

## THE ANCESTOR

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*Small, shrew-like early Paleocene mammal*

Size of a mouse | Warm-blooded  
Flexible diet | Can burrow and climb

*When the dinosaurs disappeared, this small mammal's descendants spread into six empty ecological niches. Fill in what body changes were needed for each one.*

#### ← THE BURROWER

*Underground | roots, worms, soil insects*

#### THE SWIMMER →

*Water | fish or aquatic plants*

#### ← THE GLIDER

*Trees | air travel | insects or fruit*

#### THE LARGE GRAZER →

*Open plains | grasses and low plants*

#### ← THE INSECT EATER

*Specialized insect hunter | possibly nocturnal*

#### THE FRUIT EATER →

*Forest canopy | fruit, leaves, grasping hands*

## NICHE 1: THE BURROWER

**THE BURROWER** — *Lives underground, eats roots, worms, and soil insects*

To become a burrower, this mammal would need:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Draw it here:*

## NICHE 2: THE SWIMMER

**THE SWIMMER** — *Lives in or near water, eats fish or aquatic plants*

To become a swimmer, this mammal would need:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Draw it here:*

### NICHE 3: THE GLIDER

**THE GLIDER** — *Lives in trees, moves through the air, eats insects or fruit*

To become a glider, this mammal would need:

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*Draw it here:*

### NICHE 4: THE LARGE GRAZER

**THE LARGE GRAZER** — *Lives on open plains, eats grasses and low plants*

To become a large grazer, this mammal would need:

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*Draw it here:*

### NICHE 5: THE INSECT EATER

**THE INSECT EATER** — *Highly specialized for catching insects, possibly nocturnal*

To become an insect eater, this mammal would need:

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*Draw it here:*

### NICHE 6: THE FRUIT EATER

**THE FRUIT EATER** — *Lives in forest canopy, eats fruit and leaves, needs grasping hands*

To become a fruit eater, this mammal would need:

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*Draw it here:*

## I LEARNED THAT

When the dinosaurs disappeared, they left behind empty \_\_\_\_\_.

Mammals were able to fill those niches because they were small and \_\_\_\_\_.

This rapid spread into new roles is called adaptive \_\_\_\_\_.

The three types of mammals are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.