



1. DRAW A STEAM-POWERED VEHICLE

John's first invention is based on a steam-powered engine. Interestingly, steam-powered "coaches" were available long before cars and motorcycles.

- After we've examined a working model of a steam engine & chatted about it, draw a vehicle powered by steam.
- It should have a fuel source (e.g. coal, wood, chicken poo, etc.), a boiler, and ways to harness/distribute the steam heat.

MATERIALS: Pencil, paper.

2. CREATE YOUR OWN LEGO® INVENTION



John builds his inventions to solve particular problems – a way to advertise the circus, a baking oven to help his friend Maria, and a device to bust through a building. If he doesn't have certain materials, (e.g. coal), he uses what he has on hand (e.g. explosive chicken poo).

- With fellow kids or by yourself, brainstorm about a problem you face every day (e.g. a crappy locker door, hitting rocks when you're mowing the lawn, slippery footballs, etc.).
- Using LEGO blocks, build a better version of the item or create an invention to overcome the problem.

MATERIALS: LEGOs or recycled materials.

3. LEGO® BUILD A BRIDGE CHALLENGE

John is an engineer, and engineers are famous for building skyscrapers, bridges, space stations – the biggest, best, and longest things you can think of!

- With fellow kids, build a LEGO bridge that sits on a countertop and can hold the weight of the heaviest object you can find.
- Build the longest LEGO bridge that you can between two desks or tables. This should be able to rest on the desks without crashing into the center.

MATERIALS: LEGOs.



4. GO LEGO® TEAM!

John constantly needs the help of others to build his inventions. Sometimes they argue – a lot – about the best way to do things. But eventually they find a way to work as a team.

- Pair up with I kid.
- Take a cup containing 14-20 LEGOs or small classroom items (with a matching pair of each piece) and divide them up so you have exactly the same pieces as your partner.
- Using a piece of strong cardboard or a metal sheet, create a barrier so you can't see your partner's work.
- Build something cool with your LEGOs.
- With the barrier still up, explain to your partner what you've built. You can only use words to tell him/her what it looks like.
- While you're talking, your partner should try to build exactly the same LEGO creation with his/her pieces.
- Once he/she is finished, remove the barrier and compare your creations.
- Draw both of your creations on a worksheet like this:

MY FIGURE	MY PARTNER'S FIGURE

- Reverse the exercise so your partner goes first, creating a cool LEGO creation.
- Then follow the same steps as before.

After you've finished the exercise, you might want to discuss your experiences with the class. You could think about:

- What made this activity tricky?
- What did you do to help your partner “see” the creation in his/her mind?
- Which instructions did your partner find helpful?
- What parts of your conversation weren't helpful?
- What would you do differently next time?



For more info, see: www.thecounselorstop.com/working-together-with-legos/.

MATERIALS: LEGOs/recycled materials, cardboard barrier, paper, pencil.



5. PLAYS WITH WORDS

John's friend Boz is prone to making up words or using them in strange new ways.

- With another student, find a funny word in the dictionary that you think no one in the class will know the meaning of.
- Create 2 extra “fake definitions” of each word.
- Present your words to the class, and list the 3 definitions. Ask your classmates to guess which one is correct.

MATERIALS: Pencil, paper, dictionary.

6. STUDENT PRESS CONFERENCE

Politicians and sports stars often give press conferences to a room full of reporters. This gives each reporter a chance to ask questions about important issues.

- Pretend your class is reporting on a story for T.V. news or a newspaper.
- With your teacher and class, come up with a topic on reading that you think is controversial (e.g. Are movies better than books? Do kids' books have enough diversity? Should books be only for boys or girls?)
- Choose 3 students from the class who will act as “experts” in the area. They should be ready to argue different points of view!
- If you are acting as a reporter, prepare a list of questions to ask your teacher, your 3 fellow students, and Elinor during the conference.
- If you are acting as an “expert,” prepare a list of points that you will use to justify your opinion.

MATERIALS: Desk or table, chairs.

7. WRITE YOUR OWN ENDING



Dreaming of becoming a writer? You deserve a chance to see your work reach a wider audience!

- After Elinor has finished reading a section from her book, she'll ask anyone who is interested to write a 300-400 word story about what might happen in the next chapter.
- With the permission of your parents, you can email Elinor your submissions (teele.writer@gmail.com) and she will feature excerpts of your writing on her website (www.elinorteele.com).
- When she has books available, she'll hold occasional book raffles to reward students for contributions.

