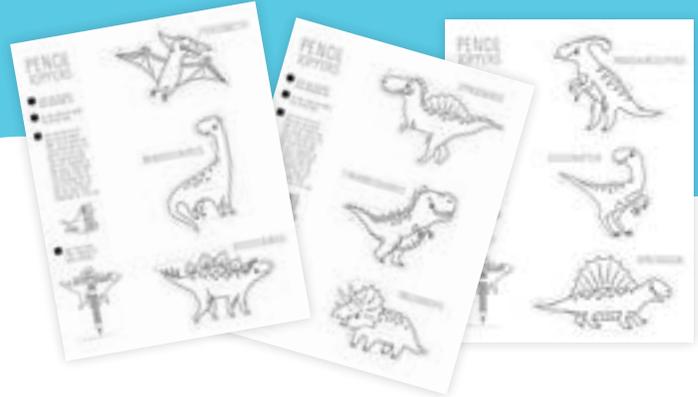


# Makeables



## Prehistoric Pencil Pals Activity Guide

Uncover a love of dinosaurs with the activities below, which coordinate with [Upstart's Makeables Prehistoric Pencil Pals](#).

**Learn Dino Facts** Dinosaurs are one of the first obsessions for many kids! Help young learners find out more about them by guiding their research in books and online. To get started, check out *The National Geographic Little Kids First Big Book of Dinosaurs* by Catherine D. Hughes or search for kid-friendly videos, games, and hands-on projects on [The American Museum of Natural History's Paleontology: The Big Dig](#).

**Host a Read-Aloud** Choose a book featuring dinosaur characters to read aloud while kids color the pencil pal of their choice. Here are a few suggested titles for your storytime:

- Brontorina* by James Howe. Candlewick, 2010.
- Crunch, the Shy Dinosaur* by Cirocco Dunlap. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2018.
- Dinosaur Farm* by Frann Preston-Gannon. Sterling Children's Books, 2014.
- Dinosaur Rocket!* by Penny Dale. Nosy Crow, 2015.
- Dinosaur Pirates!* by Penny Dale. Nosy Crow, 2016.
- Tiny T. Rex and the Impossible Hug* by Jonathan Stutzman. Chronicle Books, 2019.
- We Love Dinosaurs* by Lucy Volpin. Nosy Crow, 2016.

**Put on a Puppet Show** Use one of the read-aloud books as inspiration or help kids plan out a story of their own with their pencil pal characters. Then, have kids make a puppet theater using materials they have around the house. There are lots of creative ways to set the stage!

- Take an empty cereal box and remove the top, bottom, and back panels. Cut a rectangle out of the front panel. Decorate the box with printer or construction paper, and use tissues or scraps of fabric to create a curtain.
- Remove the bottom of an empty tissue box. Remove the plastic from the dispenser slot, and widen the slot if needed to allow enough space for characters to be seen. Turn the box on its long side, and then use the discarded bottom to make a "Dinosaur Theater" sign you can affix above the stage.
- In a doorway or hallway, put up a curtain or sheet using a tension rod. Place it high enough for kids to hide behind as they put on their show.

**Reconstruct a Fossil** Gather empty paper towel and toilet paper rolls and a few sheets of paper. Choose one of the pencil pals, then help young paleontologists lay out a "skeleton" that shows roughly what its fossil would look

like. Cut out a skull from the paper to complete it. To do this activity on a smaller scale, have kids use Q-tips.

In a classroom setting, try splitting students into groups and assign each group one pencil pal to “fossilize.” When finished, have students look at one another’s fossils and match each with the correct prehistoric creature from their collection.

**Practice Paleontology** In a shallow baking tray, pour a thin layer of sand or dirt. Lay a few of the pencil pals throughout, then cover them with a thicker layer of the same material. Give kids a variety of small paint brushes and ask them to carefully uncover the animals.

**Design a Habitat** Have kids look up illustrations in books or online to use as inspiration for a diorama. As a group, come up with words that describe the landscape and talk about things that they might want to include in their miniature habitat. Here are some ways they can turn a cardboard box into a prehistoric paradise:

- Paint the inside with natural colors to represent the ground, horizon, and sky.
- Stretch cotton balls into cloud shapes and paste onto the “sky.”
- Create a volcano with play dough or by turning one cup of an egg carton upside down.
- Make a pond with blue construction paper or a small dish of water; a few drops of food coloring can make it more vibrant.
- Add rocks, twigs, leaves, and other natural material from your own environment for a more realistic feel.

**Host a Dino Dinner Party** Some dinosaurs ate meat and others ate plants. Talk with kids about how to tell the types of eaters apart: in general, meat eaters stood on two legs and had claws and sharp teeth, while veggie eaters stood on four legs and had flat feet. Make representative snacks like veggie cups and chicken nuggets, and have kids sort their pencil pals between the two.

**They’re How Big!?** Help kids get a sense of scale while practicing measuring, an important early math skill. Choose one of the pencil pals and look up measurements for its species. Using a poster board or several sheets of printer paper taped together, draw the outline of a life-sized footprint. Place it on the ground for kids to stand on and compare to their own foot size. Ask them to guess how many of their footprints would fit inside one of the animal’s.

If you have space outside, measure out the length or wingspan of your chosen species. Mark the beginning with an object that’s large enough to be seen from some distance away, then use a tape measure (or count steps) to see just how big it really was. For an awe-inspiring distance, choose the brachiosaurus, which grew up to 98 ft. long from snout to tail.

**Dino Stomp!** Make a set of oversized feet that are inspired by one of the pencil pals. From cardboard or stiff poster board, cut out footprint shapes that are about twice as long and three times as wide as the child’s foot. Mark the position of their foot on the cardboard, then create small holes where shoelaces or string can be inserted to make the feet wearable. For extra fun, have kids color their new set of feet to match their pencil pal.

