



Birds Are Dinosaurs

If you only have 20 minutes, or want to do a more informal lesson, here are investigation questions for each of the four activity boxes. (For activities with two questions, do either one or both!) These questions are designed to promote close observation and spark curiosity.

Investigation Question: What do modern birds and dinosaurs have in common?

This activity box includes fossils of ancient dinosaurs and body parts of modern birds. Unpack the objects and ask your students to sort the objects into two groups: one ancient dinosaur group (*Trex* furcula, *archaeopteryx* plaque, *velociraptor* skull and foot) and one modern bird group (feathers, goose furcula, eagle skull and foot). (Or you can sort the objects yourself before the activity.) Ask them what traits are common in the two groups and what traits are different. *Common traits include: feathers, furcula, three-toed foot. Differences include beaks in birds and teeth in ancient dinosaurs, dinosaurs are generally much larger.*

Ask them if there are more similarities than differences. *(There are more similarities.)* Tell students that scientists determine relationships between groups of animals based on shared traits. Since birds and ancient dinosaurs have so many traits in common, scientists classify birds as a kind of dinosaur.

