



Carefully read the excerpt below, taken from an article in NY Times, then answer the three questions that follow.

First Fossilized Dinosaur Brain Found

1 Paleontologists have uncovered what they believe to be the first ever fossilized brain tissue from a dinosaur.

5 The fossil, which looks like a mere pebble, was found in East Sussex, England, by an amateur fossil hunter in 2004. Using a scanning electron microscope, a team of researchers from Britain and Australia performed a forensic examination of it. They discovered that the fossil contained, blood vessels and capillaries, as well as tissue from the cortex, the outer layer of the brain, and the meninges, which is the membrane that helps keep the brain in place.

10 “The unusual aspect of this is the way the soft tissues, which are so fragile and 133 million years old, have actually been preserved,” said David Norman, a paleontologist at the University of Cambridge and author of the study published Thursday by the Geological Society of London. “It’s not the entire brain — it’s just remarkable preservation of soft tissues you wouldn’t expect to have preserved.”

15 The researchers think that some time during the Early Cretaceous Period, a massive herbivorous dinosaur similar to an Iguanodon fell into a shallow swamp or bog. There, its head quickly became buried beneath the sediment. As it stewed in the stagnant, acidic pool, minerals began to replace the soft tissue in the cranium, preserving it for millions of years.

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1 “The acid solution would have pickled the parts of the brain that were immersed,” Dr. Norman said.

5 He added that the brain, which is incomplete, does not tell us much about dinosaurs. We already knew that they had brains, and we already thought their brains would probably look similar to those of crocodiles and birds. Instead, he thinks the finding will help get paleontologists to investigate their fossils more carefully because they could never know what might be hiding within them.

“It’s uniquely remarkable,” he said, “but it’s not going to change the way we think.”

Source Reference: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/28/science/first-fossilized-dinosaur-brain.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fscience&action=click&contentCollection=science®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=7&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0

1. In the passage, the word “stewed” most nearly means:

- A) Floated
- B) Swam
- C) Dissolved

- D) Boiled
- E) Combusted

2. Dr. David Norman would probably disagree with which of the following statements?

- A) Soft tissues of dinosaur bodies are not usually well-preserved.
- B) If a paleontologist doesn't find anything important when they first look at a fossil, they should dig for another one.
- C) Scientists had some idea what the brains of dinosaurs would look like prior to the discovery mentioned in the article.
- D) The discovery of the dinosaur brain will not have a huge impact on the study of ancient life.
- E) The discovery of the dinosaur brain is interesting.

3. The central point of the passage is to:

- A. Tell the story of how an amateur paleontologist made a discovery.
- B. Give one scientist's opinion about the implications of the discovery.
- C. Inform readers that the first fossilized piece of a dinosaur's brain has been unearthed.
- D. Encourage readers to learn more about dinosaurs.
- E. Explain the anatomy of the brain.

Answer Key:

1. D
2. B
3. C