

Dinosaur Rescue – Diplo-dizzydocus

Author: Kyle Mewburn

Illustrator: Donovan Bixley

Synopsis

Arg isn't just an ordinary cave boy; he has a very large brain and is much smarter than everyone who lives in his Stone Age village. Unfortunately Arg's intelligence means that he has an inquisitive nature and he loves adventure. This would be fine but during the Stone Age there were many dangers; including violent and brutal rival tribes and blood-thirsty dinosaurs. Arg's friend Skeet is the only one who really understands him. He is a super-smart T-Rex who is determined to save the dinosaurs from extinction and he has asked Arg to help him. All of the diplodocuses are suffering from a strange sickness which makes them dizzy and unable to defend themselves from the fierce Grogllgrox tribe. When Arg and Skeet go to help them Skeet himself falls victim to the strange illness, leaving Arg alone and defenceless against the blood-thirsty Grogllgrox. Arg must use his large brain to formulate a plan to save not only his own life, but Skeet's and the other dinosaurs' as well. Who would ever have guessed that he would gain inspiration from his incredibly stupid and evil sister Hng?

Text Type

Diplo-Dizzydocus is the fourth book in the *Dinosaur Rescue* series written by New Zealand author Kyle Mewburn. Designed for readers aged 8-10, the books are full of disgusting descriptions of unsavoury cave man behaviour and will appeal particularly to boys. Set in the Stone Age, the story contains fascinating and hilarious information about Neanderthals and their lifestyle. In addition, readers will learn interesting information about a range of dinosaurs. The illustrations by Donovan Bixley are lively and funny and ensure reader engagement.

Students who have read any of the other books in the series will by now be familiar with Arg, his family, his friends and the other member of his tribe. Arg has trouble fitting in with his tribe because he is so much smarter than they are. This makes him feel like an outsider at times. He doesn't get on with his sister Hng who is considered evil, and although his friend Shlok is always keen to have an adventure his stupidity often ends up getting them into trouble. The only one who understands Arg is his friend Skeet, a T-Rex who is just as smart as he is. *Diplo-dizzydocus* continues the story of Arg and Skeet's crusade to save the dinosaurs

and develops the minor characters further, showing readers how hilarity can ensue when you are dealing with primitive and not very clever cave people.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 9-25), Chapters 2-3 (pp. 26-63) and Chapters 4-5 (pp. 64-96).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them make predictions about what will happen next in the story. Students need to learn about the main character Arg and understand the difficulties that he faces because of his superior intelligence. Most importantly, students should enjoy the book and allow themselves to get caught up in Arg's prehistoric world where dinosaurs and cavemen exist and adventures abound. The book is delightfully illustrated with humorous drawings that really bring the setting and characters to life.

Introducing the Novel

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

- Who is the main character in the story?
- When do you think the story is set?
- How do you know that this book is part of a series?
- What do you already know about dinosaurs and when they lived?
- What do you think a Grogllgrox might be?

Examine the map of Arg's valley provided at the start of the book.

- What do you notice about Arg's village?
- What possible dangers do the people in Arg's village face?
- What extinct animals do you notice on the map?

Look at the picture of Arg's family and friends.

- What do you notice about each of the characters?
- How is Arg described?
- Who is Arg's pet? What kind of animal is he?

What clues are there in the picture that Arg and his family are cave people?

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

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 9-25)

- How does Arg know that Hng is up to no good?
- How are Hng's descendents different from Arg's descendents?
- Why does Arg usually try and stay away from his sister? Why does he decide to stay and keep an eye on her this time?
- Who is Shlok? How is he different from Arg?
- What is old Kril supposed to be doing? How does Arg know that he is asleep?
- What do Shlok and Arg see Hng doing?
- What happens when Shlok squashes the stink bug? How does he react to the smell? Why doesn't the smell bother Arg?
- List 3 interesting facts about the Geysers stink bug.
- What does Hng do when she reaches the top of the tree above where the old men are sleeping? What happens when the old men rub their noses?
- Who does Arg see standing at the edge of the village? Who comes to help the old men?
- What do we learn about Skeet?
- List 3 fascinating facts about Stone Age schools.

Discussion

- Do you have a brother or sister like Arg? How do you feel about them? Do you play pranks on each other? What kinds of things do you do together?
- What do we learn about Arg and his life in this Chapter?
- Why do you think Skeet has come to find Arg?

Students read Chapters 2-3 (pp. 26-63) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2-3 (pp. 26-63)

- What are two advantages of having a T-rex for a friend?
- How is the neighbouring valley different to Arg's valley?
- What are the big grey "boulders"?
- What happens when a diplodocus tries to get to its feet?
- What does the book tell us about diplodocus?
- Why is Arg so worried when he sees the Grogllgrox hunting party? Why are Grogllgrox so dangerous?

- Why isn't Arg afraid to enter the valley?
- How does the first diplodocus react when it sees Skeet and Arg enter the valley?
- What happens to Skeet when he enters the valley? How does this create problems for Arg?
- What are two disadvantages of having a T-rex as a friend?
- What does Skeet do all over Arg? How does Arg know that the vomit must be very smelly?
- Why are the Grogllgrox so excited?
- What happens to the flies buzzing around Arg's head? What does Arg think is causing all of the things in the valley to faint?
- Why doesn't Arg run away from the Grogllgrox? What does this suggest about his character?
- How many Grogllgroxes are in the hunting party? Why do Grogllgrox eat people?
- What does Arg do to attract the Grogllgroxes attention? How do the Grogllgrox react to his comments?
- What happens when the Grogllgrox run off after Arg?
- Why doesn't Arg's plan work completely?
- What are two good reasons why you shouldn't try and befriend a Grogllgrox?

Discussion

- What do you think has made Skeet and the other dinosaurs dizzy? Why doesn't it affect Arg?
- What do you think might have happened if Arg didn't have a cold?
- Create 2 popular Neanderthal insults of your own.
- What do you think is going in the story next?

Students read Chapters 4-5 (pp. 64-96) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 4-5 (pp. 64-96)

- What does Arg worry will happen if the Grogllgrox catches him alive?
- Why does the Grogllgrox stop chasing after Arg?
- What is the bravest thing a Grogllgrox can do?
- How does the Grogllgrox approach Skeet? When does he realise that Skeet is defenceless? How does Arg distract the Grogllgrox?

- How does Arg feel being so close to a Grogllgrox? Why doesn't he run away?
- What does Skeet do to the Grogllgrox? What happens to his other half?
- What does Skeet do as soon as he has eaten the Grogllgrox?
- Why aren't Skeet and Arg safe even after the Grogllgrox is killed? Why can't Arg formulate another plan to save them?
- How does Arg know that Skeet is getting better? Why does he tell Arg to leave? Why doesn't Arg go?
- How does Hng's prank earlier in the day help Arg think of a plan?
- What does Arg do with the stink bugs? How do the diplodocuses react to the smell? What do the diplodocuses do when the Grogllgrox charge at them?
- How does Arg get Skeet to wake up? Why do the remaining Grogllgrox run away?
- What happens to Hng when Arg gets home?

Discussion

- What are the advantages and disadvantages to Arg of having a big brain?
- Why do Skeet and Arg make such a good team?
- Identify the climax of the story. Why is this event important?
- Identify a theme or idea presented in the story.

Activities

Research - Conduct a research assignment 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.

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

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 *Diplo-dizzydocus*. 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.

Drama - Imagine that you are Arg. Acting in-role introduce the class to your family, describe where you live and the sorts of adventures that you have in the Stone Age.

Poster - Create a poster showing other ways that dinosaurs might use their body parts.

Writing - Rewrite a section of the book from a Grogllgrox's point of view.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd