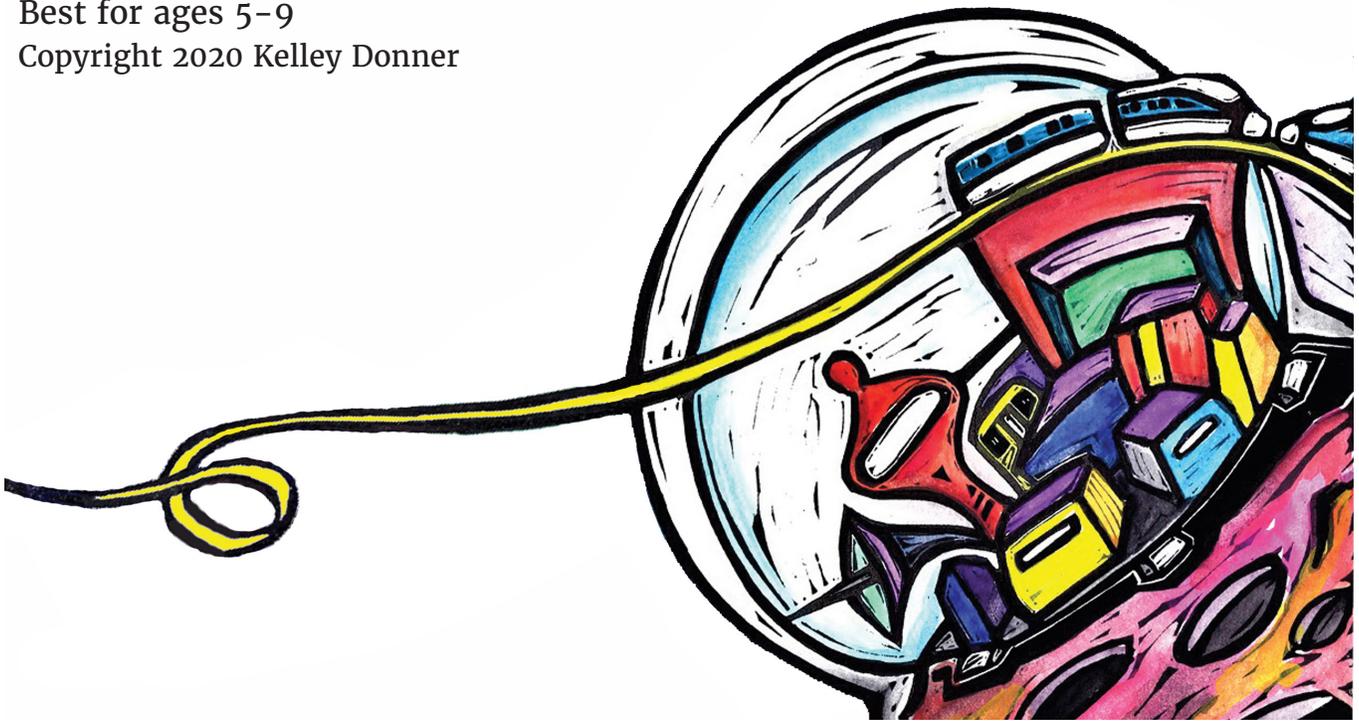


Little Jack Thomson¹⁵ Magnificent Brain

Lesson Plan Suitable for online teaching

Best for ages 5-9

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Introduction

Little Jack Thomson's *Magnificent Brain* is an uplifting story which teaches children how to overcome obstacles and learn to believe in themselves. In this lesson plan children will learn about some historical figures who also had learning disabilities, discuss what challenges Jack faces in the story, and think about what they can do to overcome things that they find difficult. Children are asked to use their theory of mind skills to think about how their classmates feel and to put themselves in someone else's shoes. In addition, there is an art and a writing activity.

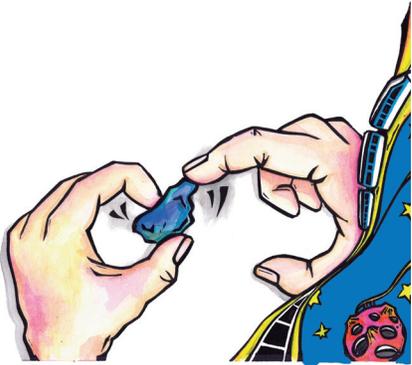
Little Jack Thomson's *Magnificent Brain* - ISBN 978-17339595-44, ISBN 978-17339595-51, ISBN 978-17339595-68 (Available on Amazon and in most bookstores)

Synopsis:

Jack Thomson, a gifted, young boy who dreams of flying rockets to Neptune and building trains between planets is unaware of how truly intelligent he is. Truth be told, he's convinced he is stupid and slow because he can't read and write like everyone else he knows. After one awful day at school, Jack's mother comforts him by relating some inspiring stories of history's greatest minds and how they overcame learning disabilities and made a difference. As Jack listens, his spirits lift as he recognizes that someday he, too, can do something magnificent.

Pre-Reading Discussion

Use the following list of questions to help in your discussion. Use the explanation ideas if you need help.



Questions:

- What subjects in school do you find hard?*
- How does it make you feel when you are not very good at something?*
- Have you ever wished that you could be better at something than you are?*
- Did anyone ever make fun of you for not being good at something? How did that make you feel?*
- Do you know what a learning disability is?*

Possible Explanation:

If you find it really difficult to do math, write words, or to read then you might have a learning disability. Even though you may find one subject difficult, you may be very good at another. Having a learning disability does not mean that you are any less smart than your classmates. It just means that your brain works a bit differently. Thank goodness we are not all the same! Many famous people have had learning disabilities. Sometimes the ability to see something in a different way can actually be a very good thing.



Read: Historical Figures with Learning Disabilities

Show children the last 2 pages of Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain where there is information about Agatha Christie, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein. Many children may have never heard of these important historical figures. Take some time to explain who each of these historical figures are, what they did that was significant and what things they found hard to do. You can use the text in the book as a guide.

Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain
celebrates those who have found paths to succeed with learning disabilities, who think outside the box, and who make an imprint on our society in a positive way.

Thomas Edison
Thomas Edison did not talk until he was four. Although he was an avid reader, he only went to public school for a few weeks but was then told to leave because his teacher found his behavior too difficult.
Many reports state that Thomas was hyperactive and had difficulties talking to people. Thomas Edison went on to patent over one thousand inventions. Today, many sources state that Thomas Edison probably had ADHD and Autism.



Albert Einstein
Born in 1889, Albert Einstein had difficulties speaking as a child and was said to often be in his own little world. When he was young, he had difficulties in languages and mathematics. Some sources claim that he was dyslexic, while others state that his withdrawn nature sounds a lot more like autism.
Einstein felt different to his peers and had to overcome many challenges to becoming one of the greatest mathematicians of all time. His most well known achievement was discovering the theory of relativity.



Jack Thomson
Born in 2008, Jack Thomson's first word was 'rocket' at the age of 3. Although he had difficulties in school with reading and writing, and was diagnosed with autism and dyslexia, he developed other ways of learning and began his own company Interstellar Space. Commuting when he was only 22.
Jack is known best for his invention of interplanetary transportation, specifically his first train the Nitrosaturn 4 which ran between the moon and Mars.
and many, many more...



Agatha Christie
Agatha Christie was born in 1890 and is famous for writing over 66 popular mystery novels. She loved telling stories and had an imaginary friend growing up who kept her company.
Because Agatha's handwriting was often difficult to read, she began speaking her stories into a dictaphone, a kind of recording device. Later a secretary typed her stories into a typewriter. Today many people think that Agatha probably had dysgraphia, a common learning disability.



Questions:

Have you ever heard of...

*Thomas Edison?
Agatha Christie?
Albert Einstein?*

Explanations/Discussion

Read paragraph under each person's name and discuss with class.

Read: Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain

Read the story Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain. It is currently available in both paperback and ebook.

Post-Reading Discussion

Use the following list of questions to help in your discussion. It is difficult for young children to put themselves in someone else's shoes. Please use this discussion as an opportunity for children to think about not only how Jack feels, but also how others in their class feel. This helps children to learn more theory of mind.



Questions:

*Why did Jack have a bad day at school?
What did his classmate say about him?
How did his classmate's comment make him feel?
How would you feel if someone said that you were dumb?
What is Jack's learning disability?
How did Jack's mother feel when she saw Jack sitting on his bed?*

Questions (continued):

Why did Jack start to jump up and down when he was thinking about outerspace?

What do you do when you are excited?

Do you think that you can be anything you want to be? Why?

Do you think that Jack can overcome his learning disabilities? Why?

How does Jack feel at the end of the story?

What do you think that Jack will be when he grows up?

Read: Historical Figures - Jack

Go back to the end of the book and the page with the historical figures. Read to the class the paragraph on Jack Thomson. Make sure that children are aware that Jack is only a fictional character.



Questions:

Imagine they wrote a paragraph about you and what magnificent things you did in the future. What would it say? What challenges did you overcome? What did you achieve?

Note to teachers: Children's mental health is very important. Young children may worry about a lot of things. Please make sure that children know who they can contact if they are feeling sad, worried, or scared.

*Information provided in this lesson plan is not a substitute for professional care by a qualified practitioner, and is not intended to provide medical advice. If you are concerned about the health and well being of you or a child, you should always consult an appropriate health care professional.

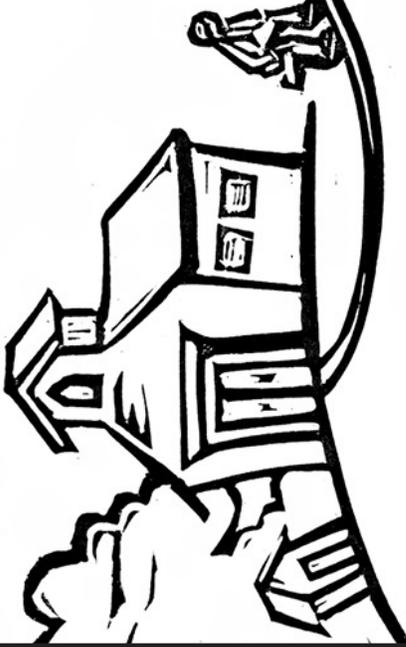
Writing Assignment:

Have children write a paragraph about themselves 20 years in the future. Tell them that they have done something magnificent. If children are older and capable of doing third person, have them write their paragraph like in Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain. If not, then simplify the task as needed. For example, you can have them finish this sentence: I am magnificent because...

Art Assignment:

On the following page is an excerpt from the book Little Jack Thomson's Magnificent Brain Coloring Book which can be bought at Amazon and at many bookstores (ISBN 978-1733959575).

More info at: KelleyDonner.com



Thomas Edison is famous for inventing many different things, but he is most well known for creating a light bulb.

At school, however, he could not sit still, often got in trouble, and was kicked out after only three months.

Nevertheless, he continued to learn at home and do what he loved most - inventing.

If you could invent anything, what would you invent?

