

Fossils

Early Years - Student notes



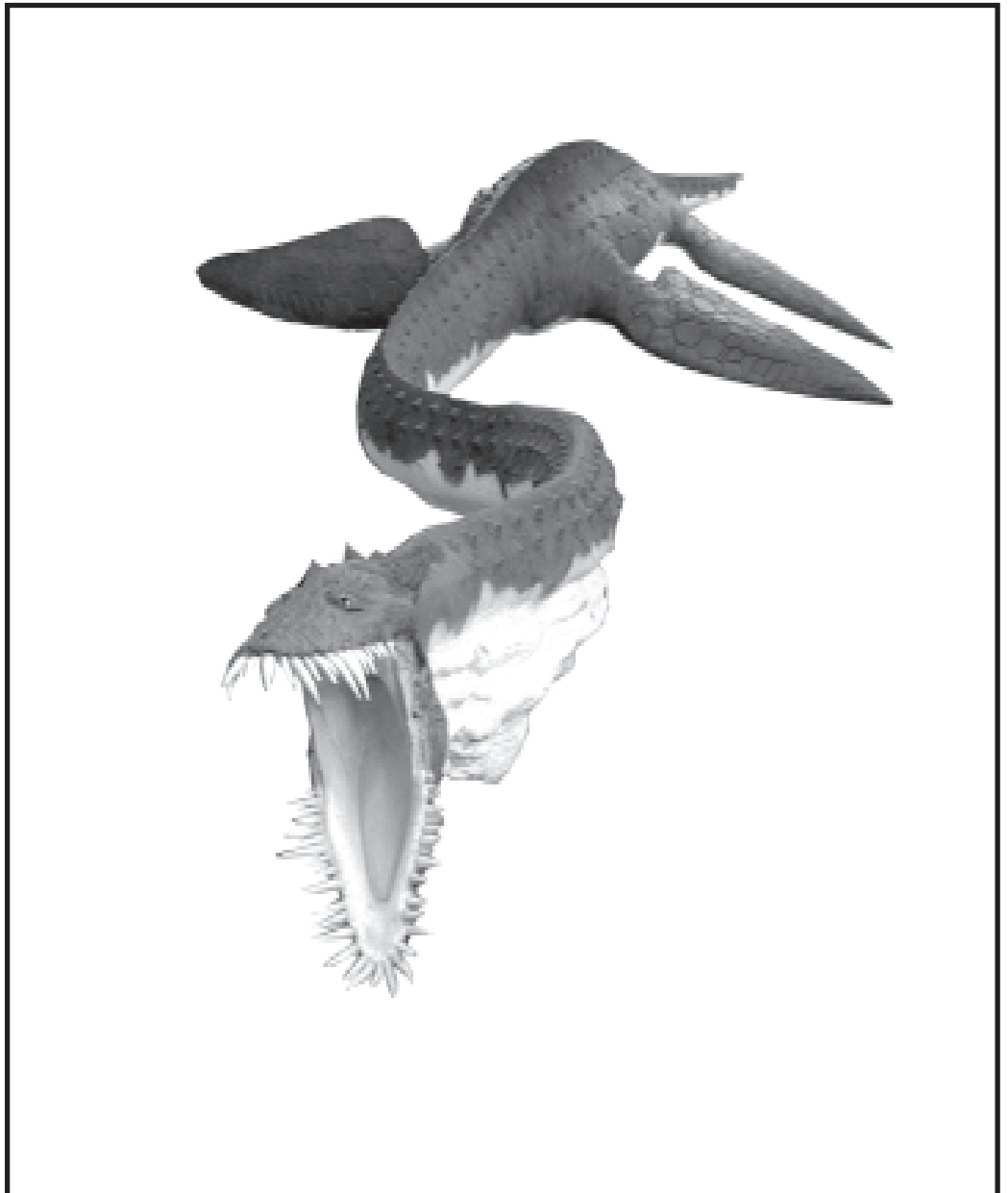
Government of South Australia
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The adventures of two young palaeontologists at the museum.

Imogen and Harriet visited the museum to see what they could discover about dinosaurs and other animals that lived in South Australia a long time ago.

Fossil **tree** (*Outside the museum by the east wing.*)



“Hi. My name is Imogen and this is my sister Harriet. We thought this was just an old tree trunk. But it doesn’t feel like wood. Its been turned into stone and now its a fossil.”

“Hey. Look at this. Even the museum walls have got fossils trapped inside them. Come on Imogen, lets go inside the museum and look for some dinosaurs!”



Allosaurus atrox skeleton (*Museum foyer above the security desk.*)

Harriet and Imogen went into the museum and were surprised to find an Allosaurus skeleton waiting for them!

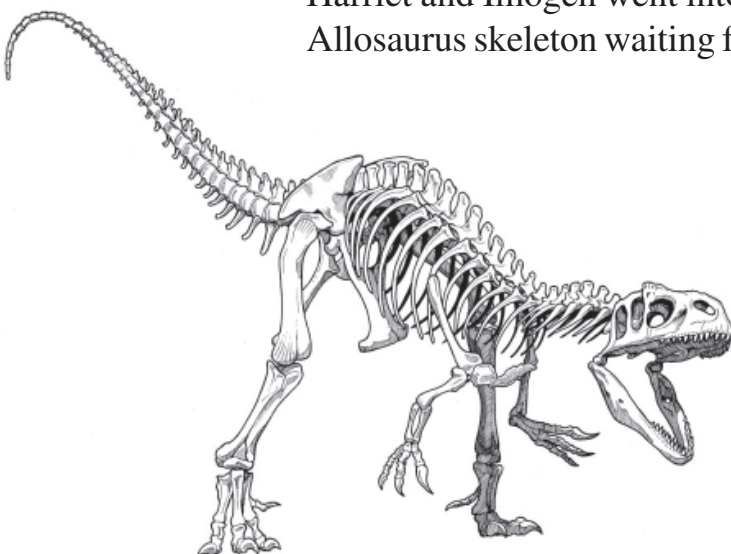


Illustration by Andrew Plant

Imogen said “It looks like its going to leap down off the display and chase after us!”

Harriet said “Look at its big sharp teeth! It must have eaten meat.

See if you can find out why the dinosuars became **extinct**.

Tyrannosaurus rex skull (Ground level outside World Mammals Gallery)



“Wow! It’s *T rex*’s skull! Be careful Imogen, it has sharp teeth and like eating meat.”

“It’s only a fossil Harriet! It must have been buried for millions of years because its bones have all turned brown.”

“Come on Harriet, lets go upstairs to the Origin Energy Fossil Gallery.”

Plesiosaur model (Level 3 Origin Energy Fossil Gallery.)

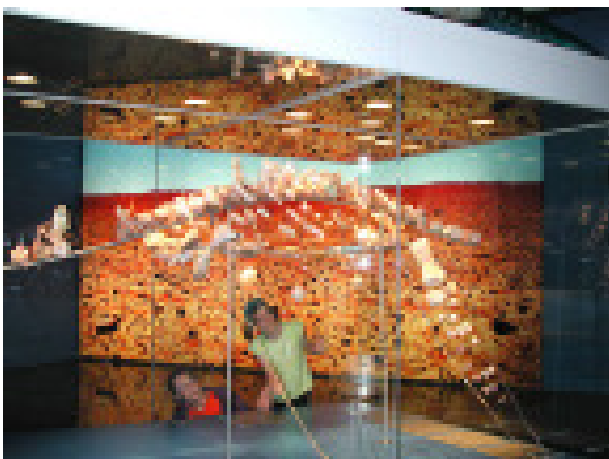


“Hey Imogen. It looks like a turtle-head! What is it?”

“Well its not a dinosaur. Its got flippers, so it must have lived in the sea. It must be a plesiosaur!”



“Wow. Look at this Harriet! See the teeth marks. Some other sea creature must have tried to eat it!”



“This is amazing Imogen. They must be the bones of a plesiosaur. But why are some bones missing?”

“Well Harriet, they were probably eaten or washed away by the sea after it died. Gee, the bones look like coloured glass.”

“Imogen, that’s because they have been turned into opal fossils!”

Opal fossils (*Level 3 Origin Energy Fossil.*)



“Wow Harriet, these opal cockle shells are pretty!”



“These look like scallop shells.”



“And these look like some kind of sea plant, but they have been turned into an opal fossil!”

“Look at all these opal bones Harriet. See how they all fit together.”

“Yeah, like a backbone! Hey! This could be the backbone of an ichthyosaur that lived in the sea a long time ago. Scientists say it looked a bit like a shark!”

