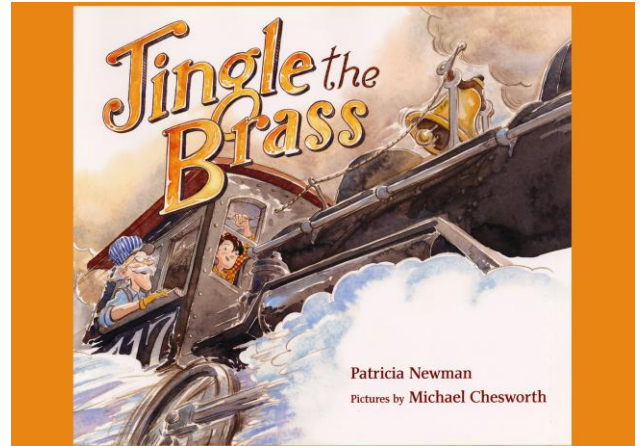


Jingle the Brass Teacher's Guide

“Climb aboard and ride the point!”

Step back in time to Ruby's rail-yard *hash house* and *put on the nosebag* with the *boss hogger*. He'll tell you he likes his *eggs with headlights*, but if you want scrambled, just order *wreck on the main line*. Follow him as he and his *ashcat* warm up engine #417 at the *roundhouse*, *give her a drink* at the water tower, and then hitch her up to a *jigger*. *Jingle the brass* and *ride the point* as the *rods start flashing*. Now you're railroading!



Thematic Connections for grades K-6

- Transportation
- Travel
- Trains
- Transcontinental Railroad
- Industrial Revolution
- Intergenerational communication

How to Use this Packet

- Before or after my author visit, use any or all of the curriculum connections with your students to complement your post-reading discussions.
- Lessons with resource lists and/or activity sheets are highlighted as links.

Pre-reading Discussion

- Talk about different parts of a train—the engine or locomotive, the various cars that make up a train (grain, refrigerator, hopper, livestock, caboose). Talk about the people who work on the railroad—engineer, fireman, brakemen, track workers, conductor.
 - Use the [What do you know about the railroad?](#) activity sheet.
- Talk about two trains traveling in the opposite direction that share one track and what sidings are used for.
- Include a discussion of the slang your students use today—what words they use and possible explanations for how the slang developed.

Reading Together

Read *Jingle the Brass* aloud to your students, allowing ample time to understand the new slang vocabulary. The pictures provide excellent clues to what the railroad jargon means. Discuss these clues with your students, then open to the glossary at the end of the book to check your answers.

Curriculum Connections

Listening/Speaking

- Retell the story of *Jingle the Brass* as a classroom play. Act out the journey. Students will enjoy becoming the locomotive, the train cars, the semaphore (track signal), and the tunnel, as well as the people in the story.
- Look at the illustrations and discuss how the little boy might be feeling during his journey.
- Talk about other professions that might use jargon. Consider ideas like sports, cowboys, the military, and journalists.
- Ask your students to interview their grandparents about train travel memories. If parents or grandparents worked on the railroad, ask them to come into the class to talk to your students about their experiences.

Writing

- Pick one railroad slang phrase from *Jingle the Brass* and draw a picture to illustrate it.
- Write a short story about your favorite trip. Illustrate it.
- Complete the [All Aboard! Word Search](#).
- Complete the [Main Line Maze](#).
- Write your own story using railroad slang. Use the [Rail Talk](#) activity sheet.
- Rewrite *Jingle the Brass* from the little boy's perspective.
- Complete the [Railroad Crossing](#) crossword puzzle.
- Write a letter to the author of *Jingle the Brass*. Ask students to tell her how they liked the story. Ask students to tell about their own train trips. Send her your students' stories.
- Ask students to write a story about their grandparents' memories of train travel (see Listening/Speaking above).
- Write several diary entries from the point of view of a Chinese laborer on the Transcontinental Railroad (see Social Studies below).

Reading

- Reference list: [Train Books](#)
- Reference list: [Train Poems & Songs](#)

Social Studies

- Talk about why railroads are useful. What kinds of goods do they transport?
- Using a U.S. map, chart an itinerary to visit several American landmarks by rail.
 - Use Amtrak's route map at:
http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Amtrak/Page/Routes/Index_Page&c=Page&cid=1080072922209&ssid=4. Click on 'View Route Map.'
 - Determine four landmarks you'd like to see (monuments, national parks, museums, historic spots, etc.) and create a day-by-day itinerary
 - If you can, determine the cost of rail tickets using the Amtrak website listed above.
- During your units on the industrial revolution or the transcontinental railroad, discuss the following with your students:
 - What was life like before the railroad?
 - How did life in the U.S. change after the railroad?
 - How did railroads influence the growth of industry?
 - What were some of the dangers and problems railroad workers faced when building the transcontinental railroad?
 - What unique problems did Chinese workers face? (The Central Pacific Historical website at www.cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html has an excellent article on Chinese labor with photographs. Several links are included at the end of the article.)
 - How did the Transcontinental Railroad affect the Plains Indians? (See www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tcrr/ for a PBS interview).

Science

- Heat a pot of water in a hot pot or on a hot plate. Discuss what happens to the water.
- How does a steam locomotive work? What is the fuel for the locomotive in *Jingle the Brass*? What are other types of fuels for locomotives throughout history?
- Discuss the parts of the steam locomotive and why steam makes the pistons pump. Check out the following website for an excellent explanation and animation.
<http://travel.howstuffworks.com/steam1.htm>
- Discuss technological advances on the railroad—from the days when brakemen rode on top of the cars to today's radio communications.

Math

- Read train departure times off a railroad timetable and ask students to set their clocks as part of a lesson on telling time. Act out having plenty of time before the train comes and rushing for the train. ([Don't Miss Your Train!](#) includes a timetable which you could use for this activity, but the questions on the worksheet are geared for grades 3-6.)

- Take a field trip to a railroad depot. Count the cars on a long freight train.
- Teach your students to read the railroad timetable included with [Don't Miss Your Train!](#) Ask students to complete the accompanying timetable worksheet in groups or independently.
- Using the itinerary students planned in the Social Studies section, ask them to calculate the amount of traveling time for the journey and the cost for their own family. Be sure to include meals (see railroad menu in the Health/P.E. section).

Art/Music

- Sing railroad songs with your class. Use the suggested [Train Poems & Songs](#) resource list.
- A “quill” is an engineer’s signature whistle call. According to one story, an engineer blew his quill as he pulled into the station. His wife heard it from their house and she had dinner on the table by the time he came home. Have your students make up their own quills with a railroad whistle or with their own voices. Are there specific “quills” their parents use to call them in for supper? To call the dog?
- Ask students to draw their own freight train and label all the cars with slang names.
- Every railroad line had its own logo. Ask your students to create their own railroad line and design a logo. Each railroad had different designs for the plates, silverware and glassware in the dining cars. Ask students to design their own china pattern for their railroad line. This website is a great place to see some of the patterns:
http://www.cabinclass.com/pages/railroad/dining_car.htm
- Analyze Michael Chesworth’s illustrations and note some of the techniques he uses to suggest speed. What are some of the funny touches he includes? Why do you suppose he chose the color palette he did?
- Track workers or gandy dancers used chants and songs to help them realign the heavy steel track in unison. Teach your class some of the track workers’ songs and see if they can pull and push an imaginary track as a team. Use the [Gandy Dancers’ Song Sheet](#).

Health/P.E.

- Act out a scene in the dining car on a passenger train. Have students create menus from which the passengers may order. For older students, menus may include prices. Ask them to calculate the price of a balanced meal.
- Your students are the head chefs on their own railroad lines (see the Art activities above). Ask them to design and prepare a healthful menu. (Discussion of the major food groups and suggested servings may be necessary.) Then ask your students to prepare a grocery list (including quantities and prices) to determine the railroad’s cost for each meal. Decide on a profit margin and determine the prices for each meal on the menu.