

What is Archosaur April Absurdity?

After the success of the past two years' Archosaur April Absurdity, we'll be holding a second tournament of prehistoric creatures! Throughout April and May, we'll once again be holding a series of matches between different dinosaurs in four different size categories, as shown in the bracket. Some dinosaurs might be familiar to you, while others might be species you've never heard of before!

To play along, choose the dinosaur you think would be the winner in each match-up. Just like in basketball, contestants are seeded. Dinosaurs with the smallest numbers beside their names are the highest-seeded, and stand a better chance of winning. We will be posting a play-by-play of each match on Twitter, Instagram and our website, written by museum staff. Follow along with the Archosaur April Absurdity and see how well your favourite fossil creatures do!

Step 1: Scoping out the Talent

Objective:

- Students research the contesting dinosaurs competing in Archosaur April Absurdity
- Develop their research, critical thinking, and story-telling skills

Requirements:

- Internet access
- Long-distance face-to-face communication program (Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, etc.), or in person

Procedure:

- Divide your students into 4 groups and assign each group one of the 4 dinosaur divisions.
- Have the student's research the species competing in their assigned division. This includes the size, shape, diet, and behavior of each creature, as well as what kind of habitat it lived in. Use the online Creature Guide as a jumping-off point.
- Have the students keep track of where they get their information from, and ask them whether or not trust this source to provide accurate information.
- Once each group has created a complete description of each dinosaur in their division, have each group present their findings to the rest of the class, so that every student is introduced to every dinosaur competitor.

Outcome:

- Oral presentations about the traits of the dinosaurs in each division.

Museum Support Option:

To give your students some augmented support during their research process, staff at the museum are available for zoom Q&A sessions. Students can ask questions about particular dinosaur characteristics, what factors to think about when making decisions for their predictive bracket, etc.

If you are interested in setting up a pre-tournament Q&A, contact the PJCDM Curator, Dr. Emily Bamforth at curator@dinomuseum.ca

Step 2: Guessing the Winners

Procedure:

- Print off copies of the online tournament bracket, and have your students fill out their own predictions for the winner of each match. They'll have to use what they learned in their research and from the presentations of their classmates to decide which dinosaur would be victorious in each face-off.
- This predictive bracket will be used by the student throughout the tournament, as each round they will earn points for their correct predictions.
- Have your students tell you why they decided on the animals they chose to win each match. Get them to defend their decisions using what they learned from their own research.

Outcome:

- Each student has a completed predictive bracket with justifications for their choices in the teacher's format of choice.

Step 3: The Tournament Begins

Objective:

- Students follow along with the competition as it develops. A schedule of the competition can be found on the tournament webpage.
- Students keep track of what dinosaurs win and lose, and why
- Develop their critical thinking skills, story-telling skills, and further knowledge of natural sciences

Requirements:

- Internet access
- Long-distance face-to-face communication program (Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, etc.), or in person

Procedure:

- Students follow the results of each series of matches on the museum's website to see who the official winners are each round, and why they won.
- For each round of the tournament assign students a creative activity to get them thinking more about the animal interactions and get their imaginations working. This can be in any medium, collaborative or individual. Student re-telling of matches should involve a good degree of scientific accuracy, but a healthy dose of imagination adds to the fun.

Additional Activities:

- Re-write one of the matches with a plausible, but different, outcome. This is an awesome activity if students made a different prediction than the official match outcome.
- Investigate what existing scientific research supports the outcome of a match (for older student groups).
- Create a piece of original artwork depicting a scene from one of the matches.
- Reenacted one of the matches in a short skit.
- Create a stop animation film of one of the matches.

Outcome:

- 4-5 creative activity products (one for each round +/- one for the final showdown)

Museum Support Option:

If you would like your class' work showcased to the wider community, to celebrate their efforts and contribute to the learning of others, contact Museum Curator Dr. Emily Bamforth at curator@dinomuseum.ca. Selected media will be shared over the museum's social media channels, with appropriate recognition to the creator(s).

Post - Tournament Follow Up

Museum Support Option:

If you are interested in wrapping up your dinosaur tournament experience with a guided debrief session, staff at the museum are available for zoom sessions. We will talk to your students about the behind-the-scenes science of the tournament, answer their questions, and ask guided learning questions to help them think through what they have learned while participating in the tournament.

To set up a post-tournament debrief, contact Museum Curator Dr. Emily Bamforth at curator@dinomuseum.ca.

Extension Lesson:

- Once the tournament has come to an end, work with your students to make your own class competition. This can involve any combination of animals you like, living or extinct. Dinosaurs, mammals, lizards, amphibians, fish, bugs, whatever your students think is neat! This can be a fun opportunity to learn about the diversity of life on Earth, and think about how animals that never met would have interacted with each other.
- These brackets can be thematic (a certain type of animals) or ecosystem based (animals from a particular environment). Thematic brackets are a good way to dive into the details and diversity of a particular group of animals. Ecosystem based brackets can be used as an introduction to food chains and trophic levels.
- The creation of brackets and outcomes can be an individual activity for each student or a class wide collaborative activity;
- Make the brackets as a class, then each student gets to write one of the matches.
- Or each student makes their own bracket and writes explanations for each of the wins.