



Swim Saurus!

What are dinosaurs?

- Scientists have sort what we call dinosaurs into three main groups.
- Pterosaurs were creatures that flew; dinosaurs roamed on the land; and plesiosaurs swam in the sea.

Illustration: A Spinosaurus hunting.

Spinosaurus Skeleton Found in Sahara

Palaeontologists, searching for fossils in a part of the **Sahara**, have uncovered the first complete skeleton of a Spinosaurus for 100 years.

Only one **previous** Spinosaurus skeleton has ever been found. However, it was destroyed during the Second World War.

Until now, all we really knew about Spinosauruses was that they had long jaws like that of a crocodile. They also had giant sails on their back and were the largest of all **carnivorous** dinosaurs.

Thanks to the discovery of the new skeleton, though, scientists have been able to learn new things about this prehistoric meat eater.

Scientists once thought that Spinosauruses stood on two legs, like a Tyrannosaurus rex. Now, however, they think that it probably found standing on two legs very difficult and probably didn't walk on land very much.

They noticed that it had a nostril far back on its head and very dense arm and leg bones. Both of which would help an animal to swim.

They also discovered something special about its tail. They noticed that a Spinosaurus' tail was actually much wider and flatter than previously thought.

It may have looked similar to that of a modern-day newt's tail. But much larger of course!

David Martill, one of the scientists involved, said, "Discovering its tail was such an amazing gift. We had no idea that its tail was going to be so different from other dinosaur tails."

Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| palaeontologists | Scientists who study fossils to learn more about dinosaurs. |
| Sahara | A North African desert and the largest in the world. |
| previous | Before or earlier. |
| carnivorous | An animal that eats mainly meat. |

Questions

1. Fill in the gaps in this sentence.

It may have looked similar to that of a modern-day _____ tail.

2. Find and copy an adjective from the final paragraph which is similar in meaning to 'well known'.

3. Find and copy **one** new fact about Spinosaurus that the scientists discovered recently.

4. Tick whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

| | Fact | Opinion |
|--|------|---------|
| The skeleton was discovered in the Sahara. | | |
| Discovering its tail was an amazing gift. | | |
| A Spinosaurus' skeleton was destroyed during the Second World War. | | |
| Dinosaurs are really cool. | | |

5. Professor David Martill said, "Discovering its tail was such an amazing gift." Tick one which best explains his use of the word 'gift'.

- The finding was unexpected.
 It felt like a special discovery.
 He felt lucky for receiving this new knowledge.
 All of the above.

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. Fill in the gaps in this sentence.

It may have looked similar to that of a modern-day **newt's** tail.

2. Find and copy an adjective from the final paragraph which is similar in meaning to 'well known'.

famous

3. Find and copy **one** new fact about Spinosaurus that the scientists discovered recently.
Accept any two answers referring to the new discoveries: a nostril far back on its head; very dense arm and leg bones; difficulty standing on two legs; a tail different to other dinosaurs that helped it swim.

4. Tick whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

| | Fact | Opinion |
|--|------|---------|
| The skeleton was discovered in the Sahara. | ✓ | |
| Discovering its tail was an amazing gift. | | ✓ |
| A Spinosaurus' skeleton was destroyed during the Second World War. | ✓ | |
| Dinosaurs are really cool. | | ✓ |

5. Professor David Martill said, "Discovering its tail was such an amazing gift." Tick one which best explains his use of the word 'gift'.

- The finding was unexpected.
 It felt like a special discovery.
 He felt lucky for receiving this new knowledge.
 All of the above.

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer which includes the key information. e.g. Some scientists have uncovered the first complete skeleton of a Spinosaurus in 100 years in the Sahara desert.