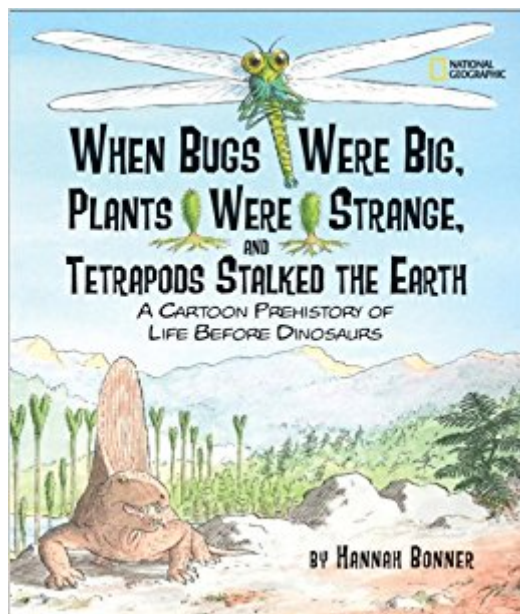




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# When Bugs Were Big, Plants Were Strange, And Tetrapods Stalked The Earth: A Cartoon Prehistory Of Life Before Dinosaurs



## Synopsis

A centipede as long as a couch? Trees so tall they touch the clouds? Amphibians changing into reptiles? These are just a few of the amazing life forms detailed in *When Bugs Were Big....* This lively new paperback tickles the reader's funny bone while imparting tons of information about the animals, plants, and bugs that lived before the dinosaurs. Children will read "news reports" including a weather forecast from 320 million years ago and an emergency broadcast about the swift extinction that would end the Permian period. As kids peruse Bonner's innovative combination of narrative text, engaging illustrations, hilarious cartoons, maps, charts, and time lines, they will gather lots of valuable scientific information about the amazing creatures that ruled the Earth before the dinosaurs.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-6--Bonner takes a lighthearted approach to a fascinating topic. The Carboniferous and Permian periods spanned 100 million years or so just before the better-known Mesozoic Era. The author describes many of the unusual plant and animal species from those times in a lively, conversational style. Cartoon illustrations decorate every page. Some of them are strictly informational, but most contain elements of humor as well. The facts and the fun work well together, and it's always clear which is which. In one three-panel strip, for example, two scientists offer legitimate theories regarding possible uses of a shark's (Akmonistion) spiny "turret," while a chef

wishes that he could have used that unusual appendage as a cheese grater. Weather reports by well-dressed reptile ancestors, want ads for bug-eating amniotes, and pictures with word balloons are among the other comic features. The more straightforward drawings of the unusual creatures are clear and eye-catching, though not all include estimated size. A useful two-page illustrated time line gives a nice overview. Most of the species details are basic, with more emphasis on how life in general evolved during this time period. Readers also see how climate, geology, and other animals effected development. Most dinosaur books include just a page or two of pre-Triassic information, so this title offers valuable subject coverage in an appealing package.--Steven Engelfried, Beaverton City Library, OR Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 2-5. The Carboniferous and Permian eras that ended the Paleozoic period (250 million years ago) are presented with verve and humor that don't shortchange the young natural historian's quest for good explanations of the earth's distant past. In spite of the book's subtitle, there's plenty of text. Cartoons are lightly sprinkled throughout an otherwise more traditionally illustrated narrative, but the formats are blended well to provide appropriately factual and hyperbolic information. Descriptions of evolving animal life, climate changes, continental drift, and the formation of elements such as carbon as a natural part of the vegetative life cycle unfold coherently. The use of age-appropriate appendixes (a chart designed to help children keep the vertebrates straight) and familiar reference points (a "seven-foot basketball player" standing next to a very, very tall synchysidendron tree) make this an exemplary curriculum support resource, but kids who dig dinosaurs will read the book purely for pleasure. Let's hope this author-illustrator will decide to present more history for young readers. Francisca Goldsmith Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I got the first one at a book sale for like \$2 and a couple of my 4th grade students became hooked on it. It's a little above their comprehension level, especially since most of them are ELLs, but a great challenge especially for kids who are interested in science, dinosaurs, etc. One of my kids refused to read anything else after we finished the first and he was so excited that I was able to get the second one for him it made it totally worth it. Super informative but written in very kid-friendly language, and they love the little cartoons.

I've said it before in other reviews, but Hannah Bonner's book series is an absolute charming and

delightful read. This volume tackles the Carboniferous and Permian eras, a fascinating and somewhat overlooked time period. Loaded with wonderful artwork, both 'realistic' and more 'cartoony', and easy to understand explanations, it's enjoyable for both children and parents. I recommend getting this one along with the other two in the series. Please write and illustrate more books, Hannah!

Great information delivered in a fun and interesting format.

Great book for kids.

One of my 4 year old son's favorites. A big dinosaur buff, he received this book that covers the Carboniferous and Permian Periods (the two periods just before the dinosaur era) as a gift several months back and he regularly asks me to read it to him. While some of the details are over his head, he seems to comprehend the major points of it (there were plants and creatures before dinosaurs, the continents move, and the variety of life forms has evolved over the years) and often brings up some of the details embedded in the text in daily conversation. The author does a great job of mixing in blocks of more detailed text with cartoons that are useful for keeping kids interested for long spurts of time. When my son is in a more focused place, we can read the whole book, intermingling the text with the humorous cartoons and getting some laughs along the way. When he's in a less focused place, we can just get some chuckles through the cartoons including reading the awesome two-page timeline of the entire history of life on earth (including the 2+ billion year reign of bacteria). The book is obviously aimed at grade schoolers, but preschoolers and parents can enjoy the book as well, with both learning stuff along the way.

As a sixth grade science teacher, I am always amazed that my students have the misconception that dinosaurs were the first organisms to be on earth. Indeed, there is a couple of billion year history before the dinosaurs. This book does a great job of at least showing what else was around with the dinosaurs. The cartoon format draws children in and engages them in reading the informative, upbeat, and fun text that supports the fabulous illustrations. After reviewing this book at a science museum teacher workshop, I knew I needed a copy for my classroom library. Open the book and you'll be hooked, too! If you are looking for a well-written non-fiction children's book, this is a great one (especially if you have a child interested in dinosaurs). If you're looking for a funny and engaging book with fun cartoons and easy-to-understand text, you've found it.

The author does a great job explaining life before the dinosaurs. It can be difficult for kids to "get" the fact that there were big reptiles (and amphibians) before the Age of Dinosaurs, and some authors find it easier to just lump those beasts together with dinosaurs. But not here. Ms. Bonner does a nice job detailing differences in reptiles and amphibians, and also does one of the best jobs I've seen in a children's book of explaining vegetation -- why it was different then, how it evolved, and how it turned into coal. This book is a definite keeper for the 6 and up set -- my daughter, turning four soon, is a big dinosaur buff, and likes the cartoon pictures more than the science behind it. But when she's ready for a nice overview of the Permian period, I'll pull out "When Bugs Were Big."

This book was a present to my two kids, ages 6 and 8, but I've enjoyed it as much as they did. My kids love dinosaurs, and I've read dinosaur book after dinosaur book. This is the first book that showed me what was around before the dinosaurs. The author (and illustrator) do a great job of being entertaining and informative. The drawing and humor are fantastic, and there are lots of little details that show up in the second, third and fourth reading (always an advantage in favorite children's books). I highly recommend "When Bugs Were Big" for both parents and children who want to learn more about what the world was like before.

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