

Dino-saurus

Language Arts Lesson for Grades K-3

Use common scientific prefixes, roots, and suffixes to create original dinosaur names.

Literacy focus

Word building

What you need

Dinosaur Word Parts,
Several reference books
about dinosaurs (optional)
Blank paper Markers,
crayons, pencils

QuickMind Connection



From the Teacher
Home Page, click:
Curriculum Activities>
Language Arts>
Tenth Planet>
Roots, Prefixes and
Suffixes>

All three door activities
will support skills covered
in this lesson.

Ask the students what they know about dinosaurs. Do you know the names of any dinosaurs? Together, brainstorm a list of dinosaur names on the chalkboard. If necessary, add some to the list yourself to extend the list, such as plateosaurus, procompsognathus, terrestrisuchus, heterodontosaurus, ichthyosaurus, dilophosaurus, megalosaurus, ceratosaurus, and velociraptor.

Explain that dinosaur names often reveal something about their distinguishing characteristics, such as physical attributes, where the specimen was found, etc. Meaningful word parts are often blended together to make dinosaur names. Share with the students that “saurus” means lizard. Bellusaurus, for instance, means “beautiful lizard,” from the Latin bellus, for beautiful, and the Greek saurus, for lizard. Monoclonius means single stem, describing a onehorned dinosaur. What do you think the name supersaurus tells us about that dinosaur? (It’s huge).

Distribute copies of Dinosaur Word Parts attached, one to each pair of students. Go through the sheet together, talking about the various word parts and what they mean. Today, let’s imagine that you’re world-famous paleontologists who have just completed a greatly successful dig, in which you’ve discovered a dinosaur skeleton never before seen. It’s a new and important find.

Encourage pairs to use the Dinosaur Word Parts list to dream up and name a new type of dinosaur. Explain to students that they should attempt to name their dinosaur in such a way that the name describes something distinguishing about the creature. They should then draw a sketch of the dinosaur, and explain the significance of its name.

As students work, visit with them about what they are doing.

- What kind of features will your dinosaur have? Use the Word Parts sheet to get some ideas.
- What kind of dinosaur have you discovered? Do you see any word parts on the list that could help describe it?
- How could you combine some of the meaningful word parts listed on the sheet in order to come up with a descriptive name for your dinosaur?

When students have finished, have them present their new “discoveries” to the rest of the class. Some students may enjoy first stating the name of their dinosaurs, then having classmates try to intuit from the name any distinguishing features the dinosaur may possess. Students may then reveal their drawing, and see how well the name they chose communicated the characteristics of their creature.

Tip from a teacher

Some of the younger students in our school happened to be studying dinosaurs at the same time my class did this activity. We took our pictures to their classroom to share. They told us about some real dinosaurs they were learning about, and what their names mean, and we showed them our make believe “discoveries.” They loved hearing the names and guessing what they meant!

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Are children able to create a unique dinosaur, using ideas from the Dinosaur Word Parts sheet? Are the names students come up with successful in describing defining features of their dinosaurs?

Dinosaur Word Parts

Prefixes:

akantha = prickly	amblys = blunt	anodon = toothless
baros = heavy	bellus = beautiful	brontos = thunder
carnis = flesh	daspletos = frightful	deinos = terrible
dia = two	dyo = double	dromikos = swift
eu = good	fulgur = lightning	homalos = level
kamptos = bent	kentron = spiny	kompos = elegant
korythos = helmet	leptos = slender	mono = single
nanus = small	oros = mountain	tetra = four

Roots - Animals

avis = bird	chelone = tortoise	gigantos = giant
omis = bird	saurus = lizard	souchos = crocodile
therion = beast	vorare = eater	

Roots - Body Parts

cheir = hand	dephale = head	don = tooth
genyos = jaw	gastros = stomach	kera = horn
klon = stem	odon = tooth/teeth	onychos = claw
ped = feet	pholis = scale	skelos = leg
tops = face		