



Trilobites

By

Doug Mann

Trilobites (try-low-bites) are fossils of an animal that lived long ago. The first trilobites lived more than 500 million years ago.

That time was called the Cambrian (cam-bree-an) Period. The Cambrian Period was a part of the Paleozoic Era. During this time all of the plants and animals lived in the oceans.

Trilobite means three lobes. Trilobite bodies all have three lobes. The axial lobe is the one in the center. The lobes on the sides are called the pleural lobes

Their bodies also have three sections. A cephalon, a thorax, and a pygidium.

The cephalon is the head. The thorax is the middle part. It is made up of many hinged sections. This allowed the trilobite to roll into a ball. This was a way that it could protect itself. The pygidium was the tail section.

There are many different kinds of trilobites. Some trilobites were good swimmers. Others crawled on the ocean floor. Some could dig into the sandy bottoms. They had many legs. Most of them had antennas. Trilobites were some of the first animals to have eyes.

Trilobites are arthropods. Insects, spiders, crabs, and lobsters are also arthropods. All arthropods have an exoskeleton and legs with joints to help them move.

The trilobites became extinct at the end of the Permian Period. The Permian period was the last period of the Paleozoic Era. No one knows why but something happened at that time that killed most of the animals. It is called the great Permian extinction.