



# Classroom Guide

Title: **Digging Up Dinosaurs**

Author: **Aliki**

Illustrator: **Aliki**

**Theme:** The great mystery surrounding the dinosaurs continues to fascinate us. How the giant creatures evolved, lived, and disappeared over 65 million years ago are questions that are still intriguing scientists.

**Program Summary:** This book introduces readers to many types of dinosaurs whose skeletons are seen in museums and explains how scientists uncover, preserve, and study fossils. LeVar explores our fascination with dinosaurs that lived and then disappeared millions of years ago. Dinosaur riddles are interspersed among interviews with a ranger and a paleontologist who take LeVar on a fossil tour of Dinosaur National Monument.

## Topics for Discussion:

Before watching the program, discuss with students why or how they think dinosaurs disappeared.

Through fossils, scientists have learned much about plant and animal life from long ago. Discuss the ways that fossils tell “stories.”

Discuss with the class how artists and scientists are able to draw pictures of dinosaurs. What information do they have that helps them make these drawings?

## Curriculum Extension Activities:

Find out what students know about dinosaurs by brainstorming two lists: “Dinosaur Fact” and “Dinosaur Fiction.” Write their ideas on sentence strips and put them in a pocket chart under the heading they choose. As they learn more about dinosaurs, have them add ideas to the two lists. They may also need to move the sentence strips to the other heading. Students might enjoy using these facts to make a board game or a card-matching game.

As students learn more about dinosaurs, have them classify them into groups, such as smallest and largest dinosaurs, where they lived (land, water, air), or by various physical features (plates, spikes, small head, etc.).

In *Digging Up Dinosaurs*, Aliki uses word bubbles to provide additional information. Have students draw pictures of a favorite dinosaur and glue them to a long piece of mural paper. Under the picture, have them attach a label identifying the dinosaur. Above the head of their dinosaur, have them make a word bubble telling an interesting



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fact about that dinosaur. For example, Stegosaurus might say, “I have plates on my back,” or Brachiosaurus might say, “I am one of the largest and heaviest of all dinosaurs.”

Have the class make a pictograph of dinosaurs that are omnivores, herbivores, and carnivores. Make a three-column chart. As students learn the eating habits of various dinosaurs, have them make a small drawing of the dinosaur and glue it under the appropriate heading. Later, discuss which category had the most representatives and what the implications might be for plant and animal life in the area in which those dinosaurs lived.

Using clay or clay dough, have students make models of dinosaurs and paint them. Display them against a backdrop made by the students. Have them use books about dinosaurs for ideas about making the scenery.

As a class, plan a time capsule that would represent the lives of children their age today. Brainstorm a list of favorites, such as favorite games, books, toy, TV shows, singer, sports, song, heroes, and other categories. Discuss the idea that everyone doesn't have the same favorites, but what, or who, would most children choose? Write their choices on a scroll of paper and tie it with some ribbon. Store it until the end of the year and then open the time capsule scroll. (To elicit even more discussion, save these scrolls for a period of years, and when the students reach fifth or sixth grade, deliver them to their classrooms and read them.)

Alternatively, send home the “Our Time Capsule” worksheet to give families an opportunity to plan their own time capsule.

If possible, take a field trip to a museum that has an exhibit related to prehistoric times, dinosaurs, or fossils.

## **Book Review:**

*Dinosaur Time* by Peggy Parish, illustrated by Arnold Lobel

## **Supplementary Booklist:**

*Bones, Bones, Dinosaur Bones* by Byron Barton



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*The Magic School Bus in the Time of the Dinosaurs* by Joanna Cole, illustrated by Bruce Degen

*Dinosaurs* by Gail Gibbons

*How Big Were the Dinosaurs?* by Bernard Most

*The Dinosaur Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta, illustrated by Ralph Masiello

## **Related Themes:**

- extinct animals
- fossils

## **Related Reading Rainbow Programs:**

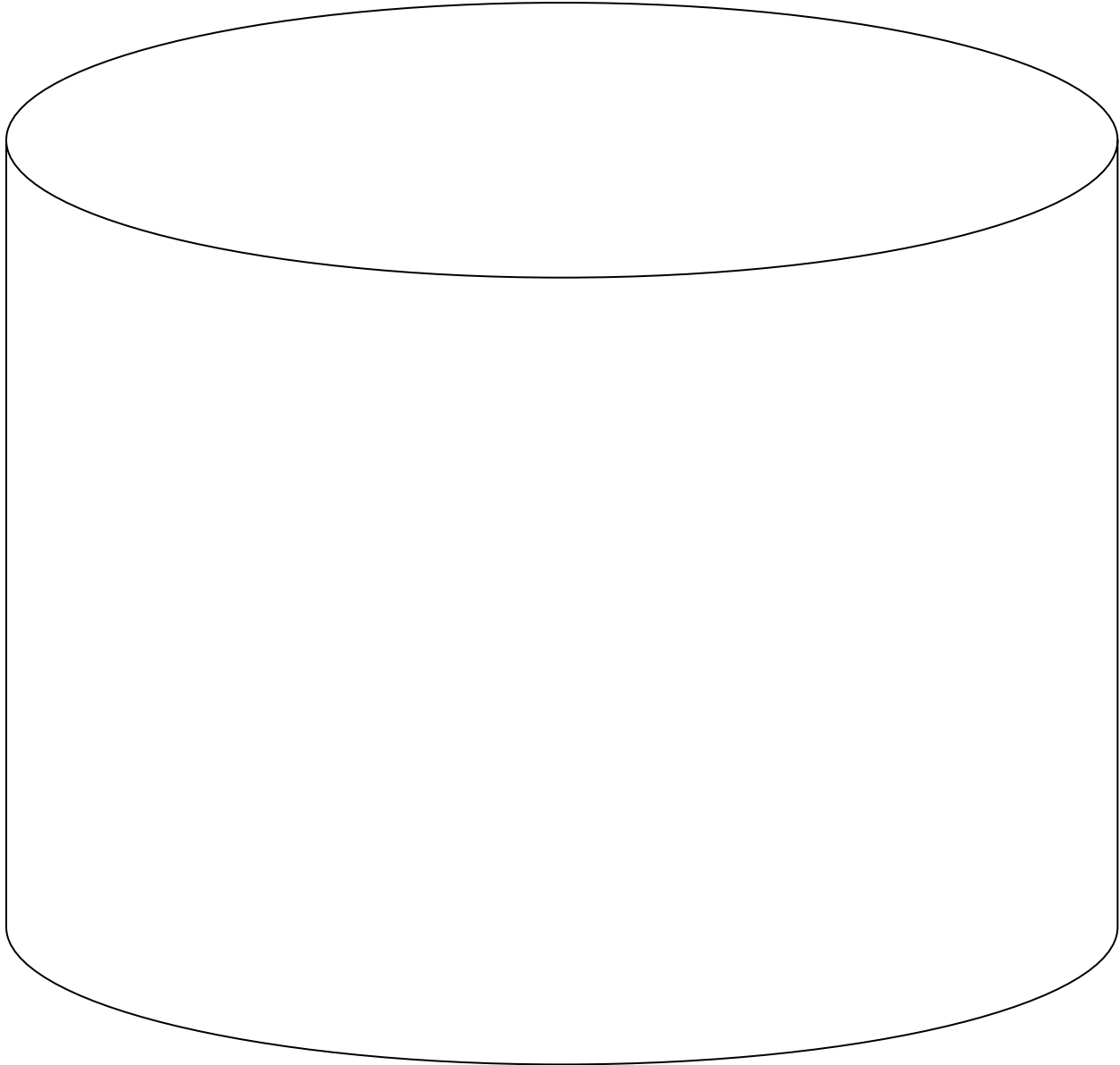
- Program #60 — Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lizardo
- Program #66 — The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth

**About the Author & Illustrator:** Aliki Brandenburg grew up in Philadelphia and recalls drawing all her life. She credits her kindergarten teacher with recognizing her talent and encouraging her. The author of numerous works of both fiction and nonfiction, Aliki says she writes about subjects that she's curious about. She is the author/illustrator of two other *Reading Rainbow* feature books, *Feelings* and *Mummies Made in Egypt*, and review books, *A Medieval Feast*, *How a Book Is Made*, *The Many Lives of Benjamin Franklin*, and *The Two of Them*. Aliki has collaborated on several books with her husband Franz.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Time Capsule

Have everyone in the family choose an item or two that they would put into a time capsule if you have an opportunity to make one. Don't forget to choose something for your pets! Draw and label the items in the time capsule below.



If you were to open the time capsule in 20 years, what year would it be then? \_\_\_\_\_