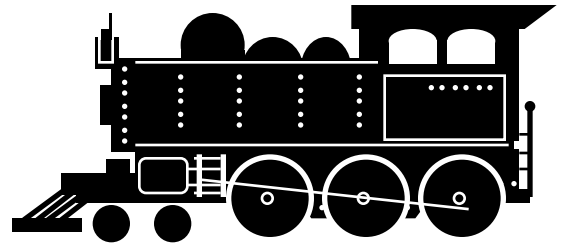


Brainstorm for a "Trains" Theme



Books & Stories

- * **1,2,3 to the Zoo** by Eric Carle -- picture counting book with no words, but big animal illustrations; a small image across the bottom of the page shows the train growing longer as each group of animals join the train. Also works for numbers, animals or zoo themes.
 - * **Freight Train** by Donald Crews (1978) -- bold, clear graphics and a very simple but rhythmical text: "A train runs across this track. Red caboose at the back. Orange tank car next..." Also works for a colors theme.
 - * **Hey! Get Off Our Train** by John Burningham (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1989) -- a boy's dream train takes on a host of endangered animal passengers. Also works for an animals or habitats theme.
 - * **The Train Ride** by June Crebin, illustrated by Stephen Lambert (Cambridge, Mass: Candlewick Press, 1995) -- rhyming, repeated text takes a child on a train journey chalk pastel illustrations in bright colors.
 - * **Train Song** by Diane Siebert (©1981), paintings by Mike Wimmer (Harper Collins, 1990) -- realistic oil paintings and rhythmic text recall the sights, rhythm and sounds of trains old and new.
 - * **The Little Engine That Could** retold by Watty Piper, illustrated by G. & D. Hauman (Scholastic, 1976).
 - * **Thomas the Tank Engine** based on the The Railway Series by the Rev. W. Awdry.
 - * **Big Book of Trains** (Dorling Kindersley, 1998) if it's the biggest, fastest or longest train, it's here.
- For board books: put bumps between the pages or tabs on them to make them easier to separate & turn.

Software:

- * PB Bear's Birthday Party (DK) - "Build a Train"
- * Reader Rabbit's Reading 1 (Learning Co.) has a train activity.
- * Add trains to the IntelliPics Transportation Activity.
- * Make IntelliPics &/or IntelliTalk Activities for your favorite train books.
- * Make trains using Blocks in Motion (DJ).
- * Color or rubber stamp a train in Kid Pix Studio.
- * Visit Thomas the Tank Engine on line at www.thomasthetankengine.com - numerous links, activities and even a create-your-own Thomas webpage using mostly point & click choices.

Toys:

- * Electric Trains: use a Power Link with an ability switch to turn trains on & off.
- * Battery-operated toy trains for play & exploration, with ability switch.
- * Kids "make tracks" on butcher paper by dragging markers behind trains (attach markers with rubber bands, etc., so tip drags on paper).
- * Brio-type wooden trains: Poster-Putty helps stabilize the tracks. Try a track ramp for a distance race. Brio now has a battery operated engine and a fancy (but expensive!) station that lets you record station announcements for playback!

Train Songs:

- * "Down by the Station, Early in the Morning," traditional children's song:
*Down by the station Early in the morning, See the shiny engines All in a row!
Hear the station master Pull on the handle. Puff-Puff! Toot-toot! Off they go!*
- * "Freight Train," recorded by Pete Seeger; and by David Grisman & Jerry Garcia on Not for Kids Only.
- * "I've been Working on the Railroad," traditional folk song, recorded by many artists.
- * "Little Red Caboose," recorded by Sweet Honey in the Rock on Family Folk Festival.
- * "Morning Town Ride," a lullaby recorded by Raffi on Baby Beluga.

Train "Sound Station"

- * Kids can blow a wooden train whistle, ring the bells, do the chug-a-lug sound, say "all aboooooard!", etc.
- * Have some kids help you record all the train sounds into IntelliPics or HyperStudio, or on a voice output communication device so non-verbal and/or switch using kids can play, too.
- * Use Train Sounds and Signals when you change activities, line up, walk down the hall, etc.

Poems and Finger Plays:

- Song of the Engine, by Christine Weatherly

When you travel on the railway,
And the line goes up a hill,
Just listen to the engine
As it pulls you with a will.

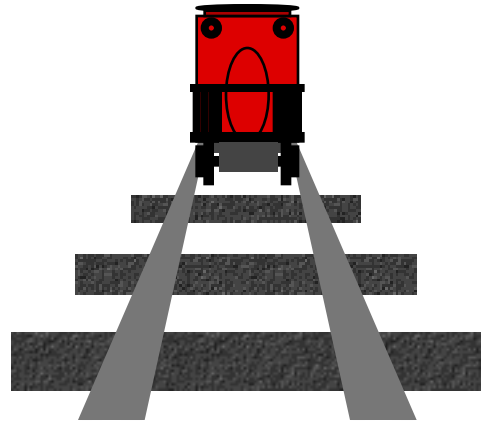
Though it goes so very slowly
It sings this little song,
"I think I can, I think I can,"
And so it goes along.

But later on the journey,
When you're going down a hill,
The train requires no pulling,
And the engine's singing still.

If you listen very quietly
You will hear this little song,
"I thought I could, I thought I could,"
And so it speeds along.

- Here is the Engine traditional finger play ; can also do with a felt board, popsicle stick puppets or other props.

Here is the engine on the track;
Here is the coal car, just in back;
Here is the boxcar to carry freight;
Here is the mail car. Don't be late!
Way back here, at the end of the train
Rides the caboose through sun and rain!



Snack:

- * Box lunches? Train-shaped cookies? Make a table train with a line of tables snaking around the room?

Art Center:

- * Sponge Painting with train car shapes
- * Recreate Freight Train story w/ own choice of colors for cars -- can be done on paper, with sponges, or on computer with accessible painting tools.

Movement Activity:

- * Make a Human Train -- a student using a wheelchair could be the locomotive -- see costumes, below.

Other Ideas:

- * "Train tickets" -- pass out or have kids "buy" tickets at the beginning; kids will need to "board" the group activities or even get tickets punched at each play "station" around the room.
- * Costumes -- striped hats, overalls, bandana scarves, etc... can use large boxes to turn a power or manual wheelchair into a train! don't forget the cotton for a puff of smoke.