

Dinosaur Rescue 7 – Scuto-stickysaurus

Author: Kyle Mewburn

Illustrated by: Donovan Bixley

Synopsis

Arg is a very smart cave boy who lives in a village with some very dumb Neanderthals. Arg's brain is much bigger than the other villagers', so he often feels different from them. He wears clothes, for one thing, and worries about things like hygiene and cleanliness.

When Arg hears a racket coming from the forest he immediately realises that a scutosaurus is in trouble. If the hunters in the village find out the scutosaurus is nearby they will kill it. Wanting to rescue the animal from certain death Arg sets off into the jungle to find out what the animal's problem is. Unfortunately for him, rather than solving the scutosaurus's problem Arg adds to it. The scutosaurus is covered in sticky vine glue and everything that it comes in contact (including Arg himself) sticks to it. Soon Arg finds himself being dragged through the forest stuck to the dinosaur's back. The dinosaur is exhausted from hauling heavy vines and other debris around with him and Arg himself is in danger. Will Arg and his best friend Skeet be able to figure out how to get rid of the sticky vine glue before it's too late?

Text Type

Scuto-stickysaurus is the seventh novel in New Zealand author Kyle Mewburn's hugely successful *Dinosaur Rescue* series. Designed for readers aged 8–10 years, the books are full of disgusting descriptions of horrible Neanderthal behaviour and will appeal particularly to boys. Set in an imaginary Stone Age, the story features both cave men and dinosaurs. *Scuto-stickysaurus* is a fast-paced adventure which sees Arg once again defy death with the help of his brainy T-Rex friend Skeet. The graphic descriptions and illustrations will have readers simultaneously laughing and trying hard not to cringe. The illustrations by Donovan Bixley are humorous and ensure that the reader is continuously engaged in the story. *Scuto-stickysaurus* even comes with a free poster!

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 9–25), Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–55) and Chapters 4–5 (pp. 56–96).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them suspend disbelief and enter into a world where dinosaurs and cave men exist together and animals can talk. Have them look at the illustrations, and most importantly, enjoy the story!

Introducing the Novel

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

- What is the dinosaur on the front cover called?
- Who is the main character in the story?
- What might happen to the main character if he doesn't work out a solution to his problem?
- When and where is the story set?

Study the map at the front of the book and look at the illustration of Arg's family.

- What possible dangers exist around Arg's valley?
- In what way does Arg look different to the other people in his family and village?
- What do you think it would be like being a caveboy genius?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (pp. 9–25) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 9–25)

- What are four distinctive features of Neanderthals?
- Why hasn't Arg eaten anything for ages?
- Why doesn't Arg want his mum to know he has a sore tooth?
- Why does Arg find watching his mother feed old Drik disgusting?
- Why is the tribe sprawled around the fire?
- What do the other members of Arg's tribe do that he finds disgusting?
- Why does having a big brain make Arg's life complicated?
- What does the sound that Arg hears in the forest remind him of?
- What is number four on Arg's list of unexpected things to see? What are numbers one, two and three?
- How does Arg know that the scutosaurus is in trouble? Why doesn't he want the hunters in the village to know the creature is there?
- What information do we find out about scutosaurus from the illustration and key provided?
- Why do Neanderthals have such strong teeth? Why don't they get tooth decay? What do they do with their teeth when they fall out?

Discussion

- What would be the best and worst parts about being a Neanderthal?
- What do we learn about Arg and his family in this chapter?
- What does the fact that Arg wants to rescue the scutosaurus suggest about his character?
- What do you think is going to happen in the story next?

Students read Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–55) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2–3 (pp. 26–55)

- What are the everyday sounds of the valley?
- Why does Arg think his dad would be able to find the scutosaurus?
- Why does Arg think that the scutosaurus is playing games with him? Why does he begin to suspect that he might be lured into a trap?
- Why does Arg decide to run away? What stops him?
- What is unusual about the vine that is wrapped around Arg’s leg? What happens when he tries to get it off?
- What does the vine stick to after Arg gets it off his leg?
- What happens to the vine as Arg gets dragged along the path?
- Why isn’t Arg’s big brain always helpful?
- What does Arg try and do when the dragging stops? What stops him from getting far?
- Why does Arg think it’s strange that there are tickle-berry branches on the path?
- What happens when Arg scratches his head?
- How does Arg feel when he sees the huge pile that the vines are trailing off?
- What does he discover when he creeps closer to the pile?
- Why is Arg at first excited and then dismayed about the idea of a dinosaur using camouflage?
- How does Arg discover that there is a scutosaurus hiding under all of the debris?
- Why is it important that Arg gets the scutosaurus out from under the pile of debris?
- What happens when Arg leaps onto the scutosaurus’s neck?

- What does the scutosaurus do when Arg yells at it?
- What are Tiger Burns' 4 survival tips?
- Why did the idea of domesticating animals catch on so quickly? Which animals were not suitable for domestication?

Discussion

- Would you describe Arg's actions as brave? Why/why not?
- In what ways is Arg different to the other Neanderthals?
- Why is having a big brain not always a good thing?
- How do you think Arg is going to escape from situation?

Students read Chapters 4–5 (pp. 56–96) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 4–5 (pp. 56–96)

- Why does Arg's face become nearly as knobbly as the dinosaur's?
- How does Arg know that the scutosaurus is getting weaker? Why is he worried that the scutosaurus will soon be too weak to stand?
- How does Arg feel when he sees the outline of a T-Rex on the path?
- Who is Skeet? Why is Arg such good friends with him?
- Why does Arg forget all about his own predicament when he sees Skeet's face?
- How does Skeet know that the scutosaurus must have been dragging the vines for days?
- What does Skeet tell Arg about grapple vines that upsets him?
- What are the 6 most dangerous plants in the jungle?
- What is wrong with all of the ideas that Arg and Skeet come up with to remove the vines?
- How does Arg's head become unstuck?
- Why does Arg need to get the scutosaurus to Big Bone Lake?
- How does Skeet help get the scutosaurus to Big Bone Lake?
- When was the first time the word 'Neanderthal' was used? What does the name translate to?
- Why does it take the scutosaurus so long to get to Big Bone Lake? Why does Arg feel sorry for it? How does Skeet stop the scutosaurus from running into Slimepot Swamp?

- Why does Arg want to get swallowed by a mouth-plant? What could potentially go wrong with this plan?
- What are Arg's top 3 scariest places in the valley?
- Describe the forest where the mouth-plants grow. How does the scutosaurus react when it realises where it is?
- What is the inside of the mouth-plant like? How does Arg manage to get loose from the scutosaurus?
- How does Arg feel when the juices rise up over his head?
- Who rescues Arg and the scutosaurus?
- What was Skeet doing when he popped the mouth-plant?
- What does Arg find in his mouth when he pops out of the plant? Why does this make him happy?

Discussion

- How might the story have been different if the T-Rex that Arg saw wasn't Skeet?
- Identify the climax of the story. Why is this event important?
- What lessons do you think Arg's adventure have taught him?

Activities

Static Image – Design a dangerous jungle plant. Next to your illustration provide an explanation about what the plant does.

Research – Conduct a research assignment on either dinosaurs or the Stone Age. Areas of study could include weapons, rituals, religion, hunting or clothing. Formulate 3 focussing questions to help guide your research. Use a range of oral, visual and written sources to gather your research. Record your research process in a diary and include a bibliography. Present your findings in a report or as a diary.

Storyboard – Choose 10 important events that occur in the story and illustrate them in a storyboard. Under each picture write a brief description about what is happening.

Writing – Write a brief plot synopsis for *Scuto-stickysaurus*.

Questions – Write 10 discussion questions for the story.

Drama – Choose an exciting event from the story and write a script for it. Include a list of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to your class.

Vocabulary – Identify 5 new words you learned from *Scuto-stickysaurus*. Using a dictionary, write a definition for each word and write out the sentences in which you found them.

Writing – Write a paragraph explaining why this book should be read by everyone who hates reading.

Game – Invent a game that cave people could play to keep themselves entertained.

Writing – Write a letter to the author explaining what you liked about the story.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd