Dinosaur Lady: The Daring Discoveries of Mary Anning, the First Paleontologist

Discussion Guide

Grades Pre-K – 3rd

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Begin by doing a picture walk with your students. Ask, "what details in the illustrations show you that this story took place a long time ago?"
- Check out the American Museum of Natural History resources to introduce fossils to your students.
- Introduce vocabulary: prehistoric, paleontologist, fossil

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- What kinds of "curiosities" did Mary Anning fill her basket with?
- What kind of person is Mary Anning? What details from the words and pictures make you think this?
- What did Mary and her brother find in the cliffs that was surprising?
- Why does Mary continue to return to the cliffs?
- Where do they take the skeleton? Why?
- What were some other discoveries that Mary's finding led to?
- What does the author mean when she writes, "around the world, scientists were talking about Mary's incredible discoveries. But they weren't talking about Mary"?
- Why couldn't Mary join the Geological Society of London?
- Why do you think Mary continued to explore and discover new things even when she couldn't attend a university?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Ask, "why is Mary Anning known now as the first paleontologist?"
- Be sure to read the "Bone Bits and Fossil Facts" in the back of the book. Watch the short BBC Film about Mary Anning.
- Fun Fact: The tongue twister She sells seashells on the seashore written in 1908 was said to be about Mary Anning. Have fun reciting this tongue twister with your students!

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books about fossils and paleontology such as *A Dinosaur Named Ruth* and *Life: The First Four Billion Years*.