

ACADEMY VIRTUAL FESTIVAL PALEOPALOOZA

A Nine-Day Festival of Fossils

October 17–25

Mesozoic playground

Dinosaurs lived on every continent, even Antarctica, during their 186-million-year reign. Depending on when and where they lived during that time, their environments were totally different. If we want to recreate an accurate playground for our dinosaur models (yes, our), we should at least consider when our model dinosaur's namesake lived. The Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous all had different overall climates, which we will explore, creating miniature environments for our models.

Know before you begin

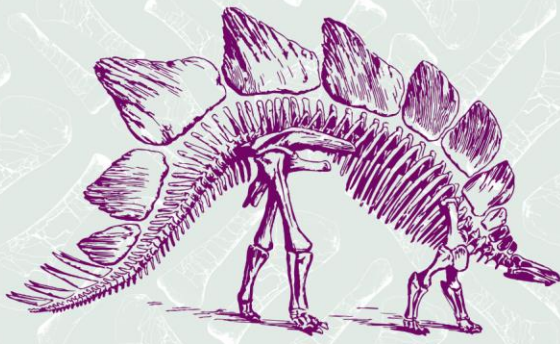
- *This activity can be done inside or outside*
- *All supplies are easy to find*
- *Adult supervision is recommended*
- *Please choose a safe space to play*

Materials

- *Scissors*
- *Tape or a glue stick*
- *Markers, colored pencils or crayons*
- *Colored construction paper*

Instructions

- *The Triassic Era, the first part of the Mesozoic Era, was overall very hot and dry. So, we will need brown, orange and grey paper for rocks. Brown will be needed for the bases of cycads and conifers. Cycads have squat, thick trunks and palm-like leaves coming out of the top. We can use green paper for those. Conifers are trees like pine trees. Again, we can use brown paper for trunks and green paper for the leaves. Ferns were also common and can also be made with green paper.*
 - *Ground: Use brown and red paper for the ground, adding small patches of cut-out blue paper for water.*
 - *Rocks: Crinkle a whole piece of brown, grey or orange paper to make large rocks. If you want smaller rocks, cut the paper in half or into quarters before crumpling.*
 - *Water: Cut out small pieces of blue to represent waterholes and ponds. Attach the ground with glue.*

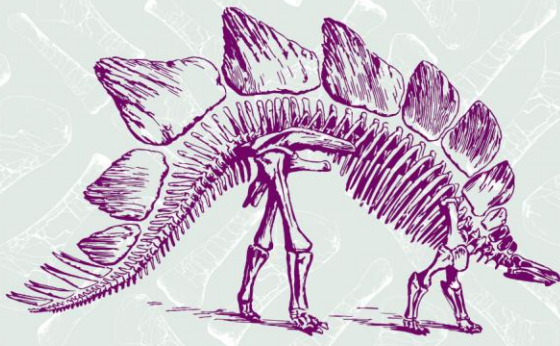


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- *Plants:*
 - *Cycad: Cut a piece of brown paper in half widthwise (You can draw a small diamond pattern across it for added realism) and tape it to form a tube. Cut a piece of green paper into long, thin sheets and glue them to one end of the brown paper tube. For more realism, draw little Vs along the green strips to better mimic the leaves. Tape or glue it to the ground.*
 - *Conifer: Draw a tree with a straight trunk on a piece of brown paper. Give it lots of straight branches that stick out to the sides. Color the ends of the branches with lot of little lines of green. These trees have needle-like leaves instead of wide leaves. Cut your tree out and glue or tape it to the ground.*
 - *Ferns: Cut a green piece of paper like you did for the cycad, adding the Vs if wanted. Fold the paper in half and layer multiple pieces together with glue. Tape or glue it to the ground.*
- *The Jurassic Era, the middle part of the Mesozoic, was warm and humid, with larger numbers of trees. Lakes were also more common, and the era was more lush than the Triassic.*
 - *Ground: Brown for mud and green for small clumps of ferns are good colors to use.*
 - *Rocks: Use the smaller rock method given above.*
 - *Water: Larger pieces of blue paper can be cut out for lakes or cut into small pieces paired with the brown paper for mud. Attach with glue.*
 - *Plants: All the previously listed plant types the Triassic from were still common in the Jurassic, but there were many more kinds of conifers, and some became quite large. Use a larger variety of them and make them in different sizes as well.*
- *The Cretaceous Era, the last era of the Mesozoic, was slightly cooler. Snow could be seen in some areas, so we can model that. Also, in North America, the central part of the country was a giant, shallow sea.*
 - *Ground: Brown for mud and dirt, green for ground ferns or grass. You can even draw flowers on the ground since they first appeared in this era!*
 - *Rocks: Use the small rock method listed above. If you are making a sea scene, add them for some topography. You can also put many big rocks together to make cliffs.*
 - *Water: You can use full pieces of blue paper to make a sea or use smaller pieces for lakes.*



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- *Plants: You can still use plenty of cycads, conifers and ferns using the instructions above. However, new plant types like grasses and flowering plants appeared during the Cretaceous and can be made using the instructions below.*
 - *Grass: Use green sheets of paper for a grass base, drawing lines with your drawing tools to create blades of grass. For more three-dimensional grass, cut rectangles out of the green sheets of paper and cut into the rectangles from the top on one side to create a grass-like profile. Glue to the ground.*
 - *Flowers: Use your coloring tools to draw flowers onto the green ground cover. For a little more pop, cut out small flowers using red, yellow and orange paper and glue them to the green ground cover.*