.

Where can you see dinosaurs today?

Did you know that you have dinosaurs living in your backyard? Scientists think that the birds that are alive today came from dinosaurs.

Scientists call birds, avian dinosaurs because the word avian means bird.

Look at the skeletons below. One is a dinosaur and the other is a modern day bird. What do you notice?



Chicken



Archaeopteryx

Maybe now you will start feeding the dinosaurs in your backyard.

A separate workbook accompanies this reading booklet.

You can choose to complete activities after reading each section of the booklet or at the completion of the whole booklet.

You are encouraged to read the booklet several times to increase your comprehension.

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