

# Water Worries?



Art by D. Henderson

Claim: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence/Data: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation/Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

Rebuttal/Counter Claim: \_\_\_\_\_

My Thoughts/Questions: \_\_\_\_\_

The sun has burned in a cloudless sky for days and days. Ponds, streams, and lakes are drying up. Plants are dying. Plant eaters are starving. Crayfish are burrowing deep into mud to wait for wetter days. Fish are trapped by the hundreds in ever smaller puddles. *Coelophysis* gather to scoop up the helpless fish, but even more than meat. the dinosaurs need water.

As more fish are trapped, more *Coelophysis* of all ages come to eat. But the feeding activity doesn't last. The dinosaurs are weak with hunger and thirst, and there isn't enough food or drink to satisfy everyone. Hundreds die as they crowd around the last of the puddles.

When paleontologists began looking at the rocks around the bones of these dinosaurs, they sometimes found mud cracks, suggesting that some of the animals died on sunbaked mud. The skeletons with the curved necks were arranged like any animal who dries out in the hot sun after death.

Most of the fish bones were underneath the dinosaurs, as if they had attracted the little hunters to the site. And the scientists found many places where crayfish had burrowed into the mud.

But the drought picture does not tell the whole story. We already know that the dinosaurs' bones were not cracked by drying a long time in the sun. What if they spent only a short time—just a few days—in the sun? The real picture may be a combination of two suggestions—a drought *and* a flood.