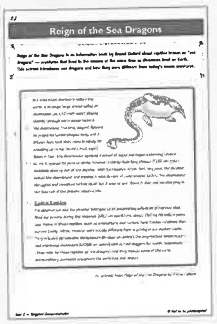
Reign of the Sea Dragons


Reign of the Sea Dragons

Question Book:
Year 4, pages 22-23

Author / Source:
Sneed Collard

Genre:
Non-fiction — reference text

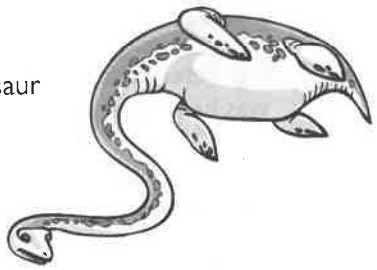
Cross-curricular links:
- Science (adaptation; food webs)
- Maths (conversion; scale)

Introduction

Sneed Collard is an American science writer. He has written many books for young people, many of which are non-fiction science texts. He developed an interest in science from an early age, as a result of both of his parents being biologists, and he aims to make his books interesting and accessible for younger audiences. *Reign of the Sea Dragons* is about the unusual creatures which lived in our oceans millions of years ago.

Answers

1. E.g. They show the reader how to pronounce the word that comes before the brackets.
2. E.g. To make something move forwards.
3. E.g. The elasmosaur had a long neck which let it sneak up on prey. The pliosaur had huge jaws and lots of teeth which helped it attack and kill large prey.
4. squid
5. The pliosaur eats the elasmosaur, which eats the squid.
6. the elasmosaur
7. E.g. To give the reader something to compare its teeth to so that they know how sharp they were.
8. E.g. They don't exist any more and are so different from animals which live in our oceans today that they seem like fantasy creatures. They are also very big and dangerous, just like dragons.



Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to write a short fantasy story in which they make the shocking discovery that creatures such as the elasmosaur and pliosaur are not actually extinct.
- Get pupils to invent their own sea creature. Ask them to draw a picture of their creature and write a short passage describing what it looks like, where it lives, what it eats, and how it goes about getting its food.
- Split the class into groups and assign each group an elasmosaur, pliosaur, ichthyosaur or mosasaur. Give them a large piece of paper with a picture of their creature in the middle, and then ask them to research how the creature is adapted to its environment and annotate the picture with their findings.
- With the class, discuss the food web mentioned in the extract. Explain the difference between a food web and a food chain. As a class, come up with some food chains, and then try to create a food web.
- The extract says the elasmosaur had a fifteen-foot neck, and the pliosaur was thirty feet long, with seven-foot jaws. Using calculators and the conversion of 1 foot = 0.3048 metres, get pupils to calculate these lengths in metres. Then take the class outside and measure the lengths in the playground so that they can visualise the size of the creatures. Back in the classroom, get pupils to draw scaled-down diagrams of the creatures, making sure to add a scale next to their drawing.