

Dinosaur Rescue #5: Spino-rottysaurus

Author: Kyle Mewburn

Illustrator: Donovan Bixley

Synopsis

Arg is a very special cave boy. He has a very large brain and is much smarter than his family and everyone else who lives in his Stone Age village. Arg's special friend is Skeet, an enormous T-Rex who is also very clever. Arg and Skeet have a unique friendship and Arg is always eager to help Skeet keep the dinosaurs in the secret valley safe.

This time there is a rampaging spinosaurus in the secret valley who is killing all of the dracorexes. Even though Skeet is a T-Rex, the spinosaurus is much bigger and more powerful than him, and Skeet is unable to defend the dracorexes. Unless Arg gets there soon, the dracorexes face extinction.

Arg is convinced that he is clever enough to outsmart the spinosaurus and save the dracoraxes. However, he soon discovers that what the spinosaurus lacks in brains he makes up for in brute strength and savagery. Arg's life is in danger and Skeet is powerless to help him. It seems like there is no hope for Arg's survival when help comes from an unexpected source...

Text Type

Spino-rottysaurus is the fifth book in the *Dinosaur Rescue* series, written by New Zealand author Kyle Mewburn. Designed for readers aged 8–10, the books are full of disgusting descriptions of unsavoury cave man behaviour and will appeal particularly to boys. Set in the Stone Age, *Spino-rottysaurus* is a fast-paced adventure that contains hilarious information about Neanderthals and their lifestyle. The graphic descriptions and illustrations will have readers simultaneously laughing and trying hard not to lose their lunch. The illustrations by Donovan Bixley are lively and funny and ensure reader engagement.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 8–25), Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–58) and Chapters 4–5 (pp. 59–96).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them make predictions about what will happen next in the story. Encourage students to enjoy the book and allow themselves to get caught up in Arg's prehistoric world where dinosaurs and cavemen exist and adventures abound. Of particular interest in this book is the realisation that Arg comes to about his father. Maybe he is smarter than Arg gives him credit for? How does he know about the secret valley? Arg has often felt different from his family but after his father rescues him he begins to appreciate his father for who he is.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- What are the names of the other books in the Dinosaur Rescue series?
- Who is the main character in the story?
- What kind of dinosaur is pictured on the front cover? How do you know?
- Where and when is the story set?
- What big trouble does Arg find himself in?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (pp. 8–25) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 8–25)

- Examine the map of Arg's Valley at the front of the book. What potential dangers do the people of Arg's village face? Why do you think the dinosaur valley might be secret? Can you find the entrance on the map?
- Who are the members of Arg's family?
- Why did insects grow so large in prehistoric times?
- Why can't the giant dragonfly escape? Why is Arg so convinced that he will eventually get the dragonfly?
- Who is Krrk-Krrk? What kind of dinosaur is he?
- What happens to the dragonfly? Who rescues Arg?
- Why is Arg so excited when he hears the T-Rex screech? How do the other people in the village react?
- What do we learn about Skeet from the diagram? What do Skeet and Arg have in common?
- Where is the best place to find a dragonfly? How do you catch a dragonfly? Why is it not really a good idea to have a pet dragonfly?

Discussion

- If you lived in prehistoric times what modern conveniences would you miss the most and why?
- In what ways is Arg different to the other members of his family? Why is being a cave boy boring sometimes?
- Why do you think Skeet has come to Arg's village?

Students read Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–58) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–58)

- How does Arg know that something terrible has happened? What explanation does Skeet give Arg for his injuries? How does Arg know that he is lying? What really happened?
- Why did Skeet have a fight with a spinosaurus? What did the spinosaurus start doing after Skeet ran away from it?
- Why is Arg determined to go to the secret valley?
- What do we find out about the spinosaurus from the diagram?
- Examine the picture of the secret valley. Can you find seventeen prehistoric creatures? Why is Arg surprised by how quiet the valley is?
- What does Arg notice about the spinosaur when it lifts its head? How does Arg know that Skeet is really scared of the spinosaurus?
- What do Skeet and Arg see when they reach the lake? How many dracorexes survived the spinosaurus attack?
- What do we learn about dracorexes from the diagram?
- Why does Arg's father always spit on his hands before he goes hunting?
- What are the three main Stone Age holidays?
- How does Arg plan to capture the spinosaurus? What could go wrong with his plan?
- Why does Arg have trouble attracting the attention of the spinosaurus? How could the spinosaurus's problems be of benefit to Arg? How does Arg finally get the spinosaurus to notice him?
- How does Arg get the spinosaurus to step into the lasso? What happens when the spinosaurus takes a step?

Discussion

- What does Arg's willingness to risk his own life to rescue the dracorexes suggest about his character?
- If you were in Arg's position, how would you capture or kill the spinosaurus?
- How do you think Arg will escape from the spinosaurus?

Students read Chapters 4–5 (pp. 59–96) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 4–5 (pp. 59–96)

- Why doesn't the spinosaurus hurry after Arg? What does Arg do that surprises the spinosaurus? Where does Arg run after the spinosaurus knocks him over with his tail?
- Why does Arg change his mind about getting into the lake?
- Where does Arg decide to hide? What do you think it would have been like in this hiding place? How does Skeet help Arg reach his hiding place?
- What does Arg think hiding that hiding in the dracorex's carcass will achieve? What other hunting tricks has he learned from his dad?
- Describe one Stone Age invention and explain why it isn't very useful.
- How does the spinosaurus find Arg? Who rescues him? How does Arg's rescuer manage to confuse the spinosaurus?
- Why is Arg worried when he realises that his father knows where the secret valley is?
- Why does Arg think that his father won't understand his desire to save the dracorex?
- Describe Arg's dad's plan to outwit the spinosaurus. How effective is the plan?
- Why doesn't Arg ask Skeet for a ride home? Why won't Arg and his father be allowed in the village when they get there?
- Why does Arg feel admiration towards his father? What sorts of things is he looking forward to doing with his father?

Discussion

- What special skills does Arg's father have? How do you think he knows about the secret valley? Why don't you think he has revealed its location to others?
- What does Arg learn about his father during his adventure? How does his attitude towards his father change? Is Arg's father as dumb as Arg originally thought? Why/why not? What realisation does he come to about his father at the end of the story?
- What do you think might have happened if Arg's father didn't come to his rescue?

Activities

Research – Conduct a research assignment about a particular dinosaur or aspect of life in the Stone Ages. Formulate focussing questions to guide your research. Use a range of sources to gather your information. Present your findings as a poster or an oral presentation.

Invention – Create a “not-so-amazing” Stone Age Invention. Include a description and illustration.

Storyboard – Choose 10 important events that occur in *Spino-rottysaurus*. Design a storyboard that illustrates each of these events in the order that they occur. Under each picture write a brief description about what is happening.

Static Image – Design a poster advertising *Spino-rottysaurus* that is suitable for displaying in your school library. Combine verbal and visual features to convey your ideas.

Plot – Choose an important section of the story and retell it in your own words.

Writing – Write a letter to a friend explaining to him or her why they should read *Spino-rottysaurus*.

Soundtrack – Imagine that *Spino-rottysaurus* is being made into a movie. Your job is to choose 5 songs for the soundtrack. List the songs that you choose along with where they will be played in the film and why they are appropriate.

Drama – Choose an important event from the story. Write a script that depicts the event. Remember to include a cast of characters and stage directions in your script. Practise your play and present it to the class.

Plot – Choose an important event from the story and explain how this event affected the outcome of the story. If this event hadn't happened might things have turned out differently?

Character – Write 5 questions with answers for Arg.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd