

A Guide for Using
The Watsons
Go to
Birmingham
–1963
in the Classroom

Based on the book written by
Christopher Paul Curtis

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Quiz Time

Directions: Respond to the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is the setting (time and place) of this story? _____

2. What does Kenny believe the neighbors secretly call his family? _____

3. From what you've already learned about Byron Watson, what are two of his personality traits?

4. When does Byron say, "Give my regards to Clark, Poindexter," to Kenny? _____

5. Discuss two problems that Kenny faces at school. _____

6. Do you agree with Kenny's statement that God sent Rufus to be his saver? Explain why.

7. Who is Buphead? _____
8. What causes trouble in Kenny's and Rufus's friendship? _____

9. Name two people who treat Kenny badly. What do they do to him? _____

10. Name two things that Momma does that indicate she's a caring person. _____

11. Why do you think Rufus and Cody eat a part of Kenny's lunch each day?

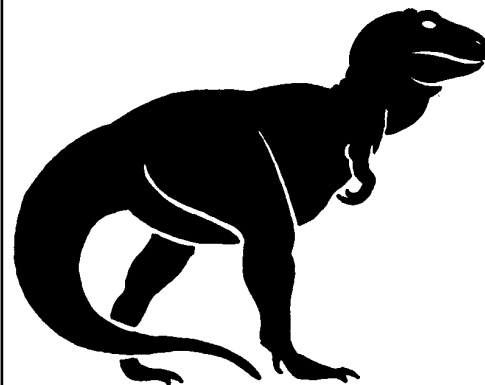
12. Do you think it was a good idea for Kenny to tell Byron that Larry Dunn had stolen his gloves?
Explain. _____

Dinosaurs

LJ figures out a clever way to steal the majority of Kenny’s toy dinosaurs. After reading the information below, pick two types of dinosaurs and fill in the Venn diagram on page 42. In the part where the circles overlap, fill in the things that the two dinosaurs have in common. In the parts that don’t overlap, fill in things that apply to just that particular dinosaur.

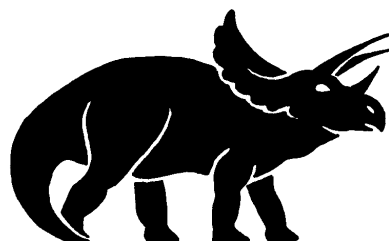
Tyrannosaurus Rex

The Tyrannosaurus Rex is one of the most widely known and most terrifying of dinosaurs. This large, meat-eating animal lived and hunted alone. It walked upright on two legs; had sharp, jagged teeth; and had tiny “arms” with two fingers on each one. Despite its great weight, it could overtake prey by running up to 22 miles per hour (35 kpm). In addition to catching live dinosaurs, tyrannosaurus also ate the bodies of dinosaurs that died from natural causes.



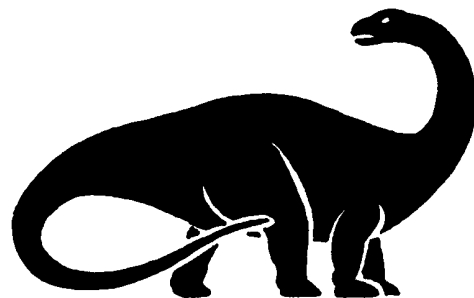
Triceratops

Triceratops were plant-eating dinosaurs that lived in herds. Each triceratops had a large frill at the base of its three-horned head, a sharp beak to chop leaves from plants, and flat teeth to shred the leaves. The frill protected its neck and had blood vessels on the underside to radiate excess heat. Triceratops used its horns to defend itself against meat-eating dinosaurs.



Apatosaurus

Apatosauruses were the biggest animals ever to live on land. These plant-eating dinosaurs moved slowly in large herds. Apatosauruses had long necks, small heads, and very long tails that they used as a whip or a club to ward off attacks by meat-eating dinosaurs. Their feet had five toes with claws on the inner toes for balance. The natural life-span of an apatosaurus was about 100 years.



Learning About the Empire State Building

In chapter 1, Buphead and Byron show Kenny how to survive a blizzard by spinning him around and throwing him in the snow. Kenny has padding from the many layers of warm clothing that his mother makes him wear. Kenny quips, “These guys couldn’t hurt me if they’d thrown me off the Empire State Building.”

The Empire State Building is a famous landmark that has graced the New York City skyline for more than 70 years. When it was built in 1931, it was the tallest building in the world, and it enjoyed that status until 1973. Even today, the Empire State Building and its colorful history fascinate people. Your students will enjoy learning about this interesting structure.

Have students work in pairs or trios. (If necessary, the class can be broken into larger groups.)

There are two Web sites listed in the resources on page 44 that may be available; or you can ask your students to search the Web using these keywords:

- Empire State Building
- ESB NYC
- NYC tourist
- New York City landmarks



1. If your students do not have Internet access, they can use encyclopedias or the definitive reference, *The Empire State Building: The Making of a Landmark* by John Tauranac.
2. The students’ goal is to locate and write down five interesting facts about the Empire State Building that they don’t think anyone else in the class will choose. Here are a few examples:
 - Every year, people compete to see who can be the first to climb the building’s 1,860 steps.
 - The building has 3,194,547 light bulbs.
 - The building’s electrical bill tops \$4.5 million annually.
 - On July 28, 1945, an Air Force B-25 crashed into the building between the 79th and 80th floors. Fourteen people were killed.
 - The only way the building could pay its taxes during the Depression was by charging visitors to go up to the observation deck.
3. Bring the class together as a whole. Have each team state their facts. They earn one point for every fact they found that no one else mentioned. (You’ll be pleased at how closely they listen to each other’s facts.)
4. The winning team(s) can have a prize, such as a no-homework-night pass or something else that is appropriate.

Greek Mythology

When Byron is stuck to the car mirror, it reminds Joetta of a story Kenny read to her about a man named “Nar-sissy.” She is actually referring to the Greek myth of Narcissus. A myth is an old story that was once believed to be true. Greek myths first started around 3000 BC. The Greek people believed that all natural things had spirits. They also believed that some things had magical powers. Over time, their beliefs developed into legends about natural objects, animals, and gods. These gods all had human forms and emotions. Many of these legends are still well known; they are called classical Greek mythology. Read the version of the Narcissus legend below and then, using complete sentences, answer the questions that follow.

The Myth of Narcissus

Zeus, the supreme god, persuaded Echo to distract his wife, Hera, by chattering incessantly. He did this so that Hera could not keep track of Zeus, leaving him free to chase other women. However, when Hera figured out the plan, she was so enraged that she took away Echo's voice, leaving her with only the ability to repeat the final word of every message she heard. When Echo saw the extremely handsome but vain Narcissus, she fell deeply in love with him. Of course, she could not tell him of her love, but she followed him everywhere, gazing at him lovingly until he haughtily rejected her. Poor Echo hid in a cave and wasted away until only her voice remained. Then the goddess Nemesis decided to punish Narcissus by making him fall hopelessly in love with his own face as he saw it reflected in a pool. He gazed in fascination, unable to tear himself away from his image, until he gradually wasted away. In the spot where he had sat grew a beautiful yellow flower, which even to this day bears the name narcissus.

1. What did Zeus ask Echo to do? _____

2. Why did he ask her to do this? _____

3. What was Hera's reaction? _____

4. Why did Echo fall in love with Narcissus? _____

5. What was Narcissus's reaction to Echo? _____

6. What did Nemesis do to Narcissus? _____

7. What happened to Echo in the end? _____

8. What happened to Narcissus in the end? _____

Extension: Read another myth. Write a brief summary of the story on the back of this paper.