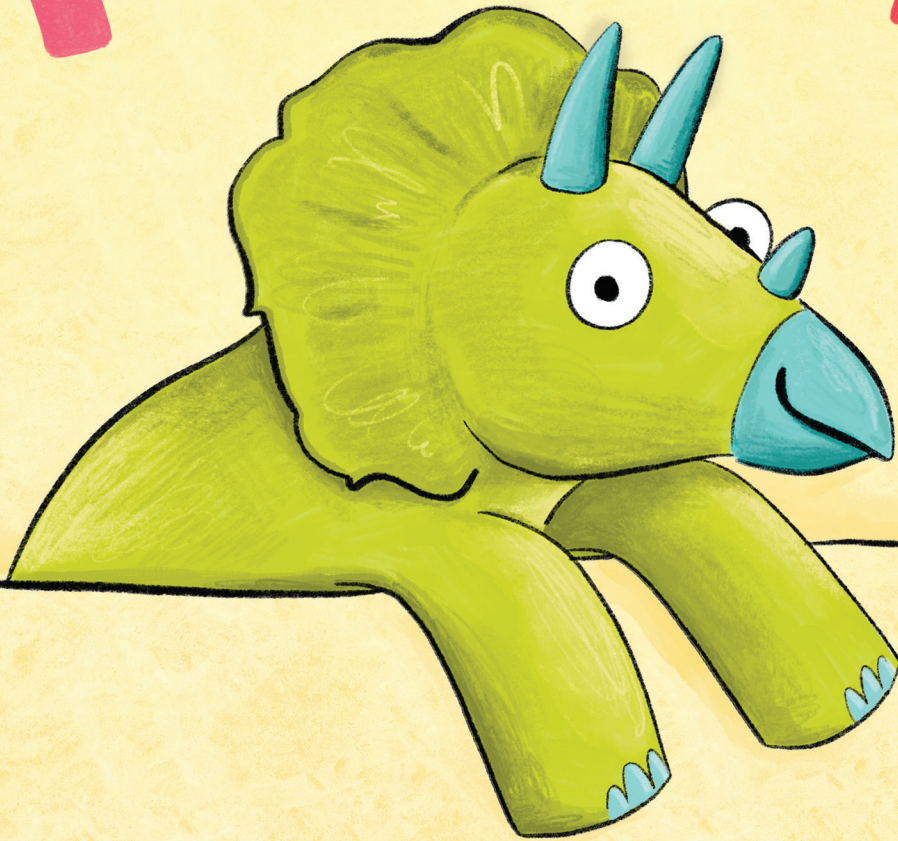


# DINOSAUR IN MY POCKET



Ashleigh Barton & Blithe Fielden

TEACHERS RESOURCES



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## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Themes &amp; Curriculum Topics</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Humanities &amp; Social Sciences (HASS)</b>	
<b>English Language &amp; Literacy</b>	
<b>Visual Literacy</b>	
<b>Creative Arts</b>	
<b>Learning Technologies</b>	
<b>Mathematics</b>	
<b>Further Topics for Discussion and Research</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Author's Notes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Illustrator's Notes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>About the Author</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>About the Illustrator</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Worksheets</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>About the Author of the Notes</b>	<b>14</b>



# INTRODUCTION

James loves two things more than anything in the world: dinosaurs and miniatures. So when his class goes on an excursion to a museum and James finds a miniature dinosaur in the gift shop, he can't help himself: he takes the dinosaur. But as the day continues, James' guilt grows. And so does the dinosaur!

The only thing that can cure James' guilt – and shrink the dinosaur back to its proper size – is doing the right thing.

This is a warm-hearted cautionary tale for 'sticky fingers' everywhere.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes and topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

### GUILT AND HONESTY

**Discussion Point:** James knows that he has been wrong to take the mini-dinosaur from the museum shop. What does James learn in this story?

**Discussion Point:** Read other picture books about honesty and compare to this one. [See **Bibliography**.]

### DINOSAURS

**Discussion Point:** James lists a number of dinosaurs (p 3). Research several of them and how they differ from each other. [See **Bibliography**.]

**Activity:** Have fun pronouncing and spelling the names of these huge creatures. [See also **Worksheet 2**.]

**Discussion Point:** Read other picture books about dinosaurs and compare to this one. [See **Bibliography**.]

### COLLECTING MINIATURES

**Discussion Point:** Do you collect miniature things? Read the list of things James has on his shelf. What objects do you have on your shelf?

**Discussion Point:** Read other picture books about collecting, and compare to this one. [See **Bibliography**.]

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

**Activity:** Cautionary Tales teach children lessons about behaviour or morals. This story is framed around such themes. What other stories have you read about learning to be honest and truthful? [See **Bibliography**.]

**Activity:** Size acts as a metaphor for the guilt James feels for having taken the dinosaur. As his guilt grows, the dinosaur grows as well ... Discuss this aspect of the story and how it relates to the imagination and feelings of this child.

**Activity:** Write a story about a child being tempted to take something and what happens when he or she does steal the object.

**Discussion Point:** The last line in the book is: 'And it was never, ever going to grow big again.' Ask your students whether they think this statement is likely to be true? Why/why not?

**Activity:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author's Notes** below.]

## VISUAL LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

**Activity:** The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. The front cover depicts the dinosaur peeping out of James' pocket (as does the **title page**). The back cover depicts James as a miniature figure pulling the enormous dinosaur by a lead. How do these two images work together to summarise the book's contents?

**Activity:** The **endpapers** depict all the miniature things James has collected. Design endpapers depicting all the things you collect or have on your bedroom shelves at home.

**Activity:** The **medium or style** employed is digital art. (Although the artist also enjoys working with paints and crayons.) Draw another picture of James and the dinosaur in a funny situation. The **colours** used in this book are bright primary colours. Use the same range of colours when you create your drawing.

**Activity:** Prediction is an important part of picture book reading. How did you think this story would end? Were there other possible endings?

**Activity:** Encourage students' observation skills – James has several objects in his room which depict dinosaurs, eg his quilt cover. Make a list of all the dinosaur related things in his room.

**Activity:** Play a memory game with students. Invite them to look at the spread depicting James's miniature collection. Then close the book and invite them to write a list of each of the miniatures in the image.

**Activity:** Draw a favourite dinosaur. [See also **Worksheet 1**.]



**Activity:** Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography.**]  
[See also **Worksheet 3.**]

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Make a paper plate dinosaur.** Fold a paper plate in half as the dinosaur's body. From craft paper, cut out shapes for the head and tail and spikes for the length of its body. Glue them inside the plate. Colour the dinosaur using crayons or paint. Add two toilet rolls for the legs.
2. **Make an origami dinosaur.** [See **Bibliography.**]
3. **Create a polymer clay model of a dinosaur.** [See **Bibliography.**]
4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
5. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

**Activity:** Research the topics above online.

**Activity:** Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

## MATHEMATICS

**Activity:** How many miniatures does James have on his shelf? How many dinosaurs can you find in these pictures? Have fun counting things in this text.

# FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

## MUSEUMS

**Discussion Point:** Is there a museum in your town, city or area? Have you visited it? Perhaps your class could go on an excursion like James does and then write a report on what you discover in the museum's exhibitions.

**Discussion Point:** There are some museums dedicated to dinosaurs. In Winton, Queensland, there is The Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum <https://www.australianageofdinosaurs.com/> The Natural History Museum, London <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/> also contains fascinating dinosaur exhibits. Two books by acclaimed illustrator and writer, David Mackintosh, were commissioned to accompany the exhibitions. [See **Bibliography.**] Research other museums dedicated to dinosaurs.

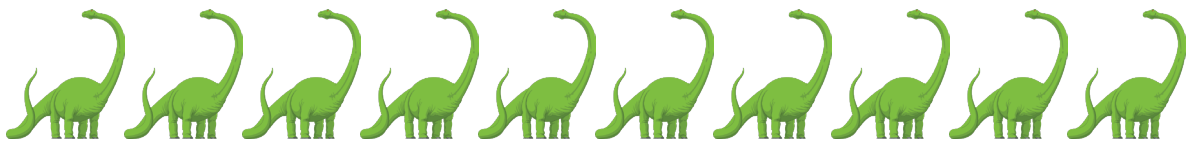
**Activity:** Research museums dedicated to your students' favourite topics.

## COLLECTIONS

**Discussion Point:** Why do people collect certain objects? Research unusual collections.

## CONCLUSION

This is a charming story with which any child might identify. It taps into the love of dinosaurs, and collecting, and also into worries a child might experience when they inadvertently do the wrong thing, in the heat of the moment. It is a very engaging story in both text and appealing illustrations.





## AUTHOR'S NOTES

I like to think of *Dinosaur in My Pocket* as an example that ideas can truly come from anywhere. The idea for this particular story came to me years ago when my little boy was a baby. He was wearing a onesie with an illustrated dinosaur sitting in the pocket. I remember staring at it thinking, 'What is that dinosaur doing there?' and 'How did it get there?'. I imagined the dinosaur growing bigger and bigger until it no longer fit in the pocket, and then even bigger still. This, of course, raised more questions. Why was it growing?

One thing I particularly love about picture books is how often they are about something other than what they first appear to be about. As the idea of this pocket dinosaur growing came to me, I realised it was about something more. It was about a little boy who made a mistake that is weighing on him until he comes clean and finds a way to make amends. And so, the ever-growing dinosaur serves as a metaphor for James' guilty conscience.

Like the rest of us, James is only human. We all make mistakes and feeling remorse for these mistakes is something many – or perhaps even most – children experience at some point. In small measures, guilt can be a healthy emotion that helps remind us of the difference between right and wrong and keeps our empathy in check. And luckily for James, and for us, there's always the opportunity to fix our mistakes and make things right again.

I hope James' love of collecting things, and all his favourite interests and hobbies illustrated so endearingly by Blithe, will also resonate with many children. When I was young, I collected many different things – notably keyrings, stickers and pen pals!

## ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

I am always on the lookout for new inspiration and ideas in my everyday life! I love bright colours, nature and animals. I think I enjoy drawing dogs the most. I always carry a small sketchbook and a pencil around with me in case I see something that's of interest and may spark an idea later. The dinosaur skeleton from the illustration where James returns the dinosaur to the museum was from my own trip to a museum. I love switching up the materials I use to draw, sometimes I like drawing with pencils and crayons, sometimes I use gouache (a type of paint), and sometimes I use my iPad to create my illustrations.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

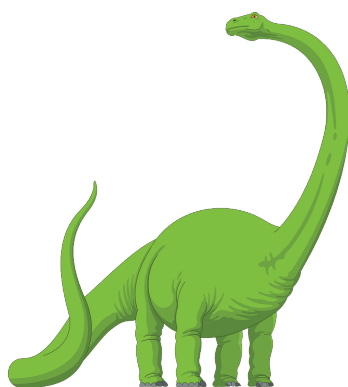
**Ashleigh Barton** is a children's author and copywriter. Before writing full time, she pursued her love of books (children's books especially) by working in some of Australia's biggest publishing houses, running marketing and publicity campaigns for globally renowned authors and illustrators. Ashleigh has previously published five successful and highly acclaimed picture books and a junior fiction series. She lives in Sydney with her husband, three children and their dog. She says: 'I've loved stories since before I could read and have wanted to write ever since I could use a pencil. Lucky for me, I now get to write for a living.' See: <https://www.ashleighbarton.com/>

See also: 'Guest Post: Ashleigh Barton on Cultivating Creative Writing Through Childhood' *Kids' Book Review* 29 August 2022

<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2022/08/guest-post-ashleigh-barton-on.html>

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

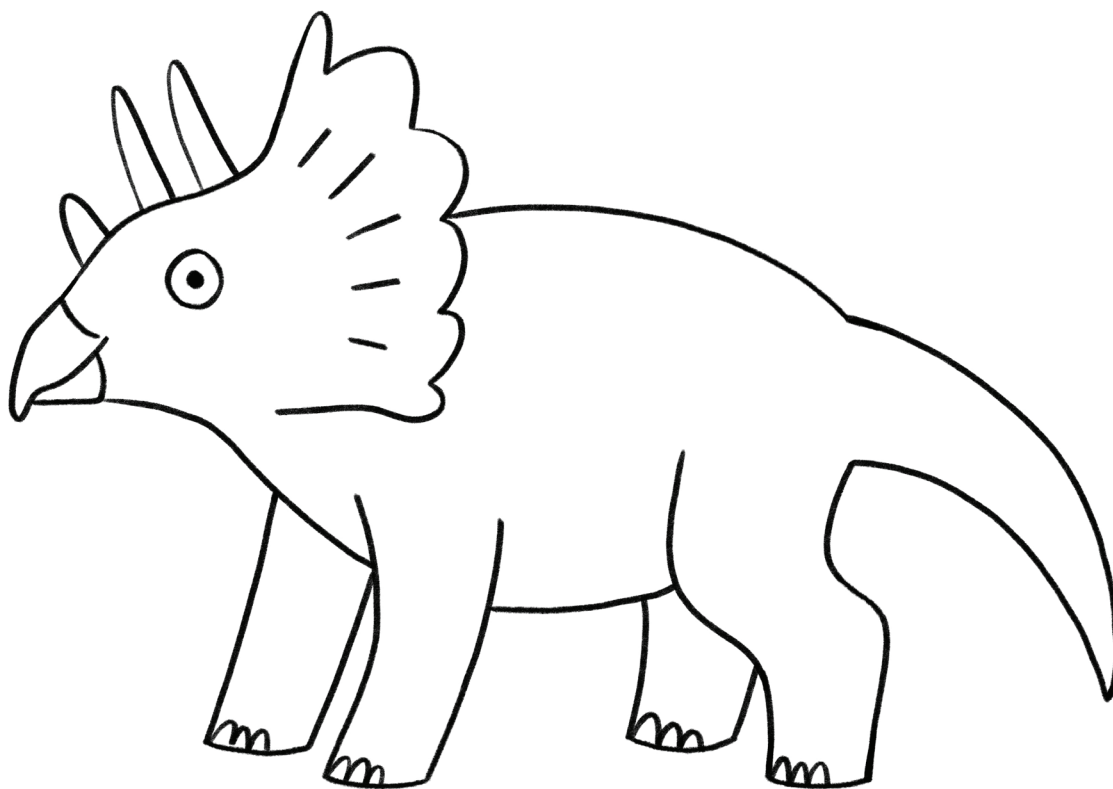
**Blithe Fielden** is an illustrator from the UK but now based in Brisbane. Blithe loves to create playful, colourful and happy illustrations, depicting the world through the eyes of children. Since graduating from Leeds Arts University with a BA (Hons) in Illustration in 2021, Blithe has showcased her illustrations to a range of audiences.





# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. COLOUR THIS TRICERATOPS



## WORKSHEET 2. ALPHABET OF DINOSAURS

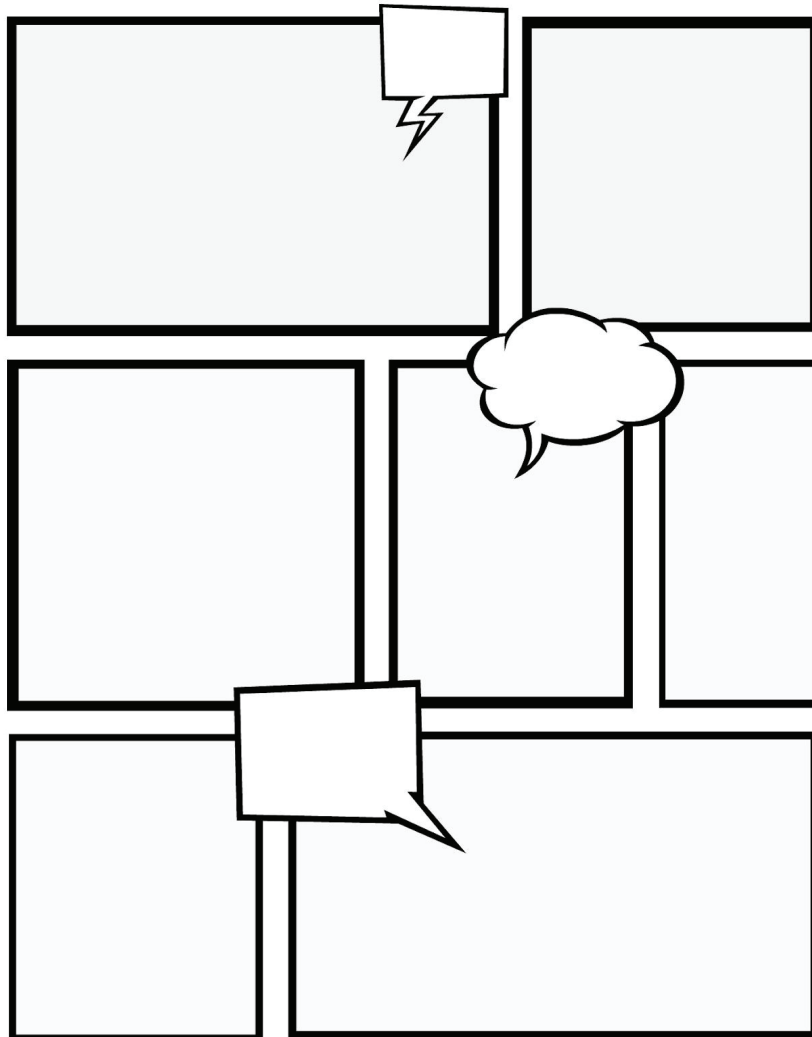
Find a dinosaur name for each letter of the alphabet. Then add a fact about that dinosaur if you can locate one via research.

<b>A</b>	
<b>Brachiosaurus</b>	
<b>C</b>	
<b>D</b>	
<b>E</b>	
<b>F</b>	
<b>G</b>	
<b>H</b>	
<b>I</b>	
<b>J</b>	
<b>K</b>	
<b>L</b>	
<b>M</b>	
<b>N</b>	
<b>O</b>	
<b>P</b>	
<b>Q</b>	
<b>R</b>	
<b>S</b>	
<b>Triceratops</b>	
<b>U</b>	
<b>V</b>	
<b>W</b>	
<b>X</b>	
<b>Y</b>	
<b>Z</b>	



## WORKSHEET 3. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



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<https://www.kids-dinosaurs.com/>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.

