

Name:

Date:

Before Reading

Predict the relationship between each term and what you know about dinosaurs. What do you think these words will have to do with dinosaurs in the story we are about to read?

1. shoot

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

2. election

3. thunder

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

4. safari

5. machine

6. paint

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

7. stone

8. moon

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

9. trophy

10. butterfly

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**"A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury
Vocabulary**

Word	Part of Speech	Definition
finicky	adj	
annihilate	verb	
expendable	adj	
infinitesimal	adj	
tonnage	noun	
poised	adj	
primeval	adj	
subtle	adj	
remit	verb	
scrabble	verb	

“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury
Vocabulary

Word	Part of Speech	Definition
finicky	adj	requiring great attention to detail
annihilate	verb	destroy completely
expendable	adj	describes something that is of little significance when compared to an overall purpose, thus able to be ignored
infinitesimal	adj	Extremely small
tonnage	noun	weight in tons
poised	adj	Describes having grace and composure
primeval	adj	resembling the earliest ages in the history of the world
subtle	adj	delicate, not obvious, and understated
remit	verb	to send money to someone
scrabble	verb	To scratch or grab something with your fingers or hand

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“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury
Reading Questions

1. What is Time Safari Incorporated?

2. What is Mr. Eckels looking to shoot?

3. How much does it cost to go on a safari? How do you know?

4. What is the political status of the United States?

5. Why does the man behind the desk try to scare Eckels?

6. How does Travis emphasize how far in the past they have traveled?

7. How does Time Safari protect the natural environment?

8. What does Travis tell Eckels is the best way to kill a dinosaur?

9. What is the harm in going off the specifically designed path? Or killing one mouse?

10. How do the travelers know what animals are OK to shoot?

11. What happens when Eckels sees the Tyrannosaurus Rex?

12. Why do Billings and Kramer turn down a photo with their trophy?

13. Why does Travis want Eckels to stay behind?

14. What does Eckels notice about the sign on their return?

15. What does Eckels find on the bottom of his boot? What major event is changed because of it?

16. What is the reader to infer that Travis does to Eckels? What is the “sound of thunder” at the end of the story?

After Reading Questions

1. What is a paradox? Explain the paradox of time travel.

2. In the description of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, what example of imagery can you find? What effect does it have?

3. Do you feel bad for Eckels why or why not?

4. Why is it ironic that Eckels is afraid to kill the T-Rex?

5. How does Bradbury foreshadow what will happen at the end of the story?

6. What theme about environmentalism is present in this story?

ANSWER GUIDE

“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury Reading Questions

1. What is Time Safari Incorporated?

A company that offers safaris to any year in the past through a time machine.

2. What is Mr. Eckels looking to shoot?

Dinosaurs.

3. How much does it cost to go on a safari? How do you know?

10,000 dollars—they tell Eckels that it will cost him *another* 10,000 dollars if he breaks the rules.

4. What is the political status of the United States?

Keith was just elected president over Deutscher. Keith represents American democracy and Deutscher represents a totalitarian regime.

5. Why does the man behind the desk try to scare Eckels?

The man wants to make sure that Eckels is fully prepared to go on the safari. He needs to remind Eckels that it is a very dangerous journey, and there's a possibility of injury or death. The company does not want him to arrive and panic, cause a disaster, and become a liability.

6. How does Travis emphasize how far in the past they have traveled?

Travis says, “Christ isn't born yet,” and “Moses has not gone to the mountains to talk with God.” He also mentions that the Pyramids have not been built yet, and famous leaders in history, like Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, and Hitler have not been born yet.

7. How does Time Safari protect the natural environment?

They travel on a path that doesn't touch the ground, as to not disturb the land. They will fine anyone who goes off the path. The men also wear oxygen helmets so they can't introduce bacteria into the atmosphere.

8. What does Travis tell Eckels is the best way to kill a dinosaur?

Two shots in the eye (to blind them) and then shoot the brain.

9. What is the harm in going off the specifically designed path? Or killing one mouse?

They might change the past and as a result, change the future. If they go off the path, they may kill one animal or one plant; that one small mistake could lead to a billion other small consequences that add up, changing the future in a major way. If you kill one mouse, you kill its whole family because now it will not procreate. Foxes now starve who would have fed off the mice; the lion starves; the caveman starves, etc. Destroy one man, and you destroy a race, an entire history of life. Any small change causes an imbalance and population disproportion later on.

10. How do the travelers know what animals are OK to shoot?

Lesperance explains that the party can safely shoot the specific animal he has previously marked for them because he has already traveled back in time to find the dinosaurs that would have died of some accident within minutes after the hunt regardless. They are marked with red paint.

11. What happens when Eckels sees the Tyrannosaurus Rex?

He is afraid and terrified. He sees how big the monster is and decides it is impossible to kill. Lesperance tells him to hide in the machine.

12. Why do Billings and Kramer turn down a photo with their trophy?

They are traumatized and sickened by the blood and gruesomeness of the kill.

13. Why does Travis want Eckels to stay behind?

Eckels traveled off the path. Travis wants to punish him and hide what they have done; they will have to report the incident to the government and the company could lose their license to time travel. Leaving Eckels behind would be better for Travis and the company.

14. What does Eckels notice about the sign on their return?

All the words are spelled differently.

15. What does Eckels find on the bottom of his boot? What major event is changed because of it?

A dead green, gold, and black butterfly. Deutscher won the presidential election and not Keith. Killing the butterfly changed the presidency.

16. What is the reader to infer that Travis does to Eckels? What is the "sound of thunder" at the end of the story?

Travis kills Eckels by shooting him. The sound of thunder is a bullet from a rifle.

After Reading Questions

1. What is a paradox? Explain the paradox of time travel.

A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement but is proven to be true. In this story, Eckels thinks that if they go back in time, they will see themselves—seemingly, this would be true. However, the paradox is that it's impossible because time does not allow you to meet yourself.

2. In the description of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, what example of imagery can you find? What effect does it have?

Answers will vary.

"It towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker's claws close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of pebbled skin like the mail of a terrible warrior. Each thigh was a ton of

meat, ivory, and steel mesh. And from the great breathing cage of the upper body those two delicate arms dangled out front, arms with hands which might pick up and examine men like toys, while the snake neck coiled. And the head itself, a ton of sculptured stone, lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of teeth like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich eggs, empty of all expression save hunger. It closed its mouth in a death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones crushing aside trees and bushes, its taloned feet clawing damp earth, leaving prints six inches deep wherever it settled its weight."

The dinosaur is massive, tremendous, extraordinary, dangerous, threatening, and solid. The travelers are in real danger.

3. Do you feel bad for Eckels, why or why not?

Answers will vary.

4. Why is it so ironic that Eckels is afraid to kill the T-Rex?

He is a master hunter whose killed many dangerous animals: "I've hunted tiger, wild boar, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it," said Eckels.

5. How does Bradbury foreshadow what will happen at the end of the story?

Answers will vary.

- Nothing is guaranteed beside the dinosaurs.
- Eckels is warned, "If you disobey instructions, there's a stiff penalty of another ten thousand dollars, plus possible government action, on your return."
- The man behind the desk says, "We don't want anyone going who'll get scared and do something silly at the first sign of danger," which is what Eckels does.
- Eckels says Keith will make a great president.
- Six safari leaders were killed last year.
- Travis warns everyone not to go off the path, he says, "A little error here would multiply in sixty million years, all out of proportion."

6. What theme about environmentalism is present in this story?

There is an impact of human interference in the environment, even if they seem unrelated.
Humanity is directly connected to the environment and can influence the future with small actions.
People may not realize the impact of their actions on the environment until it is too late.

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“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury
Cause and Effect

A major theme in this story is that every action, no matter how small, has consequences. Fill out the following cause and effect chart in chronological order.

Cause	Effect
	Eckels travels back in time.
Eckels doesn't take the precautions seriously.	
	Eckels doesn't want to kill the T-Rex.
Lesperance instructs Eckels to get back in the machine and hide there.	
	They kill the T-Rex.
A fount of blood spurted from the dinosaur's throat. Somewhere inside, a sac of fluids burst.	
	Eckels shouts, "I'll pay anything. A hundred thousand dollars!"
Travis wants to punish Eckels.	
	Eckels kills a butterfly.
Eckels changes history by killing one butterfly.	
	Travis kills Eckels.

Answer Guide
“A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury
Cause and Effect

A major theme in this story is that every action, no matter how small, has consequences. Fill out the following chart in chronological order.

Cause	Effect
Eckels signs up for the Time Safari.	Eckels travels back in time.
Eckels doesn't take the precautions seriously.	Eckels is not prepared; he plays around with his rifle jokingly which irritates Travis.
The dinosaur scares Eckels.	Eckels doesn't want to kill the T-Rex.
Lesperance instructs Eckels to get back in the machine and hide there.	Eckels steps off the path.
The dinosaur lunged forward at the men with a terrible scream.	They kill the T-Rex.
A fount of blood spurted from the dinosaur's throat. Somewhere inside, a sac of fluids burst.	The men get ill and vomit.
Travis wants to leave Eckels behind.	Eckels shouts, "I'll pay anything. A hundred thousand dollars!"
Travis wants to punish Eckels.	Eckels must retrieve the bullets from the dinosaur's corpse.
Eckels steps off the path.	Eckels kills a butterfly.
Eckels changes history by killing one butterfly.	The U.S. presidential election is changed (among other things); now Deutscher is a dictator.
Eckels broke the rules and put the company at risk by completely changing history.	Travis kills Eckels.

Name:

Date:

After Reading

Revise your predictions from before you read the story "A Sound of Thunder." Write down how each term *actually* relates to the story.

1. shoot

PREVIEW

2. election

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

3. thunder

PREVIEW

4. safari

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

5. machine

6. paint

PREVIEW

7. stone

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

8. moon

PREVIEW

9. trophy

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

10. butterfly

After Reading

Revise your predictions from before you read the story “A Sound of Thunder.” Write down how each term actually relates to the story.

1. shoot

The characters travel back in time to shoot the T-Rex.

2. election

There was a presidential election the day before Eckels went hunting; when he returned, the results were different.

3. thunder

The dinosaur’s roar sounded like thunder.

4. safari

The characters pay to go on a safari with a company called Time Safari.

5. machine

The characters travel back sixty million years in a time machine.

6. paint

The dinosaurs that are allowed to be killed are marked with red paint.

7. stone

The T-Rex’s head was like a sculptured stone. Like a stone, the T-Rex fell.

8. moon

The dinosaur was so tall it could reach up and touch the moon.

9. trophy

The men couldn’t take the body back to present day, but they could take a photo as a trophy of their kill.

10. butterfly

Eckels killed a golden butterfly and changed the course of history.

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After Reading Discussion Questions

Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?

This question was posed by meteorologist Edward Lorenz who studied chaos theory and the underlying patterns that are involved in apparent randomness. In the phenomenon known as the "butterfly effect," reality is so delicate and sensitive that one small event could cause a major change in the outcome of later events. In Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," Bradbury presents a literal and metaphorical butterfly effect, where the crushing of a butterfly changes the results of a presidential election 65 million years later.

Answer the questions below.

1. Do you believe in time travel? Explain.

2. What changes may have led to the difference in the election in the story "A Sound of Thunder?"

3. If you could travel back in time, where would you go and in what time period? Is there anyone you want to meet or what event would you want to witness?

4. Is Time Safari an ethical company? Why or why not?

5. Bradbury set this story in 2055, about 100 years after he wrote it in the 1950s. How might this story relate to or speak to the American generation in the 1950s?