Name_____

Continental Drift Worksheet

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

Types of Evidence	Examples of Evidence
Evidence from 1. _____	a. Mountain ranges in South America and 2._____ line up b. European coal fields match with similar coal fields in North America
Evidence from Fossils	a. Fossils of the plant 3._____ found in rocks on widely separated landmasses
Evidence from 4. _____	a. Fossils of tropical plants found near Arctic Ocean b. Scratches in rocks made by 5._____ found in South Africa

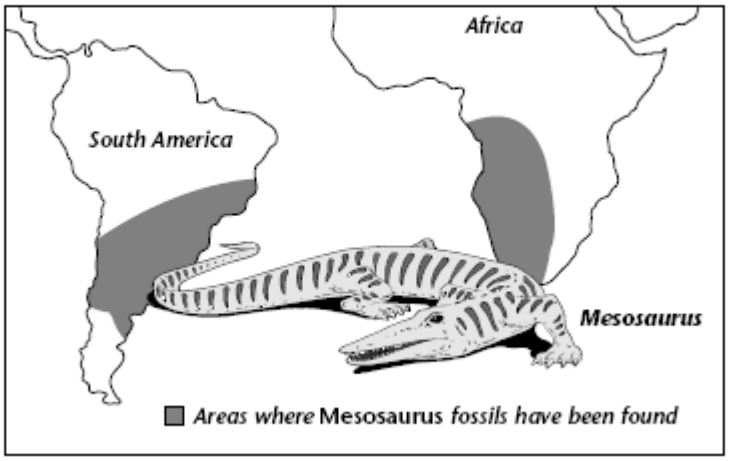
6) State the Theory of Continental Drift.

7. Why did most scientists reject Wegner's theory for nearly a half a century?

8. What was the name of the large "supercontinent" formed when all of the continents were joined together?

9) What is a fossil?

The Curious Case of *Mesosaurus*



About 265 million years ago, a reptile called *Mesosaurus* lived in just a few places on Earth. This fairly small, lizard-like reptile measured 71 centimeters from its nose to the tip of its tail—or about two thirds of a meter. Its body was long and flexible, perfect for swimming swiftly through the water. *Mesosaurus* was a hunter of small fish and other aquatic animals. Its webbed feet and long tail worked like powerful paddles as it chased and captured its food. Like all other reptiles, *Mesosaurus* breathed air, so it had to return to the surface after hunting underwater. Freshwater ponds and lakes were its habitat.

In the 1800s, scientists began finding fossils of these ancient reptiles, which had long since become extinct. These fossils were found in only two regions, southern Africa and the southern part of South America. The shaded areas on the map show where fossils of *Mesosaurus* have been discovered. This distribution is a curious one—only two regions far from each other and separated by the Atlantic Ocean. What could explain this distribution?

1) Describe the kind of environment in which *Mesosaurus* lived.

2) Is it likely that *Mesosaurus* swam back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean? Why or Why not?

3) What could explain this distribution of *Mesosaurus* fossils?

4) Does the case of *Mesosaurus* support Wegner's theory of continental drift? Explain why or why not.