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Where Did the Dinosaurs Go?

CONNECTIONS

Literature Connection—*What Happened to the Dinosaurs?* By Franklin M. Branley

What Happened to the Dinosaurs? is about dinosaurs and the many theories that exist about the reason for their extinction.

Content Connection—Science, Animals

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go? discusses some theories about what may have happened to the dinosaurs, connecting to science curriculum through the discussion of life cycles and scientific investigation.

OBJECTIVE

Students will summarize information in texts (e.g., includes the main idea and significant supporting details of a reading selection).

VOCABULARY

1. Introduce the key vocabulary words from the script. Write each word on the board.
2. Describe the meaning of each word and point out its use in the script.
3. Challenge the class to a game of team charades. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group a vocabulary word to act out for the class. Give each group three minutes to decide how to demonstrate its assigned word. Challenge the other groups to guess the word.
4. After students read the script, review the vocabulary words again. Have students take turns coming to the board and choosing the correct word for each of the sentences below.
 - **carbon**—dust from millions of years ago that settles into rocks
 - **comet**—a body of chemicals that floats around in outer space
 - **theory**—a guess based on little information or knowledge.
 1. A ____ could hit Earth some time in the next 13 million years.
 2. The scientists don't know for certain what happened to the dinosaurs. However, they have more than one _____ about where they went.
 3. Scientists found a layer of _____ in the rocks.

BEFORE THE READER'S THEATER

1. Read the title of the script to the students. Then, ask the class to make predictions about the selection. Is it fiction or nonfiction? Why do they think so?
2. Introduce students to the Prediction Chart graphic organizer (page 38 or predictionchart.pdf).
3. Read the script aloud, modeling appropriate reading strategies while you read. To help build fluency and comprehension, it is important for students to hear the script read aloud before practicing on their own.

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go? *(cont.)*

DURING THE READER'S THEATER

1. Split the class into groups of five to read and practice the script.
2. Students need to decide which character they will play and then highlight their parts in the script (Readers 1–5). They should also mark with a star any places where they need to pause while reading.
3. Give students a few minutes to practice reading with expression in their voices. Additionally, students may decide on a few props or materials to use during their reading. They need to use materials that can be easily acquired or assembled in the classroom.
4. After they have finished practicing, have each group perform the reader's theater for the rest of the class. You may also want them to perform for another class.

AFTER THE READER'S THEATER

1. Have the class come together to complete the Prediction Chart graphic organizer.
2. Have students draw pictures reflecting their mental images related to one of the theories discussed in the script. Allow students to share their completed work in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class.
3. Encourage students to find out more information about how dinosaurs lived and to study other theories about dinosaurs and what may have happened to them.

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Group Discussion Questions

- Describe one theory scientists have about what happened to the dinosaurs.
- What is the theme or lesson taught by reading this selection? (Suggested answer: All animals, Earth, and outer space are connected and have an impact on each other.)

Written Response Question

- Why is it important for scientists to understand what happened to the dinosaurs?

Name _____ Date _____

Prediction Chart

Question

Prediction 1

Prediction 2

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go?

By LISA ZAMOSKY

A reader's theater with five parts



Reader 1: Where did all the dinosaurs go?

Reader 2: Dinosaurs lived on Earth for a very long time. But about 65 million years ago, the dinosaurs disappeared.

Reader 4: Many other kinds of animals and plants disappeared, too.

All: What could have happened?

Reader 1: No one knows for certain why all the dinosaurs disappeared.

Reader 3: Some say that small animals ate most of the dinosaurs' eggs.

Reader 2: That means only a few dinosaur eggs hatched.

Reader 4: But why did all the other life on Earth disappear, too?

Reader 5: What happened to the sea and plant life?

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go? *(cont.)*

All: So, where did all the dinosaurs go?

Reader 1: Another theory is that the sun may have become cooler. Maybe that was the problem.

Reader 4: If the sun were much cooler, Earth would have been cooler, too.

Reader 5: That would have made it harder for plants to grow.

Reader 3: Then, there would have been less food for the dinosaurs to eat.

Reader 2: I thought dinosaurs were meat eaters!

Reader 1: Some dinosaurs ate only meat. But many dinosaurs ate only plants.

Reader 3: Dinosaurs needed to eat a lot of plants to stay alive.

Reader 3: If plants couldn't grow, both plant- and meat-eating dinosaurs would have starved to death.

All: Where did all the dinosaurs go?

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go? (cont.)

Reader 4: Another theory comes from some scientists who found dinosaur fossils in rocks.

Reader 1: Along with fossils, scientists found a layer of carbon in the rocks.

Reader 2: Carbon is black dust that could have come from a big fire.

Reader 3: Maybe thousands of comets crashed into Earth and started a bunch of wild fires.

Reader 5: Maybe wild fires destroyed everything, including the dinosaurs.

Reader 1: Plants would have burned, too.

Reader 2: Only small animals that could have dug into the ground would have survived.

Reader 3: This theory is very possible.

Reader 4: We know that other comets have hit Earth in the past.

Where Did the Dinosaurs Go? *(cont.)*

Reader 5: Scientists believe that comets may hit Earth every 65 million years or so.

Reader 2: Scientist also believe that animals and plants die when comets hit Earth.

Reader 1: If this theory is right, we should expect another comet to crash into Earth in about 13 million years.

All: Where did all the dinosaurs go?

Reader 3: No one knows for sure why all the dinosaurs disappeared.

Reader 5: Scientists will keep trying to figure out this mystery.

Reader 4: Who knows, maybe you'll grow up to be a scientist.

Reader 1: Maybe you'll be the person to uncover the mystery of why all the dinosaurs disappeared from Earth so long ago.

Reader 2: Until then, it will remain a great mystery.