***Permian Monsters: Life Before the Dinosaurs***

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**Did You Know?**

* The Permian Period ended with the largest mass extinction in Earth’s history when more than 95 percent of marine and 70 percent of terrestrial species were lost.
* This extinction is known as ‘The Great Dying’ and lasted nearly 200,000 years.
* The Permian Period is the final phase of the Paleozoic Era. The mass extinction that ended the Permian Period led to the emergence of new life, including dinosaurs.
* Archosaurs and cynodonts, animals that would later become dinosaurs and mammals respectively, began to appear during the Permian Period.
* Temperatures in the Permian Period varied significantly depending on the time of day, with below-freezing nights and mid-day temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
* During the Permian Period, all of Earth’s major landmasses were collected into one supercontinent known as Pangaea.
* Insects were the ultimate aerial predators because the increased oxygen in the atmosphere made them far larger than they are today.
* Bugs with mouthparts modified for piercing and suckling plant matter evolved during the Permian Period.
* The saber-toothed Gorgonsopid, the top predator of the late Permian, was a reptile the size of a large bear. They belong to the group therapsids, believed to be the ancestors of all mammals.
* Because most land animals of the Permian were herbivores, much of their evolution is linked to the evolution of terrestrial plant life, which was extensive in this period.
* The remains of Lystrosaurus, a survivor of the Permian extinction, have been found on every continent and play an important role in continental drift theory. They are also believed to have comprised half of all life on the planet at their peak.

Dimetrodons possess small and large teeth which is why their name means ‘two measures of tooth.’