

# Penguin Random House

## TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

### DINOSAUR HUNTER

David Hill and Phoebe Morris

Meet Joan Wiffen, a super-determined, self-taught palaeontologist, and join her on the hunt for the fossils that will prove New Zealand once had dinosaurs.

Once there was a clever girl who liked searching for interesting things on the ground. She wanted to know why shells could be found in rocks so far away from the sea. But her father thought education was no use to a girl, so Joan had to leave school.

This little girl grew up to be Joan Wiffen, a self-taught science superstar who became the first person to find dinosaur fossils in New Zealand – a discovery which scientific experts had deemed impossible.

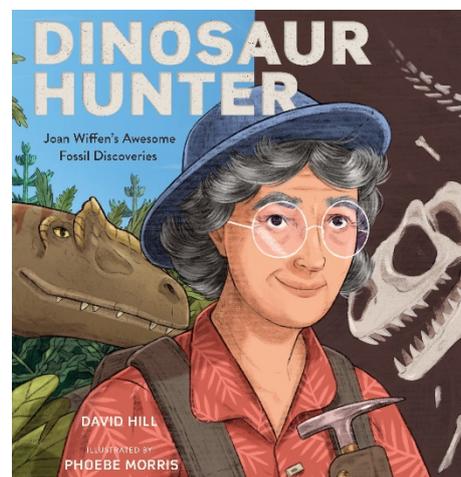
This is the fifth book in the acclaimed series about the lives of famous Kiwis from David Hill and Phoebe Morris.

#### About the Author

David Hill is a prolific and highly regarded New Zealand writer. His novels have been published all around the world and translated into several languages. In 2004 David was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, and in 2005 he was awarded the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal. He lives in New Plymouth with his wife Beth.

#### About the Illustrator

Phoebe Morris has been drawing for herself since 1996, and for other people since 2013. In 2018 Phoebe was shortlisted for the Russell Clark Award for Illustration in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.



#### SPECIFICATIONS:

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#### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before reading
- During reading
- Comprehension questions
- Language and style
- Vocabulary
- Illustrations
- Research and creative responses

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## ***Dinosaur Hunter: Joan Wiffen's Awesome Fossil Discoveries***

Written by David Hill

Illustrated by Phoebe Morris

### **BEFORE READING**

#### ***Pre-reading Questions***

- 1) What do you know about fossils? Share with one other person. See if your answers match up.
- 2) Before you read the book, as a class, find some basic information about Joan Wiffen. What do you think this book will be about? Discuss as a class.
- 3) Look at the back of the book. What description is given? Does this match what you think the book is about?
- 4) Look at the illustrations on the internal cover page. We can see a dog with a bone, but the bone has a tag on it. How do these things indicate what the book will be about? Why do you think the dog is there?

### **DURING READING**

#### ***Themes***

This book examines several ideas that may be interesting to you.

Firstly, the book suggests that **there is potential in every human being**. Joan Wiffen was 40 before she started looking for fossils. She said: "I can dream. That's one of the big things in life.

Secondly, we are asked to consider **the importance of perseverance**, even in the face of adversity. Joan Wiffen was 50 before she discovered her first dinosaur bone. Her father didn't believe that girls needed education. Scientists didn't believe that dinosaurs existed in New Zealand.

Finally, the book explores **how a life can be if you follow your passion and interests**. Joan decided to dedicate her life to her questions about dinosaurs, and even built a hut to be close to her workplace!

Can you think of ways these themes or ideas apply to you?

1) Potential in every person:

\_\_\_\_\_

2) The importance of perseverance:

\_\_\_\_\_

3) How a life can be if you follow your passion and interests:

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Comprehension Questions***

- 1) The first page states: 'It's 70 million years ago.' What is your favourite sentence on this page? Why?
- 2) What is your favourite part of the picture on this page? Why?
- 3) The next page states: 'It's a summer day in 1975.' Why do you think David Hill has written the first sentence in this way? Is it similar to the first page? How?
- 4) We then learn about Joan Wiffen's life. What is one thing that surprised you about growing up in the earlier parts of the 20th century? Why?
- 5) How does Joan discover geology?
- 6) What word (starting with 'p') did Joan want to learn more about?
- 7) What did the Wiffens find that changed their lives?
- 8) What was written down on this find that Joan 'just had to know' about?
- 9) What tools did the Wiffens use when they were searching for fossils? Name three.
- 10) What didn't Joan love about camping by the stream? Name three things.

- 11) What did Joan use to protect the fossils once they were back in her shed at her home?
- 12) 'At that time, scientists believed no dinosaurs had lived in the land that is now New Zealand.' What *had* scientists found? Name three things.
- 13) How big was the 70-million-year-old theropod?
- 14) How many years did the Wiffens and their helpers spend exploring the stream?
- 15) What did some people call Joan once she became famous?

## ***Language and Style***

This book uses colourful parts-of-speech, especially verbs and adjectives, to make the story interesting to read.

Here is a 'parts-of-speech' reminder:

A **noun** names a person, thing or place. For example, **chair**.

A **verb** is an action, or 'doing' word. For example, **sings**.

An **adjective** describes a noun. For example **blue** chair.

An **adverb** describes a verb, or an adjective, and sometimes others. For example, sings **loudly**. Adverbs often end in -ly, but not always.

Read through the following underlined examples from the book. Can you tell which are verbs, adjectives, nouns and adverbs in *Dinosaur Hunter*?:

1. Pterosaurs with giant wings sweep across a shallow bay.
2. It's a savage theropod.
3. Winds and rain cover the theropod's bones with sand and mud.
4. Earth piles up on the bones and they're squeezed into rock.
5. There's a splashing sound.
6. She arrived home bubbling with excitement.
7. Joan could hardly wait to begin her dinosaur hunt.
8. They got lost on twisting shingle roads.
9. They sloshed up and down the narrow stream till dark.

10. The Wiffens visited the stream so often that they and some friends finally built a hut there.

- a) Write three of your own sentences using interesting verbs. When could you use this in your own writing?
- b) Write a sentence in which you use two adjectives. What nouns did you choose to describe?
- c) Choose five words from the list above. Use these words in your own short paragraph describing dinosaurs.

### ***Vocabulary***

This book is about one woman's passion hunting fossils. Here are some interesting words from the story David Hill has written.

- a) Pterosaurs
- b) Savage
- c) Squeezed
- d) Fossils
- e) Education
- f) Clerk
- g) Geology
- h) Jealousy
- i) Palaeontology
- j) Twisting
- k) Steep
- l) Dynamite
- m) Vertebra
- n) Microscope
- o) Awarded

- 1) Choose five that you like.
- 2) Look up their meanings and write them down.
- 3) Explain what they mean to a partner.
- 4) Write your own story using these five words. Did you choose fiction or non-fiction?

## 5) ***Illustrations***

- 1) The first page of the book is very colourful and describes how life was 70 million years ago.
  - a) How many creatures can you see?
  - b) What other landmarks have been placed on this page?
- 2) The next page is set in New Zealand in 1975.
  - a) What living creatures can you see on this page?
  - b) What other landmarks can you see on this page?
- 3) The page that introduces Joan has many small pictures on it.
  - a) Why do you think Phoebe Morris choose to do this?
  - b) Which is your favourite 'mini' picture, and why?
- 4) When Joan goes to Pont's geology class, she is very excited.
  - a) Why do you think this illustration shows pages floating around Joan's head?
  - b) Why is there the shadow of a dinosaur on the wall?
- 5) The illustration of the Wiffen family in their car is very symmetrical.
  - a) What does 'symmetrical' mean?
  - b) What effect does symmetry have on someone looking at this picture?
- 6) When the Wiffens built the hut, we can see a dinosaur looking at them, and another flying overhead.
  - a) Why has Phoebe Morris included these extinct creatures in the present?
  - b) Do you like this? Why/not?
- 7) As the story progresses, more and more dinosaurs watch Joan at work.
  - a) Why does Phoebe Morris increase the number of dinosaurs?
- 8) When the Wiffens are at the museum in Queensland, they see bones that look like the ones they have discovered.
  - a) How does Phoebe Morris draw our attention to this visually?
- 9) Go through the illustrations and list all living creatures that can be seen in *Dinosaur Hunter*.

## ***Research and Creative Responses***

- 1) Take a trip to your local museum and see if you can find information about fossils in your area. Collect brochures to present to the class.
- 2) Choose someone you are interested in (famous or not) and copy the format of the page that introduces Joan Wiffen's early life to us. Describe their life. See if you can include illustrations in the same mini-style as Phoebe Morris.
- 3) What do you think the dinosaurs are saying to Joan throughout this book? Cut out speech bubble shapes and give the dinosaurs voices! Present your additions to the class in a read-out-loud dramatic recount session.
- 4) Can you take a trip to the beach or a river and look for your own fossils? Use the information you have collected from your local museum to guide you. If it's hard to find, use the internet to discover where they might be.
- 5) Joan Wiffen said: 'I can dream. That's one of the big things in life.' Write down one of your dreams. Brainstorm three things that you can do right now to start the journey to that dream. Remember to persevere, like Joan.
- 6) Research and make a poster with a classmate explaining the first illustration in the book. You should explain why the creatures, fauna and physical landmarks are as they are (eg. volcano, sea-life, dinosaurs).
- 7) In a small group, write a short play detailing one aspect of Joan Wiffen's life. You might choose her early years, Art and Geology classes, or the exciting discoveries of dinosaur fossils later on. Present your play to the class.
- 8) In pairs, write a fact sheet detailing the four dinosaurs that the Wiffens discovered. They are the pterosaur, plesiosaur, hypsilophodont and ankylosaurus.
- 9) Write and perform a song about Joan Wiffen's life. You can do this alone, in pairs or in groups.
- 10) Ask your school librarian if you can help make a dinosaur display at the school library to celebrate Joan Wiffen's extraordinary feats. See if you can include work from classmates, perhaps from activities in the above list, to include in the display.