

# THE WORLD OF PALAEOONTOLOGISTS

Palaeontologists study ancient plants and animals that lived millions of years ago!  
They do this by looking at fossils that have been preserved under the earth.

*Palaeontologist  
(pay-lee-on-TOH-luh-jist)*



*Palaeontologists' tools usually include a **GPS** for getting around, **phones** for staying in touch with team members, and **chisels** and **brushes** for gently removing stone and soil to uncover fossils.*

# WHAT DO PALAEONTOLOGISTS DO?

A palaeontologist's work is really interesting because there is always a chance of making new discoveries.



## FIELDWORK

Palaeontologists spend a lot of their time “in the field” which means they spend time outside at different dig sites collecting fossils.

Palaeontologists' can travel far and wide to do their work as fieldwork can be done anywhere from a remote mountain top to a farmer's field. Palaeontologists mostly find just parts of a skeleton - as bones are fragile, they don't all become fossils.

## LAB WORK

Palaeontologists also spend a lot of their time in the lab. Once the fieldwork is done, they need to work out important information about the fossils like how old they are, what animal or plant they came from, and if what they have found matches what they've found before. If it doesn't, that is very exciting as that means it is a new discovery! They have lots of clever machines and equipment that helps them uncover the secrets that fossils are hiding.



## WHO DO PALAEONTOLOGISTS WORK FOR?

Most palaeontologists work for universities or museums but sometimes they work for the government of a country!

In universities, palaeontologists mostly teach students whilst doing more research. Palaeontologists never stop learning!

In museums, palaeontologists' look after the fossil exhibits, arranging them for exhibitions and providing information for all of the people that visit the museum, including school children!

Palaeontologists have worked hard and studied at university to be able to do their jobs. But it has to be one of the best jobs ever.



# FAMOUS DISCOVERIES

Palaeontologists have made so many amazing discoveries that have changed our understanding of fossils and dinosaurs. Here's just a few of the biggest and best!



## A GIGANTIC T.REX!

In the 1990s, palaeontologists found one of the biggest T.rex skeletons ever!

It's over 12 metres (40 feet) long – longer than a school bus! It was named Sue after the scientist who found it.

## FEATHERY DINOSAURS?

For years, palaeontologists thought dinosaurs were scaly, like lizards.

Then they found Sinosauropteryx; a dinosaur that was covered in feathers.

Now, they suspect many other dinosaurs had feathers too!



## DINOSAUR PARENTS!

Finding nests of dinosaur egg fossils in the early 1900s taught palaeontologists LOTS about how baby dinosaurs grew. They now think some dinosaur species nested in big groups to help keep their eggs safe.

Palaeontologists are making discoveries all the time, who knows what they might discover next!

# FAMOUS PALAEOONTOLOGISTS

There have been so many clever palaeontologists over the years.  
Here's just a few of the most famous.



## GEORGES CUVIER

Georges was very important for palaeontology. He looked at differences between living animals and fossils, and showed that the Earth used to be ruled by reptiles that no longer exist.

## MARY ANNING

One of the first fossil hunters, Mary lived in England, UK, in a place that's called the "Jurassic coast" because of all the fossils that have been found there! She discovered many prehistoric creatures, including ichthyosaurus and plesiosaurus.



## JACK HORNER

Jack has made incredible discoveries, including dinosaur nests and T.rex fossils with body tissue inside. This kind of discovery is unbelievably rare and helped palaeontologists show that dinosaurs and modern-day birds are related!



These are just a few of the many palaeontologists who have made a huge difference to the science.