

Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs

BACKGROUND FOR EDUCATORS

Overview of Student Worksheets

Using worksheets, students visit four areas in the exhibition to observe the features of different animals from different time periods in Earth's history.

These observations help students experience a **natural phenomenon**: Animals, including dinosaurs and mammals, have different kinds of specialized body parts that help them adapt to their environments. This phenomenon can serve as an anchoring point in discovery and discussion as the students explore the **investigation questions**: What traits help animals adapt to their environments? What happens when the environmental conditions change?

Extension Ideas

Back in the classroom, students apply what they learned about adaptation. Students create a collage of animals and plants that are alive today, including the habitats they live in. They then research and discuss why mammals in particular became so successful after the impact, and they explore these questions: What traits do all mammals have in common? How might these traits have helped mammals to radiate and diversify—to spread out and adapt to different environments after the impact?

Correlation to Standards

This activity supports the following Next Generation Science Standards:

Disciplinary Core Ideas	LS4.C: Adaptation Changes in the physical environment, whether naturally occurring or human induced, have thus contributed to the expansion of some species, the emergence of new distinct species as populations diverge under different conditions, and the decline—and sometimes the extinction—of some species. (HS-LS4-5)
Crosscutting Concepts	Cause and Effect Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims about specific causes and effects.
Science and Engineering Practices	Engage in Argument from Evidence Evaluate the evidence behind currently accepted explanations or solutions to determine the merits of arguments.