



How Big Were Dinosaurs?

Lita Judge

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Have you ever wondered what it would be like to take a Velociraptor for a walk, or try to brush a Tyrannosaur's teeth? We think of dinosaurs as colossal giants, but how big were they REALLY?

With kid-friendly text and seriously silly illustrations, this fact-filled book puts dinosaurs next to modern animals so that you can see exactly how they size up. And a huge fold-out chart compares the dinos to each other, from the tiniest Microraptor to Argentinosaurus, the largest animal to ever walk the land.

An NPR Best Book of 2013

How Big Were Dinosaurs? Details

Date : Published August 27th 2013 by Roaring Brook Press

ISBN : 9781596437197

Author : Lita Judge

Format : Hardcover 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals, Dinosaurs, Nonfiction, Science

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From Reader Review How Big Were Dinosaurs? for online ebook

Tasha says

Whenever you think of dinosaurs, they are like the one on the cover of the book. Huge, green and either placid plant eaters or ferocious meat eaters. This nonfiction picture book takes a look at dinosaurs that are quite different. There is the microraptor who is the size of a chicken. The long-named *Leaellynasaura* stood as tall as an emperor penguin and lived in that same climate. Of course there were bigger dinosaurs too. The *Akylosaurus* stood as tall as an SUV. There were dinosaurs with huge claws that ate plants, ones with armor and still others with odd parts of the body that no one understands yet.

Judge carefully chooses her dinosaurs in this book. Understanding that the littlest dinosaurs lack the vibrant punch of the huge ones, the book quickly changes to the more imposing creatures. She shares just enough about each dinosaur to make the book readable. In fact, this is one nonfiction picture book about dinosaurs that could be shared at a storytime or aloud in a unit. Judge packs lots of fascinating facts into the book. It ends with the science behind figuring out what dinosaurs used to look like and a fold-out page with all of the dinosaurs in the book shown next to each other with lots of numbers and facts.

Judge's playful illustrations are great fun. Throughout the book, she uses humans to show the scale of the dinosaurs as well as other animals. The humans don't just stand next to the dinosaurs, they interact and react to them. I particularly enjoyed the image of the woman batting at a dinosaur with a broom. It's those little touches of humor that suit this book so well.

Readable, fun and filled with science, this book on dinosaurs will be a welcome addition to those crowded shelves. Appropriate for ages 4-7.

Jessica says

I got a request from one of my regular third grade classes, who visit every other Thursday, to do a nonfiction readaloud, and I wanted it to be something that would really open up their eyes to the possibility of what nonfiction can be. I pulled a ton of high-interest picture books on a cart for them--everything from grossology to mummies to hurricanes to bugs--and decided on *How Big Were Dinosaurs?* to read, as well as a little booktalk of *Chuck Close: Face Book* (which I've been trying to get the kids to check out for months; after I booktalked it and showed off the cool cut outs, the kids were fighting over it!). Dinosaurs are definitely a high-interest topic, but a lot of the dinosaur books aren't really great readalouds because they usually feature large pictures of dinosaurs with factoids on the side. *How Big Were Dinosaurs?* features illustrations of various dinosaurs next to their size equivalent--emperor penguins, an SUV, etc. The class ended up being late due to the rain, and another group was waiting to use our meeting room, so I skipped a bunch of the dinosaurs and only read the pages with the most interesting ones (the tiny ones and the big ones). Did you know that the *Velociraptor* was only the size of a dog? Did you know that the *Argentinosaurus* was as big as four school buses? Thankfully, there is a pronunciation glossary at the back of the book, which I made sure to quickly glance over before reading the book aloud. I'm definitely going to keep this in mind for a dinosaur storytime.

Ages 6-8

Elizabeth says

At the Explore•a•Saurus exhibit at the Boston Children's Museum, my 23-month-old nibbling brought this over and I saw my mom pull-out a multi-page spread and was intrigued and got a library copy.

The illustrations are fun, depicting humans and other modern-day animals interacting with the dinosaurs to give a sense of their size (and often their behavior as well) alongside the text.

Though I'm pedantic and the spread that says, "Tyrannosaurus Rex had a skull nearly as long as a man is tall. [...] Imagine cleaning the 9-inch long teeth of this fearsome meat-eater!" I looked at the illustration of a nervous-looking dentist and thought, "I can't see much of her body, but proportionally, I think she's taller than the T-Rex's head... and his teeth look to be about the size of her hands, so that's definitely not 9 inches."

Another reviewer noted that "All of the dinosaurs are "he," and are measured according whether they were "longer than a man's arm," or "nearly as long as a man is tall," and halfway through reading aloud my seven year old shifted into reading it inclusively instead (taking away from the text itself). All of the humans in the book are boys or men, save two: a woman in an apron-like dress shooing a dinosaur with a broom, and a dental hygienist brushing another dinosaur's teeth."

As an aside, I appreciated BCM's stacking the deck with books by female authors in that room:

- * Born to be giants : how baby dinosaurs grew to rule the world / Lita Judge.
- * Boy, were we wrong about dinosaurs! / Kathleen V. Kudlinski ; illustrated by S.D. Schindler.
- * How big were dinosaurs? / Lita Judge.
- * Saturday night at the dinosaur stomp / Carol Diggory Shields ; illustrated by Scott Nash.
- * Dinosaur dance! / by Sandra Boynton

Brittany says

I listened to my husband read this book to my daughter. They were both constantly exclaiming over the various sizes of different dinosaurs and the facts in the book. The art is nice. The comparisons were easy to follow for a small child. Any kid who likes dinosaurs will enjoy this one.

Lindsay Weideman says

Twin Text: Dino Pets Go to School by Lynn Plourde

Rationale: I picked Dino Pets Go to School by Lynn Plourde as my twin text for How Big Were Dinosaurs by Lita Judge because I loved how it related to the size of dinosaurs that is discussed in the nonfiction book. The boy wants to take dinosaurs to school for Pet Day, but one is too tall for the bus, another is too loud for class, and the third is too spiky to play soccer. I think that students could relate the dinosaurs discussed in How Big Were Dinosaurs by Lita Judge to this book and identify which kind of dinosaurs the boy was taking

to school for Pet Day. Both books discuss dinosaur features and I enjoyed how well they related to one another.

Text Structure: This book is really interesting because it shows dinosaurs next to other objects that are their size such as an SUV or an emperor penguin, four school buses, or a medium size dog. It was unique because it related dinosaurs to objects in everyday life that can help a reader imagine how big a dinosaur was, while also explaining facts about the dinosaurs to the reader. It is a question and answer book in which it asks questions and then answers them. There is also a fold out page that has all of the dinosaurs in the book pictured next to each other with numbers and facts. There is also a glossary that helps with pronunciations of the dinosaurs at the end of the book.

Strategy Application: I would do a webbing activity in which the students would web the three dinosaurs described in the fiction book with details about each dinosaur explained/supported in the nonfiction book.

Book Review Citation for Nonfiction Book:

(2013, December 15) Booklist. <http://www.booksinprint2.com.leo.lib....#>

Katie says

This books talks about the size of dinosaurs! It gives comparisons and names and pictures. Some of them are fun, like don't try to make a ___ do what they don't want to (as they drag him to the vet)... I think this is a way for kids to understand the size proportions. Plus this goes into how and why we think we know what these dinosaurs looked like even though we never have seen them.

Sean Albright says

How big were Dinosaurs? By Lita Judge

Twin text: How do Dinosaurs go to School? By Jane Yolen @2011

Rationale: I chose this fiction piece because it both relates to the non-fiction book I've paired it with and puts the dinosaurs in the same shoes as the students, which is fun for kids to see. The fiction book is written about dinosaurs and shares some brief insight into their former existences, but mainly places those same dinosaurs in today's classrooms to see how well they would perform in relation to today's students. So, students can compare their knowledge of the non-fiction text to this one, while also comparing their own lives to how the dinosaurs are portrayed in the fiction text.

Text Structure: This book falls under the description category, as it describes a number of dinosaurs and compares their size and weight to popular items in today's world. For instance, it explains that a microraptor would be able to look a chicken eye to eye and the protoceratops would have been very similarly shaped to that of a baby rhinoceros.

Strategy Application: I think it would be both fun and beneficial for the students to create pictures displaying what school activities dinosaurs would both excel at and perform poorly when trying. For example, the T-

Rex, with its massive, muscular legs, would be amazing at kickball, but probably not the best friend to have for some casual Frisbee tossing. This activity would require the students to access the knowledge they've just learned to consider each dinosaurs' physical stature and physical abilities.

Book review citation for Nonfiction book: How big were Dinosaurs? By Lita Judge
(2013, December 15). Booklist.
Magazine. <http://www.booksinprint.com/DetailedV...>

Jennifer Oswald says

Review from my 8 year old son:

"I felt I already knew a lot about dinosaurs already but I learned some new things from this book like I never knew how much bigger the Argentiosaurus was than the T-rex! Cool comparisons."

Heather Jo says

megan summer reading 2017, children's book, picture book, nonfiction, non-fiction, dinosaurs, size, comparisons, archaeology, history, science, biology, prehistoric, second grade, third grade,

Barbara says

Dinosaurs roam the pages of this picture book, which puts the lie to the notion that all dinosaurs were enormous in size and lived in similar habitats. Because the author/illustrator juxtaposes different types of dinosaurs against animals with which most readers will be familiar, it's easy to see that they were actually various sizes. For instance, the Microraptor was slightly smaller than a chicken, the Leaellynasaura was only two feet tall and lived near the South Pole. And the book makes it clear that size didn't necessarily translate into brain capacity or smarts; for instance, the Stegosaurus, which weighed about as much as three cows, had a walnut-size brain. The facts and comparisons come fast and furious in this picture book, which concludes with information about scientists use fossils to help them form conjectures about how dinosaurs actually looked. The softly-colored illustrations enable readers to look at the different animals carefully. Four pages fold out to reveal all the dinosaurs and modern animals featured in the book and allow young readers to make comparisons. This is another exceptional title from Lita Judge, who answers the title question, "How Big Were Dinosaurs?" by saying, "Not as big as you thought they were."

Polly says

Excellent! Non-fiction that one could easily use in storytime!

Jessie says

The text is about scale of different dinosaurs -- relative to each other, relative to items or animals that exist now. The scale is sometimes height or length, and it's sometimes weight.

For a book so interested in scale, the scale of some of the illustrations seemed off. (Emperor penguins should be taller than they're depicted as, for example.)

Molly says

This would be great to have with a measuring stick.

It gives perspective by comparing dinosaurs to animals and things we know well today.

This would be a great book for school age children.

Carrie says

The art is gorgeous, the comparisons are clever, and there's a fold-out recap page at the end which groups all of them together, as well as a refresher on how fossil-finders and artists work together to create models and show us how dinosaurs probably looked standing. Lots of very educated guesses in this field. This is a fascinating book for dino-curious kids, not only for showing a bunch of different dinosaurs but also for comparing them to modern animals and vehicles so we can get an idea of their size. A great book.

(Looking into the recent Toroceratops discussion, it seems as though they've concluded that the "Toro" is just the elder of the "Tri"--that is, as it ages, the bumps lining the frill/plate might have worn away as it grew and curved, providing it with continued protection to match the growth of its entire body. Neat! Still, the fact that the original Toro paper was published in 2012 and this book in 2013 shows how up-to-date the author was at the time, which is impressive. She uses well-known species like the Tyrannosaurus rex and many newly-discovered, lesser-known variants too.)

Petter Ruenes says

About the book:

I like the simplicity of this book. It is very up to the point about it's mission. The title of the book is a question, a question I think can interest a lot children. It is also a question the book answers in a detailed, yet simple way. It also tells the reader how they can measure dinosaurs lenght and height. The text is short and concrete. The illustration covers the whole pages and the text is inside the illustration. It also has some sense of humour in the way of explaining things. An example is how the Stegosaurus weighed as much as thee cows, and illustrating this with three cows next to the dinosaur. You learn about different kinds of dinosaurs and the book also ends with an explanation of how we can know the sizes of the different dinosaurs. Also at the end is two pages you can unfold to watch a big illustrations of all the different dinosaurs next to eachother, as well as some objects, persons and animals from our daily lives. I like the simplicity of the book

and how the visual style and text collaborates.

Twin pairing book & reason for choosing this book:

The book I have chosen to pair with the nonfiction book above is called "Dinosaur Dream". I am not very happy with pairing this book because I think the story has more potential than what the author has used. The title very much explains the content of the book. The Dinosaur Dream is about a boy named Wilbur who has a big interest for dinosaurs. It is right before bedtime and he is reading a book about dinosaurs. He is very tired and his eyelids are heavy. Suddenly there was something outside the window. It was a baby dinosaur. He chose to name it Gideon and decided that it was best for the dinosaur to be back with other dinosaurs, so he chooses to take him back to the Jurassic period. In order to get there they have to travel through the different periods that was between the Jurassic period and now, periods like the ice age. They meet many different animals from the different time periods, and in the end Gideon is united with his fellow dinosaurs and one of the big dinosaurs helps Wilbur get back home.

The book has a clear connection with the nonfiction book as its theme is dinosaurs. We see two different kinds of dinosaurs in this fiction book, and can make it easier for the students to identify based on what they learned from the nonfiction book. I don't have any problems with the illustrations, although it is clear that it is an older book. I find the illustrations imaginative and opens up for interpreting. The Dinosaur Dream gives the reader a better understanding of the dinosaurs compared to the earth's timeline and the different time periods that the earth has been through. I personally think the story is too fast-paced and has much higher potential than what the final result shows.

Chosen fiction book: Dinosaur Dream (1990) by Dennis Nolan.
