Relics

Many discoveries have been made in the past few centuries, some which completely changed history and continue to influence the lives of people. When the partial femur of Megalosaurus was unearthed in England in 1676, a professor at Oxford University identified it as belonging to a human giant, there was no understanding or concept of dinosaurs, and the closest species it could be identified with was a human. Since the 17th-century theologists could not wrap their minds around the concept of huge, lumbering reptiles from a land before time. It took another 150 years, in 1824, for William Buckland to give this genus its distinctive name, and nearly 20 years after that for Megalosaurus to be conclusively identified as a dinosaur (by the famous paleontologist Richard Owen).

For hundreds of years before the 18th century, Europeans had been digging up strange-looking bones along lakebeds and riverbanks. What made the spectacular skeleton of the marine reptile Mesosaurus important was that it was the first fossil to be positively identified (by the naturalist Georges Cuvier) as belonging to an extinct species. From this point on, enlightened scientists realized they were dealing with creatures that lived, and died, millions of years before humans appeared on earth, though less forward-looking authorities stuck to a strictly creationist viewpoint. In 1860, Charles Darwin published his earth-shaking article on evolution, The Origin of Species. The next couple of years saw a series of spectacular discoveries at the limestone deposits of Solnhofen, Germany, complete and exquisitely preserved fossils of an ancient creature, Archaeopteryx, that seemed to be the perfect "missing link" between dinosaurs and birds. Since then, more convincing transitional forms have been found, but none have had as profound an impact as this pigeon-sized dinosaur.

These observations not only reveal the history of the life on Earth but also depict how remarkably different the entire ecosystem used to be. A planet of such diversity is what amuses humans, and is the reason for preventing our curiosity from ending.

Reading Test:

Fluency: ___/5 Pronunciation: ___/5 Understanding: ___/5 Meaning: ___/5

Comments: _____

Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words in the text.

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ 8. _____

9. _____ 10. _____

11. _____ 12. _____

Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.

a. relic _____

b. concept _____

c. conclusive _____

d. profound _____

e. preserved _____

f. transitional _____

Q. Answer the following questions to the text 'Relics' in full sentences.

a. Why was it difficult to identify distinct species in the late 1600's?

b. What concept did scientists find difficult to understand?

c. After how many years did humans recognize the existence of diverse species? How was this achievable?

d. How did Charles Darwin contribute to the understanding of the origin of species in his article?

e. Why was the 'Archaeopteryx' a significant discovery?

f. Why were these discoveries so important to humans?

g. How have these discoveries changed our understanding of the Earth and its past?