

Literature: "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury  
Non-Fiction: "Did the Real T. Rex Resemble the One in Jurassic Park?" by Brian Switek  
Media: Jurassic Park (1993) Dir. Steven Spielberg

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Characteristic (n) - a feature or quality belonging typically to a person, place, or thing and serving to identify it.  
Compare (v) - estimate, measure, or note the similarity or dissimilarity between.  
Contrast (n) - the state of being strikingly different from something else, typically something in juxtaposition or close association.  
Excerpt (n) - a short extract from a film, broadcast, or piece of music or writing.  
Text (n) - the actual wording of anything written or printed.

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From "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury –

"It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs. It towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker's claws close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of pebbled skin like the mail of a terrible warrior. Each thigh was a ton of meat, ivory, and steel mesh. And from the great breathing cage of the upper body those two delicate arms dangled out front, arms with hands which might pick up and examine men like toys, while the snake neck coiled. And the head itself, a ton of sculptured stone, lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of teeth like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich eggs, empty of all expression save hunger. It closed its mouth in a death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones crushing aside trees and bushes, its taloned feet clawing damp earth, leaving prints six inches deep wherever it settled its weight."

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### **Type 1**

**Based on Ray Bradbury's paragraph characteristics of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, draw your perception of what a T-Rex looks like. Be as detailed as possible and label 3 parts of the "tyrant lizard" with actual text from the excerpt.**

## Type 2

**Highlight or circle the most interesting facts regarding a Tyrannosaurus Rex in the excerpts from the article “Did the Real T. Rex Resemble the One in Jurassic Park?”**

Of all the dinosaur's traits, the maw of *T. rex* has probably inspired the most nightmares—and much of the cutting-edge science. The predator's deep, reinforced skull was set with an array of thick, serrated teeth that evolved to pierce and cut simultaneously.

Last year, researchers Karl Bates and Peter Falkingham announced that an adult *T. rex* had a bite force of almost 12,800 pounds—the most powerful estimated bite force of any terrestrial predator. *Jurassic Park* imagined how *T. rex* used its weaponry, but there is actual evidence of *T. rex* biting techniques in the fossil record. After *T. rex* made a kill or found a carcass to scavenge, it could be a delicate feeder. As Denver Fowler and colleagues presented at the annual Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meeting last fall, toothmarks on Triceratops skulls hint that *T. rex* had a step-by-step method of decapitating *Triceratops*.

Yet the destructive power of *T. rex* wasn't isolated in its jaws. The dinosaur's neck muscles played a major role in the carnivore's ability to kill and consume prey. In their 2007 study of *T. rex* feeding mechanics, Eric Snively and Anthony Russell found that the dinosaur's neck muscles were so strong that the tyrannosaur could have thrown a 110-pound chunk of meat 15 feet into the air and caught it again—a frightening ability known as "inertial feeding."

*T. rex* didn't use its teeth and jaws just to pierce the flesh and crush the bones of prey. Tyrannosaurs also bit each other. Healed wounds on the skulls of tyrannosaurs—such as the teenage *T. rex* nicknamed Jane—show that these theropods tussled by biting each other on the face. (Arm wrestling wasn't an alternative, apparently, though *T. rex*'s small arms were heavily muscled and strong for their size.)

This bit of prehistoric behavior might explain why some of the largest carnivores of all time were ultimately killed by much smaller organisms. The lower jaws of many *T. rex* are pockmarked with smooth-sided holes. Some researchers thought that these were bite wounds from fatal attacks by rivals, but in 2009 Ewan Wolff and colleagues proposed that these injuries were created by tiny microorganisms that cause the same kind of damage in birds of prey. The protozoans infest the upper digestive tract of the birds, creating ulcers and lesions before eventually boring into the bone. The feathery raptors catch the little hitchhikers by eating infested pigeons.

Perhaps *T. rex* picked up similar microorganisms through dinosaur-to-dinosaur transmission. Face-biting would be a direct way for the harmful microorganisms to jump from one *T. rex* to another. Thanks to tooth-damaged bones, researchers also know that tyrannosaurs cannibalized each other and could have picked up parasites that way. Regardless of the pathway, it would seem that the bite of a tyrannosaur wasn't deadly just to prey, but to other tyrannosaurs, too.

Even when paleontologists downgrade the abilities of *T. rex*, the dinosaur still seems scary. One of the most famous scenes in *Jurassic Park* is the Jeep chase, with an angry *T. rex* almost making a snack of the smarmy chaos theorist Ian Malcolm. Could *T. rex* really run fast enough to keep up with a speeding car? The work of researcher John Hutchinson and colleagues suggests not.

By Hutchinson's calculations, *T. rex* walked about 6 miles per hour and ran about 15-25 miles per hour. A top speed of 25 miles per hour may seem meager, but the only humans able to exceed it are highly trained Olympic athletes. If you were unfortunate enough to be caught off guard by a *T. rex* out in the open, you'd stand no chance of outrunning the carnivore.

Picturing the tyrant wearing feathers—a likelihood since two other tyrannosaurs have been found with coats of dinofuzz—may change its image a bit. As researchers have filled in the deep history of the dinosaur, they have determined that the earliest Jurassic tyrannosaurs were "small, fast, and fuzzy."

