

Self-Check: Dinosaur Extinction

Directions: Write an answer to each of the questions below.

Questions

1. What event is cited as causing the extinction of the dinosaurs?
2. What is iridium and why is it important in studying how the dinosaurs became extinct?
3. After the extinction event 65 million years ago, what was the fate of the avian dinosaurs?

Answers

1. The movies show that a giant meteorite impact with Earth caused a cloud of dust and debris all over Earth; without sunlight for months and because of fire and heat, many of Earth's life forms became extinct.
2. Iridium is a chemical element that is extremely rare in Earth's crust, but it is common in meteorites. At places of meteorite impact, there are elevated levels of iridium. Traces of iridium are found in rock layers all over Earth from 65 million years back, exactly when the dinosaurs became extinct.
3. The avian dinosaurs survived the extinction event. They later gave rise to modern birds.