

Pterosaurs

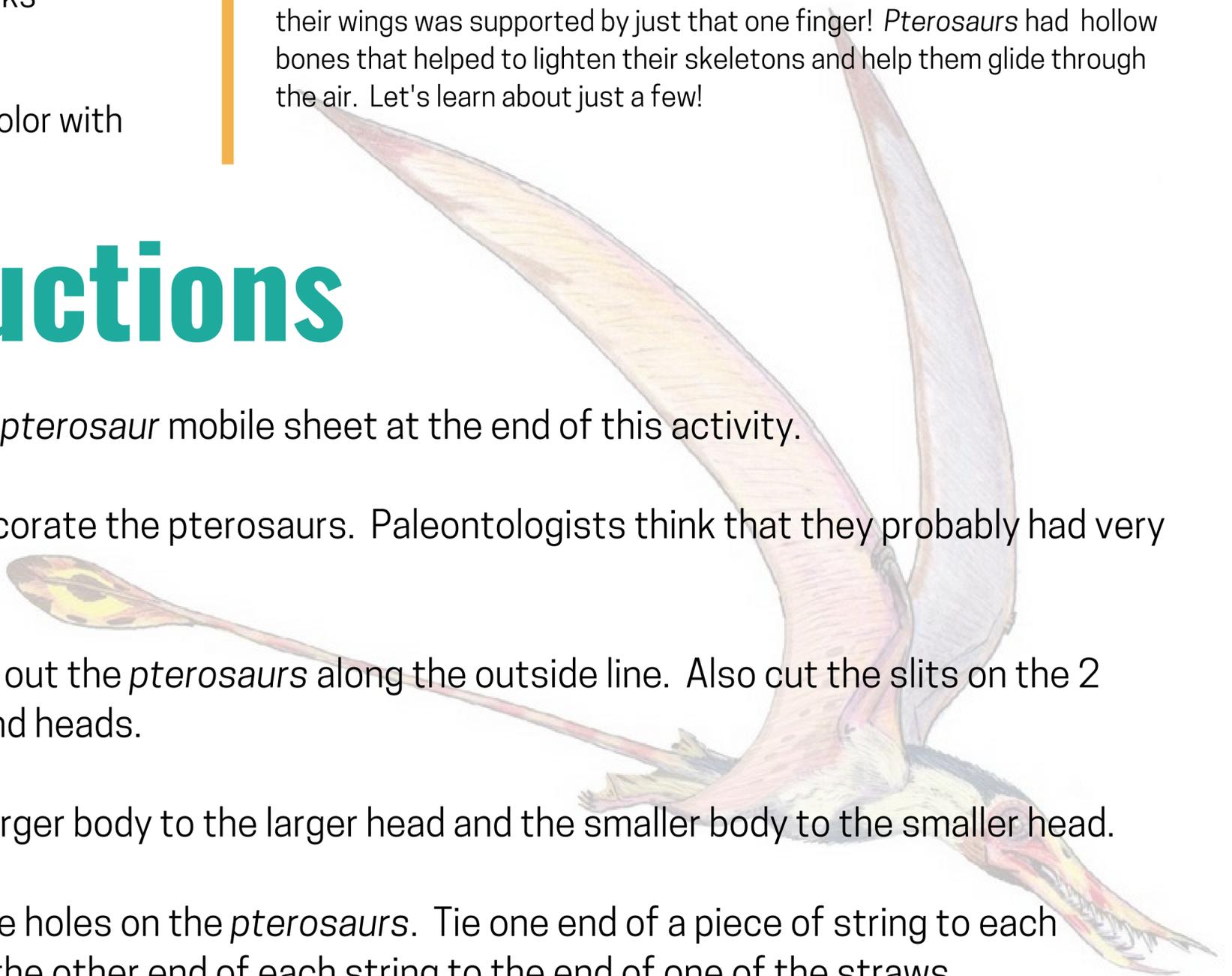
Materials

- Pterosaur mobile print out
- String
- 2 straws or sticks
- Scissors
- Something to color with
- Paper clip

Pterosaurs (tare-oh-sores) were amazing creatures that lived on our planet during the Mesozoic Era, the same time dinosaurs like *T. rex* and *Triceratops* lived. They are often confused with dinosaurs, but they are actually a totally different group of animals. Some were very, very big while others were pretty small. Their wings were very unique and were made from a membrane of skin stretched from the sides of their bodies out to the tip of their fourth finger. In fact, the second half of each of their wings was supported by just that one finger! *Pterosaurs* had hollow bones that helped to lighten their skeletons and help them glide through the air. Let's learn about just a few!

Instructions

1. Print out the *pterosaur* mobile sheet at the end of this activity.
2. Color and decorate the pterosaurs. Paleontologists think that they probably had very colorful crests!
3. Carefully cut out the *pterosaurs* along the outside line. Also cut the slits on the 2 larger bodies and heads.
4. Attach the larger body to the larger head and the smaller body to the smaller head.
5. Punch out the holes on the *pterosaurs*. Tie one end of a piece of string to each *pterosaur*. Tie the other end of each string to the end of one of the straws.
6. Unbend one half of the paper clip, leaving a "hook" on one end, and push it through the middle of each straw. Now find a place to hang up your *pterosaurs* and watch them soar!



Pterosaurs

Quetzalcoatlus (ket-zal-co-awt-ah-luss)

65 million years ago

This was one of the largest animals to ever live on our planet that could fly. It had a wingspan between 38-45 feet wide and a 6 foot long beak. On land, with their long necks, they almost looked like giraffes with wings, and were just as tall! Their bones have been found in Texas and Alberta, Canada. Because of its huge size, it was named after Quetzacoatl, the Aztec god of wind, air, and learning.



Pteranodon (tare-an-oh-don) 85 million years ago

One of the most recognizable pterosaurs, the *Pteranodon* was found all across North America. It's name means "toothless wing" because it didn't have any teeth in its sharp beak. It had a long crest on its head and wings that stretched 20 feet from tip to tip. But on the ground, they only stood about 4 feet tall. Because of where it is found, usually in rock that used to be covered by an ocean, they probably soared over the water, grabbing fish with their beaks.



Pterosaurs

Rhamphorhynchu (ram-for-ring-cuss) 150 million years ago

This is the only *pterosaur* on our mobile sheet that has teeth and a long tail. *Rhamphorynchus* was a primitive *pterosaur* and bigger than its close cousin, *Pterodactyl*. Its long, needle-like teeth helped it to grab fish and then interlocked to trap the fish in their mouths so that they couldn't get away. It had a wingspan of about 5-6 feet and they were found in Europe, mostly England, Spain, and Germany. Its name means "beak snout" because of the long, curved shape of its mouth.



Tapejara (tah-pey-ja-rah) 106 million years ago

Tapejara is most well known for the enormous crest on its head. Not much is known about this amazing *pterosaur* since paleontologists have only ever found ONE! Luckily it was a very nice and complete specimen. They lived in Brazil and were fairly small, only having a wingspan about 4-5 feet wide.



