

Focus Question:

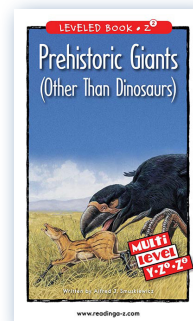
How and why has animal life evolved on Earth over the past millions of years?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

Can your students name a prehistoric animal—other than a dinosaur? Students will travel back in time with *Prehistoric Giants (Other Than Dinosaurs)* to learn about giant reptiles as well as giant species of shellfish, insects, centipedes, fish, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Read about how these animals once were a force to be reckoned with, but are now extinct. Vivid photographs, illustrations, a timeline, and a map support the text as students learn about identifying main ideas and details and using commas in a series.

The book and lesson are also available for levels Y and Z1.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Ask and answer questions to understand text
- ☐ Identify main idea and details
- ☐ Describe information provided by maps
- ☐ Identify and use commas in a series
- ☐ Identify the meaning of prefix *pre-*

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Prehistoric Giants (Other Than Dinosaurs)* (copy for each student)
- ☐ KWLS / ask and answer questions, main idea and details, commas in a series worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *eras* (n.), *invertebrates* (n.), *paleontologists* (n.), *periods* (n.), *prehistoric* (adj.), *species* (n.)

Enrichment: *amphibians* (n.), *arthropod* (n.), *DNA* (n.), *evolution* (n.), *habitat* (n.), *herbivores* (n.), *ice age* (n.), *marine* (adj.), *mass extinction* (n.), *tentacles* (n.), *trilobites* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *allows* (v.), *chart* (n.), *periods* (n.), *protect* (v.), *several* (adj.), *support* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *prehistoric* on the board. Ask students to share what they know about the meaning of the word. Explain that *prehistoric* refers to the time before writing was invented, about 6,000 years ago. Ask students whether they know of anything that was alive during prehistoric times. Ask how they think the animals may have been different from the animals of today.
- Explain to students that prehistoric animals are now extinct. Ask students why they think extinction occurs. Ask students if any animals today resemble prehistoric creatures. If so, which animals, and how are they similar to their predecessor?
- Create a KWLS chart on the board. Introduce and explain the **KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet**. Review that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. Discuss and fill in the first column (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS worksheet.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Prehistoric Giants (Other Than Dinosaurs)*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy:

Ask and answer questions

Explain to students that having prior knowledge about a topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember information in a book. Direct students to the index on page 24 of the book and model asking questions about the list of words. Ask students what they would like to know about prehistoric animals. Have them fill in the second column (W) of their worksheet. Write their questions on the class chart. As students read, encourage them to ask questions and record them on their KWLS worksheet.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Main idea and details

- Explain to students that all books have a main idea, or a general topic that is the subject of a book. The extra information and descriptions that help explain the main idea are the details of the book. Explain that sometimes the amount of information about a topic is so large that it is grouped into sections, and each section has its own main idea. Point out to students that the title of a book or section often provides clues about the main idea.
- Have students turn to pages 4 and 5 and discuss with a partner their predictions about the main idea of this section of the text. Invite students to share their predictions and the details that support their reasoning.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on pages 23 and 24. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about how and why animal life evolved on Earth over the past millions of years. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer.
- Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What are the benefits of gathering information from fossils, footprints, and DNA?* (level 3) page 4
- *What marks transitions between periods and eras?* (level 1) page 5
- *Where did life on Earth begin, and how did life migrate to other regions of the world?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *What change in climate affected the size of bugs?* (level 2) pages 8–9
- *How would you categorize Leedsichthys?* (level 3) page 10
- *Why did Koolasachus and other giant amphibians go extinct?* (level 3) page 11
- *What physical features make giant birds dangerous to prey?* (level 3) page 17
- *Why would giant mammals be able to rule the world after giant reptiles went extinct?* (level 3) page 22

Text Features: Maps

Explain that maps are helpful when reading because they provide the reader with important visual information. Have students review the map on page 5 and discuss the information they see. Have students identify the title and compass rose on the map. Ask students, *Where did Meganeura live? Were there any prehistoric animals that lived in more than one place? How do you know? How does the map help readers better understand the main idea?*

Skill Review

- Guide students to an understanding that *dinosaurs were not the only prehistoric giants that once roamed the Earth* is the main idea since the book is all about this subject. Write *dinosaurs were not the only prehistoric giants that once roamed the Earth* on the board.
- Model identifying details that support the main idea of the book.
Think-aloud: *I know the main idea of this book: dinosaurs were not the only prehistoric giants that once roamed the Earth. Since every main idea needs details to explain it, I will be looking for details that explain or describe giant prehistoric animals, other than dinosaurs. I read on page 4 that giant species of shellfish, insects, centipedes, amphibians, birds, and mammals lived among dinosaurs and are now extinct. I read on page 10 that oceans became too small and low to support giant animals that existed there in the past. I read on pages 8 and 9 that the air was heavier and filled with more oxygen. This factor supported the weight of giant insects, such*

as *Meganeura* and other land species. I read on page 11 that climate changes contributed to a loss of habitat, like the swamps where *Koolasuchus* lived. I read on page 19 that species were in competition, such as *Gigantopithecus* and humans. Humans may have used too much of the bamboo that this giant ape needed to survive. Therefore, many details support that the main idea is dinosaurs were not the only prehistoric giants that once roamed the Earth. I will continue to look for more details that describe these prehistoric giants and how they evolved.

- Have students reread pages 16 and 17, looking for supporting details about the main idea for this section. Point out that the section title helps to identify the main idea (*giant birds*). Write details about these birds on the board (page 16: *Gastornis*, a bird about 7 feet tall; sharp, powerful beak; may weigh more than 1 ton; page 17: *Phorusrhacos*, stands up to 10 feet tall, 27 million to 2.5 million years ago; and so on). Ask students how this information supports the section's main idea.
- Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#), using evidence from the text. Have students discuss the details they noted with a partner.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: Ask and answer questions

Review the questions students noted in the *W* section of their KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet and have them consider these questions when completing the *L* section of the worksheet. Then, have students share any remaining questions they might have about the topic and record them in the *S* section of the worksheet. Discuss with students other sources that might provide answers to these questions.

Comprehension Extension

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers may vary. Sample answer: *Animal life began in the ocean and moved onto land. These changes were caused by oxygen levels in the air, seas becoming smaller, less food to eat, changes in climate, competition with other species, small population, and loss of habitat.*)

Comprehension Checks

- [Book quiz](#)
- [Retelling rubric](#)

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Commas in a series

- Explain that when writers list a series of items in a sentence, the words need to be separated by commas. Without commas, the sentence would be difficult to read and understand.
- Turn to page 19 of the book. Have a volunteer read the last sentence in the second paragraph: *It eats bamboo, fruit, seeds, and other plant food in tropical rainforests in Asia.* Ask a volunteer to identify the listed items (*bamboo, fruit, seeds, and other plant food*). Discuss the location of the commas within the list and the word *and*, which joins the last words of the phrase. Point out that the sentence makes much more sense and is easier to read with the correct punctuation.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following sentence on the board: *Paleontologists can use a fossil to learn when and where an animal lived how big it was what kind of food it ate and how it moved.* Have students copy the sentence on the inside front cover of their book and add commas to separate the phrases. Check individual answers for understanding. Have a volunteer add commas to the sentence on the board.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [commas-in-a-series worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Prefix pre-

- Have students find and point to the word *prehistoric* on page 4. Write *prehistoric* on the board. Cover the prefix *pre-* in the word. Have students discuss with a partner what the word *historic* means.
- Uncover the prefix *pre-* and explain to students that the beginning of the word *prehistoric* is a *prefix*. Explain that prefixes help readers figure out the meaning of some words. Ask students what they think the word *prehistoric* means.
- Explain to students that the prefix *pre-* means *before*.
- Ask students to turn to the glossary on pages 23 to 24, and have them find the meaning to the word *prehistoric*. Remind students that the words in the glossary are vocabulary words for the book. Point out that the prefix *pre-* supports the definition.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to find and circle all examples of words with prefixes in the text.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.