



Fiction

Oxford Level 13 Pack A

# Bones!

Author: Paul Shipton

Range: Fantasy/Horror story

Theme: Solving a problem

Teaching Notes authors: Thelma Page and Vicky Yates

## Synopsis

David and Chris go with their class to the museum. They are looking at an asteroid when it begins to crack and glow. Suddenly the museum trip turns into a nightmare as the dinosaur skeletons begin to roam the halls, ready to attack anything that moves.

## Group or guided reading

### Introducing the book

- Read the title and notice how the words have been created. Ask: *What do we call words that have been written in such a way as to reflect their meaning?* (calligrams)
- Read the blurb and look at the picture on the front. *What seems to have gone wrong?*
- *Do you recognise the author's name? What have you read by Paul Shipton? Did you enjoy it?*

### Strategy check

- Find the word 'asteroid' on page 11. Divide it into syllables and ask a child to spell the word without looking at the book.
- Find the names of dinosaurs on pages 13, 16 and 24. Ask the children to separate out the syllables of each name and practise spelling the words.
- Find 'Medieval' on pages 8 and 25. *What does this word mean? What clues are there in the text that follows it?*

### Independent reading

**Focus:** Explain that you want the children to be able to answer these questions when they read the story: *Which character do you like more – David or Chris? Why? When did you realise what had brought the dinosaurs to life?*

- Ask the children to read the story independently while individuals read aloud to you.
- Encourage them to take their time and break down long words into syllables.

### Returning and responding to the text

- Ask the children to say which of the boys they liked more. Ask them to find the pages with evidence, e.g. Chris: was funny (pages 5 and 8); was brave (pages 34–35); Dave: knew about dinosaurs (page 27); was brave enough to talk to the aliens (page 43).
- Ask the children to say and show you when they worked out what was causing the dinosaurs to come to life. *Did you work it out before David did on page 37?*
- *How did the author make the aliens seem strange and frightening?* (pages 44–45) *What noises did the aliens make?* (pages 45, 52, 53)
- If the children have seen films about dinosaurs, such as *Jurassic Park*, ask them if this story reminded them of parts of the film.



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- *Why did the aliens want to destroy the earth? How did Chris persuade them not to?*
- *How did the author make sure that this story began and ended with jokes?*

## Speaking and listening activities

- Ask the children, in groups of four, to make a skeleton poster. If possible make this fit in with work in other subjects, e.g. fishes, birds, mammals, humans.
- Provide books with clear illustrations, or use the websites listed below.
- Suggest that children define each task carefully, e.g. Draw the outline of bones on white paper; Cut out the bones carefully; Place the bones correctly; Glue them into position; Draw label lines; Use the computer to print the names of the bones; Cut out and place the labels.
- Decide who will be responsible for each task.
- Work together to settle uncertainties and make decisions.
- When the poster is complete, ask the children to report back to the class, saying how the task was shared and how problems were dealt with.

## Further reading activities

- Ask the children to scan the story to find similes and make a list. Look on pages 11, 12, 17, 20, 27, 32, 40, 43, 52. Ask them to use one of the comparisons to make up a simile of their own, e.g. David's mind was filled with a sound like...'.  
● Provide copies of *The Monster in the Wardrobe* and *Captain Blood's Revenge*, both by Paul Shipton and both in TreeTops Level 13 Pack A. Ask the children to choose and read one of the titles and make comparisons, saying which characters and which plot they preferred and why.

## Suggestions for using ICT

- Encourage the children to find out more about dinosaurs using the Internet (ensure they have access to child-friendly sites only).

## Writing activities

- Ask each child to say what they liked about the book. *At which stages did the author create humour? Which chapters were tense? How did the author make us worry about the main characters?*
- Ask the children to reflect upon the story and write a report on the book, saying which aspects they thought were the strongest, e.g.  
*Do you think the idea of skeletons coming to life was a good one?*  
*Did you think the idea of the asteroid was logical and made sense within the story?*  
*Did you believe in the main characters? Were they like people you know?*  
*Were there aspects of the story that could have been better?*  
*Would you have put in more jokes?*  
*What did you think of the ending? Was Chris falling over enough to save the world? How would you have ended the story?*
- Read the children's reports to the group and find out where there is agreement or disagreement.  
Discuss the story as a group.

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