



## Dinosaurs!

Eric knows a lot about dinosaurs and fossils because he studied Paleontology. Look up the word *paleontology* and the word *fossil* with the children. Go to the school or local library and collect books about dinosaurs and fossils. Invite the children to set up a small area in the classroom with these books, toy dinosaurs, a dinosaur poster. Add some paper, pencils/pens, magnifying glasses. Encourage them to share a dinosaur fact for the day. Imagine together what it would be like to go back in time to when dinosaurs lived – use lots of vocabulary to describe what they can see, hear, smell, touch. How do they feel? Eric says that part of the reason he studied dinosaurs is because they are like real dragons!

## Magical Creatures

Eric tells us that the Guardian's of the New Moon series is inspired by the stories of Chinese and East Asian legends that his dad told him when he was little. These stories have been told and retold through generations. They are full of magical creatures and magical rules. Invite the children to talk about who their favourite magical character is from 'The Year of the Ox' or any of the other Guardian's of the New Moon books. What words would they use to describe this character? Why did they choose this one? If they could be this character, what would they do? This could lead on to a drama session where the children become their favourite characters!

### Activities for

#### *Guardians of the New Moon: The Year of the Ox*

Written by Eric Huang.  
Illustrated by Phùng Nguyễn Quang

## Be true to yourself

'You be you' is the message Eric hopes children take from 'The Year of the Ox'. In the book, Xiao Nioh wants to be a dancer, but his dad disapproves. Eric says when he was younger he thought he had to fit in at all costs, but that he also knew it is much better to be himself. Eric knows it isn't always easy to be yourself. Knowing your children, make time to discuss what they think it means to 'be yourself'. This could include thinking about similarities and differences, how they are when they are on their own and how they are when they are in a group, what makes them feel worried, what makes them feel safe, how can they help each other to be themselves? Be ready for children to share what is meaningful to them.

## Write about what you know

Eric and Laura both say they write about things from their own lives. The temple in Guardian's of the New Moon is based on Eric's school. Gran Gran in JoJo and Gran Gran is based on Laura's Grandmother. Collect some picture and object prompts of familiar everyday things to share with the children – the class bear, a mug, a picture of the bus stop outside school, the big tree in the playground... invite them to use their imaginations to make up stories about them. Support them with questions to encourage talk: What if the bear could talk? Is there a magic potion in the mug? What if the bus took you to another world? Who lives inside the tree trunk? This could lead on to writing or drawing their story, or recording an audio version.