



# Introduction



A pop culture phenomenon comes to the musical stage! The Emmy Award-winning 1970's Saturday morning cartoon series that taught history, grammar, math, science and politics through clever, tuneful songs is not only making a small-screen comeback, instructing a whole new generation to "Unpack Your Adjectives" and "Do The Circulation," is lighting up stages everywhere, from school multi-purpose rooms to university and regional theatres all around the country.

Tom, a nerve-wracked school teacher nervous about his first day of teaching, tries to relax by watching TV when various characters representing facets of his personality emerge from the set and show him how to win his students over with imagination and music, through such beloved "Schoolhouse Rock" songs as "Just A Bill," "Lolly, Lolly, Lolly" and "Conjunction Junction."

The original **Schoolhouse Rock** television series was the brainchild of an advertising executive who noticed his son could remember all the words to popular songs on the radio, but could not remember the multiplication tables. He reasoned that if important educational information was coupled with exciting animation and catchy music, children would be able to learn and remember it.

Before the show, get familiar with the following songs (link to lyrics found at bottom of this page).

- A Noun is a Person, Place or Thing-grammar
- Three is a Magic Number-multiplication
- Unpack your Adjectives-grammar
- Just a Bill-American history (passing bills to become laws)
  - The Preamble-American history
  - Do the Circulation-science
  - Conjunction Junction-grammar
- Great American Melting Pot- American history
- Elbow Room- American history (acquisition of territory in America)
  - Interplanet Janet-science (planets)
  - Interjections-grammar

Review applicable lessons in American History, Grammar, Multiplication, and Science with your students.

### **After The Performance**

After seeing School House Rock Live, discuss it with your students or have them write a short essay.

What did they learn from the show? Were the songs accurate? Did they have any questions on the material covered on stage? What would they do to make the songs more memorable?

Have your own School House Rock. Assign students to write and perform (with props and rhythm instruments) their own songs about a subject matter that they're having difficulty memorizing. Monitor their song writing closely to be sure that the songs are accurate.

**LYRICS** can be found:

<http://www.schoolhouserock.tv/>

# SYNOPSIS

In the dark we hear the sound of an alarm clock ringing and we are introduced to Tom, a young teacher preparing for his first day of school, standing in his bathrobe. As he rehearses what he will say, he hears the school bell and the sound of the children settling into their desks. One at a time we see Tom's "other sides", as they enter speaking his thoughts. We are introduced to George, the romantic side; Dori, the goofy side; Schulie, the sweet side; Joe, the cool side; and Dina, the mature side. They tell us his thoughts that range from "I love children" to "these monsters are going to eat me alive." Tom decides to try and watch some television while he settles down and collects his thoughts. When he turns on the TV we hear the theme to Schoolhouse Rock. The characters begin to sing one of the familiar songs that Tom instantly recognizes (Verb: That's What's Happening). As the song goes on, Tom is swept up in the excitement and begins to sing and dance with the others. As it ends, he is startled to find himself standing with a group of strange people that he does not recognize. They explain to him that they represent all of the thoughts in his head. They represent everywhere he has been, everyone he has known, and every person that he has ever met (A Noun Is A Person, Place Or Thing). They explain that they are there to help Tom remember that teaching is as easy as 1,2,3 (Three Is A Magic Number).

Still thinking that all of this is a hallucination, he continues to try to get rid of the others. They explain to him that he needs them; and "necessity is the mother of invention" (Mother Necessity). Tom is asked to remember why he wanted to be a teacher in the first place. He remembers that his grandmother and her mother before that were teachers. Teaching was one of the few opportunities for women to work at that time (Sufferin' Till Suffrage). He also remembers working at his grandfather's hardware store as a child and sneaking away on Saturday mornings to watch Schoolhouse Rock (Lolly, Lolly, Lolly). After Schulie and company sing "Unpack Your Adjectives," Tom reminds them that he not only has to teach grammar, but math, science, and social studies as well (Just A Bill / The Preamble). Caught up in the moment, Tom remembers one very important thing; that learning should be fun (Ready Or Not, Here I Come).

When the gang becomes exhausted from all of the excitement, Tom encourages them to stay active and to keep their blood moving (Do The Circulation). Joe then tells the group that he is ready to sing a song and will need the help of you, me, him, them, and her (Rufus Xavier Sarsaparilla). Dori enters with Tom's guitar and hands it to Schulie who says about her playing, "Oh ... on a scale from one to ten, I'd give myself about an eight (Figure Eight). Schulie reminds Tom that "Figure Eight" was the way she had learned her eight multiplication tables. Joe and Schulie enter in their leather jacket and poodle skirt and dance to George's rock and roll physics lesson (A Victim Of Gravity). George and Schulie then join together to sing "Zero, My Hero" while the rest of the gang acts out their duet.

Tom goes over all of the parts of speech that they have covered (adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, nouns, and verbs) and wonders what they have left out. Conjunctions! - and where do they come together - at the junction! (Conjunction Junction). Joe reminds Tom that English will not be the first language of many of his students. School will be a very important transition to America for many of his students, just as America went through an important transition as it struggled to expand and continues to expand (Great American Melting Pot / Elbow Room / Interplanet Janet). Hey! Wow! The thought of going to the moon has the whole group energized, and what kind of word best expresses that energy - "Interjections." Tom then thanks them all for helping him remember that learning can be fun. He asks them to stay around and listen to him do a song (The Tale Of Mr. Morton). As the song ends, all of the characters are gathered around Tom as if he were teaching. "Any questions, kids?" he asks - and on the final beat we see Schulie's hand go in the air.

# CHARACTERS

**DINA - The mature side - thoughtful and grounded.**

**DORI - The goofy side - silly and playful.**

**GEORGE - The romantic side - caring and in control.**

**JOE - The cool side - laid-back and fun-loving.**

**SHULIE - The sweet side - genuine.**

**TOM - A young teacher who has just received his degree.**

# GRAMMAR ROCK

## Materials:

Several sheets of construction paper that have been marked with the parts of speech. Laminate the paper after labeling each sheet. Each part of speech gets its own color. Following are examples.

nouns = dark blue

pronouns = light blue

action verbs = dark green

linking verbs = light green

adjectives = purple

adverbs = orange

conjunctions = white

prepositions = tan

interjections = hot pink

You can also make punctuation signs. Periods, question marks, and exclamation points are put on stop signs. Commas, colons, and semicolons are put on yield signs.

The beginning and ending quotation marks each get one yield sign which are attached with enough yarn to surround several students. When used in a sentence, the yarn from the quotation marks cards surrounds those students holding the words from the direct quote.

## Activity #1

**Directions:** Divide the class into two teams. Determine which team will go first.

Write a sentence on the board and assign one student from the first team to each word. Each student is to figure out what part of speech the word is and choose the correct laminated card. Then the student is to write the word on the card with an erasable marker. Have the students hold their cards in front of them and line up in the correct sequence according to the sentence. Have other students fill in with the correct punctuation.

If the team has correctly labeled all of the words, they score ten points. If there are any mistakes, the teacher allows the other team to check for correctness. If someone sees a mistake, he raises his hand and announces which word he thinks has been labeled incorrectly. The teacher answers with a yes or no.

If the answer is no, the student is out for that round and the other team scores one point. If the answer is yes, the student makes the correction. If he is correct, his team scores two points. The round continues until all mistakes have been corrected. If no players are left to make corrections, or they do not detect all of them, the teacher calls the end of the round. Any remaining mistakes are discussed before going on to the next round. The teams switch places and a new sentence is given.

## Activity #2

Directions: Play as directed above, but the teams create their own sentences instead of working from a given sentence.

## Activity #3

Directions: Divide the students into groups of 3 to 5 members. Give each group several cards and challenge them to create a sentence using every card. Make sure that there enough essential elements in each set of cards to allow the group to actually create a sentence. For example, if you don't give a group a verb card, they won't be able to create a sentence.

You can give each group a complete set of punctuation cards that they can use for each set of word cards, or you can include the punctuation in the cards you give them for each round.

<http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/grammar/partsofspeech.html>

# MULTIPLICATION ROCK

**Manipulative:** 1) **Egg carton math.** Have each child bring in an egg carton and a plastic container with some type of little objects. These could be pennies, beads, buttons, paper clips, raw macaroni, mini-pompoms... whatever. When you say and write a problem, such as  $3 \times 4$ , the children need to display this problem using different sections of the egg carton to hold each group.

By the way, tell students to think of the X in a multiplication problem as meaning "**groups of.**" So  $3 \times 4$  is "3 groups of 4."

Using the egg carton, then, they would only use 3 compartments, and they would put 4 items in each of those 3 compartments, counting as they go. And also after the problem is set up, they can count by those 4's: 4, 8, 12.

Then you could say, " $4 \times 3$ ." Now they need 4 groups of 3, so they'll use 4 compartments and put 3 items in each, but they will still have 12. Count by those 3's: 3, 6, 9, 12.

**Rhymes and Stories:** Make up silly sayings to remember the hard ones. The kids really get in to making up ones for their hard ones. Ex:

"Had two 8's, dropped them on the floor, picked them up, had 64."

**Physical Correlation:** Physical movement helps students learn math facts, including multiplication. Go out on the playground and march in a circle, skip-counting by a given number: (6) "6! 12! 18! 24! 30!" and so on. When they get good, march and skip-count backwards. When they can do any table backwards and forwards, they won't have any trouble figuring out a specific fact. And they really did get so they could all skip-count by any number (10 or under).

Reference: <http://www.mathcats.com/grownupcats/ideabankmultiplication.html>

# AMERICA ROCK

## The Melting Pot

Discuss your students' heritage with them.

What does their last name mean?

Where did their ancestors come from?

Make a Melting Pot Recipe Book. Have students bring in a recipe that represent their heritage.

## Just a Bill?

Discuss bills that have become laws and why they are important laws to have.

Discuss bills that have been vetoed and research why or why not they should have been passed. If your students were president, what laws would they pass?

## Elbow Room

"Elbow Room" discusses how pioneers in the early development of the United States forged the frontier. When populations grow, it just makes sense to create a little elbow room! In order to demonstrate this, you can play a game. You will need to have an open space, some fun music (music makes everything more fun) and 10 blank sheets of paper on the floor. Have the students find a piece of paper to stand on. (They may be sharing space.) As you begin playing music, have your students move around the room by way of the paper islands. Remove a few pieces of paper and then turn the music off-all student must be standing on an island-if their feet are not on the paper, they are out. Continue this until there is only one island and everyone is struggling to remain on it to illustrate increases in population density. Repeat the activity in reverse by adding islands back in. Discuss the ideas of population growth and expansion (historic and current issues), and how it felt to be in both situations.

## **The Preamble to the Constitution:**

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

# **SCIENCE ROCK**

## **What Is a Planet Today?**

Remember- In the song Interplanet Janet, they sing about our 9 planets. Please don't forget to explain to the class that we now only have 8 planets, due to Pluto's 'demotion' to a dwarf planet in August, 2006.

According to the new definition, a full-fledged planet is an object that orbits the sun and is large enough to have become round due to the force of its own gravity. In addition, a planet has to dominate the neighborhood around its orbit.

Pluto has been demoted because it does not dominate its neighborhood. Charon, its large "moon," is only about half the size of Pluto, while all the true planets are far larger than their moons.

In addition, bodies that dominate their neighborhoods, "sweep up" asteroids, comets, and other debris, clearing a path along their orbits. By contrast, Pluto's orbit is somewhat untidy. The new definition also establishes a third class of objects that orbit the sun—"solar system bodies," which would apply to many asteroids, comets, and moons. The new definition of "planet" retains the sense that a true planet is something special.

Courtesy of National Geographic

## A Gravity Experiment

**Materials you will need:** • Small rubber ball • Flat table top surface • Medium size canning jar (wide mouth) or a jar with a lip/neck (large mayonnaise jar)

\* See if you can lift the ball up from the table top without touching the ball or tipping over the jar. Were you able to do it?

- Steps:**
1. Place the ball on top of the table
  2. Place the jar over the ball so that the ball is inside the mouth of the canning jar.
  3. Start spinning the jar around in a circular motion (keeping it on the table).
  4. Once the ball starts spinning inside the jar lift it from the table top.
  5. The ball is lifted from the table and will continue to spin inside the jar until it loses its speed.

<http://www.kids-science-experiments.com/spinningball.html>

