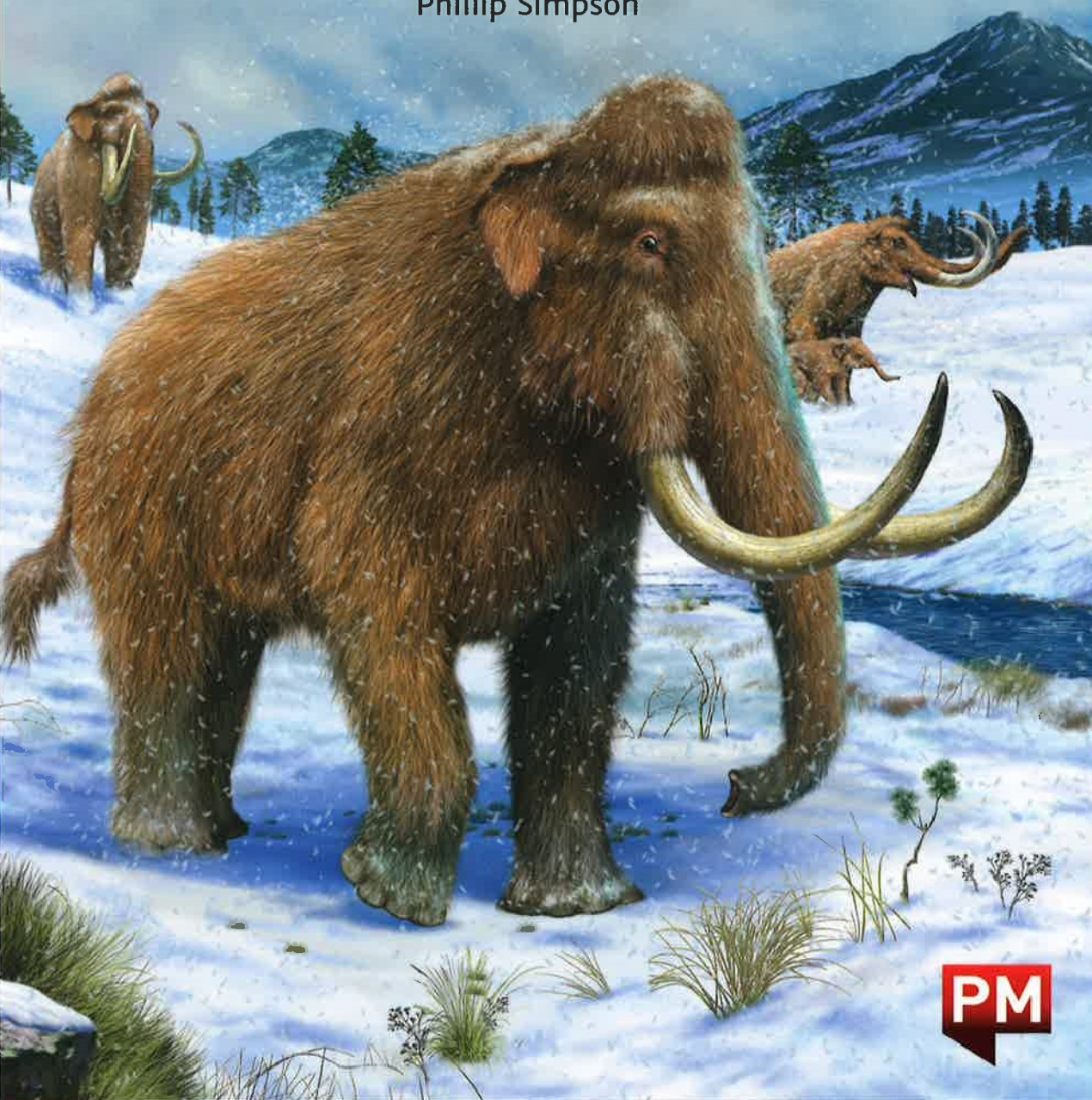


Megafauna

Phillip Simpson



Mega fauna

Level 22

Running Words 758 **Text Type** Information Report

Curriculum Areas English (Literacy, Literature, Language); Science (Biological Sciences); Humanities (History, Geography)

Retelling to Encourage Critical Thinking About the Content

Ask each student to retell the information report in their own words.

Record the retelling for further discussion and reflection.

Questions to Reinforce Meaning and Stimulate Discussion

Literal

- 1 What did mega fauna eat?
- 2 What did giant armadillos use their tails for?
- 3 What did the woolly mammoth have as protection from the cold?

Inferential

- 4 Why did plant-eating animals get so big when there were no dinosaurs left to eat the vegetation?
- 5 Why don't palaeontologists really know how fast the terror bird could run?
- 6 Why do you think most of the cave bear fossils were found in caves?
- 7 Why do you think woolly mammoths would have been hunted by humans?
- 8 Why might some animals have struggled to survive when Earth became hotter at the end of the Ice Age?

Applied Knowledge

- 9 How is the giant wombat similar to and different from today's wombat?
- 10 How is climate change affecting Earth today?

Links with Other PM Guided Reading Books

Level 22	Information Report	<i>All About Salt</i>
Level 22	Description	<i>The Grand Canyon</i>
Level 22	Narrative	<i>The Missing Bone</i>
Level 22	Narrative	<i>The Asteroid</i>
Level 21	Narrative	<i>Lily's Big Animals</i>



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What Are Megafauna?

“Megafauna” is the name for the biggest animals that have ever lived. This word is made up of two smaller words: “mega”, meaning big, and “fauna”, meaning animals.

Most megafauna are very big and heavy. They can be plant-eaters or meat-eaters.

Some megafauna that live today are the elephant, the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros.

The biggest megafauna lived during prehistoric times. They are now extinct.



rhinoceros



elephant



hippopotamus

Prehistoric megafauna lived thousands and thousands of years ago, in a time known as the **Ice Age**.



This is an artist's idea of what megafauna, like **woolly mammoths**, might have looked like during the Ice Age.

The last of the dinosaurs died out at the beginning of the Ice Age. Then, over many thousands of years, small mammals, birds and reptiles grew bigger and bigger. They became the prehistoric megafauna – the largest animals on Earth.

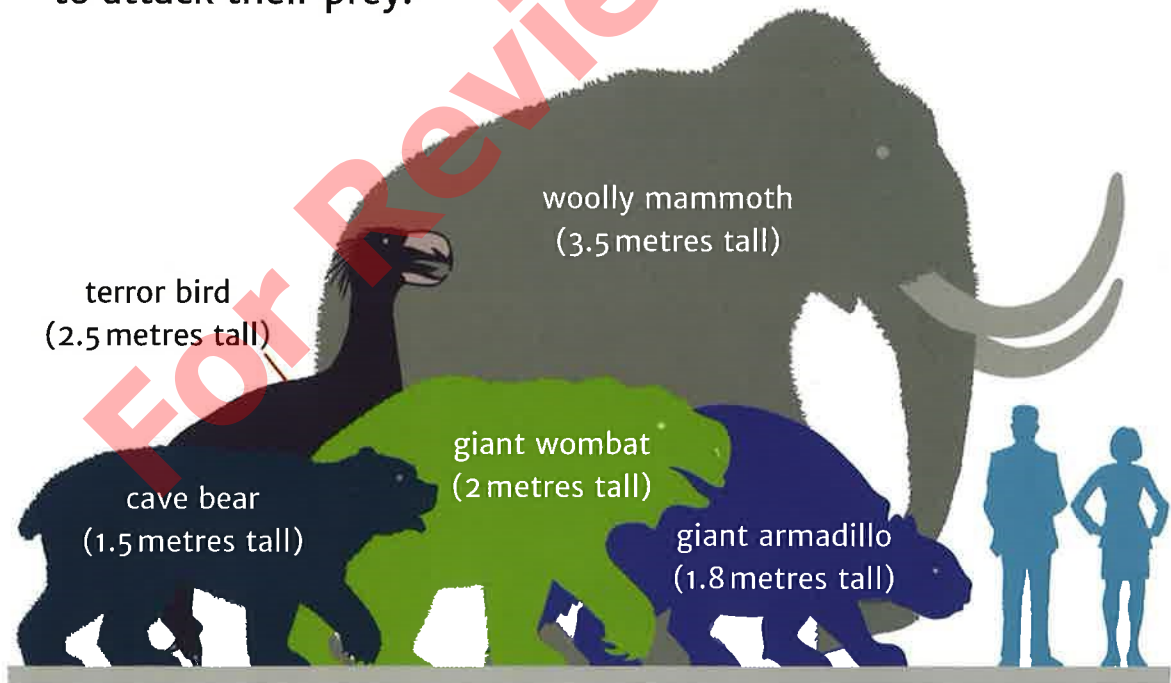


Scientists who study animal and plant **fossils** are called palaeontologists (say: *pay-lee-on-tol-o-jists*).

The largest prehistoric megafauna were plant-eaters. Palaeontologists believe that these mammals became so big because there were no dinosaurs left on Earth to eat the **vegetation**.

Meat-eating megafauna were not as big as the plant-eaters.

Their smaller size meant they could hide more easily to attack their prey.



Compared to humans, prehistoric megafauna were very large.

Terror Bird

The terror bird was a giant meat-eating bird.
It lived on what is now the **continent** of North America.

The terror bird was about 2.5 metres tall
and could weigh up to 150 kilograms.



Scientists believe a terror bird
looked something like this.