

# DINOSAURS IN THE WILD



## Science post-visit lesson Animal fact file

60 minutes

**KS2**

### Introduction

This lesson is to be completed after your visit to Dinosaurs in the Wild to keep your pupils immersed in their prehistoric world experience. It also serves as an excellent way to demonstrate all that they've learned from their visit. Pupils will research an animal that they encountered and create a class fact file.

### Curriculum links

#### Science

**All:** Working Scientifically.

**Y5:** Life cycles.

**Y3:** Nutrition; movement.

**Y6:** Classification of living things; animal adaptations.

**Y4:** Food chains.

#### Computing

**All:** Select and use software to accomplish given goals.

### Learning objectives

- Learn more about the different animals that pupils will have seen during their visit.
- Find out about one animal's appearance, diet, habitats and behaviour, plus how the creature is adapted to its environment.

### Resources required

- Activity Sheet: Fact file.
- Activity Sheet: Class fact file (*a front page to the class fact file*).
- Books about dinosaurs and other reliable research sources covering animals of the Cretaceous Period (*a list of websites is given below*).

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## Science pre-visit lesson: Animal fact file

### Delivery notes

- 1** Have a class discussion and review the Dinosaurs in the Wild experience, including what the pupils saw and how they felt. What was the best part? Did they learn something interesting about animals that lived 67 million years ago?
- 2** Use discussion to consider the question of how we know what these animals were like. Consider the question, 'What does it take to be a scientist?' and emphasise how scientists use evidence to build understanding. Use some of the following discussion points:
  - a) How do scientists know that dinosaurs existed?
  - b) How can scientists be sure about how big, say, an *Alamosaurus* was?
  - c) Can scientists be sure about what dinosaurs looked like?
  - d) What do scientists do when there is a gap in their knowledge?
- 3** Explain to pupils that they are going to act as scientists and as a class create a fact file about the 12 animals seen at Dinosaurs in the Wild. Anyone in the school will then be able to find out about some of the different animals of the Cretaceous Period.
- 4** Split the class into 12 groups and assign each group the name of an animal. **Activity Sheet: Chronotex creature pictures** could be used for this. Also, give each group a copy of **Activity Sheet: Fact file**, which acts as a template for the fact file. It is advisable to assign *T. rex* to the lowest ability group, as there is likely to be more accessible study material for this dinosaur. Likewise, the highest ability groups could be assigned some of the least known creatures, such as *Didelphodon* or those most recently discovered, such as *Dakotaraptor* and *Acheroraptor*.
- 5** Each team aims to complete their fact file page. One way to do this is for teams to assign a different section of the page to each member of the group. The sections are: appearance, diet, habitats, behaviour and notable adaptations. Ensure that pupils understand what is meant by notable adaptations.
- 6** Teams should now conduct independent research on their animal. Pupils can use books and the following reliable websites:
  - a) [www.prehistoric-wildlife.com/](http://www.prehistoric-wildlife.com/)
  - b) [www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/dino-directory/](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/dino-directory/)
  - c) <http://dinopedia.wikia.com/>

Make the point that books and websites will offer many different versions of what dinosaurs look like. This is because, as scientists discover more about dinosaurs, their ideas about the animals' appearance change. For instance, until the recent discovery of dinosaur fossils in China, scientists did not realise that so many of these creatures were covered in feathers.

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- 7** Pupils put the information that they have found out onto their section of the activity sheet. Completed sections can be cut out and fixed onto a finished page for each animal. Pupils who have finished can make sketches for the cover design of the class book (**Activity Sheet: Class fact file**). Alternatively, pupils could put the information they have collected into a webpage and present their fact files digitally. Applications such as Google Classroom could be used to share and develop content.
- 8** Assemble all the pages and attach **Activity Sheet: Class fact file** – the front cover to create the class book. Alternatively, pupils can design a cover using IT or artwork, with the best one being chosen by a vote.

### Support

Pupils needing help with this activity could work with a teaching assistant when researching to ensure that appropriate facts are gathered from the given sources.

### Challenge

High-ability pupils can be asked to go a step further and research some of the evidence that the knowledge they are gathering is based upon. For example, can they find a photo online of a fossil with feathers preserved to show that some dinosaurs were feathered?

### Extension ideas

- Using research, pupils can add to their page a list of other animals of the late Cretaceous Period which have been found in North America or other parts of the world.
- Pages could also be annotated with ‘Evidence source’ labels or boxes: brief snippets of information (gathered from research) to show what scientists based this finding on. For example, fossil forensics show that *T. rex* attacked *Triceratops*, because horns with matching teeth marks have been discovered in Montana.