

# The Name Game

## Activity for Grades 5–8

### Introduction

Dinosaur names are often made up of combinations of Greek and Latin root words that describe characteristics or how the animal might have behaved. Dinosaur names might also indicate where the fossil remains were discovered, or even the name of the paleontologist who made the discovery. In 1841, Richard Owen, the first director of London's Natural History Museum, gave the name "dinosaurs" to these giant prehistory reptiles. The word *dinosaur* is from the Greek *deinos* (terrible) and *sauros* (lizard).

### Objective

In this activity, students will use their knowledge of Greek and Latin root words to decipher dinosaur names. They will create their own dinosaur, name it, and describe how it raised its young, and how it behaved.

### Materials

- **The Name Game** duplicated for each student
- Drawing materials

### Procedure

#### Period One

1. Write the words *photograph* and *terrace* on the chalkboard. Explain that these words contain Greek and Latin root words. The Greek word *photo* means "light," and *graph* means "written or recorded." The Latin word *terr* means "land," and *ace* means "unit." Ask students to suggest other words that have these root words. Write them on

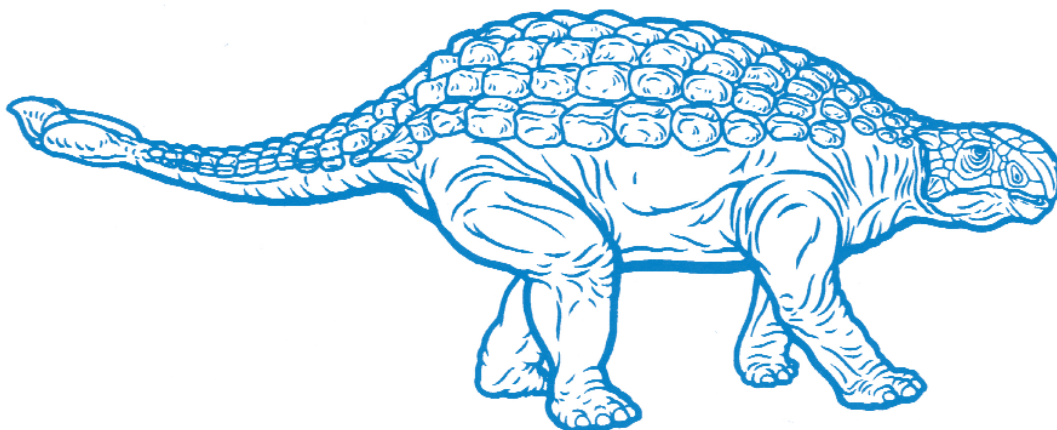
the board (photograph, telephoto, photosynthesis, terrain, territory). Tell them that dinosaur names also use Greek and Latin root words and that understanding the root words will tell them a bit about the dinosaur itself.

2. Distribute **The Name Game**. Write *Velociraptor* on the board. Have students find the meaning of *Velociraptor* (*Velo*/speed, *raptor*/robber). Discuss what they know of *Velociraptor* and whether they think the name fits.
3. Have students figure out the meaning of the dinosaur names on **The Name Game** sheet. Discuss with them what they can tell you about each dinosaur based on its name.
4. Have students work with partners to create a realistic dinosaur of their own. Remind students to use what they have learned from the activities they have done in this unit in designing their dinosaur.

Students should finish their projects during independent time or as a homework assignment.

#### Period Two

1. Have partners present their dinosaurs to the class. In their presentation, partners should describe what the dinosaur looked like, what it ate, how it raised its young, and some of its behaviors. They should also explain why they gave it the name they did.
2. Exhibit students' work on the bulletin board. Group dinosaurs with like characteristics together.



# The Name Game

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Use the Greek and Latin root words to figure out the dinosaur names below.

<i>allo</i>	strange	<i>don, dont</i>	tooth	<i>pacro</i>	ridge
<i>anato</i>	duck	<i>drypto</i>	wounding	<i>ped</i>	foot
<i>ankylo</i>	crooked	<i>echino</i>	spiked	<i>plateo</i>	flat
<i>anuro</i>	no tail	<i>elasmo</i>	plated	<i>proto</i>	first
<i>apato</i>	deceptive	<i>gnathus</i>	jaw	<i>raptor</i>	robber
<i>baro</i>	heavy	<i>lana</i>	wooly	<i>rex</i>	king
<i>bi</i>	two	<i>lepto</i>	slender	<i>rhino</i>	nose
<i>brachio</i>	arm	<i>macro</i>	large	<i>saur, saurus</i>	lizard
<i>bronto</i>	thunder	<i>maia</i>	good mother	<i>stego</i>	roof
<i>canthus</i>	spiked, spined	<i>mega</i>	huge	<i>stereo</i>	twin
<i>cerat, ceros</i>	horned	<i>micro</i>	small	<i>super</i>	superior
<i>cephalo</i>	head	<i>mimus</i>	mimic	<i>tri</i>	three
<i>compsa</i>	pretty	<i>mono</i>	one, single	<i>tyranno</i>	tyrant
<i>cory</i>	helmet	<i>nano</i>	dwarf	<i>ultra</i>	extreme
<i>di</i>	two	<i>nodo</i>	lumpy	<i>urus</i>	tail
<i>dino</i>	terrible	<i>ops</i>	face	<i>veloci</i>	speedy
<i>diplo</i>	double	<i>ornitho</i>	bird	<i>xeno</i>	strange
<i>docus</i>	beam	<i>pachy</i>	thick	<i>xero</i>	dry

- a. *Brachiosaurus* \_\_\_\_\_
- b. *Ankylosaurus* \_\_\_\_\_
- c. *Compsognathus* \_\_\_\_\_
- d. *Stegosaurus* \_\_\_\_\_
- e. *Triceratops* \_\_\_\_\_
- f. *Allosaurus* \_\_\_\_\_
- g. *Pachycephalosaurus* \_\_\_\_\_

2. With a partner, create a dinosaur of your own. Use what you have read about dinosaurs and the activities you have done to help you. When designing your dinosaur think about the following:

- a. What did your dinosaur eat? What kind of teeth did it have?
- b. What did your dinosaur look like? What kind of skin did it have? What color was it?
- c. How did your dinosaur behave?

Draw a picture of your dinosaur. Think of a good name for your dinosaur. Use the Greek and Latin roots to create the name. Write a paragraph that describes your dinosaur.