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# Activity Guide

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## The Dinosaur Who Lived In My Backyard

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### ABOUT THE STORY

This sweet, simple story is a mix of facts and fantasy, and told from the point of view of a child. The youngster describes what he imagines it would be like if dinosaurs were still alive and living in his yard.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

B. G. Hennessy has worked in children's book design for many years and was art director for a major publishing house in New York City. She is the author of several children's books, including *Eney Meeney Miney, Mo*, *One Little Two Little Tree Little Pilgrims*, *Meet Dinah Dinosaur*, and *Busy Dinah Dinosaur*. She currently lives in California with her husband and children, and is busy working on her newest titles.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Illustrator Susan Davis' work has appeared in *The New Yorker* and *The Washington Post*, among other publications. She has illustrated several book including *When Daddy Comes Home*, *Waiting for Mom*, and *My Brother Oscar Thinks He Knows It All*. Ms. Davis lives in Maryland.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Spark the children's imagination by asking them to brainstorm what it might be like if dinosaurs were still alive and living nearby. Explain that this book describes on child's ideas.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- "How was the dinosaur probably born?"
- "How much did a dinosaur probably eat every day?"
- "How big was the dinosaur at 5 years old?"
- "How much did the dinosaur likely weigh?"
- "Why did the dinosaur have such a long neck?"
- "What was bigger- the dinosaur's footprint or the child's sandbox?"

#### **Vocabulary**

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, simply discuss the terms, or have children look them up in the dictionary.

dinosaur	basketball	lima beans	neighborhood
terrible	sprinkle	swamp	rescue

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Language Arts: Wheel of Words**

Using terms from the story (such as the vocabulary terms) play a "Wheel of Fortune" type game on the blackboard. Make on dash for each letter of the word and the children guess letters one at a time. As they guess letters, fill them in accordingly. Continue until a child guesses the word. Repeat with additional words.

#### **Language Arts: Here Comes King Kong!**

Have the students imagine what it would be like if some other creatures lived in the backyards (such as dragons, King Kong, Big Foot, Godzilla, unicorn, or Pegasus). Have them draw a picture of what they imagine the scene to look like, and then take turns presenting it to their classmates. They can also explain the difference and similarities between their chosen creature and the dinosaur.

#### **Science: Dishing Up Dinosaurs**

Assign or have each child select a specific kind of dinosaur they'd like to learn about. Provide books and other resources. Have children answer basic questions about their dinosaur (What is it called? What did it eat? How big did it get? What color was it?).

#### **Art: Design Your Own Dinosaur**

Provide children with crayons and markers. Ask them to design and name a dinosaur of their own. It might be fun to name the dinosaur after the child (Sara-a -saurus or Jack-a-saurus). Display as a class bulletin board.

#### **Social Studies: What Exactly is Extinct?**

Children can use a dictionary and an encyclopedia to learn about the term extinct. Discuss what this means, and have children research why, how, and when the dinosaurs became extinct. What other animals are currently in danger of becoming extinct? What other animals are extinct now besides the dinosaurs? Emphasize that once something is extinct, it can never come back.

#### **Math: Measure the Mastodons**

Provide children with pictures of several kinds of dinosaurs. Use various measurement devices (unifix cubes, ruler, fingers, etc.) to measure their length and height.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### **Dinosaurs**

Using the keyword "dinosaur", have children find pictures of dinosaurs on the Internet. Each child can print out a picture of a dinosaur they particularly like. Collect the pictures and assemble a "class picks" dinosaur book. An extension idea would be to alphabetize the dinosaurs with the class first.