

Jurassic Texts: Diving into Crichton's Park

You love the Jurassic Park movie, right? It's a classic! But did you know it was based on an amazing, and sometimes quite different, book by Michael Crichton? Today, we're going to dive into the original text and compare it to the film you know.

Materials First!

- Copy of the novel *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton (or access to key excerpts)
- Notebook or digital document
- Pen/Pencil or keyboard
- Optional: Access to the Jurassic Park movie for specific scene comparisons
- Optional: Internet access for research (e.g., on chaos theory)

Activity 1: First Encounter - Reading the Text

Let's start by reading a section from the novel. Choose one of these options (or ask your parent/teacher for another):

1. The opening chapters detailing the mysterious animal attacks.
2. The initial arrival sequence at Isla Nublar and the first dinosaur sightings.
3. The chapters detailing the T-Rex attack sequence.

As you read, jot down your initial impressions: How does the writing style feel? What details stand out compared to the movie?

Activity 2: Character Files - Book vs. Screen

Many characters are different in the book! Let's investigate:

- **John Hammond:** Read a few sections featuring him. Is he the kindly, misguided grandfather from the movie, or something else? Find quotes to support your view.
- **Alan Grant:** How is Grant portrayed? Does he like kids in the book?
- **Ian Malcolm:** Malcolm spends much more time talking about chaos theory in the book, often while injured. Find one of his key speeches. How does his role compare?
- **Tim and Lex:** Notice any age differences or personality shifts?

Write a few sentences in your notebook comparing *one* character's portrayal in the book versus the movie.

Activity 3: Unpacking the Themes - Science and Chaos

Crichton wasn't just writing an adventure story; he was exploring big ideas:

- **The Ethics of Science:** Find passages where characters discuss whether creating the dinosaurs was right or wrong. What are the main arguments?
- **Chaos Theory:** Ian Malcolm is the voice of this concept in the book. Can you find a quote where he explains it (even basically)? How does this idea play out in the plot (e.g., unexpected events, system failures)?

Discuss: Do you think the book handles these themes more deeply than the movie? Why or why not?

Activity 4: Scene Showdown - Page vs. Screen

Think about a specific, memorable scene from the movie (like the T-Rex attack, the velociraptors in the kitchen, or the Dilophosaurus encounter with Nedry). Now, read that same scene in the book.

Note the differences:

- What details are added or removed in the book/movie?
- How is the suspense built differently?
- Do the characters react in the same way?

Assignment: Your Analysis

Write one or two paragraphs comparing *one* specific element (a character, a theme, or a scene) between the novel and the film adaptation of *Jurassic Park*. Use specific details from both the book (quotes or recalled descriptions) and your memory of the movie to support your points. Explain which version you found more effective or interesting for that specific element and why.

Conclusion

Reading the original *Jurassic Park* opens up a whole new layer to the story! It shows how adaptation works – changing things for different mediums – and lets us appreciate Crichton's detailed world-building and thematic concerns in a new light. Welcome to Jurassic Texts!