

Science Sparks: Making science fun for kids

Emma Vanstone
Stafford: Millgate House, 2017
£15.00
ISBN 978 0 9932486 9 6

Collection of engaging cross-curricular science activities for young children requiring minimal resources

This book contains 40 scientific activities that aim to engage children while using simple resources found around the home. It seems to be geared towards home learning, but the ideas that the book contains are also ideal for the classroom. When resources and budgets are stretched, it is appealing for primary science teachers to have access to experiments that require the bare minimum of resources while effectively covering different areas of the curriculum.

The experiments are primarily directed towards younger children, and it is easy to see how many could be linked with an early years/key stage 1 curriculum, such as 'Twinkle twinkle little star' and 'A zip wire for Tinkerbell'. However, as the author states in the Introduction, the activities can easily be adapted, and the questioning by teachers could be utilised to make a light experiment such as 'Super shadows' suitable for most primary age groups. 'Extra activities' are also suggested alongside each experiment.

Many schools are interested in cross-curricular

learning; the book caters for this by suggesting links with both maths and English for each activity. Finding time for science in the primary classroom can be hard, so ideas such as these, which can help teachers to address two curriculum areas in a single lesson, are welcome.

At the back of the book, there is a small '5 easy ...' section with some additional ideas for writing prompts and utilising different Tuff Trays. There is also a useful section that briefly explains the science behind the activities, although teachers may wish to research this further for a more in-depth explanation in the classroom.

I really like how clearly this book is set out, with photographs throughout, and the fact that the instructions could be read by children from lower key stage 2 upwards. If I spot a teacher in my school doing a topic or English text that one of these experiments relates to, I will pull this book out of the science cupboard for them to use, knowing that they could carry out an activity with minimal planning or resourcing.

Jennifer O'Kelly

Science Leader, Sambourne CE School



Human and animal bodies

Angela Royston
London: Franklin Watts, 2019
32 pp. £8.99
ISBN 978 1 4451 5154 0

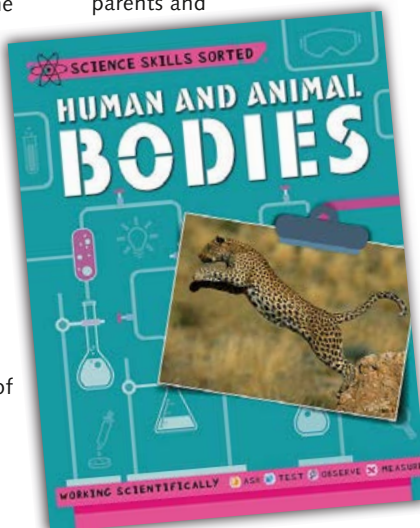
Ten attractively presented accessible investigations with background information for KS2

Human and animal bodies is one of a series of six topic books in the 'Science Skills Sorted' series aimed at key stage 2 children. Like the other books in the series, it introduces children to the ATOM method (Ask, Test, Observe and Measure) of working scientifically, helping them to develop a good understanding of the scientific method.

This book contains 10 investigations based on different aspects of the human body, including the senses, fingerprints, streamlining and pivot joints. I particularly appreciated the fact that each investigation is accompanied by explanatory text on the opposite page, making it easy for readers to access the knowledge behind the experiment prior to completing the practical. For that reason, it would be ideal for use in an after-school science club; in fact, my student teacher went on to purchase the book for that very reason, after seeing me trial some of the investigations with my pupils.

Although most of the activities outlined will be familiar to experienced

science teachers, they are presented in an easily accessible way and the majority are resource-light, making them appealing to children, parents and

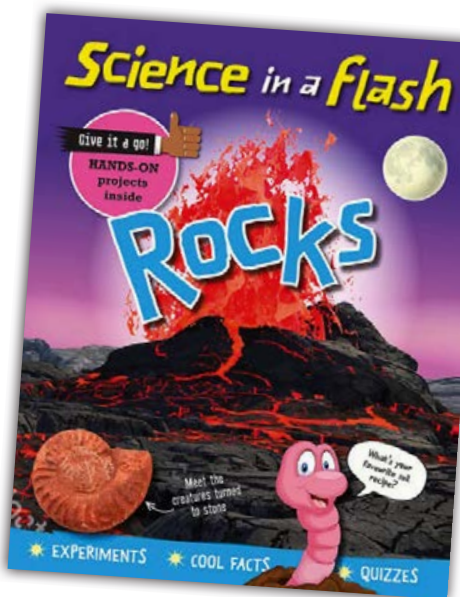


teachers alike. My pupils particularly enjoyed investigating the impact of smell on their sense of taste, using an apple, pear, potato and a blindfold, and exploring binocular vision using a paperclip and a cup.

Links to websites and other sources of information at the back of the book are useful, as is the guidance on 'reading results' (use of controls, checking for bias, outliers, reliability etc.). However, these may have been more meaningful if integrated into the main text at appropriate points, as there is a temptation for the reader to complete the investigations and not read the book to its very end. All in all this is a nicely presented, colourful and age-appropriate science read.

Elaine Stockdale

Science Lead, Tongwynlais Primary



Science in a flash: Rocks

Georgia Amson-Bradshaw
London: Franklin Watts, 2017
32 pp. £12.99
ISBN 978 1 4451 5278 3

A great resource for activities and reference to start off the topic of rocks with KS2 children

This addition to the 'Science in a flash' series is 'rock solid'. From the beginning it is eye catching, engaging and delivers a complex topic in an accessible way for children in key stage 2. Each page begins with an attractive and bold headline followed by a strapline that encapsulates the information that follows. Key vocabulary and concepts are delivered in detailed, colourful bursts, alongside entertaining pop quizzes and 'riddle me this' activities. There is a useful glossary and the language used is playful, helping to entice the most hesitant of children.

The book not only goes into great depth about the types of rocks, their properties and the rock cycle, but also gemstones, soils and our planet. In doing so, the book is really putting rocks into a relatable context.

The highlight of this book for me is the 'give it a go' activities. These experiments can be carried out within any classroom using the simplest ingredients available from your local supermarket. They give children the chance to grow their own minerals or to see the effects of soil erosion with their own eyes.

I think that this is a great resource to start off the topic of rocks and to use as a reference throughout. Children could use this book independently for enquiry purposes and to stimulate more questions.

This is an enjoyable book and definitely one I would use in the classroom.

Kayleigh Egerton
BEd student at University of Hertfordshire

Professor Pete's prehistoric animals

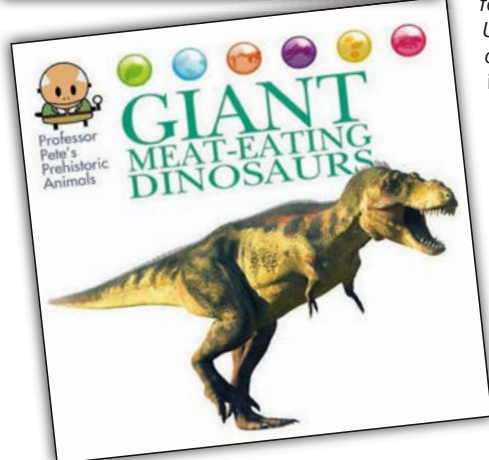
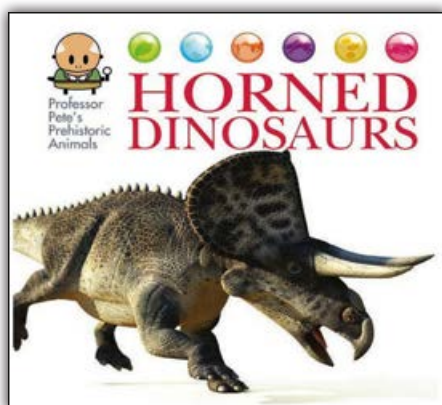
David West
London: Franklin Watts, 2017

Giant meat-eating dinosaurs
ISBN 978 1 4451 5363 6

Horned dinosaurs
ISBN 978 1 4451 5506 7
Each 24 pp. £11.99

Excellent introductory books for young dinosaur fanatics that will be popular additions to any school library for KS1 and lower KS2

Giant meat-eating dinosaurs and Horned dinosaurs are part of a series of six on prehistoric dinosaurs (other titles in the series include:



Armoured dinosaurs, Long-necked dinosaurs, Plated dinosaurs and Sharp-clawed dinosaurs). As explained in the blurb, 'Professor Pete knows lots about all sorts of

dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals. Learn all about meat-eating dinosaurs from pronouncing their difficult names to facts about their weight, what they eat, how fast they can run and where they used to live in the world.'

Professor Pete is a Chibi character (a small Japanese Manga cartoon figure) designed by the graphic designer and illustrator, David West, and I think these are excellent introductory books for young dinosaur fanatics.

A double-page spread is devoted to each of the 10 dinosaurs included, dominated by a clear graphic, computer-generated image, which really looks like a photograph! The text is very accessible for young readers and I particularly like the pronunciation aid to enable the child to read the challenging names of the dinosaurs.

Five small logos also appear on each page with information about what the animal ate, where and when it lived, its size, how fast or slow it moved and the meaning of its name. Professor Pete also makes an appearance on each page to

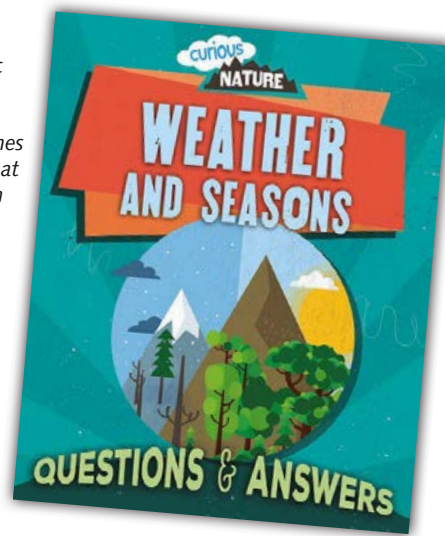
tell the reader another fact that is sure to grab interest. For example, for *Cryolophosaurus* (cry-o-loaf-o-sore-us) Professor Pete says: 'The crest on its head was probably used for display to impress females. It used to be known as *Elvisaurus*, after *Elvis Presley*, because its crest looked like a quiff.' And the fact that 'the fossils of *Zuniceratops* (*Zoo-nee-serra-tops*) were found in New Mexico, USA by an 8 year old boy' will perhaps inspire some to take up fossil hunting for themselves!

At the end of each book is a short glossary and a timeline explaining when the dinosaurs lived in the Mesozoic Era.

Available as hardback or paperback I think these books would be a very popular

addition to any school library.

Carol Sampey
PSTT Area Mentor Wessex and S. Wales and Primary Science Consultant



Curious nature: Weather and seasons

Nancy Dickmann
London: Franklin Watts, 2017
33 pp. £12.99
ISBN 978 1 4451 5612 5

Engaging question-and-answer book with a practical activity for age 6+

Part of the 'Curious nature' series, this book takes a question-and-answer approach to the topic of weather and seasons.

High-quality images, diagrams and key facts are used to answer questions such as 'Why does it rain?', 'Why are days longer in summer?' and 'Why do we see rainbows?' These engaging questions and introductory explanations are simple to follow for children from age 6 upwards, and the glossary is a great addition for keen, young researchers. All of this is rounded off with a practical weathervane activity, encouraging children to explore wind direction.

This would be a great resource for inquisitive minds and a super addition to any class or school library, although at £12.99 it seems a little expensive for such a short book.

Kate Redhead
PSTT Regional Mentor

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