Museum of Natural Science Info-Hunt – Middle Level – Answer Key

Go to the fossil section of the museum.

1. Drakoceras and Craginites are types of spiral shell fossils in this collection. What is the name of this family of shells? *Ammonites* **(These are found in the second long floor case.)**

2. Locate the large mastodon, mammoth and elephant teeth. Other than color, how are the three teeth alike? How are they different? What type of food do you think these animals ate?

   The mammoth and the elephant teeth are flat. The mastodon teeth are lumpy. They all ate plants. **(The teeth and tusks from these animals are located in the window closest to the main museum door)**

3. Find the fossil of the false Saber Tooth Tiger. What characteristics can you see that let you know he is a predator? List at least three.

sharp teeth sleek body strong teeth strong claws sharp/long claws
(The false Saber Tooth is located at the far right in the long diorama at the back of the museum near the jaw, identification and information about the animal are found in the light box in front of the window.)

4. Find the killer fish fossil on the wall with its mouth open. What do we think this animal ate? *Whales* **(The megaladon jaw is on the back wall. This extinct shark believed to be largest to ever live, left no bones, only teeth, the jaw is fabricated,)**

5. Look at the skulls of the 2 dinosaurs in the center of the museum. Which one is a predator and which one is a prey? Tell why you answered as you did. Allosaurus= predator, carnivore with all pointed teeth Triceratops=prey,herbivore **(Labels and information about these dinosaurs are on the floor of the case in front of each animal)**

6. Dinosaurs laid eggs as birds do. In the center display there are dinosaur eggs. List 3 ways these eggs are different from chicken eggs. *round& flattened, not oval in shape; very durable* because *they are dropped from tall heights into their nest; dinosaurs eggs have pores to let air move through the shell* **(There are 3 sets of dinosaur eggs on the island)**

Go to the shell section of the museum.

7. What is the name of the Texas state shell?
   Lightning Whelk **(This case is located as you come in the main museum door. A panel on the wall also shows the shell)**

8. Name & draw a shell from the Texas Gulf Coast collection. If you have ever found a shell like this one, draw a smile face next to it.

   students may draw any shell located on the left side of the museum **(Above the windows is a sign indicating these are shells of Texas waters)**

9. Go through the archway in the shell collection. Which shells do you think are the most colorful? Do the shells live on land or in the water? Can you guess why the shell animals make their shells all the different colors? *Answers may depend on students definition of color* **(There is a painting of a scallop shell above the door to this room. Guesses as to why shells are colored as they are – diet, environment, protection from predators – guesses are good, experts are not sure of this answer.)**

Go to the Wildlife section of the museum.

10. What flying bird has purple wing feathers? *Mallard* **(Facing the forest scene, #74 is on the right side above the otter)**

11. Locate the large forest scene behind the dimetrodon. Name three different animals that are competing for the same food.
    Turtle,crocodile & raccoon competing for frogs or fox, wolf,deer or owl competing for nuts, plants or other animals. **(This is the large diorama beyond the butterflies, additional information and questions are located on the sill in front of the case.**

12. Among the butterflies are ones from Brazil and Peru of the genus Morpho. What color are they from above? *Iridescent blue*

Step back 5 steps and look again. What change do you see to their color? *color becomes duller* **(This butterfly is in the middle of the long floor cases away from the back museum wall)**

Go to the Rock & Mineral collection.

13. Go to the Geode display in one of the back display cases in the Rock and Mineral Collection. Geodes are rocks that are very boring on the outside and very beautiful on the inside. Describe or draw a picture of the inside of a geode.

These rocks are very dull on the outside and very shiny on the inside. They are made from moisture being trapped inside a natural object (tree, clay etc.) **(The geode display is in back of the ivory displays. It is to the left of the curtained room which contains the fluorescent mineral display)**

14. You have observed many rocks in this collection. How are fossils different from rocks? (If you have not visited the fossil section of the museum yet, you may go back and answer this question later.)
A rock is formed from different elements including temperature, humidity ,minerals, natural chemical reactions, and age. A fossil is a remnant, impression, or trace of an organism of past geologic ages that has been preserved in the earth's crust.

Go to the Raymond Walley Hall of Archaeology

15. What is the oldest culture in the Pre-Columbian (before Christopher Columbus) art collection? *Valdivia culture* **(The Hall is between wildlife and the mineral displays. The Pre-Columbian display is at the rear of the hall. Other displays in the hall showcase artifacts from the Brazosport area.)**