Fossil Safari

Background Information

Imagine that you are going on a world-wide expedition to find fossils of extinct organisms. From the evidence you find, you hope to obtain a picture of what life on Earth was like about 250 million years ago.

Materials

Crayons, Color Pencils, or Markers
Scissors
Glue
Fossil Safari Map
Fossil Cut-outs

Procedure

1. Color each group of fossil cut-outs according to the following key:

Key		
A	*Glossopteris*	Green
B	*Kannemeyerid*	Yellow
C	Labyrinthodont	Purple
D	*Lystrosaurus*	Orange
E	*Cynognathus*	Red
F	Thecodont	Blue
G	*Mesosaurus*	Brown

2. Cut out the fossils using scissors.
3. Cut out the pictures of the organisms.
4. Glue the Fossil Safari Map and the pictures of the organisms to a sheet of tag board.
5. Find START on your Fossil Safari Map.
6. Move along the path. When you come to a box that contains a letter, take a fossil cut-out from the color pile that matches the letter in the box. Using the glue, attach the cut-out to the map over the letter.
7. Repeat Step 4 until you come to the box marked FINISH. You should now have a map showing 23 fossils.
8. Using this map, answer the questions on the back of this paper.

Questions

Complete these tables and questions on the back of your poster:

1. Compare the number of different fossils found on each continent.

Continent	# Different Fossils	Total # Fossils
Africa		
Asia		
Antarctica		
Australia		
Europe		
North America		
South America		

2. On which continents do the fossils of each organism appear?

Fossil	Continents
Glossopteris	
Kannemeyerid	
Labyrinthodont	
Lystrosaurus	
Cynognathus	
Thecodont	
Mesosaurus	

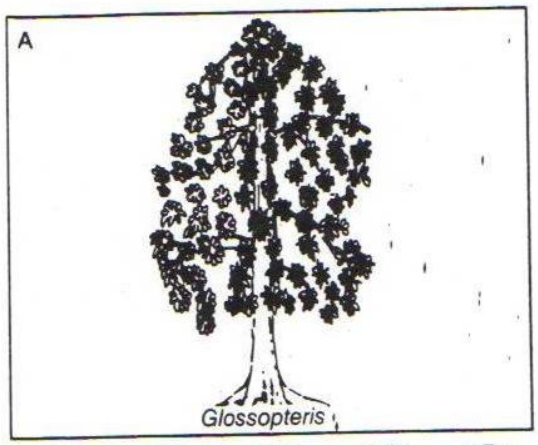
3. *Mesosaurus* was a small lizard-like animal about 20 centimeters long. It could survive only in shallow freshwater environments. Look at the locations where fossils of *Mesosaurus* were found. Does it seem likely that this animal traveled between these two areas? Explain your answer.

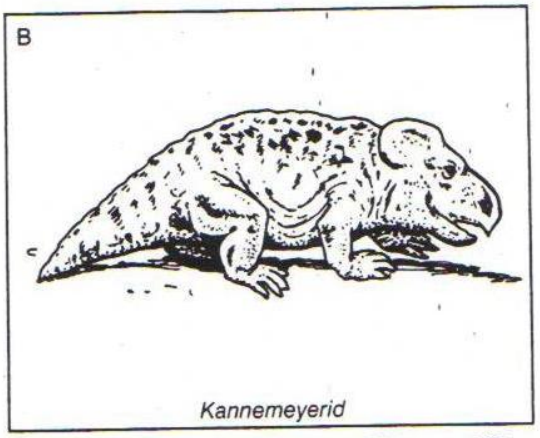
4. *Glossopteris* belonged to an extinct (no longer living) group of plants known as seed ferns. Although modern ferns do not produce seeds, these plants did. Where on your safari did you find Glossopteris?

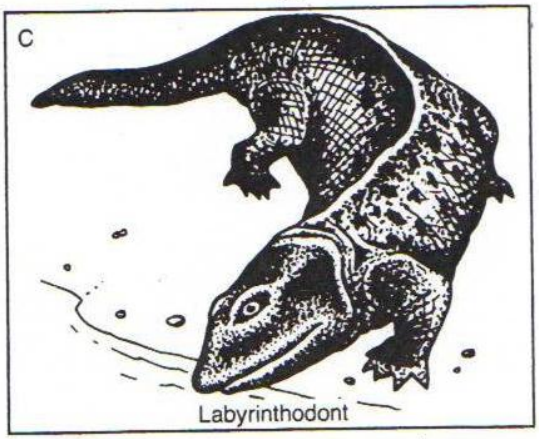
   Does it seem likely that one type of plant could live in all of these places today? Think about the different climates and explain your answer.

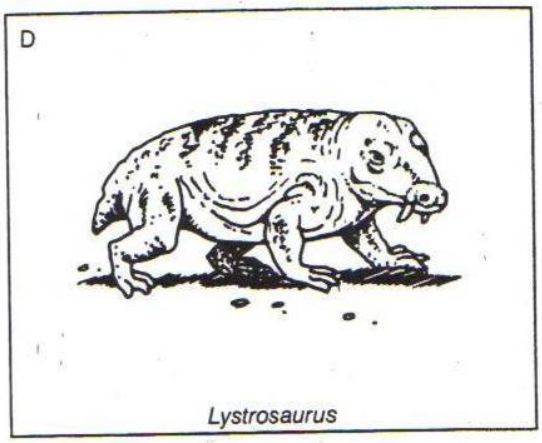
5. Does the distribution of any of the other fossils organisms seem strange or unlikely? Explain.

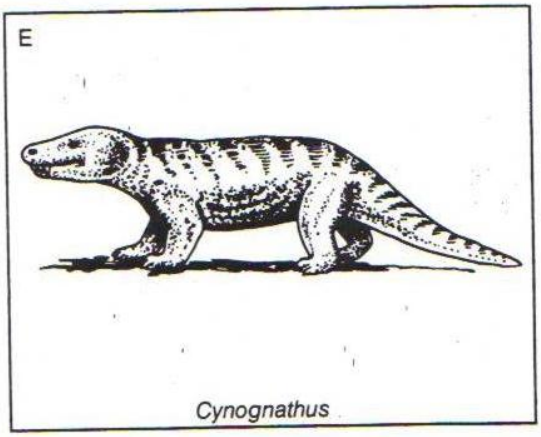
6. How could you explain the distribution of the fossils your safari has uncovered?

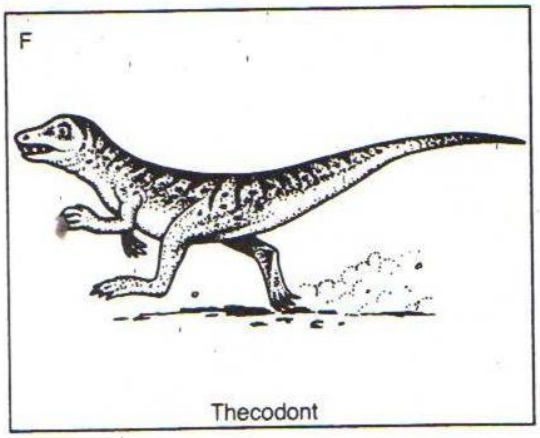

A
Glossopteris

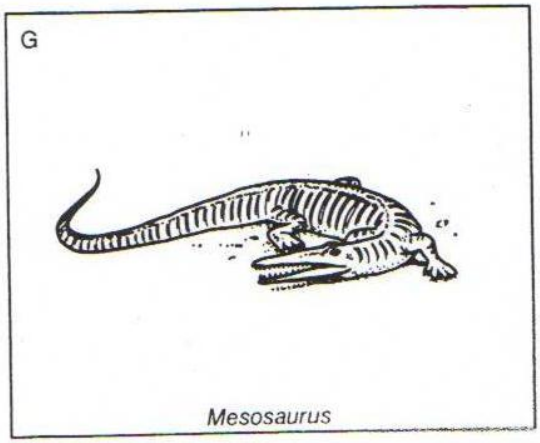

B
Kannemeyerid


C
Labyrinthodont


D
Lystrosaurus


E
Cynognathus


F
Thecodont


G
Mesosaurus

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