



# Dinosaurs and Definitions

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Duration

Pre-Visit: 10-15 minutes

Museum Visit: 60 minutes

Post Visit: 60 minutes

### Location

Dinosaur Hall

### Supplies

- Worksheet
- Pencil
- Clipboard (optional)

### Standards

[CCSS ELA](#)

L.4.a.c.d

Extension activities:  
WHST.2, WHST.4, WHST.6,  
WHST.7

[CA State](#)

Fluency and Systematic  
Vocabulary Development

### Vocabulary

Definition

Preliminary

Phrase

Context clues

## Concepts

- Unfamiliar words can be defined in context of a preliminary meaning of the word.
- Dictionaries are a tool to learn new vocabulary.

## Objectives

- Students will research a question in the Dino Hall.
- Students will identify new vocabulary terms and define them using context clues and a dictionary.

## Outline

1. At the end of one classroom session before visiting the Museum, go over the assignment and have students choose a research question.
2. At the Museum students will explore the Dinosaur Hall and gather research on their question and choose their vocabulary terms.
3. Back in the classroom, students will continue work and share their results. You may have them continue this work with an optional follow-up project based on their research.



## Pre-Visit

In your classroom, distribute and review the worksheet and ask students to choose a research question to explore at the Museum.

## Museum Visit

At the Museum, break students into pairs (it is also possible to do this assignment independently) and have chaperones assist students as they explore the Hall. Encourage students to complete the *Dig Deeper* section and first two columns of *Exploring New Words* at the Museum. The rest of the table can be filled out as homework or back in the classroom.

## Post-Visit

Back in the classroom, have students share the results of their research, as well as review new vocabulary words. Were there any that many students chose? Were initial definitions close to the original? Did they use other clues besides context to infer the meaning of a word? If they were way off, have them look back at their research. Were there clues they missed the first time through?

## Variations & Extensions

- Have students develop their research into a writing project in the form of a research paper, poem or narrative essay.
- Have students work in teams to present the research using a poster or digital slice show. Ask them to supplement Museum research with at least 2 other primary sources.

**Dig Deeper**

Choose one of the questions below to research in the Dinosaur Hall. Record information you find in the column on the left, and to the right write down vocabulary terms you have never heard before.

**Research Questions**

- What are dinosaurs?
- What was the world of the dinosaurs like?
- What were dinosaurs like as living animals?
- Why did large dinosaurs go extinct?

Research	New Vocabulary



## Dinosaurs and Definitions

### Exploring New Words

Pick your top six new vocabulary words from the first page and list them below, then use them to complete the table.

Vocabulary Word	I think it means... <i>Write what you think the word means. What clues helped you understand the meaning?</i>	It actually means... <i>Use a dictionary to look up the word and write the definition.</i>	If I told a friend... <i>Explain the definition in your own words.</i>