



Junior Paleontologists Journal – Week 1



Dear Junior Paleontologists,

Let's have fun with fossils!

I am a paleontologist at The Museum of Northern Arizona. Some of you have visited the museum and you might remember some of the displays. We hope others get a chance to visit someday. Everyone is welcome to join the fun. Some of the fossils we use in the Junior Paleontologist program are at MNA. All the fossils in this program came from the Colorado Plateau or nearby – from northern Arizona and surrounding areas.

A Message from Dinosaur Dave

To become a Junior Paleontologist at MNA, work with your parents. They can help you read and do the activities. The program will have a new page every week, with things to do and puzzles to solve. I want to see your art and read your stories. *Parents: please review the note on the last page of today's activities.*

Later in the summer, MNA will invite you to a pizza party and I will lead a guided tour through our paleontology exhibits. If you can't come to the party, I hope we can see you some time when you visit the museum. All new Junior Paleontologists will get an official MNA badge.

Let's begin with our FAVORITE DINOSAURS

My favorite little dinosaur is *Coelophysis* (SEE-low-FIE-sis) from the Triassic Period of New Mexico. This skull of a nearly full-grown adult could fit in the palm of my hand.



One reason *Coelophysis* is my favorite little dinosaur is that this skull, and many others, came from a place called "Ghost Ranch." This beautiful skull is on display at MNA.

Can you make a drawing of the whole body of *Coelophysis* in life?

Look carefully at its teeth- can you figure out what it ate?



Coelophysis is the almost the oldest dinosaur in the world, like the GREAT GREAT GREAT uncle or aunt of all other dinosaurs.

What is *your* favorite dinosaur? _____

Why do you like that one? _____

What is your second favorite dinosaur? _____

Why do you like that one? _____

Make up a poem or draw a picture of your favorite dinosaur:

Write its name on the picture.



How is your dinosaur drawing the same as this painting?

How is your dinosaur different?

This painting is in the exhibit with the *Coelophysis* skull at MNA.

It shows three *Coelophysis* looking for food, and an armored reptile in the background. Little *Coelophysis* was a meat-eater.

It was bipedal, which means it walked on its two rear legs like a chicken or an ostrich.

Coelophysis had a very long tail.

Coelophysis was a quick predator, probably feeding on fish and other small animals. Its pointed teeth are perfect for catching small prey.

Do you have a question for paleontologist Dr. Dave at MNA?

(Dr. Dave will answer questions submitted to the comments on the MNA Facebook page)

Dinosaur Detectives - Can you help me solve this puzzle?

I got a letter from someone in grade school with this question:

Dear Dr. Gillette,

What is your favorite MITITER ?

It took me three days to figure out what this question means.

Can you figure it out?

Your Answer: _____

Clue: Read this line out loud very slowly "Little *Coelophysis* was a meat-eater."
The answer will be posted next week.

Note to Parents:

Any child who completes the equivalent of two Jr. Paleontologist activities a week during this project, either in this journal or on Facebook, will be invited to a future Paleontology Pizza Party with Dr. Dave Gillette at MNA.

The Jr. Paleontology prompts will also be posted on Facebook each weekday. If your child is doing the Jr. Paleontology project in this journal, please put your child's responses into the Facebook comments. Your child will be accessing these Facebook activities through you, so their participation implies your consent to have them participate. To protect their privacy online, please use only your child's initials.

If you prefer to not participate online, just keep all your child's responses in this journal and bring the completed journal to MNA after we reopen.

