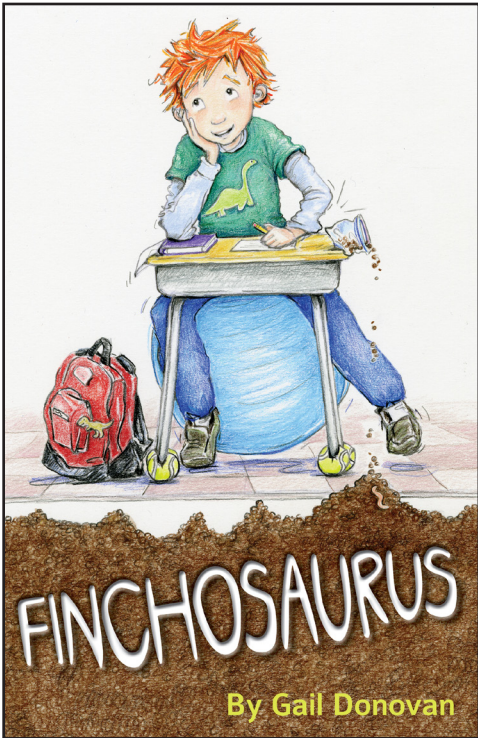


EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR

FINCHOSAURUS



ABOUT THE BOOK

Finch has trouble paying attention in school. He's just too busy dreaming about uncovering a dinosaur fossil and naming a new species after himself--until he digs up a note in the fifth-grade class garden with the word HELP on it. He is determined to come to the aid of the mystery note-writer. But when the quest turns out to be harder than expected, Finch risks losing two things that he really wants--his best friend Noah, and a field trip to Dinosaur State Park. Acclaimed author Gail Donovan gets inside the hearts and minds of fifth graders on this journey told with unexpected humor and impressive insight.

ISBN: 9781944762551 pb

Ages 8 - 12, Grades 3-5 | Lexile: 580L

A Junior Library Guild Selection



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

About the Author: Gail Donovan is the author of the middle-grade novels *The Waffler*, *What's Bugging Bailey Blecker?*, and *In Memory of Gorfman T. Frog*, which was named a New York Public Library Best Books for Children. Donovan, who was born and raised in Connecticut, lives in Maine with her husband and two daughters, where, in addition to writing children's books, she is a library assistant at the Portland Public Library.

The Discussion Questions and Classroom Activities in this guide are aligned with Common Core Standards for English Language Arts for grades 3-5, specifically for Reading: Literature Standards 1-3: Key Ideas and Details. Standards in Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language are also included.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why does Finch want to help the note writer by himself? Why does he decide to let others in on the plan? How does this change his own life?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.3)

How did the kids solve David's problem with Oscar and Oliver? Was it effective? How and why?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.3)

Grammy Mary's problem is solved when all the kids have their problems solved. As Finch thinks at the end, "Maybe Grammy Mary was right. If things had gone the way he wanted, it would have been just him helping just one kid. Instead, every time he had let someone in on the secret, they had turned into a helper-kid. By the end, who was a helper and who was getting helped was all mixed up. It wasn't what he had planned. It was better." Do you agree? Why?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.3)

Think of a time someone helped you. How did it make you feel? How do you think it made the other person feel? What about a time you helped someone else?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.4)

Digging or Digging Deep is a theme throughout the story. What are some of the types of digging going on in the story? What does it mean to dig "deeper" in each case?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.3 and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3-5.4)

If you lived before people knew about dinosaurs, and you dug up a huge fossilized bone, what would you have imagined it was?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.4)

Finch is named after a famous book character (Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee).

Are you named after someone? Who? Why? What do you like best about your name?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.4)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Acrostic Name Poems

Have students brainstorm words together to create a few poems. Use either names of kids in the class, fictional characters, or famous people. Have each student write an acrostic poem using their own names.

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.1)

What's Underground?

Finch thinks that "everything under the ground was like a wrapped present at a birthday party. And he was going to unwrap it." Have students brainstorm a list of some things that can be found underground. Ask students to draw pictures of some of the things they might find under their home, school, or other place in your town.

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.1)

Fake Dinosaur Names

Finch gives other characters fake dinosaur names (e.g. *Momosaurus*, *Awesomeraptor*) based on their human characteristics. Ask students to brainstorm some funny ideas for fake dinosaur names for themselves and their classmates. Give them some ideas to start. For instance, if someone loves to play card games, she might be Cardosaurus or Deckaraptor. If someone loves chocolate, his fake dinosaur name might be Chocoraptor or Cocoa-Rex. Once you have a good list of names, have each student pick their favorite two or three and write a small adventure story about these dinosaurs.

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3-5.1-5)

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT . . .

Edward McCarthy (page 1, 173-4, 176-7)

“On August 23, 1966, fossil tracks were uncovered during excavation for a state building. When Edward McCarthy turned over a slab of gray sandstone with his bulldozer, he saw a large footprint with three toes. The news of the discovery spread quickly as more tracks were uncovered. Within a few weeks, officials decided to preserve the site as a state park. As a result of careful excavation, the park has one of the largest on-site displays of dinosaur tracks in the entire world.”

—Dinosaur State Park

www.dinosaurstatepark.org/parkhistory.html

Sue Hendrickson (page 53, 76)

“One of the largest flesh-eaters to have ever inhabited the Earth, Sue was a Tyrannosaurus rex that roamed North America about 67 million years ago. This T. rex is named for Sue Hendrickson, who discovered the dinosaur near Faith, South Dakota, during the summer of 1990 during a commercial fossil hunting trip.”

—The Field Museum

www.fieldmuseum.org/about/press/sue-press-release

www.sue-hendrickson.info/biography.asp

Prehistoric Survivors

These are just some of the animals that were around when dinosaurs roamed Earth:

- Crocodiles
- Turtles
- Frogs
- Snakes

For more information about these animals and more:

www.amnh.org/exhibitions/dinosaurs-ancient-fossils-new-discoveries/extinction/dinosaurs-survive/

www.amnh.org/exhibitions/dinosaurs-ancient-fossils-new-discoveries/extinction/survival-in-the-seas

Real World Paleontology for Kids

Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill, Connecticut

www.dinosaurstatepark.org/

Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado, Utah

www.nps.gov/dino/index.htm

Wyoming Dinosaur Center, Thermopolis, Wyoming

www.wyodino.org/

Real World School Gardening

United States Department of Agriculture

www.fns.usda.gov/school-gardening

Grow NYC

www.grownyc.org/grow-to-learn

Collective School Garden Network

www.csgn.org/why-school-gardens

RECOMMENDED READING FROM GAIL DONOVAN

Paleontology

Ancient Earth Journal: The Late Jurassic by Juan Carlos Alonso and Gregory S. Paul

Feathered Dinosaurs by Brenda Z Guiberson, illustrated by William Low

The Greatest Dinosaur Ever by Brenda Z Guiberson, illustrated by Gennady Spirin

Not-For-Parents How to be a Dinosaur Hunter: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know, Lonely Planet Kids

Science Comics: Dinosaurs: Fossils and Feathers by MK Reed, illustrated by Joe Flood

Gardening

Garden to Table: A Kid's Guide to Planting, Growing, and Preparing Food by Katherine Hengel

The Nitty-Gritty Gardening Book by Kari Cornell

Poetry

National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry: More than 200 poems with photographs that float, zoom, and bloom! Edited by J Patrick Lewis

Poetry for Kids: Emily Dickinson by Emily Dickinson and Susan Snively

FINCHOSAURUS WORD SCRAMBLE

RCAFEOMTIU

GGINGID

VRFAO

DRGNEA

VAINONGEITIST

ARBLRYI

PERPA

MPOE

ECCYLER

TPIR

FINCHOSAURUS WORD SEARCH

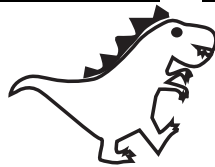
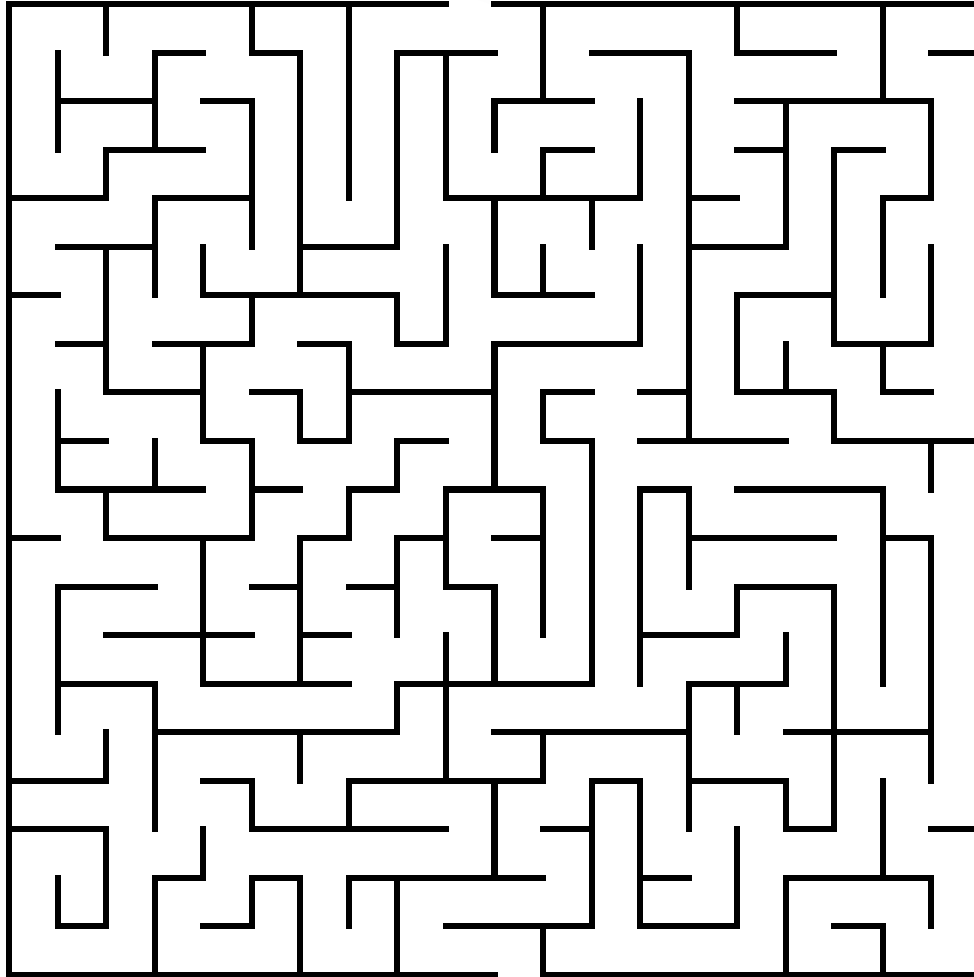
Y M H M A Z S R E P L E H
A Z P A W K B U L L Y M L
K F A E E P N C C K L N L
I L L T S D N Z L I W F Y
L R E N O M Q H A U R X D
E L O E M X J M C I E I P
G I P E E C K N E N N S R
N S A R R C T N J O I K Y
A S L G A K D L S H V F R
M O S L P R T A A T B H K
K F B N T G U O N O T E J
N Q X W O R N L N T B P Q
G X T W R E T E G D I F C

Angelika
Awesomeraptor
blackmail
bully
clues
dinosaur
fidgeter
Finch

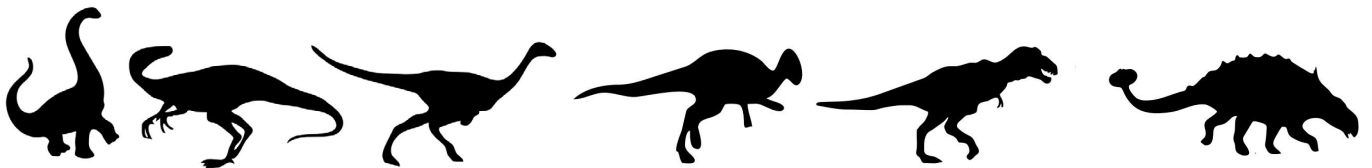
fossil
friend
Green Team
helpers
Noah
note
Paleo Pals

ACORN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL MAZE

Help Finch find his way from Acorn Comprehensive School to Dinosaur State Park.



Finish on the field trip to Dinosaur State Park!



PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Word Scramble

cafetorium

digging

favor

garden

investigation

library

paper

poem

recycle

trip

