Even Bigger Than T. Rex

Summary

Demonstrate the size of three dinosaur species using a tape measure and physical markers. Have the students compare size and walk the length of the dinosaurs to comprehend the enormity.

Materials

- **Large area, such as a field, beach, or a gymnasium**
- **Tape measure**
- **6 Plastic sports cones or similar markers**
- **Masking tape**
- **Stopwatch or wrist watch with second hand**
- **Adhesive tape**
- **Printable Pages: Even Bigger Than T. Rex**

Procedures

1. PREPARATION: Use a tape measure to mark off 3 different lengths on the ground for this activity: 40, 60, and 100 feet. Put a sports cone at the start and end of each of the lengths. Using the printable page's images, place an image of Tyrannosaurus Rex on the 40 foot cone, Spinosaurus on the 60 feet cone and Argentinosaurus on the 100 foot cone. For older students, you may also wish to mark off every 10 feet on the field and put additional markers at each of these points. That way, students can practice counting by tens when walking the dinosaurs' lengths.

2. Ask the students to name the largest dinosaurs they know. Tell the students the largest dinosaurs known were sauropods that first appeared during the Triassic. Sauropods included one of the longest dinosaurs known, Argentinosaurus. Scientists believe Argentinosaurus was at least 100 feet long. Explain to the children that they are going to investigate length. First each student is going to compare their length to a Tyrannosaurus rex.

3. Have a student volunteer lie down on the ground. Use a tape measure to find out the student's length/height. Round this measurement to the nearest foot. Explain that Tyrannosaurus rex was about 40 feet long from the tip of his snout to the tip of his tail. Compare the student's length with an adult T. rex's length by dividing the length of a large dinosaur by their length to see how many of their bodies put together would make a large dinosaur. Repeat this step for each child in the class.

4. Give each child a copy of the "Even Bigger Than T. Rex" chart page. Tell the children they are now going to explore the length of three dinosaurs: T. rex, Spinosaurus and Argentinosaurus. Explain that each child is going to walk the length of each of the dinosaur marked by the previously set up cones. Using a stopwatch, time how long it takes each student to walk from one T. rex cone to the other. Write down this information on the Data Collection Chart for each child. If you wish, you can ask the students to see how fast they can run this distance. Repeat Steps 4 and 5 for the other two dinosaurs species, Spinosaurus and Argentinosaurus.

Extensions

- Add large mammals like the blue whale, elephant, rhinocerous and manatee to your species comparison.

- To further explore non-standard measurement, older students can measure the lengths of the various dinosaurs by walking heel-to-toe from one cone to another, and counting their steps. They might say, “A T. rex is 57 ‘Michael steps.’”

- Visualize the Mesozoic Era! With every foot equal to 5 million years, mark off the beginning and end of the Mesozoic, and the start and finish of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Add in major milestones like first known appearance of fish, reptiles, dinosaurs, mammals and birds. This visualization may be scaled for smaller spaces by making every inch equal to 5 million years.

- Play the “How Big Are You?” game on pbskids.org/dinosaurtrain.