

- Vocabulary Guide -

Home

- **ceratopsia** - the formal term for all beaked and frilled dinosaurs that lived for approximately 100 million years
- **ceratopsians** - an informal term that refers to ceratopsia
- **Ceratopsidae** - the group of dinosaurs, also known as ceratopsid, that evolved on the prehistoric island of Laramidia. This group includes two distinct branches (groups), the centrosaurs and chasmosaurs.
- **fossil record** - any documentation and information provided by fossils
- **Laramidia** - the name for the prehistoric island that is present day western North America spanning from Mexico to Alaska
- **paleontologist** - a scientist who studies ancient life and fossil records

Level 1

- **frill** - the bony appendage on the back of a ceratopsian skull
- **ornate** - elaborately decorated
- **traits** - genetically determined physical characteristics

Level 2

- **clade** - a group of animals that includes the last common ancestor and all of its descendants in a defined set of taxa (also known as a branch)
- **fossil record** - any data or information provided by fossils
- **node** - points in a phylogenetic tree that show key points of evolutionary change (represents the common ancestors for all the species after that point)
- **phylogenetic tree** - a branching diagram that shows evolutionary relationships between organisms
- **stems** - clades or lineages within a phylogenetic tree
- **taxonomy** - a system for classifying organisms

Level 3

- **absolute dating** - age based on a specified number, for example isometric and radiocarbon dating
- **diversity** - the variety and variation of a population of organisms
- **geologic column** - graphic representation showing rock layers that indicate the age of the various layers that make up the Earth's crust
- **morphology** - the branch of science that deals with the physical form of organisms and the relationships between these structures (ex. traits)
- **radiocarbon dating** - a method of absolute dating that determines the age of a fossil based on isotopes (a stable physical characteristic) that are found in the volcanic ash within rock layers or the strata

Level 3 *(continued)*

- **relative dating** - determining the age of a fossil in relationship to where it was found within rock layers; oldest near the bottom and youngest near the top
- **rock layers** - layers in rock, also called strata, that represent a specific interval of geologic time
- **species diversity** - the number of different species present in an ecosystem and relative abundance of each of those species
- **strata** - a group of sedimentary rock layers
- **stratum** - an individual layer of sedimentary rock within a group of other rock layers

Level 4

- **biogeography (biogeographical)** - geographic distribution of plants and animals
- **Centrosaurinae (commonly known as a centrosaur)** - a member of the ceratopsian dinosaur family that lived in the Late Cretaceous with round noses and, typically, shorter and more ornate frills
- **ceratopsia** - the formal term for all beaked and frilled dinosaurs that lived for approximately 100 million years
- **ceratopsians** - an informal term that refers to ceratopsia
- **Ceratopsidae** - The group of dinosaurs, also known as ceratopsid, that evolved on the prehistoric island of Laramidia. This group includes two distinct branches (groups), the centrosaurs and chasmosaurs.
- **Chasmosaurinae (commonly known as a chasmosaur)** - a member of the ceratopsian dinosaur family that lived in the Late Cretaceous period with elongated noses and, typically, longer and less ornate frills
- **Laramidia** - the name for the prehistoric island that is present day western North America spanning from Mexico to Alaska
- **paleogeography** - what Earth looked like in the past, the configuration of ancient continents
- **relative time** - determining the general age range of one thing in relation to the timeframe of something else, typically rock layers
- **topographical** - physical features (rivers, valleys, mountains, etc.)

Level 5

- **audience** - a group of listeners
- **storyline** - the plot of a story or narrative
- **elevator pitch** - a brief speech that outlines an idea