Jiminy Cricket Revisited: A Dozen Ways Video Can Activate Learning

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A DOZEN IDEAS

Let’s explore a dozen ways to extend the video-based learning experience beyond the video screen.

1 - Authors Alive

The Reading Rockets (<readingrocks.org/books Interviews>) website contains over 100 interviews with famous children’s book authors. Seeing an author talk about his or her books can bring reading alive for children. Their Author Study Toolkit (<read ingrocks.org/books/authorstudy>) provides lots of ideas for creating author studies to go along with the videos.

Scholastic Videos (<scholastic.com/browse/video.jsp>) is another great source for author interviews. Go to the AuthorTube (<scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/author-video-index>) page for Scholastic lesson ideas. You can also find videos at the individual publisher websites.

For young adult authors, explore author interviews at the AdLit website (<adlit.org/articles/authors>.)

The Barnes and Noble (<goo.gl/ndyja>) website provides free picture books read aloud by their authors. In addition, the site provides author interviews.

2 - Interview Investigators

Many videos contain interviews. How authentic are these? Do they represent the experiences or views of students in your school? Rather than simply have students watch interviews, ask them to actively think about how the content connects to their lives.

Teaching students to become digital citizens is an important 21st century skill. It’s essential that students have the knowledge and skills to make responsible decisions about the use of technology. However, students also need to internalize these skills through practical experiences. Ask students to watch the Cybersafety videos from NetSmartz (<netsmarts.org/videos/offlineconsequences>). Then, discuss which interviewee most closely reflected their perspectives and experiences. involve students by having them interview their peers using the questions from the videos.

3 - Act It Out

From peer pressure to animal interactions, many videos teach students about relationships. Get students involved in discussing these relationships and acting them out.

The Arkive website (<arkive.org>) has many videos featuring animals from around the world. Ask students to view video clips showing symbiotic relationships such as the interaction of the Clownfish and Sea Anemone (<goo.gl/JiAFl>). Then, act them out with puppets or paper models. A similar activity could focus on animal locomotion. After they watch animals move, ask the students to replicate their movements.
The Arkive website has a tool for creating and saving image collections called MyArkive. This makes organizing tools for a presentation or activity much easier.

The National Geographic Video <video, nationalgeographic.com/video/animals> page is another great source for animal videos.

After watching videos about dinosaurs or other prehistoric creatures, go to the playground and compare the size of the creatures to children with chalk. Go to What Does It Take to Make a Monster Snake? <goo.gl/0Xf9> from the Smithsonian Channel <smithsonianchannel.com> for an example of connecting video viewing with live outdoor activities.

4 - Take a Stand

The Google Elections <google.com/elections/ed/us> page provides news and videos on elections in the United States as well as around the world. Students can view content by candidates and by issues.

Get students involved in producing their own election issue video. What do they see as the key issues? How would each candidate stand on the issues?

The C-SPAN Video Library <c-span-video.org/videoLibrary> is another great source for video election coverage. Ask students to choose a video that represents a particular point of view. Then, create a poll using a tool like Flisti <flisti.com> to see whether their classmates agree or disagree with the candidate's perspective.

5 - Bring in the Real World

Video provides an excellent, real-world context for discussions. Whether examining the impact of erosion on a hillside or analyzing the interactions at a presidential debate, look for video segments that serve as authoritative examples of content being taught in the classroom. Use these videos as the basis for a discussion of how the simplified concepts we learn in school become more complicated in the “real-world.”

For instance, students in an emergency training course need to learn about the role of bystanders in an accident situation. Ask students to watch an Amazing Rescue video at YouTube <youtu.be/pUxPWx4YW20>. Then, talk about the roles represented by the various bystanders. Watch the video again focusing on a particular bystander. Then, re-enact the situation discussing the various roles.

Use of YouTube videos can be a problem if they are filtered in your school. However, there are two ways to address this problem.

First, consider using the School Version of YouTube <youtube.com/schools>. Using your school Google account, it’s possible to set up a controlled environment for using YouTube. Students are able to watch YouTube EDU videos plus videos added by teachers. All comments and related videos are disabled.

Second, download the video you wish to use from YouTube. You can then run the video from your school server or embed it in a presentation. Use tools like KeepVid <keepvid.com>, Save Media <savemedia.com>, and ZamZar <zamzar.com> to download online videos.

6 - Role Play

Students enjoy role-playing activities. Use video to jump-start these activities. Kids.gov <youtube.com/kidsgov> is a YouTube Channel that provides a wide range of U.S. government-produced videos.

For instance, their Careers Series explores occupations such as oceanographer, animal keeper, and architect. After watching a career video, ask students to learn more about the vocation. Then, have them
play the role of the person whose career they studied, sharing information about their job.

The USA.gov YouTube channel <youtube.com/user/USGovernment> focuses on videos for high school students and adults. Videos are categorized for easy access. It also contains a great master list of featured government channels for more ideas.

7 - Activate with the Arts

You can read about different cultures and think about ways to experience these cultures through art, music, dance, and other active learning experiences.

ArtsEdge <goo.gl/1Jfhl> has a multimedia section connected to a wide range of videos including American Blues and traditional Chinese music. Explore the role of dance, music, theater, and visual arts in cultures around the world. Then, ask students to learn about how the arts are reflected in the culture. Use video to illustrate their findings.

The Powwows <tv.powwows.com> website features music and dances by Native American tribes from across North America. Ask students to compare these modern cultural events with their historical roots.

The Silk Road Project <youtube.com/user/silkroadproject> contains videos that reflect the culture of the Silk Road.

The Smithsonian Folkways <youtube.com/user/SmithsonianFolkways> channel features musical artists performing live and discussing their work. The project reflects music from around the world.

8 - How to Do Anything

Demonstrations are an effective way to teach procedures. These "how to" videos are popular on the web. Art is an area where video is particularly useful. Create a learning station with a laptop, headphones, and the materials needed for the project.

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the volume of video available on the Internet.
ASSORTED FICTION

Grades 9-12. Grace Covey, realizing her seventeen-year-old daughter, Jenny, is trapped inside a burning school, rushes in to save her. Although both are comatose and severely injured, their spirits communicate with each other and narrate the novel. This affecting novel about family bonds should appeal to Jodi Picoult fans.

Grades 11-12. Tormented at Iron House orphanage, Julian’s only protection is his brother Michael. When Michael is blamed for a boy’s death and runs away, a wealthy couple adopts Julian. Streetwise Michael becomes a Mob assassin. When fate throws the brothers together again, Michael uncovers family secrets, crooked politicians, and blackmail in this fast-paced thriller.

Grades 9-12. Jack and Mabel, homesteading in the brutal wilds of Alaska, appear to get the child they long for when a snow girl they make seemingly comes to life as blonde, mysterious Faina. Based on a Russian fairy tale, this unusual historical fiction novel is well written, compelling, and surprising.

Grades 9-12. Professor Jeremy Logan, investigator of supernatural occurrences, is summoned to an archeological dig in the Sudan when bizarre accidents and deaths afflict the site. A great blend of Egyptian curses, near death experiences, and unusual events makes reading this novel feel like watching an action movie.

VI Hart’s YouTube Video Channel

Spend some time curating the best websites associated with the curriculum. Scoop.it <scoop.it> is one of many tools for easily presenting a set of videos to students. For instance, students reading about origami may use the How To: Origami page from Scoop.it <scoop.it/how-to-origami>. Videos are easy to add, and descriptions can be created to meet instructional needs.

For fun elementary grade “how to” videos, go to Activity TV <activitytv.com>. Consider a display containing crafts, magic, art, and science experiment books along with a laptop showing videos.

9 - Step-by-Stepping

From step-by-step instructions to explanations with quality examples, tutorial videos are a great resource for visual and auditory learners. Vi Hart <youtube.com/user/ViHart> is known for her outstanding math videos. She connects math with art and music for real-world explanations of math concepts.

Get students involved in creating their own math videos with a Flip camera. Ask students to explain a math concept using dry erase markers on their desks or white boards. Or, provide props and manipulatives to use in their explanations.

YouTube Teacher <youtube.com/teachers> provides hundreds of playlists aligned with common educational standards. They are organized by subject and grade level. For instance, you can find sets of videos on math topics like vector quantities, complex numbers, and kindergarten measurement.

10 - The Power of Voice

One of the advantages of video is the ability to capture spoken language. Whether teaching world languages, exploring presidential speeches, or analyzing poetry, video can be a powerful tool.

WatchKnowLearn <watchknowlearn.org> is a website that collects and organizes video clips for use in the curriculum. Be advised that the website accesses content from other websites that may be filtered at your school. The reading section contains over 3000 videos.

Ask students to listen to Maya Angelou read her poem Still I Rise <watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=3175>. Discuss whether the images selected from the videographer added to or distracted from the poem. Involve students in illustrating a poem of their choice.

Go to Art Babble <artbabble.org> and notice how the speakers discuss topics related to art. Ask students to select a piece of art to share in a short narrated video. For more ideas, explore the many Smithsonian art channels on YouTube including:

- African Art - youtube.com/user/SmithsonianAfricanAr
- American Art - youtube.com/user/americansmartuseum
- Archives of American Art - youtube.com/user/SmithsonianAAA
- National Design Museum - youtube.com/user/cooperhewitt
- National Portrait Gallery - youtube.com/user/NatlPortraitGallery
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden - youtube.com/user/hirshhornmuseum
- Freer-Sackler - youtube.com/user/FreerSackler

11 - Self-Paced Support for Standards

Sometimes you’re seeking a quality instructional experience to support a content-area standard. TeachersDomain <teachersdomain.org> is a great place to start. This free digital media service provides video clips and support materials for popular public broadcasting media programs like NOVA,
**Nature, Cyberchase, Between the Lions, American Experience, and others.**

Go to the Environmental Public Health area of TeachersDomain <teacherdomain.org/special/eh/te> for video-rich lessons tied to topics related to human health and the environment. The website includes self-paced lessons for students with embedded video elements.

Explore PBS LearningMedia <pbslearningmedia.org> for lots of lessons connecting videos with the Common Core curriculum.

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**12 - Get Social**

Increasingly, social networking features are being woven into video content websites. Untamed Science <untamedscience.com> is a project developed by teachers and scientists to make science fun for students. They encourage teachers and their students to participate as Ecogeeks. Rather than simply watching videos, get your students involved with creating their own images and videos to share as part of the project.

Involving students by having them explain complex topics to others through video. Show them examples of how fun learning can be through YouTube channels like History for Music Lovers <youtube.com/user/historyteachers> and The Center on Congress at Indiana University <youtube.com/user/TheCenteronCongress>; and Go Retro: Connect Historical Footage with 21st Century Skills.

Want to have some fun in your library and address standards, too? Revisit Jiminy Cricket. Many of the original videos can be found on YouTube. Or, connect historical footage with curriculum activities. Ask students to talk about how times have changed. Comparing then and now is a great deep thinking activity as well as an interesting way to weave history across the curriculum. It’s also an opportunity to discuss primary source video materials.

The 1951 educational film Duck and Cover <archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava11109vwb> is a great example. How did the video reflect the time that it was created? What has changed?

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**How Does Your Environment Affect Your Health self-paced, media-rich lesson from Teacher’s Domain**

The Internet Archive <archive.org> is a wonderful place to seek out videos. The FeedFlix section <archive.org/details/FeedFlix> features the best of United States government films that are now in the public domain. This means that students can use the footage in their own videos.

For high school students, the American Politics <laitis.utexas.edu/gov310/FAD> page contains links to many historical videos.

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**CONCLUSION**

Compared to today’s computer-generated animation and cutting-edge realism, Jiminy Cricket educational films may seem sadly dated. However, the qualities of great learning experiences remain the same. The key is getting your students actively involved with the video content and extending the experience beyond the screen.
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