



Trilobite Facts



- Trilobites are a type of extinct arthropod.
- Tri-lob-ite means three-part-body in Latin.
- Trilobite bodies can be divided into three axial (long direction) lobes
- Trilobites can also be divided into three longitudinal parts (short direction); a head called the cephalon, an abdominal region called the thorax, and a tail region called the pygidium.
- Trilobites were covered with an exoskeleton.
- Trilobite's exoskeletons were segmented, and they could roll into balls for protection.
- Some trilobite exoskeletons were covered with spines and bumps for added protection.
- Like many modern arthropods, trilobites shed their exoskeleton and developed a new one as they grew. This process is called molting. Most fossil trilobites are actually fossil trilobite molts. This is why fragmentary fossils are so common.
- Trilobites were the first group of animals in the animal kingdom to develop complex eyes.
- Trilobites were also one of the first organisms to develop multiple appendages for moving around.
- The oldest trilobite fossils are from the early Cambrian Period (about 550 million years ago). The youngest are from the Permian Period (about 250 million years ago).
- Trilobites were most numerous and abundant at the end of the Cambrian Period (about 500 million years ago).
- Trilobites lived in marine waters.
- Some trilobites could swim, others burrowed or crawled around on muddy sea floors.
- The smallest trilobite fossils are a centimeter or less in size.
- The largest trilobites were more than 70 cm long.

