

Dinosaurs

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets

Contents:

- Two books – one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

for teachers and librarians



This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about dinosaurs, appropriate for a first grade listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books for the Dinosaurs Activity Packet are ***Dinosaurs*** by Gail Gibbons and ***Danny and the Dinosaur*** by Syd Hoff. During a visit to a museum, Danny encounters a dinosaur that turns out to be real and they leave the museum for a day of adventure in ***Danny and the Dinosaur***. Gail Gibbons, a leading author in nonfiction for children, offers an excellent introduction to dinosaurs of many shapes and sizes in ***Dinosaurs***.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> The Creativity Activity is a hands-on craft project
- >> The Imagination Activity encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> The Get Real Activity focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

The bookmark lists both the featured title and additional titles.

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> two books – one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> parent information sheet
- >> three themed activity pages
- >> bookmark
- >> survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you by the date you specify.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags."

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere—not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about ***Dinosaurs*** was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child,
- >> three related activities,
- >> a bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish, and
- >> a short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet.

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction – a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away. Start the fun

Start the fun

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child – can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. Read it again, if your child asks you to. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book is about real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you’re done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning – and reading – too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*



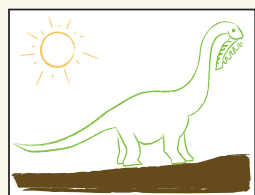
make a puzzle

Just like a paleontologist (someone who studies fossils and prehistoric life) has to figure out which bones go where in order to put together his dinosaur discovery, you and your child can have a similar experience by creating and putting together your own dinosaur jigsaw puzzle.

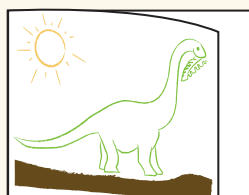
Supplies

- >> Cardboard or posterboard (an empty cereal box would work well)
- >> Pictures of dinosaurs drawn by you or your child, images from magazines, or pictures printed from a computer (www.search4dinosaurs.com offers links to illustrated dinosaur images)
- >> Marker or pencil
- >> Glue or other adhesive
- >> Scissors
- >> Ziploc bag for keeping puzzle pieces

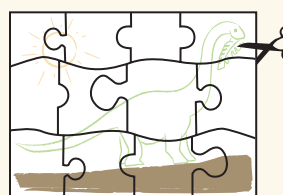
Instructions



Draw picture of dinosaur



glue to cardboard



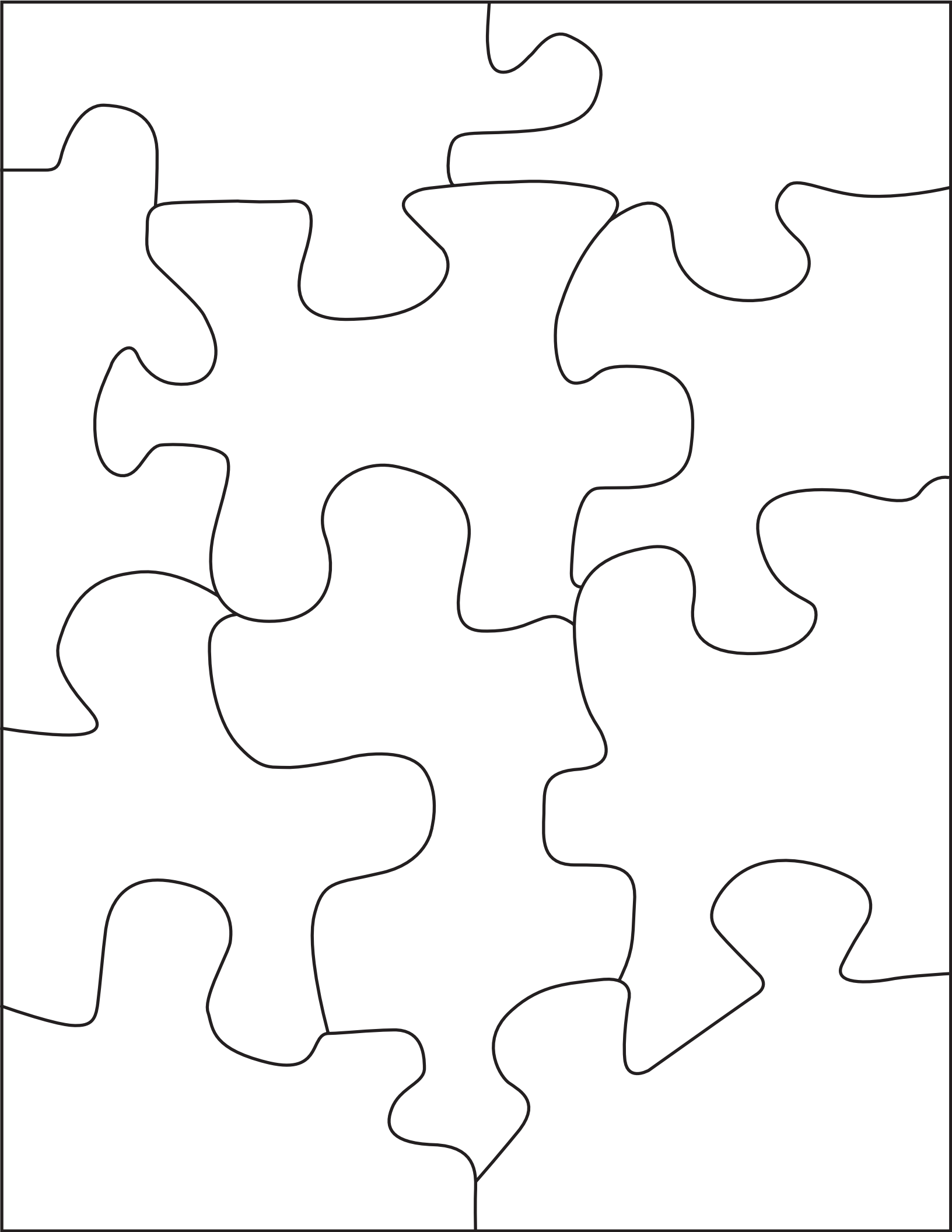
cut out puzzle shapes

1. First, choose the picture you want to use for your puzzle. (Make sure your child understands that the image will be cut into puzzle pieces.)
2. Glue the image to a piece of poster board or cardboard that is the same size as your picture.
3. Show your child how to draw puzzle shapes. Encourage your child not to make puzzle pieces that are too complex as those will be difficult to cut out. Draw the puzzle pieces with marker or pencil on the back of the cardboard, not on the image.
4. After the glue has dried, cut out your puzzle pieces together. It may be difficult for your child to cut through thick cardboard or posterboard, so exercise caution and pay attention to small children when scissors are used.

When you and your child put together the dinosaur puzzle, talk about:

- >> Where this dinosaur might have lived
- >> How scientists discover dinosaur bones
- >> Where people can go to see dinosaur bones
- >> How do scientists know how to put dinosaur bones together?

Build a dinosaur online: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/dinosaurs/buildadino/index.htm>



measuring up



One thing about dinosaurs that fascinates many children is their size. But how big is big? You may read together that Brachiosaurus is about 80 feet long, 40 feet tall, and weighed 70-80 tons, but what does that mean?

Get out and about and use everyday measurements to help your child understand the size of dinosaurs:

- >> Show your child a tree that tops 40 feet (birch or maple often are that height) or a four story building to get the sense of how tall Brachiosaurus stood. A standard kids' soccer field is about 90 feet wide, so a Brachiosaurus could lie down cross-wise on the field but his tail would still stick out by about 10 feet! Or if a bus is about 40 feet long, a Brachiosaurus would be about 2 buses long. There are 2,000 pounds in a ton. How much does your child weigh? How many of your child would it take to equal one Brachiosaurus?

Find out the measurements of your favorite dinosaurs and see how they measure up!

- >> Some of the largest dinosaur footprints found in the world would be big enough to sit in — about three feet by three feet. Make a cut-out paper version of a fossilized dinosaur print and a paper version of your child's foot and your foot. Have your child guess how many of his footprint would be needed to fill in the dinosaur print and write down his estimate. Then let him trace his paper footprint as many times as necessary to fill in the dinosaur print. Have him count his footprints and see how close his estimate was.

Turn the paper dinosaur print over and have him try again — this time with your footprint.

- >> Many dinosaurs were very large, but some were small. The smallest, the non-avian dinosaur Parvicursor, was less than 15 inches long. Use a tape measure or ruler to measure your child's height. How much taller is he than Parvicursor? Than other small dinosaurs? Talk about the kinds of things that your child can do that he couldn't do if he were smaller. Then think about big dinosaurs. What kinds of things could your child do if he were much bigger or had the help of a very large dinosaur?

Encourage your child to write or draw pictures about being big or being little.

More great online resources about dinosaurs

For his Caldecott-Honor-winning illustrations in *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*, illustrator Brian Selznick traveled to London to sketch, photograph, and climb inside the famous dinosaur replicas. Watch this Reading Rockets video interview in which he shares his dinosaur adventure. <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/selznick>

Enter your zip code to find out what dinosaurs lived in your backyard millions of years ago. The Discovery Channel offers an interactive tour of prehistoric North America. <http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/dinos/dinos.html>

Download additional title recommendations and activity ideas in the Reading Is Fundamental Story Sampler Dino-Stories for preschoolers and children in grades K-2. <http://www.rif.org/assets/Documents/StorySamplers/Dinosaurs.pdf>

Go with NOVA on an exciting Arctic trek and watch as a team of paleontologists attempts to tunnel into the permafrost of Northern Alaska in search of fossil dinosaur bones. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/arcticdino/program.html>

Join in a virtual dinosaur dig and find more dinosaur links at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. <http://paleobiology.si.edu/dinosaurs/>

Explore PBS's dinosaur field guide, a companion resource for the PBS show *Dinosaur Train*, developed especially for kids 3-8 years old. <http://pbskids.org/dinosaurtrain/games/fieldguide.html>

what's in a name?



Dinosaur: from the Greek “deinos” meaning “terrible or powerful” and “sauros” meaning “lizard”

With their unusual and complicated names, dinosaurs offer a rich opportunity to explore letters and language. Here are some ideas to try:

- >> Formal scientific names for dinosaurs come from Latin and Greek words and are hard to pronounce using English. Use the DinoDictionary to listen to the pronunciation of more than 300 dinosaur names. www.dinodictionary.com
- >> Dinosaurs are usually named for the way they look or behave, but the scientist who discovers a new dinosaur can name it for anything he or she likes — a special location, a family member or friend, or a mythical beast. Spend some time coming up with and writing down new names for dinosaurs that your child draws or imagines.
- >> Use the name of a real dinosaur to create an acrostic poem. Write the name of the dinosaur like this:

M
A
I
A
S
A
U
R
A

Begin each line with a word that starts with the letter on that line. Since Maiasaura means “good mother lizard” this poem might describe the dinosaur mother’s relationship with her young ones.

- >> You can also play with words with the names of real dinosaurs. Follow this example from the PBS show Word World to build a Word Thing of your child’s favorite dinosaur:

<http://pbskids.org/wordworld/activities/103b.html>

DINOSAURS



Featured titles

Fiction

Danny and the Dinosaur by Syd Hoff

Nonfiction

Dinosaurs by Gail Gibbons

Additional fiction titles

Dinorella: A Prehistoric Fairy Tale by Pamela Duncan Edwards

Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct by Mo Willems

How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon? by Jane Yolen

When Dinosaurs Came with Everything by Elise Broach

Additional nonfiction titles

Digging Up Dinosaurs by Alikei

Dinosaurs, Dinosaurs by Byron Barton

Dinosaurs: The Biggest, Baddest, Strangest, Fastest by Harold Zimmerman & George Olshevsky

How Big Were the Dinosaurs? by Bernard Most

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