

Name:

Class:

Unit 4 – Chapter 13

FIRST LISTENING

Listen to the lecture about dinosaurs. As you listen, put the following parts of the lecture in the order that you hear them. Number them 1 to 5.

- _____ The asteroid impact theory
- _____ Possible other theories
- _____ The climate change theory
- _____ Two different theories that some scientists believe today
- _____ Iridium in earth as evidence of asteroid theory

THIRD LISTENING

Lecturer: I'd like to start today's lecture with a question or two: What happened to the dinosaurs? Why did the dinosaurs of 65 million years ago disappear? Any ideas?

Well, no one knows for sure, and the cause of the dinosaurs' disappearance remains a mystery. However, scientists have suggested a number of theories for why dinosaurs became extinct. These theories include the gradual climate-change theory and the asteroid impact theory. I'm going to spend some time talking about these two theories. There are a number of other theories, but the climate change and asteroid theories are among the most talked about today. Perhaps one day we will know for certain why dinosaurs such as the Tyrannosaurus rex died out. But until that day, we will continue to speculate and continue to search for answers to why these creatures disappeared.

So, let me talk about the climate change theory first. This theory suggests that dinosaurs became extinct because the planet's climate changed. It says that over millions of years the world gradually became cooler. By the way, many scientists think that climate change is happening

even today, but they think the climate is getting hotter rather than colder. But, that's a topic for another day. Let me return to the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

So, some scientists speculate that in the time of the dinosaurs, the climate of the world gradually changed and became cooler. As a result, the plants that the dinosaurs usually ate began to disappear. The change in climate caused a severe shortage of food for the dinosaurs, since most dinosaurs were plant eaters. In other words, dinosaurs were vegetarians, and the types of plants they depended on for their food supply were disappearing. So, according to the theory of gradual climate change, the cause of the disappearance of the dinosaurs was a change in climate that changed the type of plants available for food.

Many scientists, but by no means all scientists, believe that gradual climate change best explains why the dinosaurs disappeared. Many other scientists think the dinosaurs may not have disappeared gradually and slowly over centuries. They speculate that the dinosaurs disappeared quickly and suddenly.

This brings us to the asteroid impact theory. This theory suggests that a huge asteroid hit the earth about 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs still walked the earth. When this asteroid hit the earth, it caused a huge cloud of dust. The enormous dust cloud covered the whole earth and blocked out the sun for months and months. Since there was no sun for many months, most of the plants on earth died. The dinosaurs' food supply disappeared in a period of months.

Until a few decades ago there was little evidence that an asteroid or a comet had hit the earth 65 million years ago. However, in the late twentieth century scientists found large amounts of an element called "iridium." This iridium is in layers of earth that are 65 million years old. In other words, the iridium is in the same earth and rock layers as many of the bones of the last dinosaurs. This element is not common on earth. It exists deep within the earth, but it is unusual to find iridium near the earth's surface. However, there is a lot of iridium in space. Scientists speculate that iridium arrived on earth 65 million years ago when a comet or asteroid hit the earth.

The asteroid impact theory explains two things. For one thing, it explains the larger amounts of the rare element iridium that is in the 65-million-year-old layers of earth and rock, and for another, it explains why the dinosaurs disappeared: Their food vanished, therefore, the dinosaurs vanished, too.

Today scientists continue to debate these two theories and others, too. In the future, scientists may find evidence that supports a totally new theory of why the dinosaurs died out. Perhaps they'll find out that dinosaurs died out as a result of disease. But we'll have to wait for further evidence and future research. Well, that's about it for today. Thank you, everyone.

ACCURACY CHECK

- A** You will hear five questions about the lecture. Write a short answer to each question. Use your notes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- B** You will hear five statements about the lecture. Listen to each statement and write *T* for *true* or *F* for *false*.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____