**Reading a Natural History Specimen**

What can you learn from an animal that has been preserved? Use the questions in the left column as a guide in making observations, inferences, and deductions as Zion National Park researchers do when studying natural history specimens. Record your findings in the right column.

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| **Presentation, Properties, and Features of a Specimen** | **Observations, Inferences, and Deductions** |
| * Describe any labels or text found with the specimen. * After studying the label or text, what specific background information is shared about the history of the specimen? * Does the appearance of the specimen give clues as to how it was collected and preserved? Explain. * What purpose does the specimen serve in the collection based upon its appearance? (public education exhibit, research, artistic, etc.) * Is the specimen in good, fair, or poor condition? * What general kind of animal is it? What species? * Carefully examine individual body parts and describe characteristics of each. (skin, fur, feathers, head, teeth, ears, feet, body shape, etc.) * What do you think it feels like when touched? * Is it a carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore? * How do you think the colors of the body are beneficial to survival? * Is it female or male? * How long is it? How tall is it? How much do you think it weighs when alive? * What stage of its lifecycle was it in when it died? |  |