

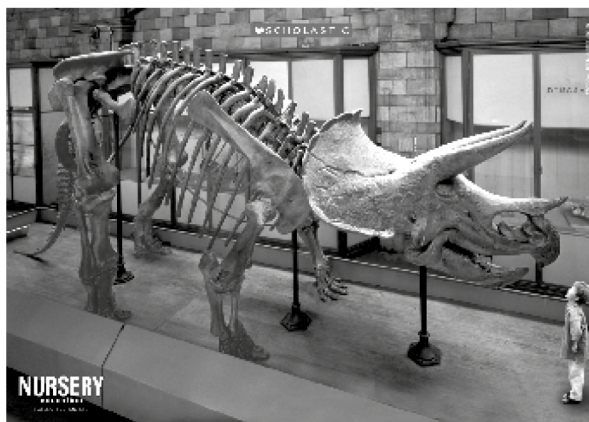
Dinosaur skeleton

Children are always fascinated by dinosaurs and eager to learn more about these exciting creatures. Extend their knowledge further using this fantastic poster of a triceratops skeleton as a starting-point

Using the poster

☒ Set up a 'Dinosaur skeletons' display using the poster as a centrepiece with the children's creative work arranged around it, for example, their three-dimensional skeletons (see 'Dinosaur skeletons' activity <https://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk/resources/5466>) and two-dimensional drawings and paintings (see 'Expressive arts and design' below).

☒ Display the poster as part of a role-play dinosaur museum. Hang the poster in the creative area and encourage the children to refer to it as they produce representations of dinosaur skeletons using a variety of media.



Activities across the curriculum

Personal, social and emotional development

☒ Invite the children to discuss the poster together. Would the children enjoy coming face-to-face with a dinosaur skeleton like the child in the poster? Would they feel excited or perhaps frightened? Allay any fears by explaining that dinosaurs no longer inhabit the earth today.

☒ Mount the poster on to card, cover it in sticky-backed plastic and cut it into large pieces to form a jigsaw. Cut it logically so that the front and back legs and the head are on separate pieces of the puzzle. Subdivide it further for older children, for example, by cutting small pieces picturing the feet and tail. Invite the children to work together to complete the puzzle and encourage them to talk about the different bones.

Communication and language and Literacy

☒ Take groups of children to visit a library to find non-fiction books about dinosaurs. Suggest that they work in pairs to discover more information about the triceratops (the dinosaur featured in the poster). Encourage each pair of children to talk about their discoveries to the rest of the group.

☒ Explain that 'triceratops' means 'three-horned face' and invite the children to find the horns on the poster. Encourage the children to clap while they say the word, breaking it into separate syllables, 'tri-cer-a-tops'. Do the same with other dinosaur names and then with the children's

names. Combine dinosaur names with the children's names to invent nonsense names such as 'Jackasaurus' and 'Lucydactyl'.

Mathematics

☒ Make comparisons between the dinosaur and the child in the poster. Who is the tallest? Who is the shortest? Can the children think of things that might be as tall as the dinosaur, such as a double-decker bus or a building, or as short as the child, such as a bicycle or a garden gate?

☒ Use the poster for a counting activity by asking questions about the features of the dinosaur, such as the number of horns, vertebrae, ribs, feet or legs.

Understanding of the world

☒ Explain how archaeologists will have discovered the bones of the dinosaur in the poster, perhaps spread over a wide area, and joined them together again to create a complete skeleton. Make some fossils from Plaster of Paris and hide them in wet sand so that the children can pretend to be archaeologists searching for them.

☒ Look for similarities and differences between the dinosaur skeleton in the poster and the children's own skeletons. Can they feel their ribs? Do they think they have as many as the dinosaur? Can they feel the bones in their legs, arms, hands and feet? Do they have joints like the dinosaurs? Ask them to feel around their faces to identify the location of cheekbones and eye sockets. Do they have a bony neck plate or horns? Identify the shoulder

bones on the children and the dinosaur.

Physical development

☒ Point out the large skull bones of the dinosaur in the poster and note the horns, bony 'neck plate' and thick rear leg bones. Would the dinosaur move quickly or slowly with such a heavy skeleton? Encourage the children to pretend to be a triceratops, lumbering along on all fours.

☒ Look at the poster together to get an idea of the comparative size of the triceratops. Invite the children to create a large model by taping together packing cases and cardboard boxes and using thick cardboard tubes for horns, tail and limbs.

Expressive arts and design

☒ Explain that finding bones helps archaeologists to learn about the shape of a dinosaur but not the outer appearance. What colour do the children think dinosaurs might have been? Invite the children to paint pictures of how they think a triceratops would have looked, using the poster to remind them of shape.

☒ Ask the children to imagine that the dinosaur in the poster has come alive and is plodding around the museum. Play some slow music, such as 'The Elephant' from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saens, and invite the children to pretend to be the wandering dinosaur.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.