

## *Small and Tall Tales of Extinct Animals*

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SMALL AND TALL TALES OF  
**EXTINCT  
ANIMALS**

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Told through a mix of legends, myths, anecdotes and scientific facts, this book takes the reader on a fascinating journey around the world of extinct animals.

Hélène Rajcak and Damien Laverdunt both live and work in Paris. Damien is a writer and illustrator and teaches applied arts at the Lycee de Serves. Helene is an illustrator who has also trained as a textile designer.

This book investigates and tells stories of the animals that once inhabited each of the continents. The author and illustrator have used cartoons, naturalistic drawings, myths and scientific fact to present detailed information for anyone interested in the natural world. It is a tragicomedy about animals that have disappeared before their, and our, time.

**Activities**

1. Look at the cover image and title. What do you think this book might be about?
2. Tall tales, folk tales, myths and legends are all featured in the book. What are these? Are there any differences between them? Find an example of one of them from your country, local area, family or culture, and share it with your class.
3. Read the information about the continents found in the book. In pairs, choose one of the continents. Create an illustrated timeline of when and how the animals in the book from your chosen continent became extinct.
4. Choose an animal from the book and create a 'missing animal' poster of it. Include vital information such its name, which continent it went missing from, when it went missing, what it looks like, etc.
5. The book includes a glossary. What is this? Write your own glossary using further words and terms taken from the book. For example, mammal (p. 16), archipelago (p. 33) and industrialisation (p. 61).
6. Choose one of the animals from the book. Imagine you have just discovered that the animal is not extinct after all. Divide into pairs to create a TV or radio interview about the discovery. In character, one person write questions as a journalist and the other person then answer them as the person who has rediscovered the animal might do. For example: Where did you find the animal?, What were you doing in the area you found it in?, Are the facts in the book about the animal correct?
7. Visit a museum to find out what other animals in your country and/or local area have become extinct. Write an illustrated report of your findings. Present it to your class.
8. Create your own imaginary animal. Think about what its physical appearance, natural habitat, food, calls, etc. would be. Using the same design and layout as the book, create an entry for your animal, include a cartoon tall tale or legend about it, and place it on the map of the continents.

9. Choose one animal from the book to create a diorama of it and its natural habitat.
10. One type of figurative language is a simile. Write a simile for each of the animals found in the book. For example, 'The old man walked as slowly as the Giant Ground Sloth' or 'My teacher was as grumpy as a Bali Tiger', etc.
11. The Galapagos tortoises are referred to in the book as a 'critically endangered species' (p. 33). As a class, discuss the difference between an endangered, a critically endangered and an extinct animal. In groups, choose and research an endangered animal. For example, what problem is it facing, such as, melting polar caps, deforestation, pollution, etc? What could humans have done to prevent it from becoming endangered? What can we do to save it from extinction? Find out about organisations that help endangered animals. Design a marketing campaign for the organisation of your choice to help draw attention to its cause. For example, create posters, radio jingles, a website, etc. Present your campaign ideas to your class.
12. List what you think are the ten most interesting facts from the book.
13. Write a review of the book. What do you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why?
14. As a class, choose one of the games below to play:
  - *Animal Categories*: As a class, think of and list categories of animal types. For example, mammals, amphibians, predators, etc. In pairs, divide a piece of paper into four of the categories per game. In a time limit of choice each pair fills in as many animals for each category (where possible list extinct or endangered animals) as they can. Once the time is up the pair with the most animals in each category wins.  
(Make the game more challenging by getting each pair to eliminate any animal that other pairs have also written down).
  - *Animal alphabet memory*: As a class, going from A-Z, attempt to find and remember a list of animals (where possible list extinct or endangered animals) for every letter of the alphabet. For example, student one could say: 'I heard a sad tale about an Auroch.' Followed by student two who could then say: 'I heard a sad tale about an Auroch and a Bali Tiger.'

Students then carry on until they reach the letter Z. Any student who makes a mistake is eliminated.

- *Animal Battle (or Who Wants to Live a Million Years?):*

Students each choose an animal that is alive today (endangered or otherwise).

Two students are then chosen to 'battle' their animals.

Round one: The class chooses an environment that is neither of the animals' natural habitat. What qualities do the two animals currently have that would help them survive this new environment? The class decides which animal has the most chance of survival. This student and their animal of choice move to round two.

Round two: The winning animal from round one is pitted against a new student and their animal of choice. The class now chooses an obstacle for the animals to survive, such as, a natural disaster, a man-made disaster or a predator. Which animal would most successfully manage to survive the obstacle? The class decides which animal has the most chance of survival. If the same student and their animal of choice win round one and round two this student is the winner.

Keep pitting new students and their animals against the winner until all students have had a turn. As a class, then decide who could be the overall winner.

(Students can up the battle ante by deciding on an adaptation for their animal which the student thinks would give their animal more of an advantage in battle.)