Name: Date: Score: / 6

Fossils: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: Science · about 210 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

🦴 Fossils

A fossil is the remains or trace of a plant or animal that lived long ago. Fossils can be bones, teeth, shells, or leaves. They can also be traces, like footprints, burrows, or even dinosaur droppings!

Most fossils form when a living thing dies and is quickly buried by mud, sand, or other sediment, often at the bottom of a lake or sea. The soft parts usually rot away, but hard parts like bones and shells remain. Over thousands or millions of years, more layers of sediment pile on top. The weight presses the lower layers into rock. Meanwhile, water seeps through the ground and slowly replaces the bone or shell with minerals. Eventually, the remains turn to stone.

Scientists who study fossils are called paleontologists. They dig carefully with small tools and brushes so they don't damage what they find. Fossils help them learn what Earth was like long ago. For example, fossil seashells found on a mountaintop show that the land was once under an ocean.

Some of the most famous dinosaur fossils in the United States have been found in places like Montana, Utah, and Colorado. Dinosaur National Monument, on the border of Utah and Colorado, has a wall with about 1,500 dinosaur bones still in the rock.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. how to dig a garden B. the life of dinosaurs only

   C. what fossils are, how they form, and what they teach us D. rocks in Colorado

2. **Detail:** Which of these can be a fossil?

   A. a footprint B. a plastic toy C. a cloud D. a song

3. **Sequence:** What happens right after a living thing dies and is buried?

   A. The soft parts usually rot away. B. It comes back to life. C. It turns to stone right away.

   D. It floats to the top.

4. **Vocabulary:** Paleontologists are...

   A. builders of museums B. scientists who study fossils C. people who paint pictures

   D. doctors for animals

5. **Inference:** What do seashell fossils on a mountaintop show?

   A. The land was once under an ocean. B. The mountain is made of shells. C. People left them on a trip.

   D. Birds carried shells up there.

6. **Detail:** What can visitors see at Dinosaur National Monument?

ANSWER KEY

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