



Lesson: Displaying your Dinosaur

Grade level: 3+

Activity duration: 30 - 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will recall the general process of paleontology, from dig to display.
- Students will use fossils and other evidence to construct ideas about their dinosaur's habitat, appearance, and behavior.
- Students will gain a general understanding of how dinosaurs are named.
- Students will create an artistic representation of their dinosaur.
- Students will create a museum exhibit panel for the dinosaur based on their investigation.

Materials:

- Process of Paleontology images
- Laminated cards depicting different fossils
- Dinosaur posters
- Blank paper (3 pieces per student)
- Art supplies (crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.)
- Scissors

Preparation:

- Place a fossil card upside down at each student's spot in the classroom

Lesson Procedure:

1. Go through the Process of Paleontology steps, using the posters. If you have already done the “Learning the Process of Paleontology” lesson, see if students can assemble the steps in order. It can be fun to time them and see how fast they can do it!
2. Remind students that when paleontologists find new bones, there is very little that they know about the animal. They have to base all of their ideas about the dinosaur on where it was found, what its fossil looks like, and what they know about other dinosaurs that looked similar. Put up the poster of the Velociraptor skeleton, and discuss it as a class. What do you think this dinosaur ate? Was it slow or fast? How big was it?
3. Reveal that the dinosaur is a Velociraptor, and tell students why it was given that name. Go through the other dinosaur posters and discuss how these dinosaurs were named.
4. Tell students that they each have some fossils on their desk. Their job is to investigate the fossils and create a colorful picture of what they think their dinosaur may have looked like.
5. Once they have created an image of their dinosaur, students should pick a name for it based on the names given to real dinosaurs. For an **extension** of this activity, students can research the Greek roots of their name, and create a scientific name for their dinosaur.
6. Show students the sample museum label, and identify as a class some of the important things that it includes.
7. Have students create their own museum label (for grades K-2, this could mean simply writing the dinosaur’s name and drawing some pictures of its home, etc.)
8. If possible, have students create a mini-museum in the classroom. Each student can place their fossil card, dinosaur drawing, and exhibit label on the wall, then walk around and observe those of other students.