**Buster’s Dino Dilemma**

When Buster finds a valuable fossil on a field trip to Rainbow Rock State Park, he tries keeping it to himself, but he soon learns that isn’t as much fun as sharing it with others.

**THEMES**
- paleontology
- sharing
- problem-solving
- friendship
- guilt
- responsibility

**I. PRE-TEACHING**

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:
- fossils, ancient, dinosaurs, orderly, stamped, fierce, library, video, pith helmet, paleontologists, motto, utility, chisels, evidence, existence, behavior, museum, displaying, diorama, imported, volunteer, calcified, organisms, seep, tissues, preserving, original, shale, professional, frantically, indentation, clenched, appetite, scientists, darkly, episode, laser, frisk, detector, infrared, perimeter, protocol, nightmare, meter, delicate, ridiculous, contagious, extinct, spectral, analysis

B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:
1. Do you like dinosaurs? What is your favorite dinosaur? Why do you like this one best?
2. Have you ever had something you wanted to keep to yourself and not share with others? Why did you want to keep it secret? Did you finally have to share it? What happened?
3. Do you collect things? What do you collect? Why do you enjoy having collections?

**II. PRESENTATION**

A. Understanding the Story:
1. Begin with Chapters 1-3: How has Buster prepared for the field trip? What is his motto? What has the class come to learn? How long ago did dinosaurs live? What is Buster so excited about? How can scientists tell how old a fossil is? Where does the class get to go on their fossil hunt? What does Arthur find?
2. Advance to Chapters 4-7: What does Buster imagine will be in the papers? What does the museum do with the fossils the children find? Why doesn’t Buster tell them what he found? Why won’t he give up his fossil? What is Arthur worried about? What does Buster do with the fossil when he gets home? What does he think the dream was telling him? In what ways does Buster find it hard to keep the fossil a secret?
3. Complete the story with Chapters 8-10: How does the secret prey on Buster’s mind? What does he dream that night? Why does he try to give the fossil to Arthur? What do they finally do with the fossil? Why does Ranger Ruth go easy on punishing Buster for taking the fossil? How is he rewarded?

B. For Discussion:
1. In what ways does Buster overdo getting ready for the field trip?
2. How does Buster’s motto “Expect the unexpected” play out in the story?
3. Right after Buster finds the fossil, Arthur asks him, “What’s the point of having the you-know-what if we can’t even look at it?” Answer Arthur’s question. What is the point of having something valuable if you have to hide it?
4. What causes Buster’s nightmares? What frightens him? How do his dreams make him decide to return the fossil? What else helps him decide?
5. Why isn’t the paleontologist angry at Buster for what he did? Why does she reward him? Do you think Buster will take something else in the future? Why or why not?

**III. EXTENDING THE LESSON**

Give students the opportunity to work with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:**

A. Language Arts:
1. Have students write about a time when they had to keep a secret. Was the secret? Was it hard to keep from telling anyone? How did they feel after they shared it?
2. Have students write a story, a poem, or draw a comic strip about dinosaurs.
3. Have the class keep a dream log for a week and then discuss their dreams. Why do we have them? Why do we sometimes have nightmares? What do dreams and nightmares tell us?
4. Have students write about a time when they stole something. Why did they steal it? How did they feel about what they did? Did they return it? Did they get in trouble? Why or why not?
5. Have students create an illustrated field guide to dinosaurs, describing the different kinds, facts about them, and drawing them in their natural habitat.

B. Art and Music:
1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They could listen to Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, used as background music for the rise and demise of the dinosaurs in Walt Disney's Fantasia, music by John Williams for Jurassic Park.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could show Arthur, Buster, and the others heading for the museum, a cut-out of the museum with the ferns, dinosaurs, rocks and other items mentioned. They might make model dinosaurs out of clay or papier-maché or find some in a crafts shop to add to the display.
3. Show the class the film Jurassic Park or read them parts of the book by Michael Crichton. Discuss what would happen if dinosaurs came alive in today's world. How would they be treated if they were alive today? Where would they live?
4. Have students make up humorous dinosaur names and draw cartoons of them. For example, someone who loves to eat might be a “hogasaurus” or someone who reads a lot a “bookasaurus.”

C. Social Studies:
1. Have students find out more about paleontologists, what they wear, how they go about finding fossils and dinosaur bones, what tools they need and where the most discoveries have been made. Ask student if they think they’d like to be paleontologists.
2. Have students learn about some famous paleontologists, like Jack Horner. What have they discovered? What made them want to learn about ancient animals and plants? Students might learn about how dinosaurs were first discovered, who discovered them, and how people reacted to this discovery.
3. Have students find out how museums protect themselves from thieves. What kind of security do they need? Have there been any famous thefts from museums? Why would thieves want to steal something from a museum?

D. Science and Math:
1. Take students on an archaeology dig in the school yard. Half the class might hide things and the other half dig them up and make notes. Students could also find things that haven’t been put there and add them to their discoveries. Mount a display of items found and notes the class makes about them in the classroom or the school hallway.
2. Buster is wise to wear a hat since the class might be going out in the sun. Have students find out about how the sun can burn the skin and the dangers of sunburn.
3. Have students find out how fossils are formed. Another group might find out what scientists have learned from studying the fossils of footprints.
4. Have students find out more about ancient Earth. Why were the only plants ferns? How do ferns and modern plants differ? Why was it so much hotter then than it is now?
5. Have students learn the different theories about why the dinosaurs disappeared.
6. Have students learn how layers of rock help scientists learn about different ages in prehistoric time. Have them learn about carbon-dating.

USING AUDIOBOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM
When it comes to teaching today's students, sometimes books are just not enough. In an increasingly technological and information-savvy world, the ability to read will be critical to every child's success. The value of audiobooks as a learning tool in the education of children is widely recognized by experts. Audiobooks bring written text to life, adding an interactive quality that can ignite a child's imagination. They encourage reading by broadening vocabularies, stretching attention spans, and fostering critical-thinking skills. Listening to audiobooks in the classroom can effectively enrich the reading experience and aid your students in understanding and appreciating literature, history, theatre arts, and more!

Theme Related Reading and Listening:
Listening Library offers additional titles that explore similar themes and content areas. Use the information below to purchase book and tape kits from our extensive list of award-winning and popular titles to enhance the learning experience for students in every classroom or library.

More titles in Marc Brown's Arthur® Chapter Books series are available from Listening Library. See the catalog for a complete listing of these titles.

Other titles students may enjoy:
- Chet Gecko–Private Eye: The Big Nap by Bruce Hale
- My Father's Dragon by Ruth Stiles Gannett
- Nate the Great and the Halloween Hunt by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- SpongeBob SquarePants #1: Tea at the Treedome by Terry Collins
Arthur and the Lost Diary

by Marc Brown

When Sue Ellen’s loses her diary at the library, Arthur and his friends daydream about what she might have written about them, while Sue Ellen worries that her secrets will fall into the wrong hands.

THEMES

secrets, problem-solving, friendship, responsibility, honesty

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:
- research
- projects
- underneath
- circulation
- impression
- retracted
- scanned
- watery
- mysterious
- valuable
- emergency
- uniformed
- restrained
- contagious
- disease
- jeweled
- pulley
- spirited
- appeal
- desserts
- serenade
- adventures
- nightmares
- improvement
- flaws
- organized
- criticism
- assistant
- glaring
- definitely
- compass
- accident
- upright
- console
- temptation
- gentlemen
- resourceful
- considerate
- confused
- popular

B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:
1. Do you keep a diary or a journal? Do you ever let people see it? What might happen if other people saw it?
2. Have you ever found something that belonged to someone else? Was it something private? Did you read it? Why or why not? What did you do with it?
3. If you could be friends with anyone in the world, past or present, who would you want to be friends with? Why?
4. What does it mean to “do the right thing”?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:
1. Begin with Chapters 1-4: How is Sue Ellen spending her time at the library? What is she asking her diary? Why does she enjoy her diary? What kind of friends does she think she’d like? What happens to her diary? Where does she look for it? Where has it gone? Why does she get mad at Francine? Why does Muffy think Francine might have read the diary? Why does Muffy think Sue Ellen might be mad at Francine?
2. Advance to Chapters 5-7: Where does Binky put the diary? What does he dream Sue Ellen wrote about him? What does Arthur imagine is in the diary? What kinds of books does Arthur like to read?

B. For Discussion:
1. Writing in her diary, Sue Ellen wonders why she has the friends she does. Do you think she might change her mind about her friends if she knew what each of them dreamed?
2. Trace each of these dreams Sue Ellen’s friends have and compare them with the real personality of the person who dreams them. What do their daydreams tell about each character?
3. How does Sue Ellen respond to the way her friends treat her?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give students the opportunity to work with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:
1. Keeping a diary or journal is a good habit that can last a lifetime. Have students begin a journal. Encourage them to decorate the cover to suit themselves and be sure they are allowed to keep the journal as private as possible. Discuss why diaries are valuable.
2. When we lose something we treasure, it can be a devastating experience. Brainstorm with students about things they have lost and how they felt about the loss. Talk with them about how to deal with losses, then have them write stories or poems about losing something valuable.
3. Sue Ellen is upset about losing her diary because she’s written secrets in it. Talk with students about secrets. Have them write a story or poem about secrets.
4. Have students notice the transitions from actual happenings to daydreams. How does the author move from one to the other? How does the narrator help with this?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 8-10: What are the kids trying to decide to do? What do they hope will happen? When did Sue Ellen start her diary? What made them confess to finding it? What is Sue Ellen going to write that night? Why is everyone so nice to her?
5. Another character who keeps a diary is Harriet in *Harriet the Spy*. Share some of the chapters with the class and have them discuss why Harriet gets in trouble when her friends read her diary.

6. Have students write a story in diary form. What's fun about writing a story like a diary? Sue Ellen daydreams a story about letting her hair out the window. Have students read the fairy tale where a princess does this. What other fairy tales do they think Sue Ellen might have read?

B. Art and Music:
1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might find Impressionistic music such as by Debussy for the daydream sequences.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could create a giant open diary on the board with moving pages, illustrated with pictures of the different daydreams the characters have.
3. Talk with students about daydreams they have had, then have them write a wild daydream to share with the class. They might draw it in comic book form, or pantomime or dance it. Have a daydream sharing party with costumes and refreshments.

C. Social Studies:
1. Find famous diaries to share with the class, such as Thoreau's *Walden Pond*, Anne Frank's diary, as well as diaries of other famous people. Students might research people who have kept and published diaries.
2. Have students brainstorm people, past and present that they would like to have as allies or friends. Would they like to be friends with a famous actor or singer? With a great inventor or artist? Have them list as many and they can think of and write the reasons why they would choose these people as friends or allies.
3. Arthur and the gang love to spend time in the library. Have students find out more about libraries. Why do we have public libraries? Do other countries have them? Why or why not? Why do schools have libraries? Do some schools not have libraries? What would be missing if schools didn’t have libraries?
4. Sue Ellen imagines she’s a princess who sees a fire-breathing dragon outside her window. Have students learn more about dragons. What stories feature dragons? Did people ever believe in them?

D. Science and Math:
1. Daydreaming has led to famous inventions or theories, such as Albert Einstein imagining himself riding a beam of light, which led to the theory of relativity. Have students learn more about the role played by daydreaming in creative ideas. Students might look at *A Whack on the Side of the Head* by Roger von Oech for ideas on the creative process.
2. As a princess in her daydream, Sue Ellen uses her hair as a pulley. Have students find out how pulleys work. How do they help lift heavy objects? Students might make their own simple pulley.
3. Muffy suggests they spin the diary like a compass. Have students learn more about compasses. How do they work? Why do they always point north?

**USING AUDIOBOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM**

When it comes to teaching today's students, sometimes books are just not enough. In an increasingly technological and information-savvy world, the ability to read will be critical to every child's success. The value of audiobooks as a learning tool in the education of children is widely recognized by experts. Audiobooks bring written text to life, adding an interactive quality that can ignite a child's imagination. They encourage reading by broadening vocabularies, stretching attention spans, and fostering critical-thinking skills. Listening to audiobooks in the classroom can effectively enrich the reading experience and aid your students in understanding and appreciating literature, history, theatre arts, and more!

Listening Library offers additional titles that explore similar themes and content areas. Use the information below to purchase book and tape kits from our extensive list of award-winning and popular titles to enhance the learning experience for students in every classroom or library.

More titles in Marc Brown's *Arthur*® Chapter Books series are available from Listening Library. See the catalog for a complete list of these titles.

Other titles students may enjoy:
- *Chet Gecko—Private Eye: The Big Nap* by Bruce Hale
- *My Father's Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett
- *Nate the Great and the Halloween Hunt* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- *SpongeBob™ SquarePants #1: Tea at the Treedome* by Terry Collins

For a FREE school and library catalog of Listening Library’s unabridged productions:
- Call TOLL FREE 1-800-733-3000
- FAX us at 1-800-940-7046
- email us at BOTCS@randomhouse.com
- visit our website at www.school.booksontape.com
- or write:
  Books on Tape
  1745 Broadway
  New York, NY 10019

© 2007 Listening Library