

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack

Reading comprehension, science, maths and writing

Ages 8-11 · 16 worksheets · answer keys included

Sixteen printable worksheets built on one KidzFeed guide, for ages 8 to 11. Every answer can be found on the sheet it is asked on. The pack moves from finding facts, through explaining them, to arguing a case and writing a report, and it finishes by asking the children to remember the lot. Answer keys for every sheet are at the back.

What is in this pack

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Meet Smilodon | Read the fact cards, then fill in the fact file. |
| 2. Word Work | The words a scientist would use for this animal. |
| 3. Fact Finder | Can you tell what is true from what only sounds true? |
| 4. Six Things People Get Wrong | Being a good scientist means correcting a story politely. |
| 5. Built for the Job | Every part of this animal did something. |
| 6. Smilodon by Numbers | Reading a scale, and working with the figures. |
| 7. Smilodon and the Lion | Two big cats that never met. |
| 8. Growing Up | A cub was not born with the famous teeth. |
| 9. The La Brea Tar Pits | Almost everything we know comes from one place. |
| 10. Did They Live in Groups? | A real argument between real scientists. You decide. |
| 11. Why Did They Die Out? | Two things were happening at once. |
| 12. Word Search and Review | Find the words, then prove you know what they mean. |
| 13. Write About It | Plan first, then write. That is how good writing gets done. |
| 14. Draw, Label and Invent | Show what you know without writing a word. |
| 15. The Big Review | Everything in the pack, all at once. |
| 16. What I Learned | Look back at what you knew, and what you know now. |

How to use this pack

Sixteen worksheets, in order, but they do not have to be done in order or in one go.

- Worksheet 1 carries the fact cards the rest of the pack leans on. Do that one first.
- Every question after it can be answered from a fact card printed on the same sheet. A child never has to remember something they were not given, and never has to go online.
- Each worksheet takes about 15 to 25 minutes. Two or three a week works better than all of them at once, because the later sheets deliberately ask again about the earlier ones.
- Worksheets 10 and 15 are the ones to keep if you only have time for a few: one asks a child to weigh evidence on both sides, the other asks them to recall the whole pack from memory.
- For a younger or less confident child, read the fact cards aloud together first and let them answer in note form. For an older one, cover the fact cards before the recall sheets.
- The answer keys are all at the back, so the pack can be handed out whole. Tear them off first.
- Free to print and copy for classroom and home use. The facts come from one KidzFeed guide, named at the foot of the key.

Why the pack is built the way it is

Each choice below comes from teaching research, not from what looks busiest on a page.

- Answering from memory beats reading again. Sheets 12 and 15 ask about material from earlier sheets, on purpose, after a gap.
- Facts come back in a different shape each time: a fact file, then a true or false, then a chart, then a quiz. Being asked the same thing a second way is what makes it stick.
- Every "what" question is followed by a "why" question. Explaining why a fact is true is what turns it into understanding rather than a memorised line.
- Words and pictures together carry more than either alone, so drawing, labelling, a chart and a Venn diagram all appear beside the writing.
- Writing frames come before free writing. A child plans in notes on worksheet 13, then writes from the plan.
- Worksheet 10 gives a genuine scientific disagreement with evidence on both sides. Children are asked to choose and justify, not to find the right answer, because that is how the subject actually works.
- The two self-check lists tell a child what a good answer contains before they are marked on it.

Where this pack maps onto the curriculum

A mapping offered in good faith, to save you the job. Check it against your own scheme of work.

Curriculum	Strand	Worksheets
US — CCSS ELA	RI.3.1 / RI.4.1 ask and answer questions, referring explicitly to the text	1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12
US — CCSS ELA	RI.3.4 work out the meaning of words and phrases in a text	2
US — CCSS ELA	RI.3.8 / RI.4.3 explain how ideas and events in a text connect	11
US — CCSS ELA	W.3.1 / W.4.1 write an opinion, supported by reasons	10, 7
US — CCSS ELA	W.3.2 / W.4.2 write to inform, grouped into sections	13
US — NGSS	3-LS4-1 fossils as evidence of organisms and environments long ago	9, 8
US — NGSS	3-LS4-3 / 3-LS4-4 survival in a particular habitat, and what happens when it changes	5, 11
US — CCSS Math	3.MD.B.3 draw and read a scaled bar graph	6
US — CCSS Math	4.MD.A.2 / 4.MD.C.5 measurement problems, and angle measure	6
UK — English KS2	Reading: retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction	1, 3, 9, 12
UK — English KS2	Reading: distinguish fact from opinion, and check a meaning makes sense	4, 10
UK — English KS2	Writing: non-chronological report, planned then drafted	13
UK — English KS2	Writing: a balanced discussion of two points of view	10
UK — Science Y6	Evolution and inheritance: fossils tell us about living things from long ago	8, 9
UK — Science Y4/Y6	Adaptation, and how a change in environment can put living things at risk	5, 11
UK — Maths Y3/Y4	Statistics: interpret and present data with bar charts	6
UK — Maths Y5	Geometry: compare and estimate angles in degrees	6

Meet Smilodon

Read the fact cards, then fill in the fact file.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Not a tiger

Smilodon was a saber-toothed cat, not a tiger. It was only distantly related to tigers. Scientists call it the saber-toothed cat.

Where it lived

Smilodon lived only in the Americas, from western North America down to Argentina and Chile. It never lived in Africa, Asia or Europe.

Country it liked

It hunted in open grassland, scrub and woodland. It needed cover to ambush from, because a heavy, short-legged cat cannot chase prey across open ground.

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

How it hunted

It wrestled prey to the ground with its huge front legs and held it still. Then it made one careful bite into the soft throat or belly, where no bone could snap a tooth.

Built to grab

Smilodon was short in the back legs and very thick through the neck, chest and shoulders, with a short bobbed tail. It stood about a metre at the shoulder. It was not built to run.

What it ate

It hunted large, slow, heavy animals: bison, ancient horses, camels, ground sloths, and young mammoths and mastodons. There is no good evidence that it hunted people.

Complete the Fact File

Use the fact cards above. Write short answers.

1. What kind of cat was it?

2. Which continents did it live on?

3. Which habitats did it hunt in?

4. How long were its canine teeth?

5. How strong was its bite?

6. How wide could it open its jaws?

7. How tall was it at the shoulder?

8. Name three animals it hunted.

Word Work

The words a scientist would use for this animal.

Name _____

Date _____

A. Match the word to its meaning

Write the letter of the matching meaning next to each word.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------|--|
| 1. Carnivore | _____ | A. An animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal |
| 2. Ambush | _____ | B. An animal that eats meat |
| 3. Extinct | _____ | C. To hide and wait, then attack suddenly from close up |
| 4. Fossil | _____ | D. An animal that hunts other animals for food |
| 5. Predator | _____ | E. The remains of a living thing, kept in rock or asphalt for a very long time |
| 6. Prey | _____ | F. Gone for ever, with none left alive anywhere |

B. Use each word yourself

Write a sentence about Smilodon using each word. Use the fact cards to help you.

Word	My sentence about Smilodon
Carnivore	
Ambush	
Extinct	
Predator	

Fact Finder

Can you tell what is true from what only sounds true?

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Not a tiger

Smilodon was a saber-toothed cat, not a tiger. It was only distantly related to tigers. Scientists call it the saber-toothed cat.

Where it lived

Smilodon lived only in the Americas, from western North America down to Argentina and Chile. It never lived in Africa, Asia or Europe.

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

How it hunted

It wrestled prey to the ground with its huge front legs and held it still. Then it made one careful bite into the soft throat or belly, where no bone could snap a tooth.

Why it died out

Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago, as the last ice age ended. The climate warmed and turned grassland into forest, and people spread across the Americas and hunted the same big animals.

A. True or False?

Read each statement. Tick one box.

	True	False
1. Smilodon was a kind of tiger.	☐	☐
2. Smilodon lived in North America and South America.	☐	☐
3. Smilodon also lived in Africa and Asia.	☐	☐
4. Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm.	☐	☐
5. Its bite was stronger than a lion's bite.	☐	☐
6. It could open its jaws wider than a lion can.	☐	☐
7. It killed prey by biting straight through bone.	☐	☐
8. It used its front legs to hold prey still before it bit.	☐	☐
9. Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago.	☐	☐
10. Smilodon is still alive in parts of South America.	☐	☐

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Fact Finder

B. Circle the Best Answer

Circle one letter for each question.

1. Scientists call this animal a...
A. saber-toothed cat B. saber-toothed tiger C. saber-toothed dog
2. Its canine teeth were about as long as...
A. a pencil sharpener B. a school ruler C. a school bus
3. Compared with a lion, its bite was...
A. three times stronger B. about the same C. about a third as strong
4. It could open its jaws to about...
A. 120 degrees B. 65 degrees C. 20 degrees
5. The power for the kill came from its...
A. tail B. front legs C. back legs
6. Its teeth would snap if they...
A. touched water B. twisted against bone C. got cold
7. It needed cover to hunt because it could not...
A. see very well B. climb trees C. chase prey over open ground
8. Smilodon ate...
A. only plants B. large, slow, heavy animals C. insects and fish

Six Things People Get Wrong

Being a good scientist means correcting a story politely.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Not a tiger

Smilodon was a saber-toothed cat, not a tiger. It was only distantly related to tigers. Scientists call it the saber-toothed cat.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

Never met a dinosaur

More than 60 million years separate the last dinosaurs from the first Smilodon. The two never lived at the same time.

Could it close its mouth?

It could close its mouth. But its sabres were probably too long to hide behind its lips, so the tips most likely showed even when its jaws were shut.

Sabres evolved again and again

Long stabbing canine teeth did not evolve only once. They appeared several separate times in different animals, including in marsupial relatives in South America that were not cats at all. Scientists call that convergent evolution.

Why it died out

Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago, as the last ice age ended. The climate warmed and turned grassland into forest, and people spread across the Americas and hunted the same big animals.

A. What people say, and what is really true

Read what someone has said. Use the fact cards to write the true version next to it.

What people often say	What is really true
"It was a tiger."	
"It had a crushing bite."	
"It hunted dinosaurs."	
"It could not close its mouth."	
"Saber teeth only evolved once."	
"The ice age killed it off."	

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Six Things People Get Wrong

B. Explain it to a friend

Answer in full sentences.

1. A friend says Smilodon fought dinosaurs. How would you explain, kindly, that this cannot be right?

2. Why do you think so many people believe Smilodon was a tiger?

Built for the Job

Every part of this animal did something.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

How it hunted

It wrestled prey to the ground with its huge front legs and held it still. Then it made one careful bite into the soft throat or belly, where no bone could snap a tooth.

Built to grab

Smilodon was short in the back legs and very thick through the neck, chest and shoulders, with a short bobbed tail. It stood about a metre at the shoulder. It was not built to run.

Country it liked

It hunted in open grassland, scrub and woodland. It needed cover to ambush from, because a heavy, short-legged cat cannot chase prey across open ground.

A. Match the body part to its job

Write the letter of the matching job next to each body part.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Long canine teeth | _____ | A. Kept the cat low and heavy, not fast |
| 2. Huge front legs | _____ | B. Made the last, careful bite into soft flesh |
| 3. A very wide gape | _____ | C. Wrestled prey to the ground and held it still |
| 4. Short back legs | _____ | D. Not used for balance in a long chase, because there was no long chase |
| 5. A short, bobbed tail | _____ | E. Let the jaws open far enough to clear those long teeth |

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Built for the Job

B. Think like a scientist

Use the fact cards. Answer in your own words.

1. Why would scrub and woodland suit a heavy hunter better than open grassland?

2. Its teeth were long but easy to break. How did the way it hunted keep them safe?

Smilodon by Numbers

Reading a scale, and working with the figures.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Three kinds of Smilodon

Smilodon gracilis lived in North America and weighed about 55 to 100 kg. Smilodon fatalis weighed about 160 to 280 kg. Smilodon populator lived in South America and reached about 400 kg.

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

Growing up

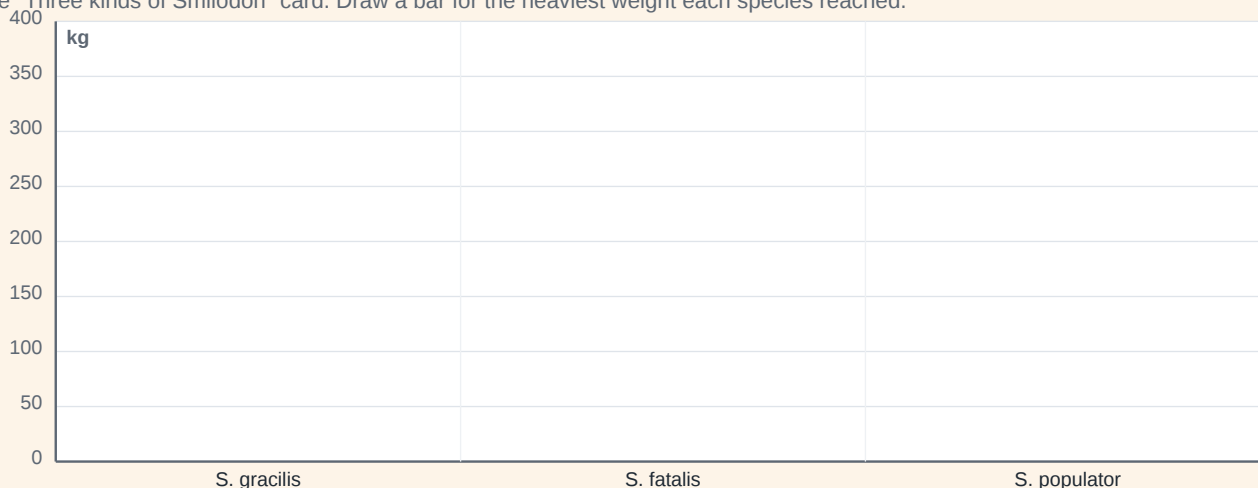
A cub grew milk canines first, like a kitten. The adult sabres pushed through later and grew about 6 mm a month. They were not full size until the cat was about three years old.

Why it died out

Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago, as the last ice age ended. The climate warmed and turned grassland into forest, and people spread across the Americas and hunted the same big animals.

A. Draw the bar chart

Use the "Three kinds of Smilodon" card. Draw a bar for the heaviest weight each species reached.



Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Smilodon by Numbers**B. Number problems**

Show your working. You may use a ruler.

1. A sabre grew about 6 mm each month. About how many millimetres did it grow in one year?

2. Smilodon could open its jaws to about 120 degrees. A lion manages about 65. How many degrees wider is that?

3. *S. populator* reached about 400 kg. *S. gracilis* could weigh as little as 55 kg. What is the difference?

4. A school ruler is 30 cm long. A Smilodon canine reached about 28 cm. How much shorter than the ruler is that?

5. Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago. How many centuries ago is that? (A century is 100 years.)

Smilodon and the Lion

Two big cats that never met.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Not a tiger

Smilodon was a saber-toothed cat, not a tiger. It was only distantly related to tigers. Scientists call it the saber-toothed cat.

Where it lived

Smilodon lived only in the Americas, from western North America down to Argentina and Chile. It never lived in Africa, Asia or Europe.

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

A surprising bite

Its bite was only about a third as strong as a lion's. But it could open its jaws to about 120 degrees, where a lion manages about 65.

Built to grab

Smilodon was short in the back legs and very thick through the neck, chest and shoulders, with a short bobbed tail. It stood about a metre at the shoulder. It was not built to run.

What it ate

It hunted large, slow, heavy animals: bison, ancient horses, camels, ground sloths, and young mammoths and mastodons. There is no good evidence that it hunted people.

How it hunted

It wrestled prey to the ground with its huge front legs and held it still. Then it made one careful bite into the soft throat or belly, where no bone could snap a tooth.

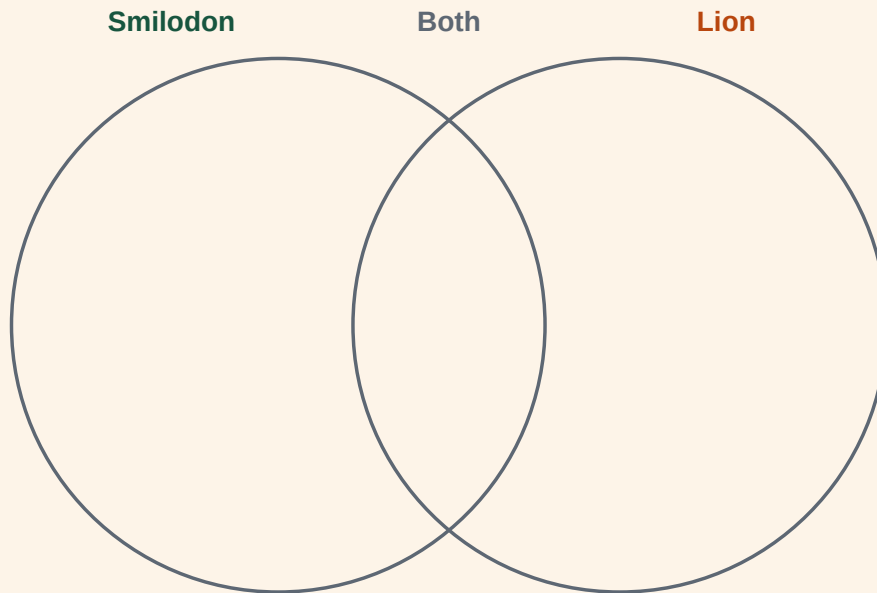
Why it died out

Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago, as the last ice age ended. The climate warmed and turned grassland into forest, and people spread across the Americas and hunted the same big animals.

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Smilodon and the Lion**A. Sort the facts**

Each fact below is true of Smilodon, of a lion, or of both. Write its number in the right part of the diagram.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. It is a cat. | 6. It hunts large plant-eating animals. |
| 2. Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm. | 7. It has short back legs and a short bobbed tail. |
| 3. It lived only in the Americas. | 8. It can open its jaws to about 120 degrees. |
| 4. It is alive today. | 9. It can open its jaws to about 65 degrees. |
| 5. It has the stronger bite. | 10. It died out about 10,000 years ago. |

**B. Who would win?**

This is the question everyone asks. Answer it like a scientist.

1. Why can nobody ever really answer "could a saber-toothed cat beat a lion?"

2. Smilodon was stronger in the front legs and the lion bites harder. If they ever had met, what would each one need to do to win? Explain your thinking.

Growing Up

A cub was not born with the famous teeth.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Growing up

A cub grew milk canines first, like a kitten. The adult sabres pushed through later and grew about 6 mm a month. They were not full size until the cat was about three years old.

The La Brea Tar Pits

Sticky asphalt welled up in what is now Los Angeles and was hidden by dust and leaves. Animals walked in and could not pull free. More than 2,000 Smilodon have been found there.

A. Put the cub's life in order

Cut out the six cards. Work out the order, then stick them in the boxes below.

Both at once

For a while the cub carries the milk tooth and the growing sabre side by side.

Born

The cub is born with no sabres at all.

Full size

By about three years old the sabres have finished growing.

Milk teeth

It grows a set of milk canines first, exactly as a kitten does.

Growing on

The sabre carries on growing by itself, about 6 mm every month.

Pushing through

The adult sabres start to push through beside the milk teeth.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Growing Up

B. What does that tell us?

Use the "Growing up" card.

1. A young Smilodon carried a weapon it could not yet use properly. What does that suggest about how long a cub stayed with its mother?

2. Cub bones are found at the La Brea Tar Pits. Why is that useful to scientists?

The La Brea Tar Pits

Almost everything we know comes from one place.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

The La Brea Tar Pits

Sticky asphalt welled up in what is now Los Angeles and was hidden by dust and leaves. Animals walked in and could not pull free. More than 2,000 Smilodon have been found there.

A state fossil

Smilodon fatalis is the official state fossil of California. Digging at the La Brea Tar Pits is still going on today.

What the bones tell us

Chemical tests on Smilodon bones show that the North American cats mostly hunted animals from forest and woodland edges, rather than from open plains.

A. How the trap worked

Cut out the six cards, work out the order, then stick them in the boxes below.

Hidden

Dust and leaves blow across the pool until it looks like ordinary ground.

Bones build up

This happens again and again for tens of thousands of years.

Stuck too

The predators walk in after it, and they cannot pull free either.

Asphalt

Sticky asphalt wells up slowly from under the ground.

A visitor

A heavy animal walks on to it and cannot pull its feet free.

Company

Its struggling attracts predators, which come to take an easy meal.

1

2

3

4

5

6

B. Thinking about the evidence

Use the fact cards.

1. More than 2,000 Smilodon have come out of these pits. Why do you think there are so many predators in one place?

2. Chemical tests on the bones tell scientists what the cats ate. Why is that better evidence than just guessing from the shape of the teeth?

Did They Live in Groups?

A real argument between real scientists. You decide.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Alone or in groups?

Many La Brea skeletons have badly broken hips and spines that healed. A cat with a shattered hip cannot hunt, so something must have fed it. Other scientists say the tar pits may simply trap more cats that hunted alone.

The La Brea Tar Pits

Sticky asphalt welled up in what is now Los Angeles and was hidden by dust and leaves. Animals walked in and could not pull free. More than 2,000 Smilodon have been found there.

A. Sort the evidence

Read the "Alone or in groups?" card. Write each piece of evidence in the right column.

Evidence that they lived in groups	Evidence that we cannot be sure

B. What do you think?

There is no right answer here. There is only a well-argued one.

1. Which side do you find more convincing, and why? Use at least one piece of evidence.

2. What new evidence would help scientists settle this argument?

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Did They Live in Groups?

C. Check your argument

Tick each box when your answer above does it.

In my answer I...	Yes	Not yet
said clearly which side I chose	☐	☐
used at least one piece of evidence from the reading	☐	☐
explained why that evidence matters	☐	☐
said what the other side would argue back	☐	☐

Why Did They Die Out?

Two things were happening at once.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

Why it died out

Smilodon died out about 10,000 years ago, as the last ice age ended. The climate warmed and turned grassland into forest, and people spread across the Americas and hunted the same big animals.

One job only

Smilodon was built for one job: ambushing big, heavy prey. When the big prey vanished it had no fallback. A leopard can live on anything from a beetle to an antelope. A saber-tooth could not.

Smilodon and people

People had already reached the Americas before Smilodon died out, so humans and saber-toothed cats overlapped for a time. There is no good evidence that Smilodon hunted people.

What it ate

It hunted large, slow, heavy animals: bison, ancient horses, camels, ground sloths, and young mammoths and mastodons. There is no good evidence that it hunted people.

A. Cause and effect

Fill in the missing boxes using the fact cards.

What happened	What it meant for Smilodon
The climate warmed and grassland turned into forest.	
People spread across the Americas and hunted large animals.	
The big, heavy prey animals disappeared.	
	Smilodon could not switch to smaller food.

B. Check you have it

Circle one letter for each question.

1. Smilodon died out...

A. as the last ice age ended B. in the middle of the ice age C. before the ice age began

2. A leopard can eat anything from a beetle to an antelope. Smilodon...

A. could do the same B. could only take big, heavy prey C. ate mostly plants

3. Humans and Smilodon...

A. never overlapped B. overlapped in the Americas for a time C. lived together for millions of years

Smilodon: The Complete Worksheet Pack — Why Did They Die Out?

C. One more question

Answer in full sentences.

1. Being a specialist made Smilodon very good at one thing. Explain why that became a problem.

Word Search and Review

Find the words, then prove you know what they mean.

Name _____

Date _____

A. Find the ten words

Words run across, down, diagonally, and some run backwards.

T	T	L	A	H	P	S	A	C	C	E	O	P
S	N	C	W	E	U	U	B	A	M	P	R	A
S	P	E	C	I	E	S	R	A	P	T	U	N
L	I	W	O	E	T	N	T	M	A	R	W	D
C	P	R	E	Y	I	S	S	B	Y	Y	T	A
C	A	T	O	V	C	T	M	U	A	C	U	I
E	C	N	O	R	S	Y	I	S	D	V	F	M
X	N	R	I	A	F	B	L	H	I	W	W	B
T	E	U	B	N	A	S	O	H	P	S	U	G
I	V	E	E	W	E	G	D	R	A	Y	R	E
N	R	V	N	W	T	L	O	R	O	W	A	V
C	C	P	D	W	I	Y	N	Y	R	L	T	O
T	Y	V	P	C	S	A	L	I	S	S	O	F

Find these words

SMILODON
CANINE
PREY
EXTINCT
SPECIES

CARNIVORE
AMBUSH
FOSSIL
ASPHALT
SABER

B. Quick recall

Cover the earlier worksheets first. Answer from memory, then go back and check.

1. How long were the sabres?

2. Where did Smilodon live?

3. How long ago did it die out?

4. Which species was the heaviest?

5. Where were most of the fossils found?

Write About It

Plan first, then write. That is how good writing gets done.

Name _____

Date _____

A. Plan your report

Write notes, not sentences. You will turn them into sentences afterwards.

Section	My notes
What it was	
What it looked like	
Where it lived	
How it hunted	
Why it died out	
One thing people get wrong	

B. Now write it

Use your plan. Write in full sentences, in your own words.

1. Write a short report about Smilodon for someone who has never heard of it. Use at least four facts from your plan.

Draw, Label and Invent

Show what you know without writing a word.

Name _____

Date _____

Read this first

The sabres

Its canine teeth reached about 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler. They were flat from side to side with fine edges like a steak knife, and they snapped if they twisted against bone.

Built to grab

Smilodon was short in the back legs and very thick through the neck, chest and shoulders, with a short bobbed tail. It stood about a metre at the shoulder. It was not built to run.

Country it liked

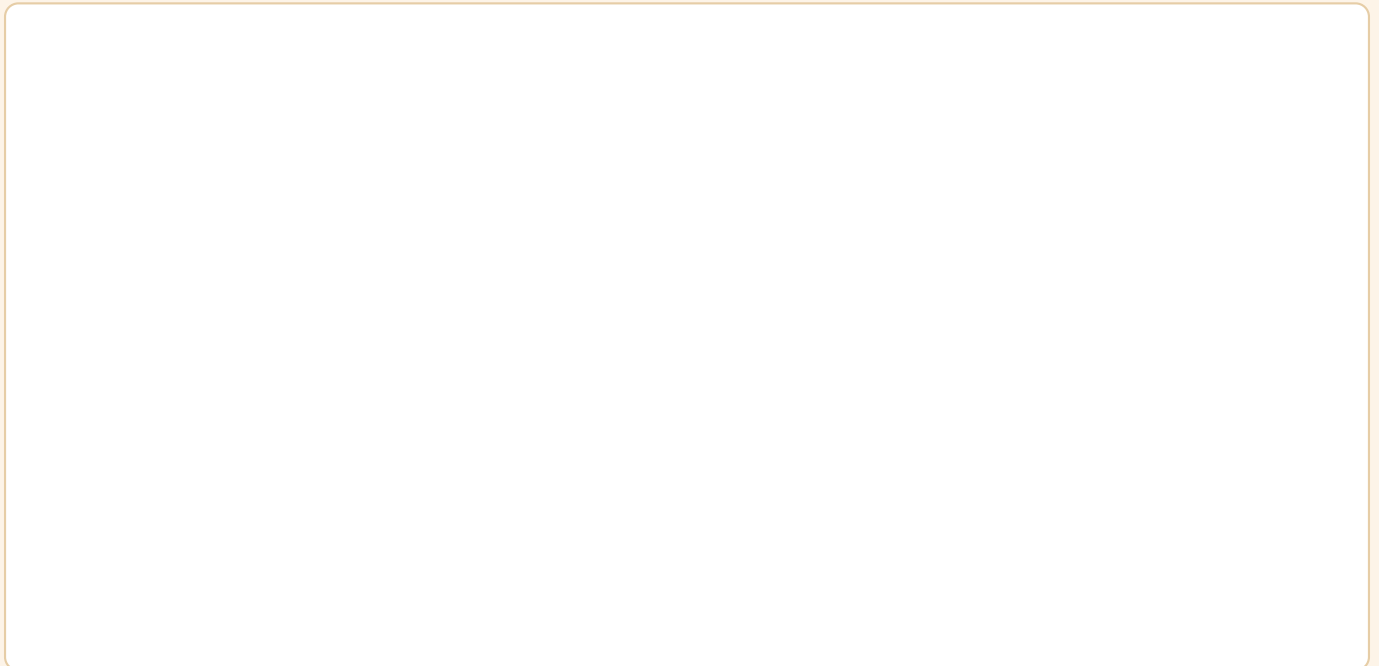
It hunted in open grassland, scrub and woodland. It needed cover to ambush from, because a heavy, short-legged cat cannot chase prey across open ground.

How it hunted

It wrestled prey to the ground with its huge front legs and held it still. Then it made one careful bite into the soft throat or belly, where no bone could snap a tooth.

A. Draw Smilodon in its habitat

Draw Smilodon in a habitat from the fact cards. Put four details from the reading into your picture, then label them below.



1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

B. Design your own ice age hunter

Use what you have learned about how a body fits a job.

1. Invent an ice age predator. Name one body part you gave it, and explain the job that body part does.

The Big Review

Everything in the pack, all at once.

Name _____

Date _____

A. Ten questions

Circle one letter for each. Try it without looking back first.

1. Smilodon was...
A. a tiger B. a saber-toothed cat C. a kind of bear
2. It lived...
A. only in the Americas B. all over the world C. only in Africa
3. Its teeth were about...
A. 8 cm long B. 28 cm long C. 128 cm long
4. The strength that killed its prey was in its...
A. front legs B. jaws C. tail
5. The heaviest species was...
A. Smilodon gracilis B. Smilodon fatalis C. Smilodon populator
6. More than 2,000 Smilodon have been found at...
A. the La Brea Tar Pits B. the Grand Canyon C. Yellowstone
7. Healed broken hips suggest that Smilodon may have...
A. hunted alone always B. lived in groups and shared food C. eaten plants
8. A sabre grew about...
A. 6 mm a month B. 6 cm a month C. 6 m a month
9. Long stabbing teeth evolved...
A. only once B. several separate times C. only in cats
10. Smilodon died out...
A. about 100 years ago B. about 10,000 years ago C. about 65 million years ago

B. The last question

This one is worth more than all ten above.

1. Which fact in this pack surprised you most, and why?

What I Learned

Look back at what you knew, and what you know now.

Name _____

Date _____

A. Before and after

Fill in the first column before you start the pack, and the last column when you finish it.

What I already knew	What I wanted to find out	What I know now

B. I can...

Tick one box for each line.

I can...	Yes	Not yet
explain why Smilodon was not a tiger	☐	☐
describe how it hunted, and why it hunted that way	☐	☐
name the three species and say which was heaviest	☐	☐
give two reasons it died out	☐	☐
give both sides of the argument about living in groups	☐	☐
read a fact from a bar chart	☐	☐

Answer keys — for the grown-up

Tear these pages off before the children start.

Worksheet 1 — Meet Smilodon

Complete the Fact File: 1. A saber-toothed cat, not a tiger · 2. North America and South America, and nowhere else · 3. Open grassland, scrub and woodland · 4. About 28 cm, roughly the length of a school ruler · 5. About a third as strong as a lion's bite · 6. About 120 degrees · 7. About a metre · 8. Any three of: bison, ancient horses, camels, ground sloths, young mammoths, mastodons

Worksheet 2 — Word Work

A. Match the word to its meaning: 1-B, 2-C, 3-F, 4-E, 5-D, 6-A

B. Use each word yourself: Accept any sentence that uses the word correctly and matches the guide, for example: "Smilodon was a carnivore, so it only ate meat." / "Smilodon waited in cover and attacked in an ambush." / "Smilodon has been extinct for about 10,000 years." / "Smilodon was a predator that hunted bison and horses."

Worksheet 3 — Fact Finder

A. True or False?: 1-False, 2-True, 3-False, 4-True, 5-False, 6-True, 7-False, 8-True, 9-True, 10-False

B. Circle the Best Answer: 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-A, 5-B, 6-B, 7-C, 8-B

Worksheet 4 — Six Things People Get Wrong

A. What people say, and what is really true: It was a cat, only distantly related to tigers. · Its bite was about a third as strong as a lion's; its strength was in its front legs. · More than 60 million years separate the last dinosaurs from the first Smilodon. · It could close its mouth, but the tips of its sabres probably still showed. · Long stabbing teeth evolved several separate times, which is called convergent evolution. · It died out as the ice age ended and the world warmed.

B. Explain it to a friend: 1. More than 60 million years separate the last dinosaurs from the first Smilodon, so they were never alive at the same time. · 2. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.

Worksheet 5 — Built for the Job

A. Match the body part to its job: 1-B, 2-C, 3-E, 4-A, 5-D

B. Think like a scientist: 1. Cover lets it creep close and ambush, and it was too heavy and short-legged to chase prey across open ground. · 2. It held the prey completely still first, then bit into the soft throat or belly where there was no bone for a tooth to twist against.

Worksheet 6 — Smilodon by Numbers

A. Draw the bar chart: Bar heights: S. gracilis 100 kg · S. fatalis 280 kg · S. populator 400 kg

B. Number problems: 1. 72 mm (6 x 12), which is 7.2 cm. · 2. 55 degrees. · 3. 345 kg. · 4. 2 cm. · 5. 100 centuries.

Worksheet 7 — Smilodon and the Lion

A. Sort the facts: Smilodon only: 2, 3, 7, 8, 10. Lion only: 4, 5, 9. Both: 1, 6.

B. Who would win?: 1. They never met. They lived on different continents at different times, so there is no contest to judge. · 2. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.

Worksheet 8 — Growing Up

A. Put the cub's life in order: Correct order: Born > Milk teeth > Pushing through > Both at once > Growing on > Full size

B. What does that tell us?: 1. It suggests cubs stayed with their mother much longer than a lion cub does, because they could not hunt properly until the sabres were grown. · 2. It lets them watch the whole growing-up process in the fossils, not just guess at it.

Worksheet 9 — The La Brea Tar Pits

A. How the trap worked: Correct order: Asphalt > Hidden > A visitor > Company > Stuck too > Bones build up

B. Thinking about the evidence: 1. A trapped animal attracted predators, and the predators then became trapped as well, so the pits collected far more hunters than an ordinary place would. · 2. The chemicals come from the food the animal actually ate, so they show what it really hunted rather than only what it could have hunted.

Answer keys — for the grown-up (continued)

Worksheet 10 — Did They Live in Groups?

- A. Sort the evidence: Groups: many skeletons show badly broken hips and spines that healed; a cat with a shattered hip cannot hunt; something must have been feeding it, so they probably shared food. Cannot be sure: a trapped, struggling animal attracts predators, so the tar pits may simply collect more cats that hunted alone, which would make the picture look different from the truth.
- B. What do you think?: 1. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain. · 2. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.
- C. Check your argument: A self-check. All four ticked is the target; the fourth is the one that lifts a good answer into a strong one.

Worksheet 11 — Why Did They Die Out?

- A. Cause and effect: Warming: the places its prey could live changed, so its food moved or vanished. · People: the same large animals it depended on were being hunted by humans too. · Prey gone: it lost the food it was built to catch. · Last row: Smilodon was built for one job, ambushing big heavy prey, so it had no fallback.
- B. Check you have it: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B
- C. One more question: 1. It was built only for ambushing big heavy prey, so when that prey disappeared it had nothing else it could hunt well enough to survive on.

Worksheet 12 — Word Search and Review

- A. Find the ten words: SMILODON (row 5, column 8, down) · CARNIVORE (row 1, column 10, down and left) · CANINE (row 5, column 1, down and right) · AMBUSH (row 3, column 9, down) · PREY (row 5, column 2, right) · FOSSIL (row 13, column 13, left) · EXTINCT (row 7, column 1, down) · ASPHALT (row 1, column 8, left) · SPECIES (row 3, column 1, right) · SABER (row 7, column 6, down and left)
- B. Quick recall: 1. About 28 cm · 2. Only in the Americas · 3. About 10,000 years ago · 4. Smilodon populator, at about 400 kg · 5. The La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles

Worksheet 13 — Write About It

- A. Plan your report: Notes only. Look for facts drawn from the pack rather than full sentences, and for a different fact in each row.
- B. Now write it: 1. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.

Worksheet 14 — Draw, Label and Invent

- A. Draw Smilodon in its habitat: Look for four labels that each come from the reading: the long sabres, the heavy front legs, the short back legs, the bobbed tail, the thick neck and shoulders, or cover to ambush from.
- B. Design your own ice age hunter: 1. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.

Worksheet 15 — The Big Review

- A. Ten questions: 1-B, 2-A, 3-B, 4-A, 5-C, 6-A, 7-B, 8-A, 9-B, 10-B
- B. The last question: 1. Open-ended — accept any answer the child can explain.

Worksheet 16 — What I Learned

- A. Before and after: The child's own record. The middle column is the useful one: a question nobody answered is a good place to take the class next.
- B. I can...: A self-check. Any "not yet" points straight at the worksheet to go back to.

Learning objective: Children retrieve information from a non-fiction text, explain how a body suits a way of life, read and draw a scaled chart, weigh evidence on two sides of a scientific argument, and plan and write a short report.

Source: KidzFeed.com — "Saber-Toothed Tiger Facts for Kids: Meet Smilodon". <https://kidzfeed.com/saber-tooth-tiger-facts-for-kids/>

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