

Perfect Preservation

A hard, transparent lump of amber sells for over \$20,000. Its gold coloring is pretty but why does it sell for so much? Take a closer look, and you will see the reason. A 30-million-year-old lizard is trapped inside the lump.

Amber is fossilized resin. It is sap from ancient trees. Over millions of years, the sap has turned rock hard. It is golden brown and beautiful. It is also hard to damage. That is why artists use it to make jewelry. Some amber pieces contain items such as leaves, insects, or reptiles. These once living things were trapped in the sap millions of years ago. When the sap hardened, the objects were preserved.

Picture a tree trunk sticky with resin. An insect lands on the sticky trunk. The unlucky bug tries to get free, but its feet are glued to the tree. Another flow of resin moves down the tree. This time the sap covers the bug all over. Over millions of years the resin slowly turns to amber. Inside the amber case, the insect's body dries out. Although it is long dead, the bug looks just like it did when it was alive.

1. What is the passage mostly about?
2. What is amber?