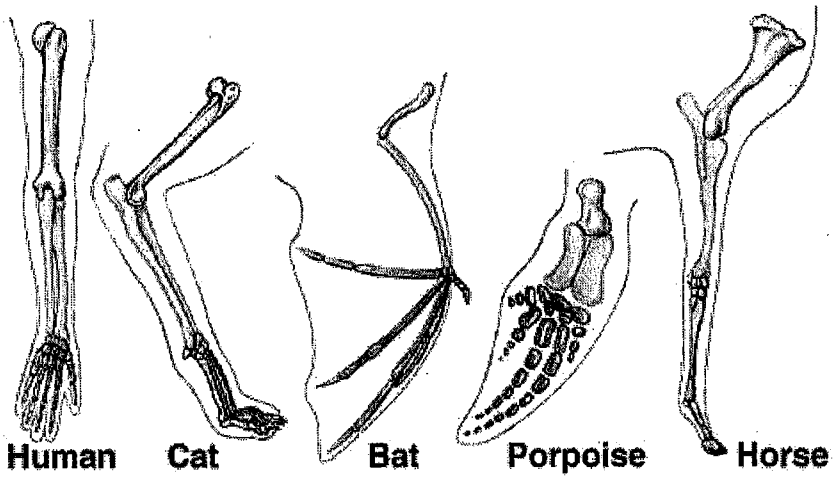
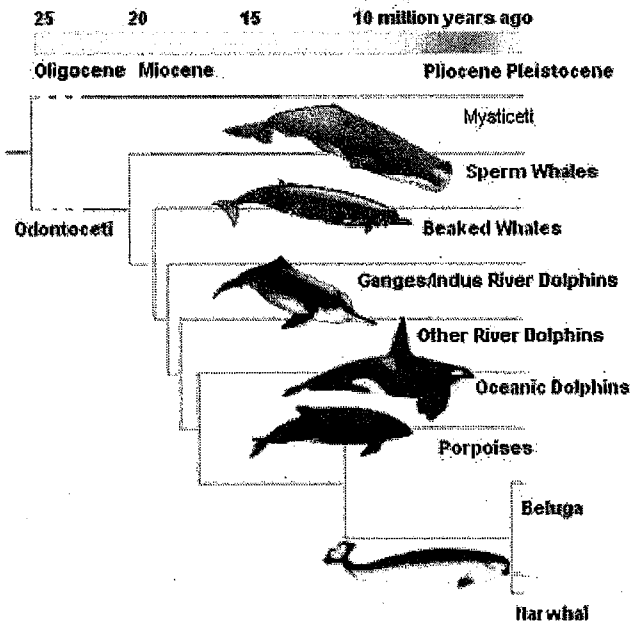
Evidence for Evolution: Comparative Anatomy

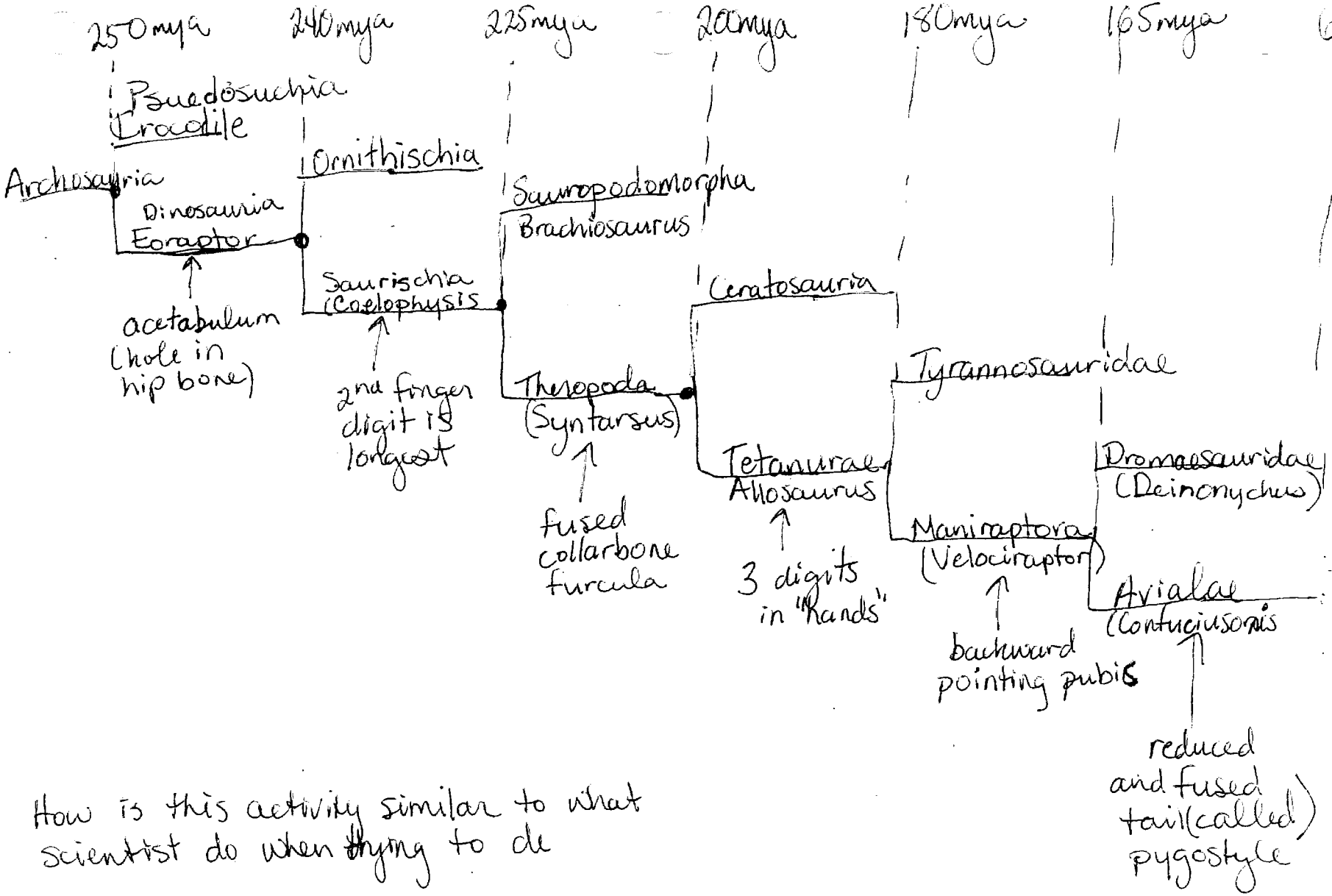
Did you know that crocodiles are the closest living relatives of birds?

How do scientists know this?
Scientists trace the evolutionary history of organisms such as birds by comparing the shapes and structures of certain bones and organs to those of some of its extinct and living relatives. Corresponding organs and other body parts that are alike in structure and origin are called **anatomical homologies**. An example of such similarities is shown in the image below.



When different organisms have anatomical homologies it is considered strong evidence that they are related to each other. When organisms are related to each other, it means they must have had a common ancestor at some time in the past. Such relatedness between organisms can be shown using an **evolutionary tree**, similar to how your family tree shows who you are related to. An evolutionary tree for a Narwhal is shown below.





How is this activity similar to what scientist do when ~~thying~~ trying to do

Comparative Anatomy of a cl kun.