How many dinosaurs can you name? *Big Dinosaurs!* begins with this question and then delivers fascinating facts about dinosaurs to curious young readers. The book provides an opportunity to discuss with students what is fact and what is make-believe about dinosaurs as well as to teach them about the classification of animal characteristics. Students will engage in activities including “building” a dinosaur online and writing dinosaur riddles.

**Theme Focus:** Science Nonfiction  
**Comprehension Focus:** Classification  
**Language Focus:** Dinosaur Descriptors

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**Teaching the Book**

*Big Dinosaurs!* invites young readers to find out about the coolest reptiles to ever walk the earth. With realistic full-page pictures and dynamic design, the dinosaurs seem to pop right off the page! The factual text is punctuated by special-feature questions that challenge readers to make connections with other species in the animal world.

The book tells the story of dinosaurs by describing some of their important characteristics—beginning with their classification as egg-laying reptiles that were terrestrial, or land-dwelling animals. Readers learn about one of the tallest dinosaurs—the brachiosaurus—and one of the smallest dinosaurs—the compsognathus. They meet carnivores, herbivores, and the smartest dinosaur—the troodon.

By the end of the book, students have met T-Rex, the velociraptor, the stegosaurus, the triceratops, and more—all pictured in close-up illustrations. The book concludes with a short discussion of why the dinosaurs became extinct and how dinosaur fossils tell us about these giants that once roamed the earth.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Get Ready to Read

Pre-Reading Activities

Is it Real or Make-Believe? Young learners will likely have read books or seen TV shows and movies that fictionalize dinosaurs and even take children on field trips back to the age of dinosaurs. Explain to students that they will be reading a science nonfiction book that is all based on real facts.

Help students distinguish between real and make-believe before the book is read. Play a game with students that presents a quiz of nine real or make-believe choices about dinosaurs. Visit Scholastic.com to play the game: http://bit.ly/RHa5vs. The game refers to other books about dinosaurs that you may wish to share later with students. Project the game on a whiteboard or guide students to play on their own computers with your guidance.

Preview and Predict Have students preview the cover of Big Dinosaurs! Encourage them to ask questions about the dinosaur they see there. Record their questions and come back to answer them when they’ve finished reading the book.

BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Ask students to think about this question as they read and be ready to answer it when they’ve finished the book. Write the question on chart paper.

What do you think would happen to dinosaurs if they were alive today?

Vocabulary

Dinosaur Descriptors The book includes important science content-area words that relate not only to dinosaurs, but to the animal world in general. The most important of these words are defined in the glossary at the end of the book. Because the words are challenging for young readers, you may want to take the time to define them at the point of use in the book, using text and visual clues to help students understand the meanings.

Use Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards on page 7 and distribute copies to students.

- reptiles (p. 1)
- species (p. 1)
- terrestrial (p. 5)
- carnivores (p. 15)
- herbivores (p. 15)
- predators (p. 26)
- extinct (p. 28)
- fossils (p. 29)
As You Read

Reading the Book

Read-Aloud  Read the book aloud to students, modeling fluency and expression. Encourage students to follow along in their own books, studying the illustrations as each page is read. The read-aloud will familiarize students with the text and build their listening skills.

Shared Reading  Reread the book, asking students to read their copies at the same time with their eyes on the text. Take time to ask students to answer the featured questions in the text, such as “What other animals lay eggs?” Use these questions as a springboard to challenge students to generate their own questions about the text.

Comprehension Focus

Classification  Explain to students that scientists put living things into groups according to certain characteristics. This is called classification. For example, humans and other animals are classified into two big groups of males and females. Ask students how many males and how many females are in the class.

Ask students to list ways that dinosaurs are classified into groups. Answers may include whether they are terrestrial (land-dwelling) and whether they are carnivores or herbivores.

Use the graphic organizer on Resource #2: Classification to model for students how scientists classify animals, including dinosaurs. Project the page on a white board or create it on chart paper to share with the class.

Model: The book tells us that dinosaurs were terrestrial or land-dwelling animals. From the pictures in the book, I can see that all the dinosaurs walked around on the land. What other animals live on land? There are lots of them—elephants, horses, dogs, chipmunks, and humans. All those animals and many more belong to the classification of terrestrial animals. Now let’s list some animals that are water animals or animals that fly in the air.

With students’ input, fill in the rest of the organizer. Extend the lesson by asking students to name other animals that are reptiles, that lay eggs, that are carnivores, etc.

After You Read

Questions to Discuss

1. Science Nonfiction  Look at pages 2–3 which show a dinosaur with six eggs in its nest. (Sample Answer: Baby dinosaurs hatch from eggs.) What would be a make-believe story about the dinosaurs on these pages? (Sample Answer: Six baby dinos would hatch and then talk to each other.)

2. Classification  Look at the picture of the velociraptor on pages 20–21 and listen as I reread the text. Do you think the velociraptor is a carnivore or a herbivore? Why? (Sample Answer: It is a carnivore because it has sharp teeth and catches food with its long claws.)

3. Dinosaur Descriptors  What is an example of a dinosaur fossil? What could it tell scientists about the dinosaur it came from? (Sample answer: A dinosaur bone could tell scientists how big the dinosaur was.)

Words to Know

Content-Area Vocabulary  Read aloud the following sentence starters. Ask students to finish each sentence with the name of an animal that they have read about in the book or that they know about from other sources.

1. An example of a reptile is a _________.
2. An example of a carnivore is a _________.
3. One animal that is extinct is a _________.
4. An animal that is a predator is a _________.
5. An example of a herbivore is a _________.

Questions to Share
Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

1. **Text to Self** Which dinosaur do you think is the most interesting or amazing? What do you like about this dinosaur?

2. **Text to World** Do you know where you can visit a dinosaur skeleton? Are there any museums near you that have dinosaur fossils or skeletons?

3. **Text to Text** What other books have you read or what TV shows or movies have you seen about dinosaurs? Were they true facts about dinosaurs? Or were they make-believe? Which kind of book, TV show, or movie do you like best—true or make-believe?

Extension Activities

**Reading/Writing Connection**

**Asking Questions about Dinosaurs** Generating questions is an important skill for students to practice in both science and in reading comprehension. Have each student choose a favorite dinosaur in the book and carefully study its picture. Model questions for them such as: “Why does it have three horns?” or “Why is its neck so long?” Then help students dictate or write a list of five questions about their dinosaurs. When they are finished, talk about how and where they might find the answers to their questions.

**Content Area Connections**

**Math** **Dinosaur Counting Book** Challenge students to create a counting book titled *Dinos 1 to 10!* Divide the ten pages of the book among the members of the group. Assign each student the numbers they will create pages for. Suggest that they use the dinosaurs in *Big Dinosaurs!* as models for their drawings. Collect the pages and put them together into a class dinosaur counting book.

**Language Arts** **Interview a Dinosaur** Pair students with partners to role-play a make-believe interview with a dinosaur. Ask the partners to first choose the dinosaur they want to interview and then decide on the roles each will play—the interviewer or the dinosaur. They might start the interview with a question like: “What did you eat for breakfast?”

**Science** **Build a Dinosaur** Students will have fun using their knowledge about dinosaurs while playing this online game. Guide students to match a dinosaur head, legs, tail, and body from clickable options to “build” a complete dinosaur. To access the game, visit: [http://bit.ly/SLJBfw](http://bit.ly/SLJBfw).

**Art** **Dinosaur Jigsaw Puzzles** Print out or copy pictures of dinosaurs from free-use sources onto heavy stock paper. Challenge students to create dino jigsaw puzzles by drawing puzzle pieces on the back of the pictures and then cutting the pieces out. Suggest that they make ten to twelve pieces per puzzle. Then have students exchange puzzles and piece them back together.

**BIG ACTIVITY**

**Dinosaur Riddles** Assign students to write riddles about their favorite dinosaur using the **Big Activity: Dinosaur Riddles**. Ask students to write three clues about the dinosaur and then ask: “What dino am I?” For example: Clue #1: I have three horns. Clue #2: My skin is scaly. Clue #3: I have short legs.” On the back of the page, students can draw a picture of their dinosaur and write the dinosaur name. Encourage students to exchange their riddle pages and guess the dinosaurs’ names.
BIG ACTIVITY: Dinosaur Riddles

Write a riddle about a dinosaur with three short clues. On the back of this page, draw a picture of the dinosaur and write its name. Ask a partner to guess: “What dino am I?”

Dino Riddle

Clue #1:

____________________________________________________________________

Clue #2:

____________________________________________________________________

Clue #3:

____________________________________________________________________

What Dino Am I?

____________________________________________________________________
READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students’ study of the book or theme.

**Author Connections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Lexile Level</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hibernation (Scholastic Reader Level 2)</td>
<td>Tori Kosara</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>K–2</td>
<td>970L</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What kinds of animals hibernate? What do they do to prepare for hibernation? What changes do their bodies go through over the course of the long winter months?</strong> This engaging science reader uses fascinating facts and amazing close-up photos to tell the story of animal hibernation. Available as a Storia e-book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Disguises</td>
<td>Emma Ryan</td>
<td>5–7</td>
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<td>NC920L</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play hide-and-seek with a group of land, air, and sea animals that hide in plain sight. Readers will find out how one clever snake is responsible for most bites, which sea creature can change to look like many other animals, and why the stick insect is almost impossible to spot. Animal lovers and science enthusiasts will find a lot to learn in these colorful and fact-filled pages.</strong> Available as a Storia e-book</td>
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**Theme Connections**

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<tr>
<td>National Geographic Readers: Dinosaurs (Level 1)</td>
<td>Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>K–1</td>
<td>520L</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Although the dinosaurs died out a long time ago, people know a lot about them from studying their bones, teeth, and footprints. Dinosaur scientists, called paleontologists, have learned all about what dinosaurs ate, how they moved around, and how they took care of their young. These awesome creatures are on full display as scientists dig up the past in this bright and accessible science reader.</strong> Available as a Storia e-book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clifford and the Dinosaurs (Scholastic Reader Level 1)</td>
<td>Norman Bridwell</td>
<td>4–6</td>
<td>PreK–1</td>
<td>250L</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clifford finally meets something even bigger than he is—a dinosaur! In this funny and easy-to-read story, the Big Red Dog goes to Dino World with Emily Elizabeth and her friends. Clifford loves learning about all the giant reptiles, but he gets a big surprise when a little boy also visiting the park mistakes him for a dinosaur!</strong> Available as a Storia e-book</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Geographic Readers: Amazing Animal Journeys</td>
<td>Laura Marsh</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>K–2</td>
<td>520L</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>This book follows the journeys of three different animals on their amazing migrations far from home. Each year, 30,000 zebras make a 360-mile trip across Africa. Christmas Island red crabs travel to new waters to have thousands of babies. And walruses mate under ocean ice. The voyages these animals take are long, and they face great danger along the way. Now, human interference and a changing environment are new threats to their yearly migrations. A glossary in the back of this book provides helpful tips for readers who want to protect the environment and preserve these amazing species. With stunning, colorful photos, surprising animal facts, and jokes and riddles on every page, this science reader is a great pick for independent readers fascinated by the natural world.</strong> Available as a Storia e-book</td>
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<td>All About Hibernation</td>
<td>Tori Kosara</td>
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Go to [http://teacher.scholastic.com/ereading-resources/](http://teacher.scholastic.com/ereading-resources/) to find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books.
Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards

- reptiles
- species
- terrestrial
- carnivores
- herbivores
- predators
- extinct
- fossils
What are examples of each type of animal that live today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND ANIMALS</th>
<th>SEA ANIMALS</th>
<th>FLYING ANIMALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dinosaurs</td>
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