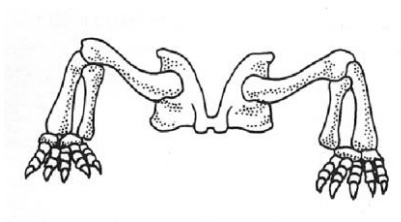


I Am Not a Lizard

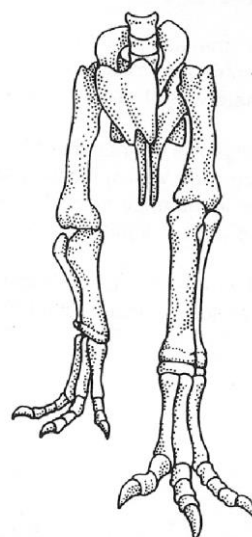
Courtesy of Wildlife of Gondwana Activity kit, PrimeSci!, Monash University.

Dinosaurs and their relatives come from an animal known as a thecodont. (Pronounced THEE-co-dont). Some of these were sprawling crocodile-like animals that usually hunted in water and swam using their tails. Others became land-dwellers and some even became bipedal.

From the thecodonts many species of dinosaurs evolved. The name means "Terrible Lizard". It was a name given by a palaeontologist name Richard Owen in 1841. However, dinosaurs are not lizards, although lizards and dinosaurs are both reptiles. One of the major differences is that dinosaurs developed a posture, which enables them to efficiently support their sometimes huge bulk, instead of having to rest for significant times in their bellies or suspend themselves with legs out to the side.

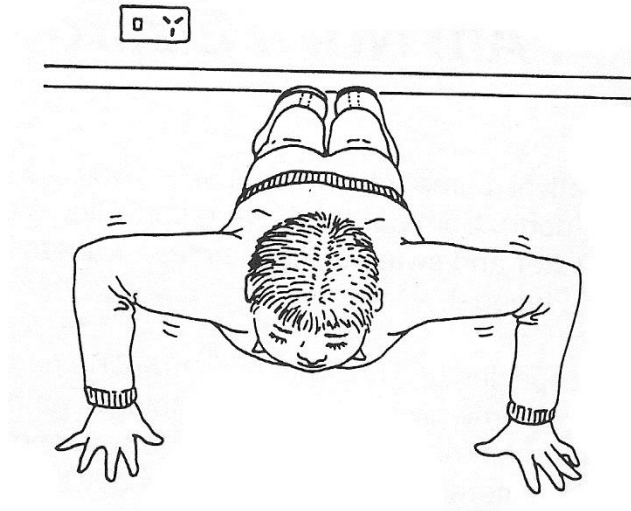


Lizards have a sprawling stance which is not very energy efficient (it is tiring to walk this way try it!). That is why crocodiles and lizards spend a lot of time resting on their bellies. Do you think all mammal-like reptiles stood like this too?



Dinosaurs developed an upright posture. Animals like mammals and dinosaurs tuck their legs under their body. This is a very efficient posture. Mammals can stand and walk for a much longer period of time (than can lizards) without running out of energy.

Walk the Walk



Do a push up off the floor, but only go half way up: keep your elbows bent. Try to "walk" in this way. Now try it with your arms directly underneath you.

1. Which was easier?

Dinosaur posture

Lizard posture

2. On the picture of the arm below, colour in where you felt the most pain. This is where your muscles were working hardest using lots of energy or where there was stress on a joint.
3. What are the names of the muscles/bones and joints in your arm where the pressure was applied? Label your diagram. Have your teacher help you look up in the encyclopedia, reference book, or on the internet, the names of the muscles, bones and joints.
4. If you were to become better at walking like a lizard what parts of your arm would you need to strengthen or change?

