

Fossil of a trilobite

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The structure of a trilobite, including the antennae and legs, can be seen in the Burgess Shale, a rock formation found in the Canadian Rockies in 1909.

This trilobite lived some 505 million years ago. Trilobites were a class of ocean-dwelling arthropods that first emerged some 540 million years ago and became extinct at the end of the Permian period 250 million years ago. Trilobites had a hard exoskeleton made of minerals, and these exoskeletons were frequently preserved as fossils. Scientists have identified some 17,000 species of trilobites from the fossil record.

The Burgess Shale contains a vast fossil record that provided the first glimpse into the diverse animal life of the Cambrian Period (542-488 million years ago).



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