

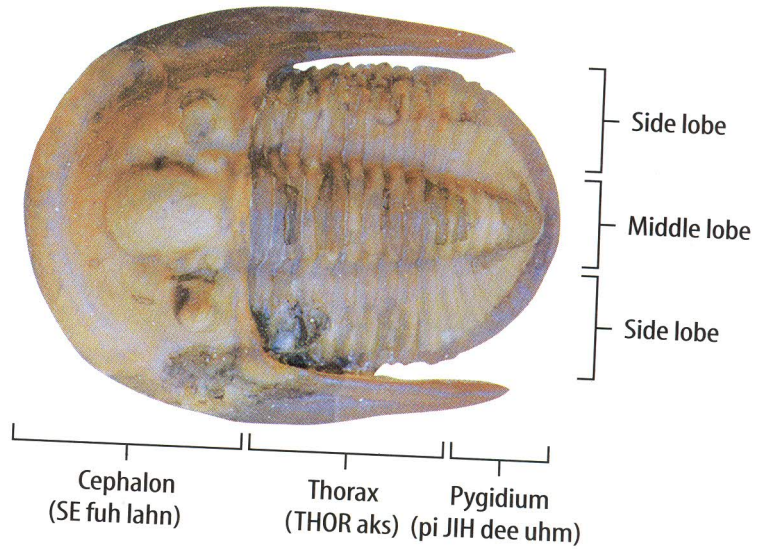
# Trilobites

Remember the trilobites? The term *trilobite* comes from the structure of the animal's hard outer skeleton or exoskeleton. The exoskeleton of a trilobite consists of three lobes that run the length of the body. As shown in **Figure 7**, the trilobite's body also has a head (cephalon), a segmented middle section (thorax), and a tail (pygidium).

## Changing Characteristics of Trilobites

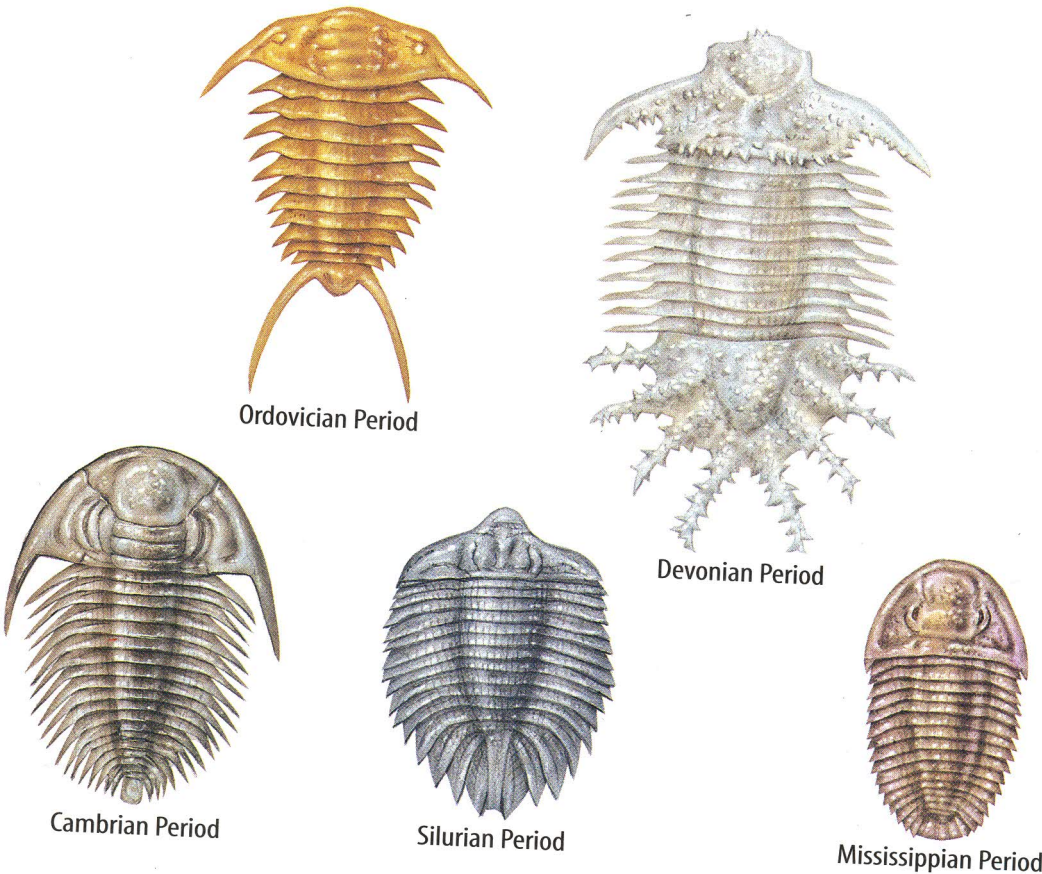
Trilobites inhabited Earth's oceans for more than 200 million years.

Throughout the Paleozoic Era, some species of trilobites became extinct and other new species evolved. Species of trilobites that lived during one period of the Paleozoic Era showed different characteristics than species from other periods of this era. As **Figure 8** shows, paleontologists can use these different characteristics to demonstrate changes in trilobites through geologic time. These changes can tell you about how different trilobites from different periods lived and responded to changes in their environments.



**Figure 7**

The trilobite's body was divided into three lobes that run the length of the body—two side lobes and one middle lobe.



**Figure 8**

Different kinds of trilobites lived during different periods.