



Lesson Plans

(for use with the award winning CD, Martian Television Invasion)

Designed for kids in Kindergarten through 6th grade.
Created through a partnership with Thaddeus Rex, Inc. and
the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra's Education Department.

Thaddeus Rex Lesson Plan:

I'm a (Three-Toed Triple-Eyed) Double-Jointed Dinosaur

Grade Levels: 1-3

Designed for use with the CD Martian Television Invasion

Objective:

Students will learn how to use adjectives and verbs to create a detailed fantasy character.

Concepts/Proficiencies:

Parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs)

Reality vs. fantasy

Creative writing

Rondo form

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- 1) Write the word DINOSAUR on the board.
- 2) Tell the students that they are going to listen to a song about a dinosaur. Ask them to listen closely and remember everything they can that makes this dinosaur unique. You may invite them to keep a list as they listen.
- 3) Play "I'm a (Three-Toed Triple-Eyed) Double-Jointed Dinosaur," track 6 from T-Rex's Martian Television Invasion CD.
- 4) Ask students to tell you what makes the dinosaur in the song unique or unusual. Keep the list under the word DINOSAUR on the board. Suggested line of questioning:
What does the dinosaur look like?
What does the dinosaur eat?
What things does he like to do?
- 5) With the class, circle the adjectives or descriptive words or phrases. Underline the verbs or action phrases. Draw a box around the noun/things that the dinosaur likes.
- 6) Ask the class if this is a real or fantasy character. Discuss the difference.
- 7) Tell them that they will create a fantasy character of their own. The following set of activities may be done individually or in small groups:
Have each student/group come up with a noun that is a real or imaginary living thing that they can base their fantasy character on (e.g., astronaut, superhero, unicorn, frog). Write it at the top of a piece of paper.
Have each student/group write adjectives or descriptive phrases to describe their character (e.g., three-toed, triple-eyed, warty)
Have each student/group write five verbs or action phrases for their character (e.g., eat, love, loaf, like, sleep)
Have each student/group write five things that their character likes (e.g., buttered asparagus, burnt toast, shiny automobiles)
- 8) Using their lists, have students write four sentences that describe their character. Instruct them to use the first-person narrative (using "I") in their writing. We will call these four sentences Group A. (NOTE: These four sentences will be the chorus for a song.)
- 9) Using their lists, students should write 2 more sets of four sentences describing what their character does and what it likes. We will call these 2 sets Groups B and C. (NOTE: These will be the verses of the song.)

10) Have students write out their sentences in the following format.

A (chorus)

B (verse 1)

A (chorus)

C (verse 2)

A (chorus)

11) Point out to the children that they have just written a song like “I’m a (Three-Toed Triple-Eyed) Double-Jointed Dinosaur.” The pattern that they have used is a musical form called rondo (a pattern where the main theme returns several times in alteration with other themes – ABACA.)

Extension Options:

- 1) Work with your music teacher to create melodies for some of the students’ songs, practice them, and include them as part of a parent program.
- 2) Provide the music teacher with the attached page of music that has the melody for “I’m a (Three-Toed Triple-Eyed) Double-Jointed Dinosaur.” Have the music teacher show the children how T-Rex, as the composer, was able to tell the music teacher what to play on the piano. See if any of their song lyrics can be sung along with the original melody of “I’m a (Three-Toed Triple-Eyed) Double-Jointed Dinosaur.”

This classroom lesson plan was created in collaboration with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Education Department.

Uses “I’m a 3 Toed Triple Eyed Double Jointed Dinosaur” as performed by Thaddeus Rex, song written by Barry Louis Polisar Copyright 1974 (BMI)

Thaddeus Rex Lesson Plan:

A Happy Party

Grade Levels: K-2

Designed for use with the CD Martian Television Invasion

Objective:

Students will learn how qualities of music can affect moods and emotions by exploring descriptive words in the song “A Happy Party.”

Concepts/Proficiencies:

Descriptive words

Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and understanding

Personal space

Physical and emotional response to music

Compare/contrast

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- 1) Class Discussion: As a class, make a list of things that make you really happy (e.g., a special day or event, a favorite activity).
- 2) Class Discussion: What do you feel like when you are happy? What do you sound like? What does your body feel like? What do you feel like doing?
- 3) Have children stand up in the room and define a space for each child (e.g., within tile squares of the floor or within their arms reach without moving their feet).

Teacher’s Tip: If you have students that are self-conscious about moving around, tell them that they can use just one part of their body (head, hands, legs, etc.)

- 4) Tell the students that they are going to listen to a song called “A Happy Party.” Tell them that as they listen, they can move their bodies with the music within their space.
- 5) Play “A Happy Party,” track 1 from T-Rex’s Martian Television Invasion CD.
- 6) Class Discussion: What mood do you think T-Rex is in when he sings the song? Why do you say that?

Teacher’s Tip: Responses will vary, but may include the following.

The song was fast (tempo)

People were singing together

Words were happy memories

What did you feel like doing with your bodies? (Select children to demonstrate, or tell/show them ways you observed them moving.) Ask children to come up with words that describe the movements (e.g., bouncy, swinging, jumpy, twisting).

- 7) Put those words on the left side of a t-chart on the board under the heading “Happy Movements.”
- 8) Class Discussion: Ask the students how they might have moved their bodies differently if they heard a sad song. Have students demonstrate those movements and come up with descriptive words. Add those words to the right side of the t-chart under the heading “Sad Movements.” Compare and contrast the words on each side of the chart. For example, your chart might look like this:

Happy Movements

Jumpy
Fast
Wiggly
Shaky
Springy

Sad Movements

Slow
Smooth
Low
Slumped
Heavy

- 9) Class Discussion: Point out to the class that music can affect how we feel and move our bodies. Ask students what kind of music they might listen to if they were really sad and wanted to feel better. What if they were excited and wanted to calm down? What if they wanted to help someone sleep?

Extension: Have the children come up with words and movements to describe other moods or emotions (afraid, silly, excited, exhausted, cranky, etc.). Extend your t-chart and add to the list.

Listen to other music and have students determine the mood using descriptive words and movement. (The songs “Lullaby for Two Towers” and “Turn Your Light on Bright” are good contrasts with “Happy Party” on the Martian Television Invasion CD.)

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Thaddeus Rex Lesson Plan

Martian Television Invasion

Grade levels: 3-5

Designed for use with the CD Martian Television Invasion

Objective:

Students will learn about the story elements of beginning, middle, and end by creating and illustrating an end to the song “Martian Television Invasion.”

Concepts/Proficiencies:

Story structure – beginning, middle, end

Story elements – character, plot

Creative writing

Direct/active listening

Alternatives to television

Optional: figurative language (personification)

Suggested Lesson Plan:

1) Tell the students that they are going to be listening to a musical story. Ask them to listen carefully and remember what happens.

2) Play the song “Martian Television Invasion,” track 2 on T-Rex’s Martian Television Invasion CD

3) Make a list of what the students heard using the following questions as prompts.

What happens at the beginning?

(TVs/Martians invade the earth, turning boys and girls into zombies)

Who are the characters?

(TVs who are actually Martians in disguise, boys and girls)

What are the characters like?

(TVs are dumb, can’t think like people)

What happens after the TVs invade?

(People sit and stare, never need to touch)

What can’t TVs do?

(dance, wear pants)

What happens in the middle of the song?

(Song explores what life might be like if TVs could do human things, but realizes it is a fantasy.)

Teacher’s Tip: If appropriate you may wish to introduce your students to the concept of personification (the attribution of human characteristics to a non-human object or idea) and how it is used in the song.

4) Class Discussion: At the end of the song, it says, “relief is on the way.” What do you think that might be? Imagine things you might do keep the TVs from invading your brain.

5) Writing Prompt: Have students write an end to the story about how they combat the Martian television invasion with their brain or by doing a physical activity.

6) Have students illustrate their story ending using available classroom art supplies.

7) Create a “gallery” of story-ending pictures and take the class on a “gallery walk.” Discuss all the ways people used their brains and bodies instead of watching TV.

NOTES:

T-Rex expresses one of his favorite ways to fight the television invasion in his song “Reading Books” on track 3 of the CD.

In the song “Martian Television Invasion,” T-Rex begins “scat singing” (improvised nonsense syllables) after he sings the lyrics, “Ignore the invasion and use your own brain.” This style of singing requires you to use your imagination rather than someone’s written lyrics. This is not a coincidence.

Note for music teachers: In the scat section, the voice and bass follow the same melody one octave apart. The entire song is written in a slightly varied standard blues form.

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Thaddeus Rex Lesson Plan

My Awesome Mom

Grade Levels: 2-5

Designed for use with the CD Martian Television Invasion

Objective:

Students will learn writing concepts (main idea, supporting facts, summary, and conclusion) by creating a tribute to someone important to them.

Concepts/Proficiencies:

Writing concepts – main idea, supporting facts, summary, conclusion

Biographical writing

Directed/active listening

Respect/admiration/tribute

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- 1) Ask students to take out a piece of paper and write down the name of someone who is important to them. It should be someone who they know and admire.
- 2) Under that person's name, ask the students to list three reasons why the person is important to the student. For example:

My brother

- teaches me basketball
 - protects me from bullies
 - helps me with my homework
- 3) Introduce the song "My Awesome Mom," track 4 on T-Rex's Martian Television Invasion CD, by telling the students that T-Rex has written a song as a tribute to someone important to him.
 - 4) Play "My Awesome Mom" for the class.
 - 5) Create the following chart on the board.

Main Idea	Supporting Facts	Summary	Conclusion
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Fill in the chart by asking the students to add the details that they heard in the song. You may have them listen to the song a few times. Suggested questions include:

What is the main idea of the song?

What details does T-Rex provide that his Mom is awesome? What does she do?

What did T-Rex do to thank or pay tribute to his mom?

What does T-Rex say we can all do at the end of the song?

For example, your chart may look something like this:

Main Idea	Supporting Facts	Summary	Conclusion
My Mom is awesome	-Reads stories -Kisses goodnight -Took to sandbox -Cut up PB&J -Help him when sick -Meets for lunch -Listens	Wrote this song for my Mom, because she gave a life with so much love.	We can sing this to all of our awesome Moms.

- 6) Put another chart on the board with just the headings. Ask the students to write a short essay paying tribute to their important person using the chart as a guideline. Make sure they state their main idea, include supporting facts, summarize, and write a conclusion.

OPTION: Have students illustrate a picture of their person doing one of the things that makes them special.

- 7) Share the students' stories with the class.

OPTION: Post stories on the wall for a parent night or create a collective class book and let students check it out to take home and share with their families.

- 8) Ask students other ways people might create a tribute (poem, skit, drawing, sculpture, song, etc.).

Extension:

Ask students to turn their stories into a poem. Have students go through their stories and circle the most important elements, then convert the story into a non-rhyming poem.

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T-Rex Lesson Plan

The Scientific Method

Grade Levels: 4-5

Designed for use with the Martian Television Invasion CD

Objective: Students will learn to use the Scientific Method by experimenting with percussive sounds of classroom objects.

- 1) Class Discussion: Ask students if they know what scientists do. What kind of things do they study? Make a classroom list on the board. (Note: Scientists study everything! From animal behavior to body odor to what kind of cars people want to buy!)
- 2) Tell the students that to study anything scientists all over the world use what is called the "Scientific Method."

- 3) Write the following words on the board:

Observation

Hypothesis

Prediction

Experiment

Theory

Tell the students they are going to listen to a song about the Scientific Method. Ask them to listen for what each of the above words means. It may be necessary to listen to the song a few times to allow students to capture all of the information.

- 4) Classroom Discussion: What does the song tell us about each of the words on the list? What else do you know about these words?

Example:

Observation

be curious, wonder why

observation requires noticing with all of your senses

ask questions about what you observe

Hypothesis

real good guess to explain something

Prediction

tell what will happen next based on the hypothesis

Experiment

run tests to see if the prediction is correct and the hypothesis true

Theory

strong hypothesis

never failed inside any experiment

passed every test you can imagine

- 5) As a class do an observation exercise. Ask students to observe everything they can about a piece of plain paper using their senses.

What does it look like?

What does it sound like?

What does it smell like?

What does it feel like?

- 6) Teacher Demonstration: Ask the students to watch as you hold a piece of paper in the air with one hand and move the other hand very slowly into it (hitting it softly). How would they describe the sound it makes?
- 7) Tell students: “The question that I have is, how can I make the sound loud or soft? Have the class create a hypothesis (a good guess) about what makes the sound louder or softer. (i.e. your hands original distance from the page, speed at which you hit it, the part of your hand that is used, how many times you hit it, etc.)
- 8) Make a prediction based on the class hypothesis. “If I hit the paper _____ I predict that it will be louder.”
- 9) Experiment: Test the hypothesis. Is the prediction accurate for the piece of paper? When you find a result that confirms the hypothesis (i.e. hitting the paper faster increases the volume), apply the test to other classroom objects (a desk top, book, trash can). “If I hit the _____ faster it gets louder.”
- 10) Have the class formulate a theory that has passed all of your tests (i.e. The volume of an object being hit increases as the speed of the hit increases.)

NOTE: Scientists must thoroughly test a hypothesis before it can become a theory (assumed to be a fact) because it is very embarrassing and bad for a scientists career if they proclaim a new theory to the world and are later proven wrong. That’s why scientists work so hard to try and prove their own hypothesis wrong. They figure if they can’t prove it’s wrong, no one else can either, and if no one can prove a hypothesis wrong, it must be right. Right!?

Extension: Listen to the song again. Have students write a multi-paragraph essay about how they applied each aspect of the Scientific Method in their classroom.

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Thaddeus Rex Lesson Plan

Turn Your Light on Bright

Grade Levels: 4-6

Designed for use with the CD Martian Television Invasion

Objective:

Students will learn the use of metaphor to express feelings in poetry and song.

Concepts/Proficiencies:

Figurative language – metaphor and simile

Creative writing

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- 1) Class Discussion: “What would life be like if you were a blade of grass?”

Suggested questions:

Would you have to go to school? Catch the bus?

Could you go to a movie?

Could you get out of the way of anything?

Could you make any decisions?

- 2) Writing Prompt: Write a short paragraph about something that might happen to you if you were a blade of grass.
- 3) Read the following letter from T-Rex to the class.

Dear Students,

Usually when I write a song, I have a story I want to tell or I have thoughts I want to communicate. “Turn Your Light on Bright” is different. I wrote this song to capture a feeling.

Do you ever have feelings you can’t put into words? Sometimes a metaphor can help. If you’re so hungry that you can’t even describe it, you might say, “I’m so hungry--I’m a starving tiger!” Those words bring a vivid picture to mind and help others understand how hungry you really feel. We all know you aren’t really a tiger, but you say it so we’ll know how you feel. This is called a metaphor.

In “Turn Your Light on Bright,” I use metaphors to describe my feelings. In the first line, I talk about life as a blade of grass. What does it tell you about my feelings if I say, “I’m a blade of grass?” Does a blade of grass ever get in trouble with its teacher? Does a blade of grass ever have to clean its room? Does it ever get to go to the movies or go on vacation? Can it move out of the way if someone sits down on it? Does a blade of grass get to make any decisions at all?

I describe myself as a blade of grass because blades of grass never have to worry about making any decisions. Everything is decided for them. Sometimes that sounds nice. You and I are people and we have to make lots of choices everyday. Sometimes it’s hard to make so many choices all the time.

In the chorus of the song, I ask you to “turn your light on bright.” This is another metaphor. You don’t really have a light above your head or in your eyes to turn on.

I know that. But have you ever seen a cartoon where the character gets an idea and a light bulb turns on above his head? We all know what it means--the cartoon character has an idea. I’m using this cartoon picture to create a metaphor in my song. If

*you have a good idea, turn that light bulb on bright so everyone can see it. How do you do that? It's up to you. Turn your light on bright so we can follow you.
I hope you enjoy this song and its metaphors.*

Thaddeus Rex

Teacher's Tip: Point out to the students that it is very different to say "I am a starving tiger" (a metaphor) than it is to say, "I feel like a starving tiger" or "It's as if I'm a starving tiger" (similes). One is a direct statement (a metaphor), the other is a comparison (simile). They give different mental pictures to the listener and tend to create different levels of intensity when expressing feelings.

- 4) Play "Turn Your Light on Bright," track 14 on T-Rex's Martian Television Invasion CD.
- 5) Based on the definition of metaphor found in T-Rex's letter, ask students to identify the metaphors in the song.
- 6) As a class, brainstorm some examples of metaphors that students could use to describe feelings they have everyday. Examples:
I dropped my eraser and it fell faster than a bullet.
I lost my lunch money and I am an angry bear
I am in a stormy mood.
I'm walking on sunshine.
I'm a scared rabbit.
- 7) Ask students to write a paragraph about how they feel today using metaphor.

Extension: Have students illustrate their paragraph and metaphors.

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