

8 Dinosaurs

"I saw a great program on TV last night," Sarah enthused. "It was called *Walking with dinosaurs*, and it had all this great stuff showing dinosaurs eating, fighting and even hatching these cute little dinosaur babies."

"Yeah, I saw that," said Tom. "What I couldn't figure out was how they got the cameras back there."

"Don't be silly, Tom – it wasn't real."

"You mean it was all lies?" asked Tom, in mock disgust. "I thought they must have invented a time machine."

"Oh, stop it, Tom. You're just pulling my leg," realised Sarah. "I guess it's just all sorts of clever models and computer animation and stuff. But that doesn't mean that it's lies. It's just like it would have been, if you had been around then."

"Are you sure?" Tom demanded. "How could they possibly know what it was like way back then?"

"Well, they're scientists, aren't they – or anyway, the people who made it asked the scientists who know all about it. And anyway, that was right back in the days of cavemen, wasn't it? They probably drew pictures of it on cave walls and stuff."

Tessa had been silent and listening, but this was too much. "Come on! Dinosaurs were around long before the cavemen – millions of years earlier. My mum said so."

Sarah pouted. "Oh well, who cares?" she asked. "It's still true, because the scientists say so."

"I'm not so sure it was all true, but it probably wasn't all lies either," asserted Tessa. "I mean, how could they possibly know all that? I can see that they could have known some stuff, like what sort of shape the dinosaurs were, but they must have just guessed some of the rest. How could you tell what colour they were, for example?"

"Yeah, or what those mummy dinosaurs did with their kids," interjected Andy. "Anyway, I just don't get how those people who study dinosaurs can be real scientists. I mean, scientists do experiments, don't they? What sort of experiments could you do with animals that lived long ago? I reckon it's more like ancient history."

"Of course it's science," said Tom, heatedly. "They're called palaeontologists, aren't they – and that's science – everybody calls it science."

"I see what you mean, Tessa" put in Sarah. "Remember what Mr Carey told us – about the scientific method – you know, controlling variables and stuff. That's what makes it science. You can't do that to stuff in the past, can you?"

"Well, Mr Carey could be wrong, couldn't he?" countered Tom. "I mean, he talked to us once about scientists called palaeontologists who study fossils. I reckon anyone who gets called a scientist must be doing science."

"I'm confused now," wailed Sarah. "Let's just ask Mr Carey in science – we've got it after lunch. I gotta run now – see you later!" And off she ran.

Walking with Dinosaurs worksheet

Part 1: Is that true?

Watch the DVD, concentrating on the scenes involving *Leaellynasaura*. As you watch the segment, fill in the table below by putting in examples from the DVD. How likely to be true do you think the 'facts' presented are? 'Facts' can be claims made by the narrator, or they may just be events depicted or visual evidence. Include three examples in each column.

Category 1 -----< Most likely true	Category 2 ----- Possibly true	Category 3 -----> Least likely true
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

Part 2: How do they know that?

In a pair, choose one of three 'facts' that each of you listed from each of the above columns.

Category 1: The 'fact' is ...

What sort of evidence do you think the makers of the documentary and their advisors would have had available to base their 'fact' on?	
What methods would they have used to gather this evidence, and to justify their inclusion of this 'fact'?	

Category 2: The 'fact' is ...

What sort of evidence do you think the makers of the documentary and their advisors would have had available to base their 'fact' on?	
What methods would they have used to gather this evidence, and to justify their inclusion of this 'fact'?	

Category 3: The 'fact' is ...

What sort of evidence do you think the makers of the documentary and their advisors would have had available to base their 'fact' on?	
What methods would they have used to gather this evidence, and to justify their inclusion of this 'fact'?	