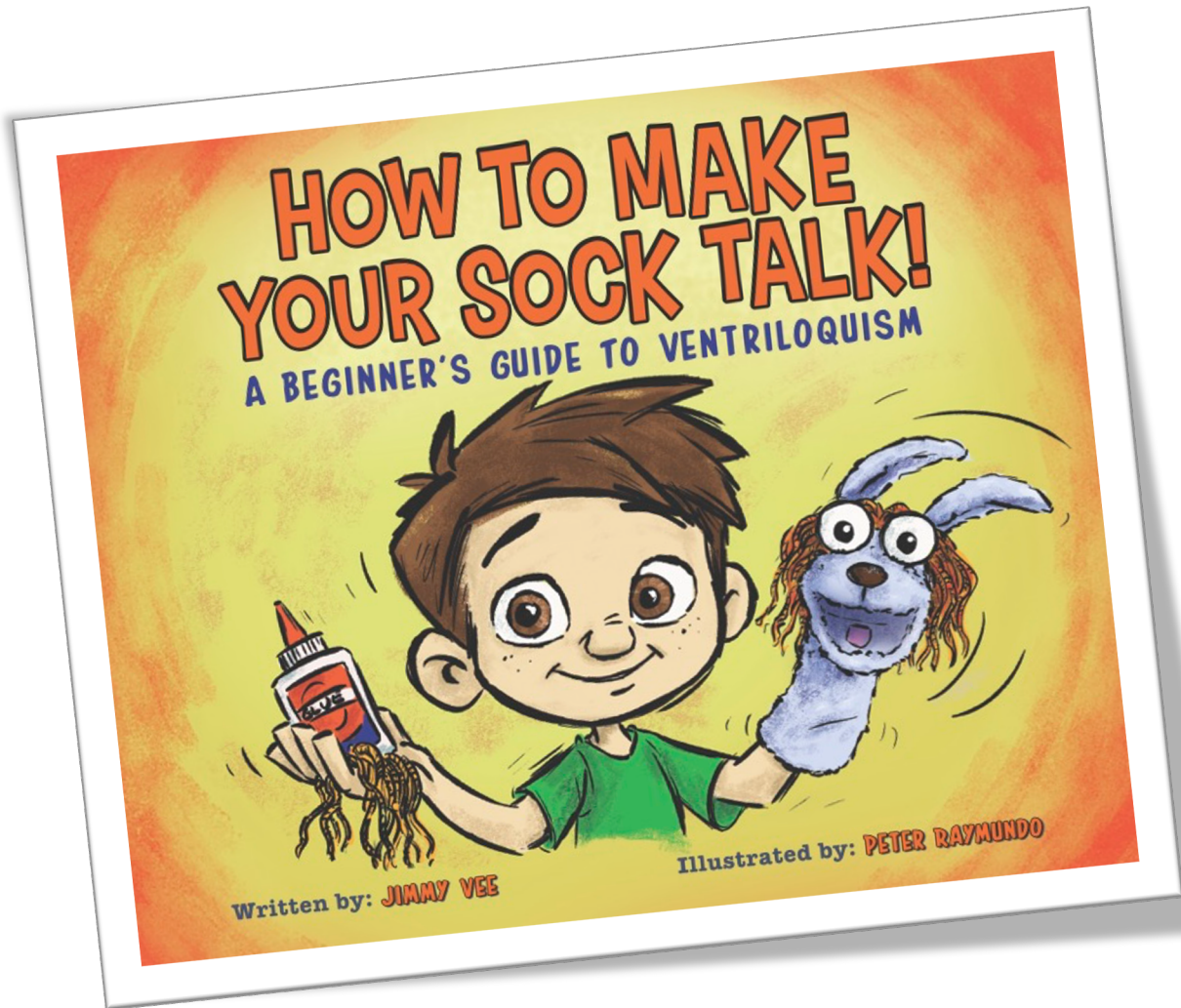




How To Make Your Sock Talk: A Beginner's Guide To Ventriloquism

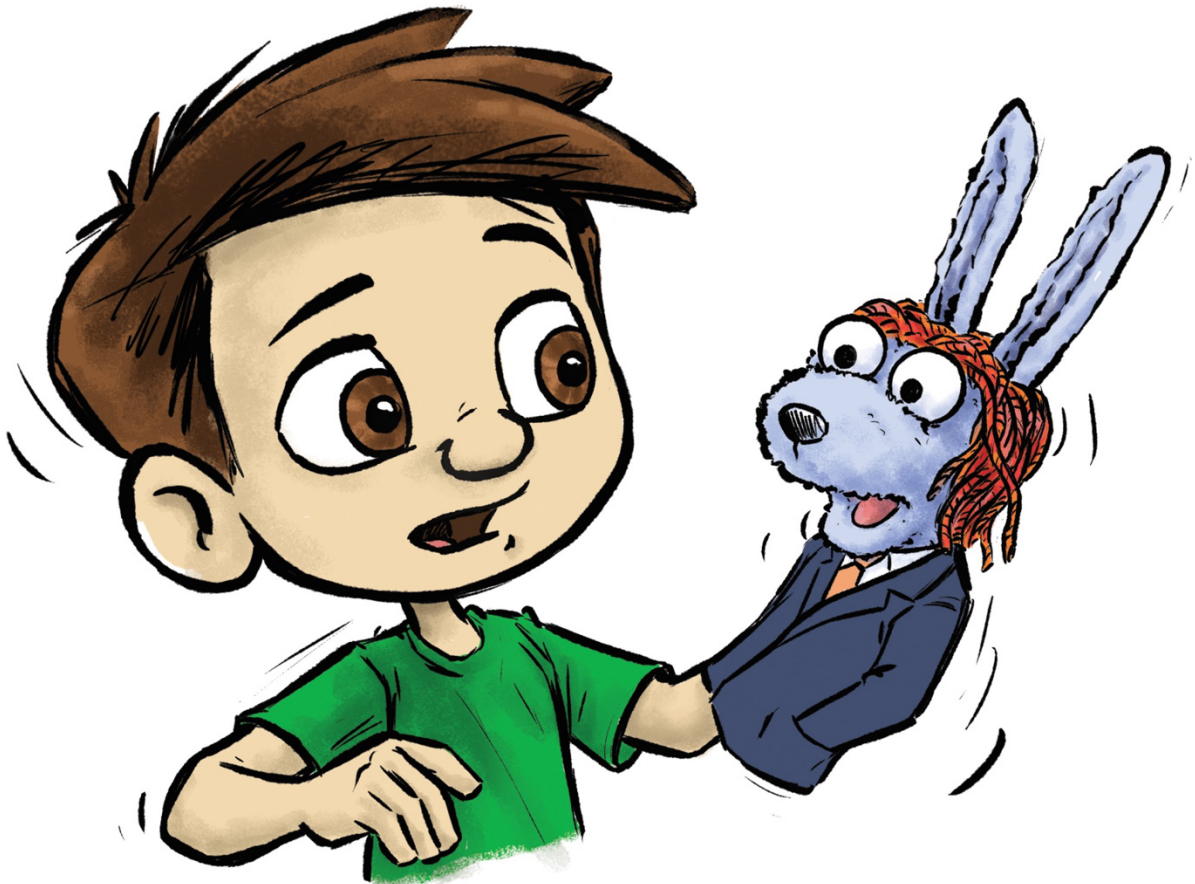
A Curriculum Guide for Developing Communication, Creativity, and SEL Skills

By Jimmy Vee

How to Use This Guide

Based on the manuscript "How To Make Your Sock Talk" by Jimmy Vee, this curriculum guide is designed to help educators and parents engage 3rd through 5th-grade students in developing communication, creativity, and social-emotional learning (SEL) and STEM skills through the art of ventriloquism and creating unique sock puppet characters. The guide provides learning objectives, discussion questions, activities, and resources that complement the story and its themes while aligning with popular teaching and curriculum concepts.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core State Standards in ELA and Math, in addition to relevant learning standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama



Grade Level: Elementary (Grades 4-7)

Learning Objectives:

- Students will develop their communication skills by learning the basics of ventriloquism and creating unique voices for sock puppet characters.
- Students will enhance their creativity and problem-solving abilities by designing and constructing sock puppet characters.
- Students will practice social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, such as empathy, perspective-taking, and self-expression, by engaging in storytelling and character development.
- Students will collaborate and support their peers in the creation and performance of ventriloquism routines.
- Students will apply STEM concepts, such as engineering and design principles, to the process of constructing a sock puppet character.

Discussion Questions:

- How can practicing ventriloquism help improve communication skills?
- In what ways can creating a sock puppet character develop creativity and problem-solving abilities?
- How can engaging in storytelling and character development help students practice empathy and perspective-taking?
- How can working together to create and perform ventriloquism routines encourage collaboration and support among peers?

Activities:

Activity 1: Create a Sock Puppet Character and Practice Communication Skills

Using the instructions in the manuscript and the videos located at www.SockTalkBook.com, have students create their own sock puppet character. You can also use paper bags instead of socks. Provide a variety of materials for them to use, such as socks, googly eyes, yarn, glue, and fabric scraps. Encourage students to think creatively and combine different ideas to create a unique character.

As students work on their puppets, have them practice communicating with their characters by developing unique voices and experimenting with ventriloquism techniques.

Activity 2: Character Development and SEL Skills

Once students have created their sock puppet characters, have them write a short biography for their character.

Encourage them to consider their character's background, feelings, and experiences, which will help them practice empathy and perspective-taking.

Discuss as a class how understanding and relating to others' experiences can help us develop better social-emotional skills.

Activity 3: Collaborative Ventriloquism Routines

Divide students into small groups and have them collaborate on creating a short ventriloquism routine featuring their sock puppet characters.

Encourage students to support one another during the creative process and provide constructive feedback. This activity will help students practice collaboration, active listening, and peer support.

Resources:

- CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning): A resource for educators and parents on evidence-based SEL practices and strategies (<https://casel.org>).
- Edutopia's Social-Emotional Learning Resources: A collection of articles, videos, and resources on SEL in the classroom (<https://www.edutopia.org/topic/social-emotional-learning>).
- "How to Be a Ventriloquist" by Paul Winchell: A classic guide to ventriloquism by one of the greats in the field, covering techniques and performance tips.

Vocab Detectives

How To Make Your Sock Talk has some new and challenging vocabulary. Words like “objection,” “technique” and “ventriloquist” may be unknown to some young readers.

Re-read certain pages of *How To Make Your Sock Talk* aloud and ask students to listen carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across an unknown word, they should raise their hand.

- Repeat the phrase using the unknown word. What might it mean, based on context?
- Look up the word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.

Create a list of the vocabulary words and hang it on the wall. Revisit it again and again.

STEM Concepts

Students will apply STEM concepts, such as engineering and design principles, to the process of constructing a sock puppet character.

STEM Activities:

Activity 4: Puppet Engineering - Applying STEM Principles in Puppet Construction

In this activity, students will explore and apply basic engineering and design principles to the process of constructing their sock puppet characters.

Discuss with students the importance of planning, prototyping, and iterating when creating a product or solving a problem.

Planning: Have students create a design plan for their sock puppet character. This plan should include a sketch of their character and a list of materials needed for its construction.

Prototyping: Encourage students to create a prototype of their character using simple materials, such as paper, pipe cleaners, or playdough. This step allows them to test the feasibility of their design and make any necessary adjustments before constructing their final puppet.

Iterating: After students have completed their prototype, have them reflect on the design process and identify areas where improvements can be made. Students should then make the necessary adjustments to their design plan before constructing their final sock puppet character.

Construction: Provide students with the necessary materials to construct their final sock puppet character based on their revised design plan. As students work on their puppets, encourage them to consider the structural integrity and functionality of their design.

Discussion Question:

How do engineering and design principles help us create more effective and functional sock puppet characters?

Resource:

"Design Squad Global" by PBS Kids: An online resource featuring engineering and design challenges, videos, and activities for students (<https://pbskids.org/designsquad>).

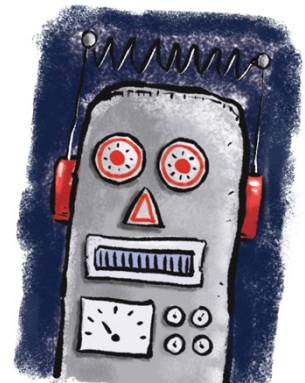
Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their ability to apply STEM concepts, such as engineering and design principles, in the construction of their sock puppet character.

Assessments can include evaluating students' design plans, prototypes, final puppet creations, and their ability to reflect on and iterate their designs based on feedback and self-assessment.

Art & Science Concepts:**ART: No Accidents In Art**

We all make mistakes, but people are never mistakes! When creating something it is easy to feel like you have made a "mistakes." But mistakes often lead to breakthroughs.

***Activity #1: Learning from quotes***

Here are some famous quotes you can share about the power of learning through failure and mistakes. Have children read these quotes and research the people who said them. You can also have them find additional quotes related to failing forward and learning from their mistakes.

- "Mistakes make masterpieces." – Jimmy Vee
- "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." - Thomas A. Edison
- "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." - Albert Einstein

- "Mistakes are the portals of discovery." - James Joyce
- "Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." - Winston Churchill
- "The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing." - Henry Ford
- "We learn from failure, not from success!" - Bram Stoker, Dracula
- "An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it." - Orlando Aloysius Battista
- "Do not be embarrassed by your failures, learn from them and start again." - Richard Branson
- "There are no mistakes, only opportunities." - Tina Fey
- "Mistakes are the growing pains of wisdom." - William George Jordan
- "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." - George Bernard Shaw

These quotes serve as reminders that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process and can lead to valuable insights and breakthroughs. Embracing mistakes and learning from them can ultimately lead to success and personal growth.

Activity #2: Learning About Art Through Making Mistakes

Several famous works of art were created or inspired by accidents, where unintended occurrences led to unique and memorable outcomes. Have the children research these artists and these works of art. Share the stories below about how they came to be. You can even have the kids create their own versions of the masterpieces below.

- **The Persistence of Memory by Salvador Dalí:** According to some accounts, the idea for the iconic melting clocks in this painting came from a Camembert cheese melting in the sun. Dalí saw this as an opportunity to incorporate a unique visual element into his painting, which went on to become one of his most famous works.
- **The Scream by Edvard Munch:** The Scream's inspiration came when Munch was walking along a fjord in Norway and suddenly experienced a moment of intense anxiety and panic. The colors of the sky shifted, and he saw a vision of a screaming figure. This emotional experience, which may be seen as an "accidental" occurrence, inspired Munch to create the iconic painting.
- **The Blue Poles by Jackson Pollock:** Pollock's drip paintings were created by accident when he accidentally dripped paint on a canvas while working on another piece. Intrigued by the effect, he began to experiment with this technique, which became a hallmark of his style. Blue Poles is one of his most famous drip paintings.
- **Monet's Water Lilies:** Impressionist painter Claude Monet discovered his fascination with water lilies by accident when he installed a pond in his garden at Giverny. Initially intended as a place to relax, the pond and its water lilies became the subject of many of his most famous paintings, as Monet was captivated by the changing light and reflections on the water.

While these examples may not be the direct result of accidents during the creative process, they demonstrate how unexpected events or experiences can lead to the creation of iconic and memorable art.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you feel about failure, and how has your feeling about failure influenced your approach to learning from mistakes?
- Can you think of a personal example where a mistake led to a valuable lesson or breakthrough?

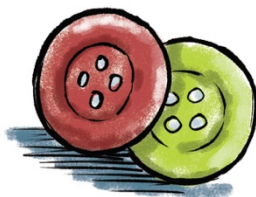
- Thomas Edison's quote, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work," highlights persistence and reframing setbacks as opportunities. How can adopting this mindset influence your problem-solving and decision-making processes in your personal or professional life?
- Albert Einstein said, "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." How does this quote relate to the importance of taking risks and stepping outside of your comfort zone? Can you share a situation where taking a risk led to personal growth or success, even if it involved making mistakes?
- In the context of James Joyce's quote, "Mistakes are the portals of discovery," discuss how embracing mistakes can lead to innovation and creative breakthroughs. Can you think of any examples where mistakes have resulted in unexpected discoveries or advancements in various fields?
- George Bernard Shaw's quote, "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing," emphasizes the value of learning from mistakes rather than avoiding them. How can we create an environment, either in our personal lives, workplaces, or educational settings, that encourages learning from mistakes and fosters growth?

SCIENCE: The No-Accidents Inventor

Surprisingly, many of today's inventions were created "by accident", until the inventors embraced and exploited the "accident".

Assign 1-2 students to research the creation of one of the following:

- Velcro
- Slinky
- Corn Flakes
- Potato chips
- Stainless steel
- Plastic
- Popsicles



- Ice cream cones
- X-ray images
- Teflon
- Play-doh
- Super glue
- Silly Putty
- Matches
- Chocolate chip cookies



Once the information is gathered, students should create either an illustrated poster or booklet of the research to present to the rest of the class.

HISTORY:

Our past shapes our future and regardless of what we choose to do in life, we stand on the shoulders of those who come before us. Entertainment influences and often leaves a lasting mark on our culture. Here are some historical figures from entertainment that have influenced today's ventriloquists and puppeteers and our culture. Have students choose one and research them. They can do an oral or written report on the person they have chosen.

Fred Russell and Coster Joe
 The Great Lester & Frank Byron Jr.
 Edger Bergen and Charlie McCarthy
 Señor Wences & Johnny
 Paul Winchell & Jerry Mahoney
 Frank Marzalkiewicz (Marshall)
 Paul Ashley & Rootie Kazootie
 Buffalo Bob Smith & Howdy Doody
 Max Terhune & Elmer
 Frank Oz & Miss Piggy
 Jimmy Nelson & Danny O'Day
 Shari Lewis & Lamb Chop
 Jim Henson & The Muppets
 Peter Brough & Archie Andrews
 Terri Rogers & Short Harris
 Willie Tyler & Lester

Shirley Dinsdale & Judy Splinters
 W.S. Berger
 Ronn Lucas & Billy The Kid
 Keith Harris & Orville the Duck
 Jay Johnson & Bob

