



TJ and the Quiz Kids
Hazel Hutchins

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Consider the following question as you read *TJ and the Quiz Kids*:
How does being part of the Quiz Kids team affect TJ and Seymour's friendship?

Story

When master fact-gatherers TJ and Seymour are asked to join the school Quiz Kids team, TJ once again downplays his own abilities.

Author

Hazel Hutchins lives in the mountain town of Canmore, Alberta. Author of forty children's titles, she has won numerous awards and enjoys visiting schools and libraries across Canada when she isn't writing.



Curricular Integration

Language Arts

- Brainstorm topics that your students would be interested in creating trivia questions for. They may all select the same topic—world geography or famous people for example—or select different ones. Have them create a list of ten questions and use them as an introduction or ending to your school day. Keep track of the most challenging questions.
- In *TJ and the Quiz Kids*, the principal, Mr. Phelps, is trying to put together a winning quiz team for Fairview School. “Our team needs someone who knows quirky, out-of-the-ordinary facts,” said Mr. Phelps. “Someone who’s done projects with unusual information about cats, for instance, or inventions or rockets or sports.” (p. 3).

Divide the class into four groups and assign each group the task of locating extraordinary information about one of these topics.

- Have each student take on the role of one of the characters on the quiz team and write several journal entries describing the process that leads up to the big show. Discuss as a class the similarities and differences found in these entries.
- TJ must work as a member of a team to be successful. Have students create a list of qualities that one must demonstrate in order to make the team a success. Discuss what being part of a team might be like.
- Seymour has a book called *Your Amazing Memory*. Design a cover for this book and write a table of contents for it. Using this information, write a summary about the book and its connections to the preparation for the quiz show.

Art

- Draw a portrait of one of the main characters. Use these drawings to create a display of quiz show participants.
- Design a logo or backdrop for the Quiz Kids tv Spectacular.



Drama

- TJ and Seymour are vying for one spot on the quiz team. However, only TJ knows the truth: that Mr. Phelps is using Seymour. Create short skits about the different options that TJ has in this situation.
- Divide your class into three or more groups and have them create and present a quiz show similar to the one in *TJ and the Quiz Kids*.
- Have students create a jingle or signature song that would be used at the start of or during the quiz show.
- Being part of a team—any team—is an important role to undertake. Brainstorm qualities that are important for any team activity. Have groups of students roleplay a variety of scenarios and then have the audience critique them.

Social Studies

- Many references to geographic locations are made in *TJ and the Quiz Kids*. Use a theme from your particular social studies curriculum to have students gather general information, as well as the most interesting or strangest facts to challenge each other with. For example: Communities Past and Present, Canada and the World or Ancient Civilizations.
- Divide your class into five groups and assign each group one of the world's oceans to explore. Members of each group will locate and gather fascinating or unusual information to share with the rest of the class. For example: The Mariana Trench is the deepest part of both the Pacific Ocean and the earth. It can be found off the coast of Japan near the Mariana Islands. The presentation can be done in a poster, Powerpoint or skit format.
- In Chapter 3 of *TJ and the Quiz Kids*, TJ says, “It’s hard to practice oddball answers without oddball questions.” Brainstorm what makes a good oddball question or answer and give some examples. Dedicate one week to challenging your students to ask and/or answer such types of questions. Use topics for this activity that connect to your classroom areas of study. You may want to model this like a game show or team relay.
- The five realms or strands of geography consist of: location, place, movement, human-environment interaction and regions. Select one of these strands to explore as a class. For example: By selecting “place” students will learn about the physical features of our world and how humans impact it. This could be done in a “Did you know...?” format.

For example: Did you know that the largest desert in the world is Antarctica?



Selected Resources

Fiction

- Bedford, David. *The Soccer Machine*.
 Brooke, Lauren. *The Scheme Team*.
 Crook, Marion. *Cutting it Close*.
 Hutchins, Hazel. *TJ and the Cats; TJ and the Haunted House; TJ and the Rockets; TJ and the Sports Fanatic*.
 Koller, Jackie French. *The Wizard's Scepter*.
 Lee, Jeffrey. *True Blue*.
 Krulik, Nancy A. *I'm Game*.
 Myers, Walter Dean. *Me, Mop and the Moondance Kid*.
 Oberman, Sheldon. *TV Sal and the Game Show From Outer Space*.
 Patterson, Nancy Ruth. *The Winner's Walk*.
 Poydar, Nancy. *The Biggest Test in the Universe*.
 Rodda, Emily. *Finders Keepers*.
 Spalding, Andrea. *Me and Mr. Mab*.
 Springett, Martin. *Jousting with Jesters*.
 Wallace, Rich. *Fast Company*.
 Yee, Lisa. *Millicent Min, Girl Genius*.

Nonfiction

- Alvarado, Amy Edmonds and Herr, Patricia R. *Inquiry-Based Learning Using Everyday Objects*. (372.13)
 Ash, Russell. *Top 10 Quiz Book*. (031.02)
 Barell, John. *Developing More Curious Minds*. (371.39)
 Berger, Melvin. *Penguins Swim But Don't Get Wet and Other Amazing Facts*. (591.7)
 Booth, David. *The Arts go to School*. (372.5)
 Bowers, Vivien. *Crazy About Canada! Amazing Things Kids Want to Know*. (971)
 Brown, Deb Austin. *Growing Character*. (372.6)
 Calkhoven, Laurie and Herndon, Ryan. *Guinness World Records Top 10: Awesome Ocean Records*. (031.02)
Guinness Book of World Records. (032).
 Harper, Charise Mericle. *Imaginative Inventions*. (609)
 Jefferis, David. *Animal Kingdom*. (590)
 Morse, Jenifer. *Scholastic Book of World Records*. (032.02)
 Romanek, Trudee. *Aha! The most interesting book you'll ever read about intelligence*. (153)
 Spencer, Beverley. *Made in Canada: 101 Amazing Achievements*. (971)
 Turner, Matthew (ed.). *Amazing Achievements; Facts and Records*. (031)
 Wulffson, Don L. *The Kid Who Invented the Popsicle and Other Surprising Stories About Inventions*. (609)



Online

Fun Trivia

www.funtrivia.com/

Geography for Kids

www.kathimitchell.com/geog.htm

The Space Place NASA

spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/games.shtml

National Geographic Kids

www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/games/games_main.html

Bob Barker Biography

www.biography.com/search/article.do?id=9542237

Jeopardy

www.jeopardy.com

Alex Trebek

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Trebek

Canadian Geographic Kids

www.cgkids.ca/cgkids/cgkids.asp

Mensa Workout

www.mensa.org/workout2.php

Ryan's Well Foundation

www.ryanswell.ca/

Multiple intelligences for Kids

www.mitest.com/omitest.htm



A few words from the author

Hello Everyone,

All I wanted to do was write *one* book about cats. Just one book with amazing cat-facts and weird cat-stories. But then things got out of control.

I blame it on TJ and his crazy friend, Seymour. They walked into that first book, took over completely and refused to go away. Who says characters in books don't have minds of their own? Pretty soon they had me writing about all kinds of things—inventions, ghosts, rockets, sports.

Everything they wanted me to write about involved strange facts, and that meant research. The more research I did the more strange facts I gathered. Even after I'd written three more TJ books, I still had an entire file of really weird but really interesting information and the answers to questions such as:

What do jellyfish and cat pee have in common?

How long does it take a cannonball to reach the bottom of the ocean?

What do you call it when someone is afraid of peanut butter sticking to the roof of their mouth?

“Those are perfect facts for a book about a Quiz Kids show!” said Seymour.

“Get writing.”

“Hang on, Seymour,” TJ argued. “You're way too excitable to be on a Quiz Kids team. You'd be ringing the bell like crazy even if you didn't know the answer. And anyway, neither of us is smart enough to be a Quiz Kid.”

It was when TJ claimed he wasn't smart enough that I really got angry. I know so many people of all ages who are incredibly smart in a zillion different ways even though you might never find them at a university. There are all kinds of ways to be smart!

I also still had more than one really good, totally weird story about cats in my folder. True stories, each and every one. But bizarre, each and every one.

Yup – *TJ and the Quiz Kids* was about to be written.

And what do jellyfish and cat pee have in common? You'll have to read the book to find out of course.

Enjoy!

Hazel Hutchins