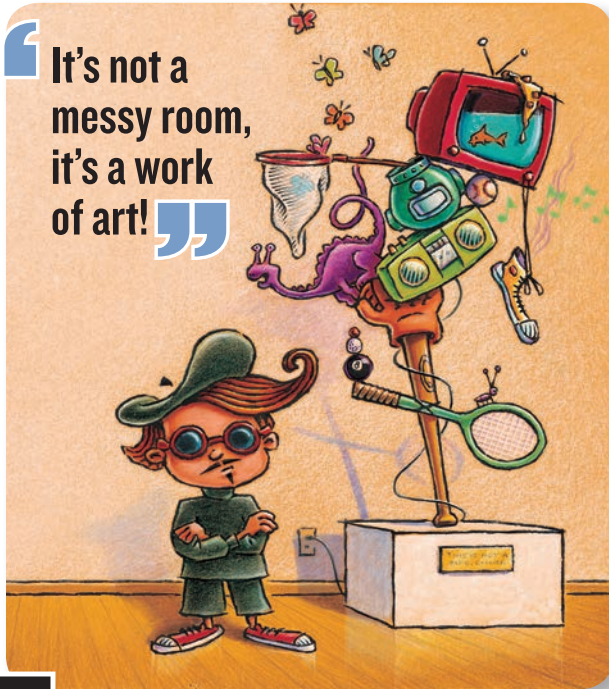


“It’s not a messy room, it’s a work of art!”



This is just one of the many excuses our young slob gives for his messy room in Tom Lichtenheld’s book, *WHAT MESS?* It’s the story of a very messy room, a very perturbed mom, and a boy who has an excuse for every pile of smelly clothes and putrid junk in his room. Now you can use this book to teach kids about everything from math to writing to art. Along the way, they just might learn something about cleaning their rooms.

I MEANT TO CLEAN MY ROOM TODAY, BUT...

writing/drawing activity

Have the children use the story starter, “I meant to clean my room today, but...” as an opening sentence for a short paragraph. Have them illustrate their paragraphs, and compile their work into a class book.

STORY STARTERS

creative writing activity

My bedroom was so messy...
I know how to make my bed. First...
I looked under my bed and saw...
I enjoy having a clean bedroom because...

MONSTER ON THE LOOSE

creative writing activity

Have the kids imagine that the boy in the book didn’t listen and opened the box that housed the mystery creature. Have them draw a picture and write a description of what that creature looked like. (For Monster inspiration, see Tom Lichtenheld’s book, *EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT MONSTERS*.) They could also tell what happened when that creature emerged from the box.

THE MESSY MEMORY GAME

listening/thinking activity

This fun listening and memory game is great for a group of kids. The first person starts out the game by saying, “Today I saw the messiest bedroom I’ve ever seen. I saw...” (have them use a number, an adjective, and a noun in their sentence). For example: “I saw 5 purple socks.” The next person repeats what the first person said and adds something new. Kids will have fun seeing how big of a mess the group can create in this imaginary bedroom.

RHYME TIME

vocabulary activity

There are rhyming words on each page of text in this book. Have children write down each pair of rhyming words, and think of new words that rhyme with each pair.

READERS THEATER

performance activity

Retype the text of this book to create a readers theater script. Assign parts to individuals or partners, practice the script, and then perform the book *WHAT’S WITH THIS ROOM?* for other classes.

MAPPING FUN

writing/drawing activity

Have children write detailed descriptions of their bedrooms using size words, color words, and directional relationships between the objects in their room. Have them draw a bird’s eye view of their rooms. Encourage them to include symbols and keys for their maps.

MESSY ROOM MATH

math activity

Have the kids look through the book for mathematical ideas. Then have them write word story problems using the illustrations and the text as inspiration.

Examples:

- Mom found 5 dirty socks, 3 candy bars, and 9 library books under my bed. How many things did she find in all?
- There were 8 t-shirts on the floor. I threw 4 of them in the wash. How many t-shirts were still on the floor?

COUNT THE CRUD

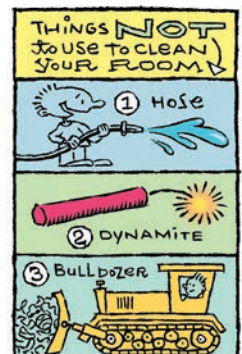
creative math activity

Have children write and illustrate their own Messy Room Counting Books.

Example:

My room was such a horrible mess! On the floor was 1 smelly purple sock. Under the bed were 2 dried-up markers. In the closet under my shoes were 3 stale peanut butter sandwiches.

After each child has finished his/her books, they can add up all the clutter up their messy bedroom. This mathematical problem can be the last page of the book.



PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

writing/ English activity

Prepositional phrases are often used to indicate direction or location in space. Have kids describe their bedrooms in writing using some of these prepositional beginning phrases:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| inside the | below the |
| next to the | over the |
| under the | above the |
| in the middle of | upon the |
| on top of | in front of |
| against the | across from the |
| beside the | in back of |
| behind the | underneath the |

I SPY

a game for two

After “buddy reading” the book with a friend, have the reading buddies go back and look carefully at the illustrations. Have kids take turns giving color, category, and function clues about one of the objects on the page for their partner to find. For example: Can you find a red vehicle used by firefighters?

BEDROOM OF YOUR DREAMS

creative writing activity

First, have kids draw pictures of their dream bedrooms. After the illustrations are done, have them write detailed descriptions of their dream rooms. Display the pictures and have everyone try to match up each written description to the correct illustration.

DEAR SLOB...

creative writing activity

Have the children write letters to the boy in the book, giving him advice on how to better clean and organize his bedroom. They can also give him tips on how to continue to keep his bedroom clean in the future.

children’s books by

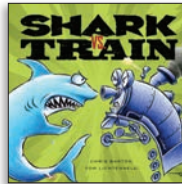
Tom Lichtenheld

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



BRIDGET'S BERET

A Junior Library Guild Selection



SHARK vs. TRAIN

A Junior Library Guild Selection

THE OK BOOK

WHAT'S WITH THIS ROOM?

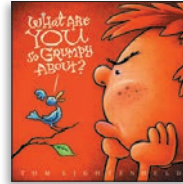
IT'S NOT FAIR!

EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT PIRATES



DUCK!RABBIT!

- A New York Times bestseller
- A Time Magazine best book of 2009
- Publishers Weekly starred review



WHAT ARE YOU SO GRUMPY ABOUT?

- A Child Magazine Best Book of 2003
- Kirkus Reviews starred review

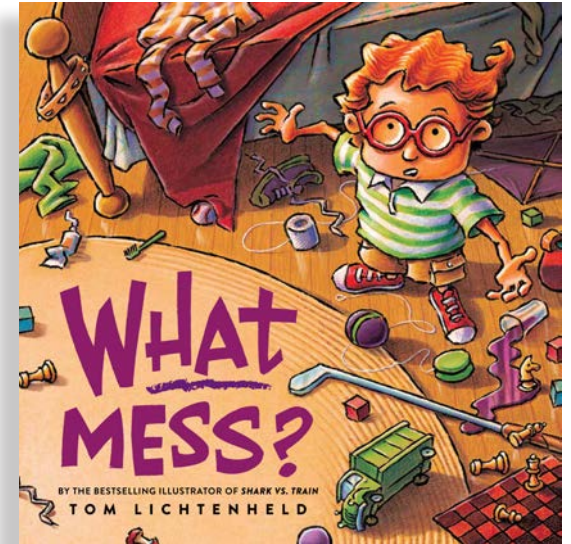
EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT CARS

EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT MONSTERS

YES DAY!

ACTIVITY GUIDE

BASED ON THE BOOK



by Tom Lichtenheld

FOR SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES AND BOOKSTORES



Tom's books are also featured in:

- Literature for Lively Lessons** by Sheila Edwards
- Becoming a Literacy Leader** by Jennifer Allen
- How to Develop Curriculum for Your Writing Workshop** by Katie Wood Ray



tomlichtenheld.com