

How Do Dinosaurs Learn to Read?

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Ages: 3-5; Grades: PreK-K

Themes: Humor, Animals, School

SUMMARY

From Jane Yolen and Mark Teague, creators of *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?* and a score of other dinosaur books comes another fanciful, rhyming tale of dinosaurs learning to read. Do dinosaurs mistreat their books? Do they skip words and throw fits? Or do dinosaurs read carefully, work hard on words they don't know, and beg for just one more book? Students will laugh at the dinosaurs' goofy, familiar antics, often shocking the adults around them. Students will also make connections (good or bad!) with their own reading behaviors.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will make text-to-self connections.
- Students will contrast responsible reading behavior with irresponsible reading behavior.
- Students will identify and generate rhyming words.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review rhyming words with students. Put up a list of 3-5 pairs of rhyming words with different endings. Read the words aloud as you point to them (or have students choral read the words). Ask students:

- What do you notice about these word pairs?
- What can you see about these word pairs that is the same? (same ending)
- What sounds the same in these word pairs?
- Can you think of any other words that sound the same as the words on the board? (List students' answers, then choral read or read aloud all of the rhyming words).

Tell students that they are about to see a movie with many rhyming words. Encourage them to listen for words that rhyme and show them a silent hand signal that they can use every time they hear rhyming words.

Start a discussion about reading and book etiquette. Guiding questions:

- How do we treat in our classroom? At home? (keep them off the floor, turn the pages gently, put them away when we're finished) List students' answers.
- What kinds of behaviors would hurt books? (bending the pages, writing in the books, throwing the books) List students' answers. Tell students that they are about to watch a funny movie about dinosaurs learning to read. Ask:
 - How do you think a dinosaur would treat a book?
 - What kinds of problems might happen?
 - What kinds of difficulties would a dinosaur have? What is difficult about reading for you? Do you think that you and a dinosaur might have similar difficulties?

- What do you think a dinosaur might love about reading? What do you love about reading? Encourage students to watch and listen for whether or not their predictions about dinosaurs at school were correct.

Elicit students' background knowledge about dinosaurs. Guiding questions:

- What were dinosaurs?
- Do dinosaurs still live on the earth today?
- How were dinosaurs different from other animals?
- What did dinosaurs eat?
- How do people know about dinosaurs?

Record students' answers. Tell them that they are going to see an imaginary movie about what dinosaurs would be like if they lived in our world today.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have students make text-to-self connections. Guiding questions:

- Were there any dinosaurs in the video that acted like you do when you read? Which one(s)? What did they do to make you think of yourself?
- What do you do when you read? Do you do any of the same things that the dinosaurs did? Do you do anything different?
- How were the dinosaurs in the movie similar to you? How were they different?

Review the list about responsible reading behavior that students generated before watching the movie. Ask students if they have any ideas to add after watching the movie. Add these thoughts to the list. Then, give students blank pieces of paper with the words "Dinosaurs' Reading Rules" written at the top, and one of the rules that students generated written at the bottom (or students can copy the rule themselves if they are able). Have students draw a picture of a dinosaur demonstrating the rule on their picture. Provide students with dinosaur stencils to trace, cut out pictures of dinosaurs to glue onto their picture, or just encourage them to draw a dinosaur the best that they can. Display the students' work around the classroom.

Review the rhyming words from the Before Viewing Activity. Ask students if they remember any of the rhyming words from the movie. Record the words that they remember and refer to the book or movie *How Do Dinosaurs Learn to Read?* for support. Tell students that rhyming words are often found in poems. Work as a class to write a poem about reading. Provide the students with a starting line or stanza, then go around in a circle, having each child contribute one word or line to the poem. Encourage the students to try to make their contribution fit with the previous line or lines. Read some poetry aloud to give them ideas. Write the poem on a large piece of chart paper as the students compose it and hang it in the room.

Read nonfiction books about dinosaurs to students. Explain to students that we read nonfiction books to learn and encourage them to listen for

new facts that they learn about dinosaurs. Conclude with the following activities:

- Build an interactive dinosaur habitat with the students. Before building, make a plan with the students. Guiding questions:
 - o What do dinosaurs need to survive?
 - o What do you think the Earth looked like when dinosaurs lived on it?
 - o How can we make a model of a part of the earth that dinosaurs may have lived on?

Help students to create a habitat, following their plan. Cover the bottom of a large box or tray with dirt. Add in plant material or objects to represent plants and water or a picture of water. Add miniature dinosaur figures to the habitat. Be sure to include both meat and plant-eating dinosaurs. Allow students to explore and manipulate the habitat.

- Support students in differentiating between fiction and nonfiction. Label one side of the T-chart "Nonfiction" and the other side "Fiction." Give students examples of things that happen in *How Do Dinosaurs Learn to Read?*, and ask them if they are fiction or nonfiction.

Examples:

- Dinosaurs read books.
- Dinosaurs live in houses.
- Dinosaurs use a potty.

Record these examples in the "Fiction" section of the T-chart after students give their responses. Now, ask students to give examples of things that they learned in the nonfiction texts you read. Record the students' responses in the "Nonfiction" section.

- Discuss with students the differences on the T-Chart. Guiding questions:
 - o How can we tell if something is real (nonfiction) or fake (fiction)?
 - o What was Jane Yolen's and Mark Teague's purpose for writing *How Do Dinosaurs Learn to Read?* Support your answer with examples from the text.
 - o What was the author's purpose in the nonfiction text? What did you learn from the nonfiction text? Support your answer with examples from the text.

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