



# I wish there were dinosaurs



## Teachers' notes

### A note from the author

Many young children are fascinated by dinosaurs. Their size, power and mysterious demise appeal to the imagination, creating a mystique in children's minds akin to that inspired by monsters, dragons and other mythical creatures. In writing this book I wanted to provide opportunities for children to consider an imaginary scenario, to compare dinosaurs with the animals they know, to put themselves into the story and think about how they might feel and act. I have used a rhyming text to create a playful mood and to give a musical feel to the narrative. The inclusion of the child writing a letter is intended to give children reading or listening to the book the impression that children can take action to bring about changes in their world.

### A note from the illustrator

Dinosaurs are often strong and loud, even the friendly ones had to be so they could survive the big nasty ones. I wanted to use colours and a style of painting and drawing that showed this. I was excited because no one really knows what colour dinosaurs were so we have to guess. That meant I got to decide the colours myself. I had to do a lot of research to learn about dinosaurs, even stuff that isn't in the story.

For example, I needed to know if I could put seals and penguins in with the plesiosaur. I didn't want him to eat them.

Written by Amanda Niland  
Illustrated by Christina Booth  
Published by Windy Hollow Books

I used acrylic inks and pencil on an oatmeal coloured pastel paper. As it was the first time I had used acrylic inks as a paint and also the first time I had used pastel paper for a wet medium (pastel paper doesn't like water), I had to experiment a lot until I worked out how to get it right.

After I had drawn up the rough images and they had been approved, I drew the pictures onto all the pages with a soft sketching pencil. This let me get the little boy the same all the way through and if I wanted to change something as the pages went on I could do it easily. After all the drawing was done I painted in the acrylic ink. I made the outlines a bit stronger using a sepia coloured ink and an old fashioned nib pen. Because all the paper was 'wibbly wobbly' from the water, I had to spend a lot of time stretching the pages once they were completed so they would lie flat.

Often artists use a very light or white paper to paint on, especially when illustrating a book as it helps the light come from behind to lift out the colours. I decided to use a brown grey background as I wanted it to be a part of the illustration and to add a different texture and look. Because I decided not to have a lot of illustrations that filled the whole page with detail, I liked the idea of the brown paper as it suited the ancient and ferocious dinosaurs better than pure clean white. I like the way it looks and how I was able to use white ink on top of it. I hope you enjoy it as well.



## Book summary

In 'I Wish There Were Dinosaurs', a boy who loves dinosaurs imagines what would happen if dinosaurs lived at the zoo or came to his home.

The book explores dinosaurs, zoo animals, size, habitat, as well as comparisons between past and present, and between fantasy and reality.

### Curriculum links

The following suggestions for learning experiences relate to many curriculum outcomes in both Early Years and Primary School frameworks. In particular:

#### Early Years Learning Framework

Early Years Learning Framework Outcome 4: 'Children are confident and involved learners'.

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, creativity, imagination

Children develop skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, investigating

Early Years Learning Framework Outcome 5: 'Children are effective communicators'.

Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts

Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Documents/Final%20EYLF%20Framework%20Report%20-%20WEB.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Documents/Final%20EYLF%20Framework%20Report%20-%20WEB.pdf)

#### Australian National Curriculum (draft) Foundation and Year 1 outcomes

##### Literacy:

Respond to texts, identifying favourite stories, authors and illustrators (ACELT1577)

Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts (ACELT1783)

Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text/Identify some

features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)

Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images (ACELT1580)

##### Numeracy:

Use direct and indirect comparisons to decide which is longer, heavier or holds more, and explain reasoning in everyday language (ACMMG006)

##### Creative arts

Imagining and improvising

Exploring the elements/materials/techniques/processes

Shaping their art works

Practising skills and techniques

Communicating ideas through their art works

Linking their art works to other Arts subjects and learning areas

<http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum.html>

## MAINLY FOR THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS Before reading

Look at the cover...

What do you think will happen in the story?

What do you think the giraffes are thinking about?

What kind of a story do you think this will be? Examples: a calm story, a friendly story, a funny story, a scary story?

What do you know about dinosaurs?

## After reading

Do you wish there were dinosaurs at the zoo?

Which dinosaurs would you especially like to see?

Talk about what you imagine it might be like to see real live dinosaurs.



Do you think there might be any dangers at a dinosaur zoo?

What new things did you learn about dinosaurs from this book?

Do you have any questions about dinosaurs?

### **The boy's letter**

Why is the boy writing to the zoo?

Do you agree with the boy that dinosaurs are better than other animals in the zoo?

Why does the boy decide to cancel his letter?

If you wrote a letter to the zoo, what would you like to ask about?

### **Story's end**

Why is the dinosaur at the end of the book carrying a suitcase and a knapsack?

What might be inside the suitcase? Perhaps you can create the dinosaur's suitcase. You may like to draw it or make a suitcase from cardboard or a small box. Then you can draw, or find pictures for, the items, cut them out and glue or place them in the suitcase.

### **Talking, listening and sharing**

Find pictures of dinosaurs that you find interesting and talk about them with your teachers and friends.

Do you have any toy dinosaurs? You could bring one to pre-school, kindergarten or child care to talk about with your teachers and friends.

Find out as much as you can about your special dinosaur.

### **Music, movement, drama**

Ask your teacher to help you choose some dinosaur music, or create your own music with drums and other percussion instruments. Think about how different dinosaurs might move and use the music to create a dinosaur dance.

Listen to 'Carnival of the Animals' by the French composer Saint-Saens, which is about other animals in the zoo, and move like those animals. There is a part in this music called 'Fossils', which is perfect for moving like dinosaurs.

### **Visual arts**

Create some dinosaurs, either with drawing, play dough, clay, collage or boxes and other recycled materials. You may like to do this with friends.

What could you use to create a zoo for your dinosaurs?

## **MAINLY FOR FIVE TO SEVEN YEAR OLDS**

Any of the above suggestions can also be adapted for the early years of school. Below are further ideas more specifically focused on K-1 curriculum outcomes.

### **Creative writing**

What words can you think of that describe how dinosaurs look, move, sound? Use these to create a word bank about dinosaurs.

Write an acrostic poem using the letters of your favourite dinosaur as your guide.

### **Science**

Investigate dinosaurs and the places where they lived. Your teachers or parents can help you to choose books or internet sites, such as museum websites, to find information. Talk about how scientists know so much about these creatures that lived such a long time ago.

### **Maths**

Find out how tall your favourite dinosaurs were. With help from your teacher, use tape measures and scissors to make streamers as long as the dinosaurs. Label these and lay them out on the floor or in the playground. Make streamers as long as you and lay them out to compare.

Find out how big dinosaurs' footprints were and make some with paper, pencils and scissors. Place them around the classroom floor. Write the name of each dinosaur on the back of the footprint.



Draw and cut out your own footprint. Compare your footprints to the dinosaurs' footprints.

## CREATIVE ARTS

### Dinosaur soundscape

Compose dinosaur music. Each dinosaur represents a sound. Use different dynamics and tempi to create your soundscape. For example, for larger the dinosaurs, you could make louder sounds. Think about which dinosaurs moved very slowly, with heavy footsteps, and which may have been lighter or faster, or moved in other ways.

### Dinosaur beat band

Select your favourite dinosaurs and draw or colour a set of small pictures of each one (4, 8 or 12 of each type). Each picture will be one sound/beat in your music. Choose a different instrument for each type of dinosaur. Place the pictures on a board in groups of 4. Decide where there will be one dinosaur sound at a time and where several dinosaurs may sound together. Decide which beats will be soft and which will be loud. Perhaps make larger pictures for the loud dinosaurs and smaller for the soft dinosaurs. Choose someone to be the conductor of your band. The conductor will point to the beat pictures and keep everyone in time.

## Song

If a dinosaur came to your house, what would you do?

If a dinosaur came to your house, what would you do?

You could run; you could hide; under the bed; [children can devise alternate lyrics here]

Be very quiet....be very still...and listen..... [spoken] oh-oh!

Stomp! Stomp! Stomp! Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!  
Stomp! Stomp!

**Final verse:** [Repeat up to hiding place]

[spoken] Or you could say "A dinosaur couldn't come to our house, because there are no dinosaurs any more, they're extinct!"

## Readers' theatre

Create a play based on 'I wish there were dinosaurs', with a narrator reading from the text and children taking on the role of child, parent, dinosaurs, other animals, zoo visitors and zoo keepers. Design masks for the dinosaurs and other animals. Make a video recording of your performances.

**If a dinosaur came to your house**

Moderato Amanda Niland

Voice

If a din-o-saur came to your house what would you do? If a  
*mf*

din-o-saur came to your house what would you do? You could run, you could hide,  
un-der the bed,     be ver-y qui-et, be ver-y still and lis-ten; (spoken) oh - oh!  
*pp*

stomp! stomp! stomp! stomp! stomp! stomp! stomp! stomp!  
*mf* *f*

