

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Subject: Science/History

Objective:

Students will learn about dinosaurs, explore different species, and understand what paleontologists do. They will engage in hands-on activities and discussions based on resources available from the Smithsonian website.

Materials:

- Paper
- Crayons or markers
- Internet-enabled devices (for showing Smithsonian website resources)
- Dinosaur images from the Smithsonian website (printed or projected)
- Dinosaur-themed worksheets (optional)

Lesson Outline:

1. Introduction to Dinosaurs (10 minutes)

- a. Begin by asking students what they know about dinosaurs. Record their answers on the board.
- b. Introduce the topic of dinosaurs. Explain that dinosaurs lived a long time ago and there are different types of dinosaurs with different shapes, sizes, and ways of living.
- c. Show images of different dinosaurs from the Smithsonian's collection on their website (such as the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *Triceratops*, and *Stegosaurus*) and briefly describe each one.
- d. Herbivore/Carnivore

2. Activity 1: Dinosaur Facts

- a. Share interesting facts about dinosaurs based on information from the Smithsonian website. For example:
 - i. Some dinosaurs ate plants (herbivores), while others ate meat (carnivores).
 - ii. Dinosaurs lived millions of years ago, and we know about them because of fossilized bones.
 - iii. Paleontologists study dinosaur bones and fossils.
- b. After discussing the facts, students will create their own "Dinosaur Fact Booklet."
- c. Each student will draw their favorite dinosaur on a page of the booklet, and they will write one or two facts about that dinosaur. If writing is difficult, students can dictate to the teacher or use a sentence strip.

3. Activity 2: Dinosaur Fossil Discovery

- a. Explain that scientists often find dinosaur bones buried in the ground, which are called fossils.
- b. Set up a simple “dig site” with a tray filled with sand, small plastic dinosaur bones, and brushes (you can also simulate this activity digitally using the Smithsonian’s fossil exhibits online).
- c. Allow students to “excavate” their dinosaur fossils by carefully brushing away the sand with the tools. They will then identify the bones and make notes of what they discover.

4. Discussion: What Do Paleontologists Do?

- a. Talk about the role of paleontologists. They are scientists who study fossils and learn about dinosaurs.
- b. Watch a short video (optional, from the Smithsonian or other sources) that explains paleontology. Discuss how paleontologists use tools to dig up fossils and what they can learn from them.
- c. Ask students, "What would you like to learn if you were a paleontologist?"

5. Wrap-Up and Reflection

- a. Have each student share their favorite dinosaur fact or the dinosaur they enjoyed learning about the most.
- b. As a class, review what a paleontologist does and why studying dinosaurs is important for understanding Earth’s history.
- c. If there’s time, students can create a final drawing of a dinosaur and label its parts (such as head, tail, legs).

Extension Activities:

- **Dinosaur Dance Party:** Play music and let the students pretend to be different dinosaurs, moving as their favorite species would.
- **Classroom Dinosaur Museum:** Set up a “museum” in the classroom where students can display their dinosaur drawings and facts for other students to see.

Assessment:

- Observe students during the activities to gauge their understanding of dinosaurs and fossils.
- Review their dinosaur fact booklets for comprehension.
- Evaluate student engagement in the discussions and hands-on activities.

Reflection:

This lesson plan introduces students to dinosaurs in a fun and interactive way, allowing them to engage with scientific concepts through hands-on activities and exploration. It combines the excitement of discovering dinosaurs with the knowledge provided by the Smithsonian, making learning both informative and enjoyable.