

INVENT-A-SAURUS

An activity in which students invent and describe a new dinosaur

ARIZONA SCIENCE STANDARDS: 4SC-R2, 4SC-R3, 4SC-F3, 4SC-F4

OBJECTIVES

Students should:

- Invent a dinosaur by combining prefixes and suffixes from attached lists.
- Write a description of their new dinosaur.
- Draw a picture of their dinosaur in its habitat.
- Share their creation with the class.

MATERIALS

- *Student Handout - Invent-A-Saurus*, 1 copy for each student
- Pencils, erasers, crayons, markers

VOCABULARY

Adaptation

Habitat

GETTING READY

Prepare the materials listed on the left.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

SETTING THE STAGE

- 1) Ask the students how they would say “*Tyrannosaurus rex*” in Spanish (the same way). Explain that fossils (and dinosaurs) have been found all over the world and scientists who find them speak many different languages. But scientists use one common method when they name any lifeform, extinct or living. These names are usually taken from the Latin or ancient Greek languages, which do not change over time. When a paleontologist discovers a new dinosaur, he or she looks for something special about it, then names the new dinosaur species after that unique feature.
- 2) List the following underlined words on the board and explain the meanings of the parts. Ask students to identify what each dinosaur was named for.

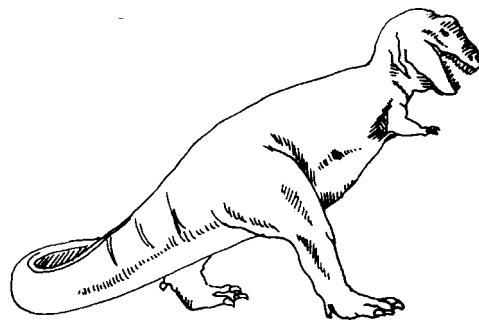
- Triceratops (their head ornaments)
Tri = three; ceratops = horned face
- Iguanodon (their teeth)
Iguan = iguana (lizard); odon = tooth
- Deinonychus (their feet)
Deino = terrible; onychus = claw
- Maiasaura (their behavior)
Maia = good mother; saura = lizard
- Stegosaurus (their body features)
Stego = roof; saurus = lizard
- Sonorasaurus (the place where it was found)
Sonora = Sonoran Desert, saurus = lizard

INVENTING A DINOSAUR

- 1) Hand out the *Student Handout - Invent-A-Saurus*. Read over the lists of prefixes and suffixes. Tell students not to worry about the pronunciations.
- 2) Explain that today they are going to be a famous paleontologist and discover a new dinosaur! They should combine the words in the columns to make up the name of their new dinosaur that describes its **adaptations**. For example: “Dinosaltusvenator” would mean “Terrible Leaping Hunter.”
- 3) Have the students fill in the blanks at the bottom of the page. You may need to help them individually with this.
- 4) Have the students draw a picture of their dinosaur on the back of the handout. Include its **habitat**.
- 5) Provide time for the students to share their dinosaurs with the rest of the class.

EXTENSIONS

- 1) Have students make shoebox dioramas with their dinosaur in its habitat. Place them on display in the classroom or in a school display case.
- 2) Have students make bag puppets using the templates and directions included on page 20.
- 3) Divide each invented dinosaur name into its prefixes and suffixes. Explain the meanings.



STUDENT HANDOUT - INVENT-A-SAURUS

Name _____

You are a famous paleontologist who just discovered a new dinosaur! Now you need to give it a scientific name. Combine the scientific word parts in the columns below to name your new dinosaur. You may use more than one word from each column. Then, write your imaginary dinosaur's name below, fill in the rest of the blanks and draw its picture on the back of this page.

Beginning

(prefix)

brachio - arm
bronte - thunder
di - two
deino - terrible
gravis - heavy
frigo - cold
glyco - sweet
makros - long
megalo - large
micro - small
saltus - leaping
stegos - plated
teratos - monster
tri - three

Ending

(suffix)

ceratops - horned face
dipus - two-footed
gnathus - jaw
mimus - imitator
nychus - claw
ops - face
odon - teeth
pus - foot
raptor - thief
rhinos - nose
saurus - lizard
venator - hunter

The famous paleontologist, _____, discovered a new

dinosaur and named it _____

which means _____

This is a good name because _____

This dinosaur ate _____

It lived near _____

It liked to _____

DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR DINOSAUR AND ITS HABITAT ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE.