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Optional Assignment # 1

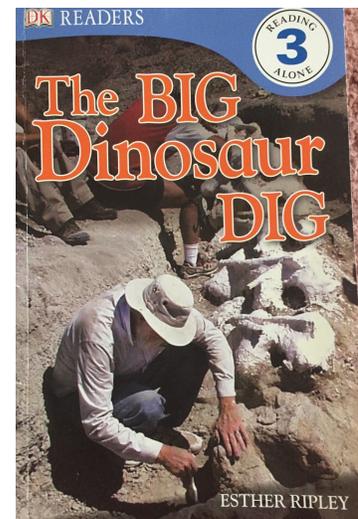
Book Resource Review

Reading & Writing Across the Science Classroom

The Big Dinosaur Dig

Overview

The Big Dinosaur Dig by Esther Ripley is an informational text written for children ready to read independently. It is written to read like fiction, but with true facts of informational text infused into the storyline. The book starts out with the character, Josh Smith in Egypt explaining his purpose for being there. He was in Egypt looking for fossils in the historical footsteps of Ernst Stromer. Josh believes he can also find valuable dinosaur bones in the same location of the Bahariya Oasis in the Sahara Desert that Stromer excavated at. He does persevere and is able to find large bones and even discovers new species of large dinosaurs at the location.



Content and Reading Level

The text looks and feels like non-fiction even though it reads like a narrative text. In away it can be considered mixed or even a hybrid of both narrative as well as nonfiction. It contains text features such as: photographs, captions, maps, drawings, charts, table of contents and a glossary as well. The text is considered a 2nd to 3rd grade level text. It covers the topic of paleontology and fossil acquisition techniques. This book would support the following science standard: Earth events can occur quickly or slowly (2ESS 1-1) and analyze and interpret data from fossils to provide evidence of the organisms and the environments in which they lived long ago (3-LS4-1).

Support for STEM

This text is a great book to introduce young readers to nonfiction structure and features. The text has more complex sentence structure, informational boxes, and detailed photos and glossary allowing for students to access informational text structures. Readers can learn about the process that paleontologists go through to find fossils. Allowing students to obtain knowledge of how paleontologists work in the real world. Readers learn about the tools and technologies used by paleontologists today compared to those in the past and notice the similarities as well. The book is written in chronological order of events so that the readers understand the storyline in order as it happened on the actual field work. In addition, readers learn how fossils can tell stories about the climate and or the environment in the past. The author eludes to some math when the text compares weights and length. The author provides both standard weights and

lengths as well as metric. The text also provides insight into how a scientist must sometimes rethink their theories and change accordingly. Josh Smith changed the location of his original dig site in order to have better access to an area that was not plagued by sandstorms. After moving to a different area he was able to locate very large bones.

Resource Usage Plan

First, I would have the students help me fill out a whole group KWL chart on the topic of paleontologists before we read the book. Then, I would post a paragraph excerpt from the text and ask the students to make predictions about the topic they are going to read before I even show the book or the title. Later, I would use the text to introduce informational text reading skills. I would have the students go on a text feature scavenger hunt using the book. For building better comprehension skills I would also have students use sticky notes to close read for main Ideas and details and place them on note catchers and give them time to transfer their writing to the organizer. This would give them a chance to practice accurate transferring skills. Finally, I would also have students create a timeline of the important events that occur in the text. Having a brief discussion around why they think the author chose to write the story in order and why is that important.

Limitations

Some limitations I see with using this text is that it is not written like a typical nonfiction text because it has characters and plot. This might confuse younger learners when you are trying to get them to understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction. It could be too difficult for those students who are not ready to read independently and would need lots of scaffolding and small group work. The vocabulary could be a little difficult for ELL populations as well, however you could use strategies to help with this.

Conclusion

In the end, The Big Dinosaur Dig would be a great book to introduce informational text features and build an understanding of how fossils are important to scientists to be able to figure out what happened in the past. It also demonstrates how scientists work in the field. A good book for early independent readers. With some scaffolding, I think all readers would be able to enjoy and reap the benefits of reading this wonderful book.