Introduction to Palaeontology

Palaeontology · Answer Key · 25 Questions

1. Which type of rock are fossils most commonly found in?

A) Igneous
B) Sedimentary
C) Metamorphic
D) Volcanic

2. What is the term for the remains or traces of ancient organisms preserved in rock?

A) Artifact
B) Mineral
C) Fossil
D) Sediment

3. Which era is famously known as the 'Age of Reptiles'?

A) Cenozoic
B) Paleozoic
C) Mesozoic
D) Precambrian

4. What is a 'trace fossil'?

A) A fossilized bone
B) A footprint or burrow
C) A perfectly preserved insect
D) A fossilized tooth

5. The study of fossilised pollen and spores is known as:

A) Palynology
B) Taxonomy
C) Stratigraphy
D) Archaeology

6. Which scientist is considered the 'father of palaeontology' for his work on extinction?

A) Charles Darwin
B) Georges Cuvier
C) Gregor Mendel
D) Louis Leakey

7. What is the process called when minerals replace the organic material of a once-living organism?

A) Petrification
B) Erosion
C) Weathering
D) Sublimation

8. Which of these is considered a 'living fossil' because it has remained largely unchanged for millions of years?

A) Coelacanth
B) Golden Retriever
C) Blue Whale
D) Bald Eagle

9. The geologic time scale is divided into units called:

A) Eras, periods, and epochs
B) Hours, days, and weeks
C) Layers, rocks, and minerals
D) Classes, orders, and families

10. Which mineral is commonly responsible for the permineralization of wood?

A) Silica
B) Diamond
C) Graphite
D) Sulfur

11. What is the study of prehistoric life through the fossil record called?

A) Palaeontology
B) Biology
C) Geology
D) Botany

12. Which method is most commonly used to date very old rock layers containing fossils?

A) Radiometric dating
B) Carbon-14 dating
C) Tree ring analysis
D) Dendrochronology

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13. What is a 'type specimen' in palaeontology?

A) The first specimen used to describe a new species
B) The largest fossil found
C) A fossil found in a museum
D) A fake fossil

14. Amber is a type of fossilization that preserves organisms in:

A) Hardened tree resin
B) Ice
C) Volcanic ash
D) Sedimentary mud

15. Which of these organisms lived during the Paleozoic Era?

A) Trilobites
B) Tyrannosaurus rex
C) Humans
D) Woolly mammoths

16. What does the 'Law of Superposition' state regarding rock layers?

A) Older layers are at the bottom
B) Older layers are at the top
C) All layers are the same age
D) Fossils cannot be found in layers

17. Which group of animals went extinct at the end of the Cretaceous Period?

A) Non-avian dinosaurs
B) Birds
C) Amphibians
D) Mammals

18. What is the name for the 'missing link' fossil that shows features of both dinosaurs and birds?

A) Archaeopteryx
B) Pterodactyl
C) Triceratops
D) Stegosaurus

19. Coprolites are fossilized:

A) Excrement
B) Eggs
C) Skin impressions
D) Feathers

20. Which geological eon preceded the current Phanerozoic Eon?

A) Proterozoic
B) Cenozoic
C) Mesozoic
D) Paleozoic

21. The process of natural selection helps explain:

A) Evolution
B) Fossilization
C) Erosion
D) Radioactive decay

22. What are 'index fossils' useful for?

A) Determining the relative age of rock layers
B) Measuring the weight of rocks
C) Identifying the color of ancient animals
D) Calculating the height of mountains

23. Which body part is most likely to become a fossil?

A) Teeth or bones
B) Skin
C) Internal organs
D) Brain

24. What is a paleontologist who specializes in fossilised plants called?

A) Palaeobotanist
B) Zoologist
C) Geologist
D) Entomologist

25. The Cenozoic Era is often referred to as the Age of:

A) Mammals
B) Reptiles
C) Amphibians
D) Fish

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