

Surf Soup® TV Dog Invention

Subtitle: A STEM Story About Creativity, Teamwork, and Making Ideas Come Alive

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Surf Soup® TV Dog Invention: Teacher/Parent Note

Dear Teachers, Parents, and Caregivers,

This guide is designed to help you use Surf Soup® TV Dog Invention to inspire creativity, STEM thinking, and teamwork in children ages 6–9. Koa and Jelly’s inventive journey shows that trial, error, imagination, and collaboration are essential to problem-solving.

Inside this guide, you’ll find:

Discussion Questions to promote comprehension, curiosity, and reflection

STEM & Creativity Activities including building, designing, and storytelling challenges

Inventor Reflection Prompts to encourage perseverance and learning from mistakes

These resources are flexible and can be used at home, in classrooms, or during group activities. The goal is to empower children to explore, invent, and learn while having fun with imagination and STEM concepts.

— Donna, Surf Soup® Creator

Surf Soup® TV Dog Invention – Enhanced TPT Teacher/Reader Guide

Grade Level: K-4 (ages 6–9)

Subject Areas: STEM, Engineering, Creativity, Imaginative Play, Reading Comprehension

Overview:

In Surf Soup® TV Dog Invention, Koa and Jelly gather broken toys and found objects from Plastic Island to invent a TV Dog that can tell stories. Through trial and error, problem-solving, teamwork, and a little bit of magic, their invention comes to life. This guide provides discussion questions, STEM activities, creative extensions, and SEL connections for teachers, parents, and caregivers.

Discussion Questions

Comprehension & Reflection:

How did Koa and Jelly come up with the idea for the TV Dog? What materials did they use, and how did they decide which pieces to keep or discard?

Why didn't the TV Dog work at first? What did Koa and Jelly do to try to fix it?

How did imagination and creativity help the invention come to life?

What lessons can we learn about persistence from Koa and Jelly?

If you were designing a TV Dog, what would it look like and what stories would it tell?

Critical Thinking:

- How can failure be a helpful part of the invention process?
- How do teamwork and collaboration make inventions better?
- What real-world STEM concepts are being used in this story (circuits, motors, pulleys, etc.)?
- How might you solve a problem differently using found materials?

STEM Activities & Extensions

1. Build-a-Toy Challenge (Maker Activity):

Gather safe household objects, recycled materials, and toy parts.

Challenge students to invent a “pet” or “robot” that can perform a simple action (move, talk, or show pictures). Document the design process: sketch, label parts, describe functionality.

Share creations with classmates or in small groups, discussing what worked, what failed, and improvements.

2. Circuit Exploration:

Introduce basic circuits using batteries, LED lights, and simple motors.

Explore how connecting power can make objects move or light up.

Relate this to how Koa and Jelly tried to make the TV Dog “come alive.”

3. Slide Storytelling:

Have students create their own “story slides” using printed images, drawings, or digital slides.

Connect them to a toy or invention and present as a mini TV Dog story show.

4. Inventor’s Journal:

Students keep a log of materials, sketches, testing, and failures.

Include reflection prompts: “What worked? What didn’t? What could I try next?”

Discuss how documenting the process helps inventors improve ideas.

5. Collaborative Design Challenge:

Pair students or form small teams to invent a “storytelling robot” or toy.

Encourage brainstorming, prototyping, and testing ideas.

Present to the class and discuss how teamwork contributed to the solution.

Creativity & Imagination Extensions

1. TV Dog Character Design:

Draw and name a unique TV Dog.

Decide on personality, favorite stories, and special abilities.

Write a short story featuring your TV Dog's adventures.

2. Magical Spark Experiment:

Use a “what if” scenario: what magical abilities could Koa’s hair or other character traits have?

Encourage students to invent their own “magical STEM tools” to enhance inventions.

3. Found Object Art:

Use recycled or found materials to create decorative or functional art.

Discuss how inventors can find value in objects others might discard.

SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) Connections

Perseverance: Learning to keep trying even when the invention doesn’t work at first.

Problem-Solving: Breaking down big challenges into smaller steps.

Teamwork: Collaboration and listening to ideas from friends or classmates.

Creativity & Imagination: Using innovative thinking to create unique inventions.

Reflection: Understanding how failure helps growth and improvement.