

Reading

Thematic Overview

'The Good Dinosaur' – Bill Scola

The Good Dinosaur is a touching story set in a world inhabited by dinosaurs. It follows a young dinosaur named Arlo on an adventure to discover who he is, face his fears, and form a special friendship along the way.

English

Pupils can write detailed descriptions of the main characters, particularly Arlo and Spot, focusing on personality traits, emotions, and physical attributes. This activity enhances vocabulary related to character and emotion, while also encouraging descriptive language.

The book's prehistoric setting is a rich area for descriptive writing. Pupils can describe landscapes like rivers, mountains, and forests. They can practice using sensory language to convey sights, sounds, smells, and textures, helping them build strong imagery in their writing.

Art

Pupil explore the prehistoric world depicted in the book by using natural materials like leaves, twigs, and stones to create textures similar to those in the book's landscapes. They can dip these items in paint or ink and press them onto paper, mimicking the rugged terrain, mountains, and rivers Arlo encounters.

Carve simple dinosaur footprints into foam sheets or potatoes, allowing pupils to create prints of dinosaur tracks as they might have appeared in mud or sand. This could be a hands-on way to understand how dinosaurs left impressions in the ground.

Geography

As Arlo travels, he encounters a variety of landscapes, from peaceful valleys to treacherous mountains, illustrating how different environments shape his adventures. This can encourage pupils to think about their own surroundings and how natural features in their area influence life.

The story also features extreme weather, such as storms and floods, which play a key role in Arlo's journey. This can lead to discussions about how weather impacts both the fictional story and real life. Pupils can explore how weather in the UK—such as rain and seasonal changes—affects daily life and the landscape, much like it does in Arlo's world.

Science

Discuss how the dinosaurs in the story move and what body parts are involved (e.g., legs for walking, tails for balance). You can compare the dinosaurs' movements to human movements, prompting pupils to think about how their own bodies work.

Explore how the story's environment might change with seasons. Discuss what happens in different seasons (e.g., trees losing leaves in autumn, animals hibernating in winter) and relate it to the dinosaurs' habitat.

Technology

Use software like Google SketchUp to design 3D models of dinosaur habitats.

Pupils can create models that include elements like vegetation, water sources, and shelter.

History

Arlo's journey shows how he learns to be brave and confronts challenges, something pupils can relate to in their own lives. Like Arlo, they are also making their own history by overcoming obstacles and contributing to their communities.

The story takes place in a time when dinosaurs roamed the Earth, allowing readers to imagine what the world might have looked like millions of years ago. This connects to learning about dinosaurs and their habitats, helping pupils visualise the past.

