

Using TTRPGs to Teach: Pre-K to Adult Learning

**Presented by:
Steph from TTRPGkids**



Hi! I'm Steph!

- TTRPGkids
- Tattered Bear
- Engineer
- Engineering Professor



**TATTERED
BEAR** 

What is a TTRPG?

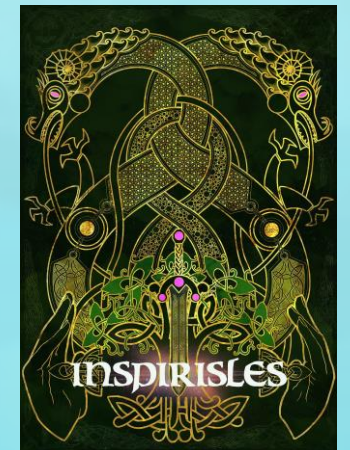
TTRPG = TableTop Role-Playing Game



Tabletop = physical or virtual game table (not a video game)

Role-Playing = playing as a character

Game = randomization, strategy, decision



What do TTRPGs teach?

Problem solving
Communication skills
Curriculum engagement
Risk/reward
Collaborative academic success
Math
Literacy
Patience
... And SO MUCH more



Sign language guide - Inspirisles

ARITHMAGINE
+ - x =

A game to build numeracy while you tell dramatic stories! Use with any game to resolve conflict or drama, and check out [my other system-agnostic tools here!](#)

YOU'LL NEED

- 2-4 friends and these rules
- A deck of cards w/o J/K/Q, or Uno cards

TO START, READ:

Imagine who you'll play in the story and describe them - you can also use the [StoriesRPG character sheet](#). Ask questions, give ideas, and have fun imagining your alter-egos!

WHEN DONE, READ:

Stories can get pretty intense! If you get upset, make an X with your arms and we'll remove it. It doesn't matter why - we're more important to each other than the story we're telling.

AS THE TELLER ...

Guide players through the story - make your own, or find free downloads at [StoriesRPG.com](#). For tips to keep the story moving and make sure everyone has fun, see the [Teller Moves](#), [Scenes](#), and [Drama Clicks](#) one-page "boosts" of any system!

CARDS

Deal each player a hand of 7 cards.

READ:

These cards are what you'll use when your character faces challenges.

If you run out of cards, you go to sleep, collapse, or pass out - but you can draw 7 new cards when your character rests!

You can also draw a card when you:

- SUPPORT:** Help someone with ideas or help a character in need.
- GET A REACTION:** Make everyone laugh, cheer, groan and enjoy the game!
- CREATE:** Come up with a line, description, or idea that people get a kick out of.

FACING TRIALS

If a character tries something difficult and failing would have consequences, they must make a Move. For help, see [this video!](#)

WHEN READY, READ:

You're about to try something heroic! The Teller will play 2 cards to make a number. That's your target.

Explain how your character tries to succeed and play up to 3 cards from your hand.

If another character helps, they can give you a card; if you have a great plan, you can play one more!

Make an equation using the card #s and plus, minus, and times to get as close to the target as you can.

The closer you get, the better you'll do!

FOR EXAMPLE

A character wants to create a potion for healing. The Teller pulls 7 and 9 for a target of 7.

The player draws a 3, 4, and 5 - they multiply 3x4 to get 12, then 12x5 to get 70. Within 10, so the potion works (Triumph), but the drinker turns blue (Trouble).

EXACT #: You nailed it! Get 2 Triumph!

- ++ 6: If you score within 5, you succeed - gain a Triumph!
- ++ 10: If you score within 10, you succeed - but you also face a Trouble.
- ++ 15: You fail, and face a Trouble.

TRIUMPHS & TROUBLES

Triumph is success - a character climbs a rocky cliff, casts an illusion, etc. Trouble means something went wrong - the illusion made the table invisible - forever! After a roll, discuss what Triumph or Trouble makes sense in the story.

TRIUMPHS

- Solve a problem or an obstacle
- Draw a card

TROUBLES

- A new problem or obstacle
- Lose a card

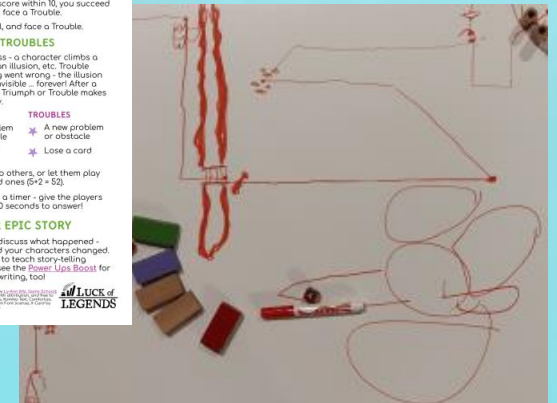
MAKE IT EASY: Help others, or let them play cards as tens and ones (5x2 = 10).

MAKE IT HARD: Set a timer - give the players only 60, or even 30 seconds to answer!

BUILD YOUR EPIC STORY

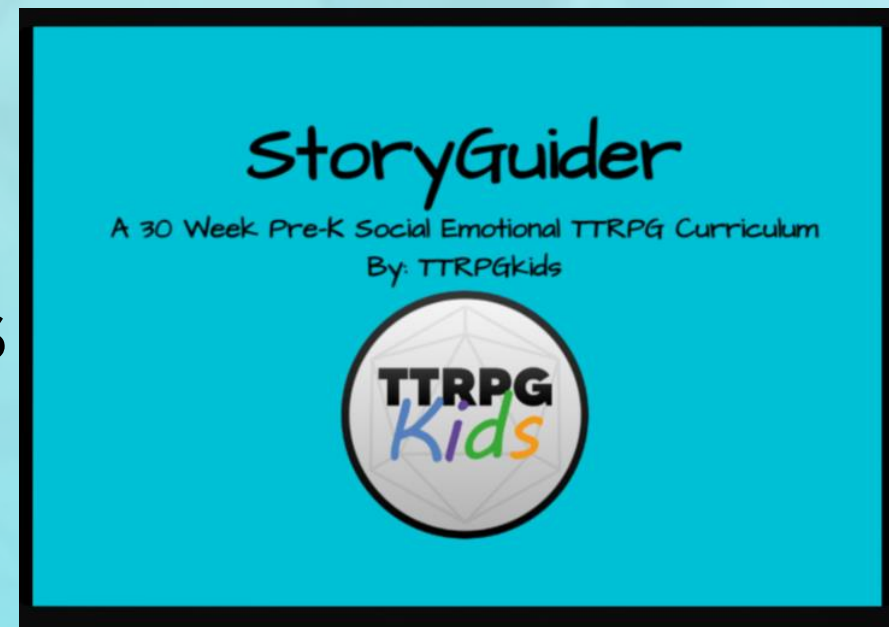
When you finish, discuss what happened - how the story and your characters changed. For ideas on how to teach story-telling between games, see the [Power Ups Boost](#) for ways to practice writing, too.

LUCK OF LEGENDS



Example: Pre-K

- **Created for teacher/librarian friend**
- **GOAL: Support SEL curriculum**
- **ADDED:**
 - **Motor skills practice**
 - **Early learning activities**
 - **Connected projects/tips**



Pre-K: SEL curriculum

- **Class plays main character**
- **Make story decisions together**
- **Each story focuses one SEL topic:**
 - **Sharing**
 - **Conflict resolution**
 - **Trying new things**
 - **Introducing yourself**
 - **Waiting**
 - **Recognize feelings**
 - **Self regulation**



Shout I CAN DO IT!:	Practice flying
Sandy closes their eyes tight and shouts out as loud as possible, "I CAN DO IT!"	Sandy flaps slow at first to get used to how it feels. Then Sandy flaps their wings a little faster... and a little faster.
Sandy flaps as hard as they can!	Sandy closes their eyes and feels the cool wind in their flapping wings.

Pre-K: Motor Skills

- **Story incorporates:**
 - **Guided movement (gross motor skills)**
 - **Crafts and coloring (fine motor skills)**

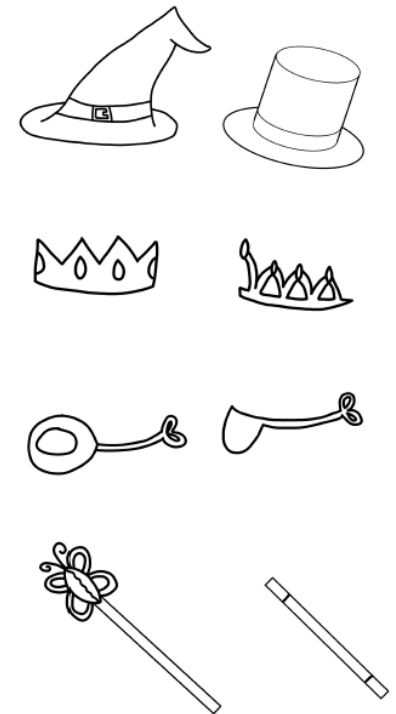
Do the squeaky bat! Flap your arms like wings and squeak squeak squeak!

Do the spooky ghost! Shake your arms around and go booooo!!!!

Do the dancing spider! Stomp your feet say click click click!

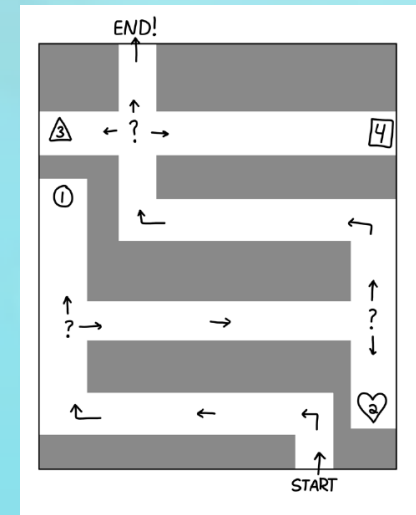
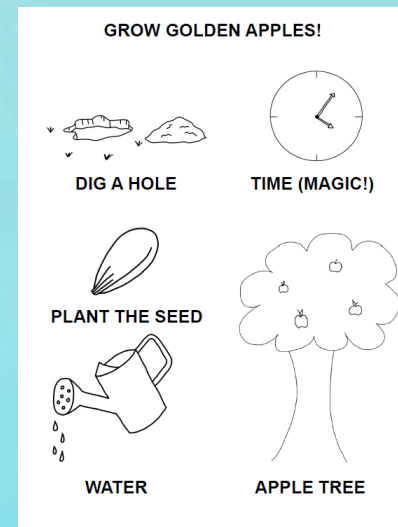
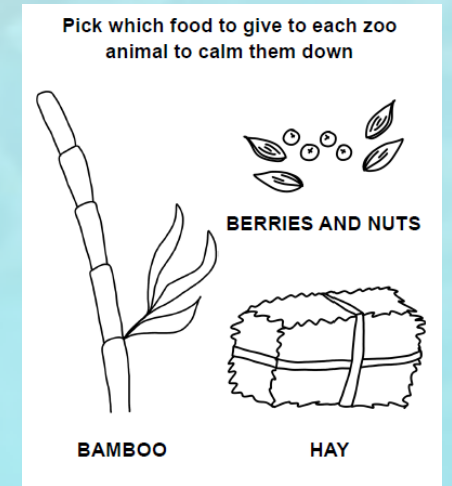
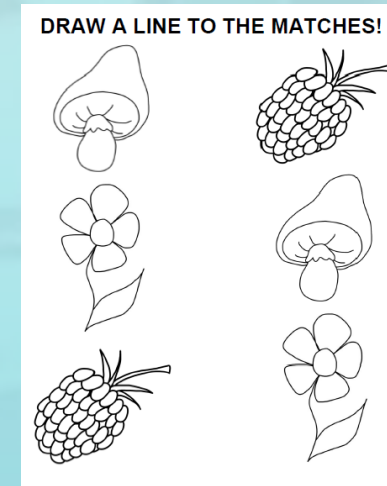
Do the happy pumpkin! Make a BIG smile and shout HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

COSTUME PIECES



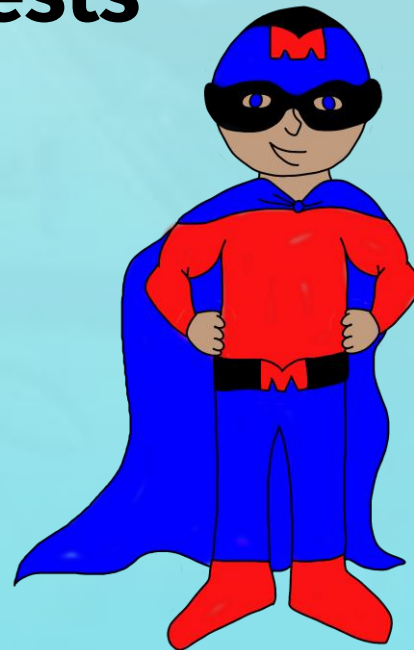
Pre-K: Early Learning

- **Story incorporates:**
 - **Problem solving**
 - **Foundational math skills**
 - **Early literacy practice**
- **Meaningful to the story**



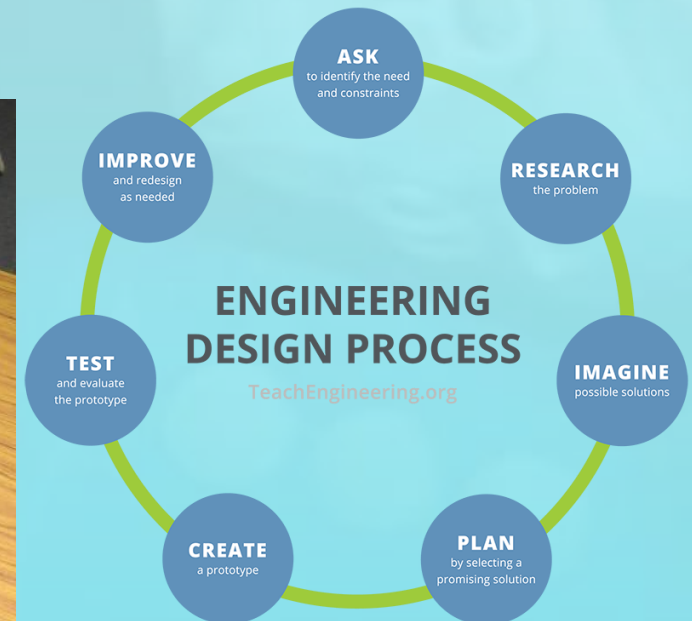
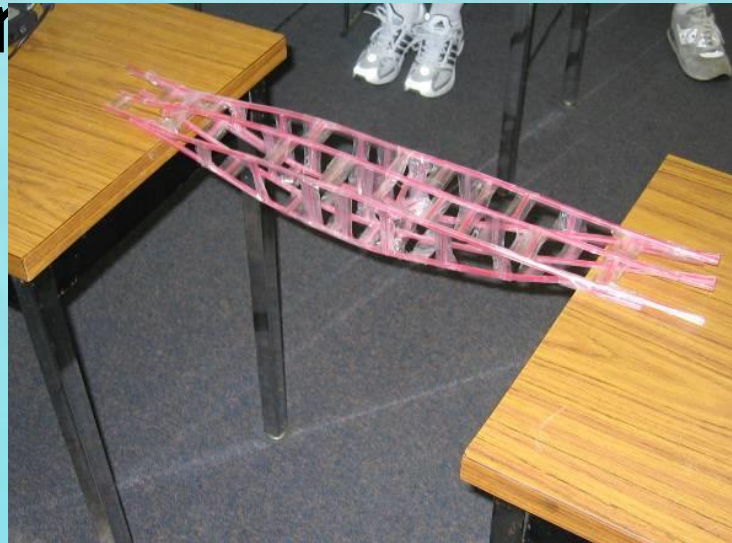
Pre-K: Overall

- **Build investment/engagement**
- **Engaged with practice → easier to internalize**
- **Cover existing curriculum**
- **Connect to existing interests**
- **Class collaboration**



Shifting to adult EDU

- **Build investment/engagement**
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Example: Engineering Class

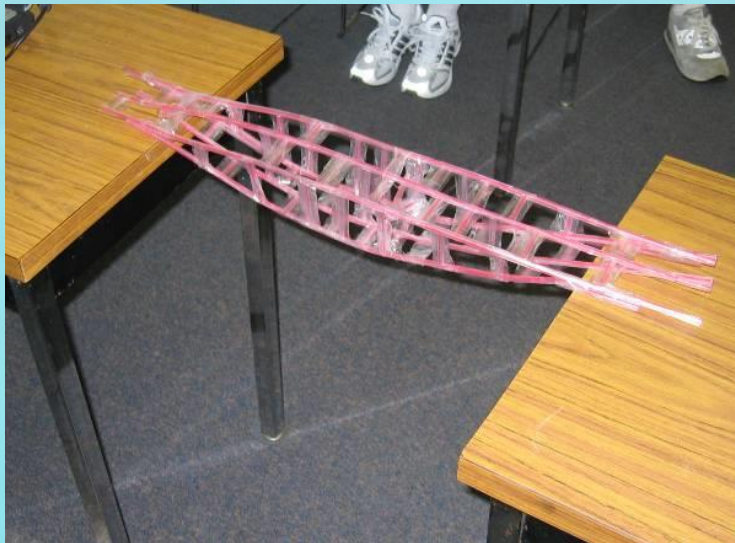
- Created for freshman engineering intro course
- **GOALS:**
 - Less than 5 minutes per week
 - Increase student engagement
 - Provide examples for lecture-only topics
 - Teach career skills



***randomization being incorporated *next* semester**

College: Student Engagement

- Class creates fictional characters
- Each assignment has a story
- Story gives meaning
- Class recap: what did the engineer learn (perspective)



Before:

- Build a bridge
- Least materials possible
- Write report

After:

- Build a bridge for a community in need
- Least materials possible due to community's limited resources
- Write report to be evaluated by city planning

College: Examples + Career Skills

- Story incorporates:
 - **Networking**
 - **Career shifts**
 - **Internships**
 - **First job application**
 - **Keeping a portfolio**
 - **Study abroad**
 - **Non-profit orgs**

Before:

Networking is the process of making career relationships. It is important for engineers.

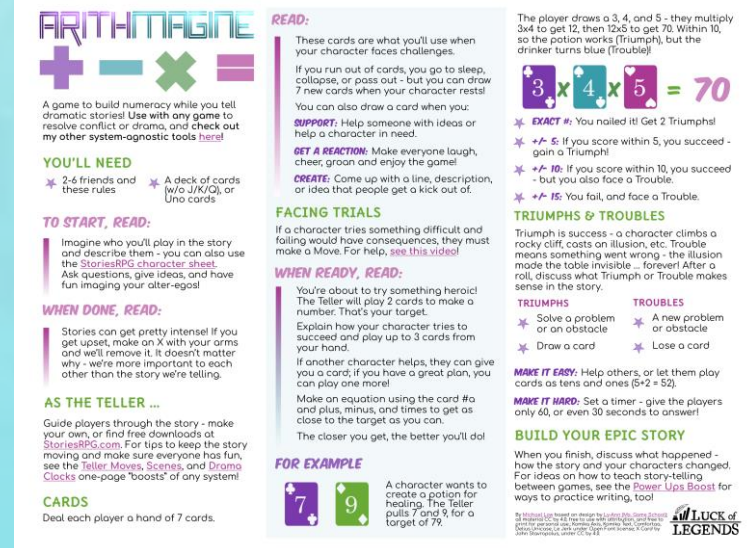
After:

After deciding to quit the job related to assignment 7 due to the work environment being too hectic, our engineer calls up their manager, Rey from the internship they were in during assignment 2 to see if they have any openings, and... success!

There aren't openings at Rey's company, but they know someone who is hiring!

Other examples

- Full class games:
 - Beowulf (history)
 - Luck of Legends (literacy)
 - God Corpse (anatomy)
 - Arithmagine (math)



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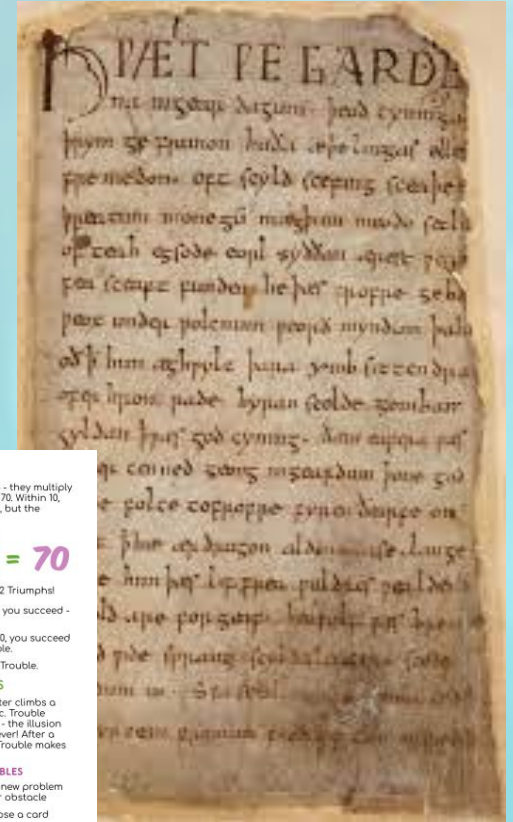
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LUCK OF LEGENDS



Other examples

- Weekly “for fun” games iterate problem-solving until natural



Other examples

- Friend groups and teambuilding exercises
 - Maryanne Cullinan – affinity spaces
 - In fiction, but felt in real life

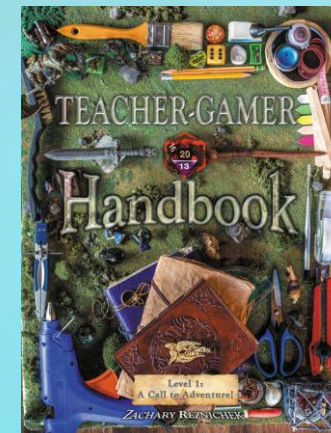
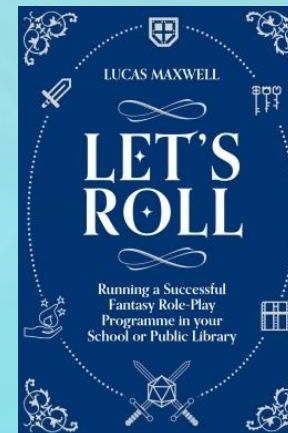
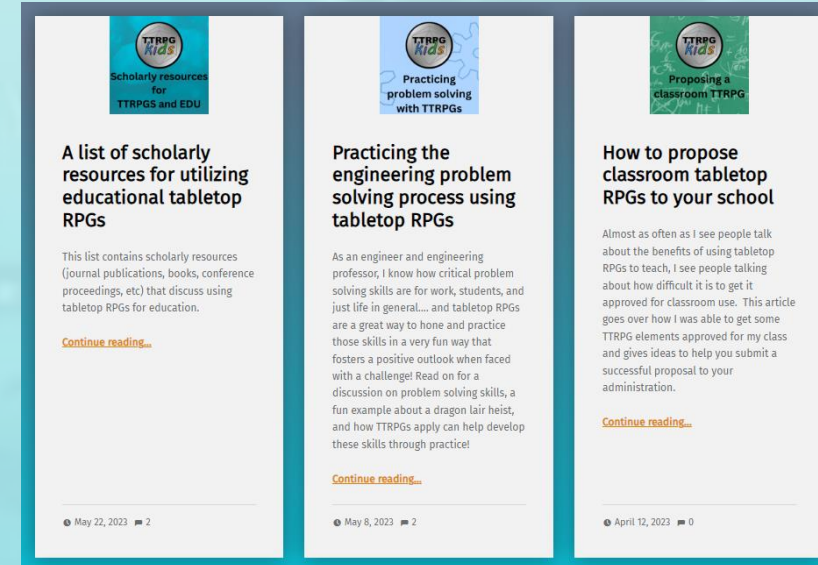


Flexible to You

- **Can be a full class or quick add-on**
- **Reframe (don't rewrite or overwrite) curriculum/goals**
- **Use what your setting allows (story, dice, full game, etc)**

Additional resources

- **TTRPGkids.com**
- **Teacher-Gamer Handbook**
- **Let's Roll**
- **Luck of Legends**
- **Maryanne Cullinan**



Supporting TTRPGkids

- Use and share the resource!!
- ENnies
- Crowdfundr
- Attend talks



Thank you!
Any questions?

