



**A teacher's guide**  
created by Marcie Colleen  
based upon the picture book  
written by Sophia Gholz and  
illustrated by Xiana Teimoy

This classroom guide is designed for students in first through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)* into the curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core and other relevant content standards.

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To learn more about Sophia Gholz, visit her at [www.sophiagholtz.com](http://www.sophiagholtz.com). To learn more about Xiana Teimoy, visit [www.xianateimoy.com](http://www.xianateimoy.com).

## Before You Read...

Before reading *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)*...

Look closely at the Front Cover ~

- Read the title aloud.
- Describe what you see.
- How do you think each item on the cover relates to the title? Is there anything that you think doesn't belong or makes you curious?



## English Language Arts

### Reading Comprehension

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book is about.

- What did the earliest people use for toilet paper? If you lived back then, which item would you prefer?
- While our toilets today are ceramic, what was different about the ceramic or brick potties used in early civilization?
- Describe in your own words the Roman way of going to the potty.
- Would you mind going to the bathroom while sitting right next to someone else? How about using someone else's *tersorium*? Why or why not?
- Who invented paper?



- Where was toilet paper first used? How long after the invention of paper was toilet paper created?
- What do you think the benefits of a flushing toilet are?
- What did colonial Americans use for toilets and toilet paper?
- How did newspapers and magazines provide a new way to go to the bathroom?
- Why was the Farmer's Almanac printed with a hole near the spine?
- Why did Joseph Gayetty's toilet paper flop?
- How did Seth Wheeler further the concept of toilet paper?
- What other ways to "use" toilet paper are shown on the "Poo...plant...play!" page? Can you think of any other uses of toilet paper?

Let's talk about the people who made *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Now, let's look closely at the illustrations. Can you find:

- A drawing of a woolly mammoth
- A goat
- A butterfly
- A dragonfly
- Someone playing the harp
- A nosy neighbor
- Two scrolls
- A painting of the Great Wall of China
- A mouse
- A rooster
- A crow
- Four lily pads
- A red and white striped chair
- A raccoon
- Four balls of wadded up paper
- A top hat and cane
- A black cat
- A rubber ducky
- A cell phone
- A jack o lantern
- Three bear cubs



## Reading Nonfiction

While reading *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)* aloud to the class, have students take notes in two columns:

- *Things We Learned*
- *Questions We Have*

Pause before each page turn to add notes to the columns. These columns can either be individual or hung on the board and worked on as a class.

Things We Learned (Facts)	Questions We Have	Answers We Found

- Once the story is read, discuss the *Questions We Have* column.
  - Were any of these questions answered as the book went along?
  - If so, ask students to find the answer within the text.
  - Record the answer next to the question in a third column labelled *Answers We Found*.
- For all remaining questions in the *Questions We Have* column, that have yet to be answered, students will need to take the steps to find answers, either through Internet or book research.
  - Discuss how to find answers to questions through research.
  - Assign students to specific questions to help them focus.
  - Record all answers in the *Answers We Found* column.
- After the answers have been shared with the class, engage in a discussion on research practices.
  - What was the most difficult about finding answers?
  - Was it easier to find answers on the Internet or in a book?
  - Which source is more reliable, the Internet or a printed book? Why?
  - How can you determine whether to trust a source?
  - What tips would you give someone who is about to do research?
- Read the Timeline and Author's Note section at the back of the book.
  - Create an additional chart to document what information in this section was included in the story and what information was not included.
  - Why do you think Gholz chose to include certain information and leave other information to the back matter?
  - Choose three facts from the back matter that were not included in the story and explain why you think each was excluded.



*Extension:* Design and illustrate posters representing each Fact, Question, and researched Answer based on *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)* and display them within the classroom.

# Science

## New Vocabulary: Brainstorming

The history of toilet paper involved many different inventors and creators through time. All inventors and creators brainstorm, but what is brainstorming?

- To demonstrate, show the class a roll of toilet paper.
  - Then, give the class two minutes (use a timer) to list as many things as possible that the roll of toilet paper can be used for.
  - Record their ideas on the board.
  - Once the two minutes is up, review the list on the board.
  - Explain that what they were just engaged in was brainstorming.



Look up "brainstorming" in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.)

- Read the definition.
- Explain that a brainstorm is when you take all the ideas in your head and let them out, kind of like how a cloud lets out all of the rain during a storm.

Explain the "rules of brainstorming."

- Nothing is a bad idea. Do not criticize any ideas while brainstorming.
- Hitching is welcome. Listen to others' ideas and let their ideas spark new ideas in you. This way, through group brainstorming, ideas often build upon each other.
- Be off-the-wall. Outrageous and humorous ideas are welcome.

Now knowing what we do about brainstorming, let's try some brainstorming activities.

- Categories Game. Have students sit in a circle and take turns brainstorming items in the announced category. For example, "animals." Go around the circle and have each child name an animal. They cannot repeat a response that another child gave. Go around the circle more than once if kids seem to have more ideas in that category. Other potential categories include fruits, vegetables, colors, items of a specific color, creatures that swim, musical instruments, and things with wheels.
- Hypotheticals. Move brainstorming into the abstract by having students brainstorm answers to hypothetical questions. For example, ask them how today's toilet paper can be improved upon. Record all the answers so they can be read back to the class when the brainstorming is finished. Rather than going around a circle and putting pressure on kids to think of something new, have students raise their hands to share answers. If a child is quiet, call on him/her early in a round before too many obvious answers have been said.
- Silly Answers. Teach students that they should share anything they can think of in a brainstorm, even if it does not seem like the best answer, by having them share the silliest answers they can think of to some questions. For example, brainstorm the silliest way to get from one end of the room to another. Turn it into a physical activity by having them demonstrate their silly methods, too. When students start running out of ideas, ask: "Who can think of something even sillier?" to prompt more responses.

After better understanding brainstorming, discuss:

- The value of brainstorming.
- Why brainstorming is so important to inventors and creators.
- Examples from *A History of Toilet Paper (And Other Potty Tools)* that show brainstorming.
- How students could use brainstorming in their everyday life.

### **Make Your Own Paper**

Make homemade paper which is similar to the paper created by Cai Lun in China two thousand years ago.

Materials:

- Paper (such as printer paper)
- Water
- Bowl
- Blender
- Wire hanger
- Duct tape
- Nylon stocking
- An iron



To make the paper:

1. Tear or cut the paper into small pieces and put them in the bowl.
2. Pour water into the bowl until the paper is covered. Allow the paper to soak for a few hours or overnight.
3. Once the paper is soggy, squeeze out the excess water with your hands. Use a blender, with the help of a grownup, to grind it into a gooey pulp.
4. Bend a wire hanger into a rectangle or oval and tape the ends together with duct tape to create a frame. Stretch the stockings over the frame to make a sieve or screen. Place the sieve on a towel or baking pan.
5. Scoop out the paper goo from the blender and mash it onto the sieve, over the baking pan.
6. Press down on the sieve to remove the excess water.
7. Let the "new" paper dry.
8. Cover the paper with a towel and iron on low. Let the paper continue to dry overnight. It should be ready to use in the morning.

Discuss:

- Would you use this paper for toilet paper? Why or why not?
- What could you do differently next time to create a paper closer to toilet paper?



## Math

### Over or Under?

Take students through a mock voting process to learn more about this civic duty, how it works, and settle once and for all the age old question of whether the toilet paper roll should go over or under!

Divide the class into two teams: Team Over and Team Under. Each team will act as a campaign team, creating a presentation based on facts and opinions about their given candidate. They must try and convince others why their way is the only way!

Each campaign team will then present their candidate to the class. This can also be done across grades or the whole school.

Then, in a mock voting process, students will vote for their chosen candidate.

Count the votes.

Provide a vote tally or percentage for each candidate.

## Social Studies

### Everyone Poops . . . Around the World

Countries around the globe have many different customs. They speak different languages. They eat different foods. They celebrate different holidays. And they even have different bathroom customs.

- In America, it is called the "bathroom" or "restroom."
- In the Philippines, it is called the "comfort room" or "C.R." for short.
- In England, it is often called the "loo."
- In some areas of Taiwan, mostly in subways, public bathrooms charge for the toilet paper, but not the use of the toilet.
- In some developing countries, there is a lack of toilet paper, so people use their left hand for wiping.
- In China, many toilets are just a hole in the ground, and children, once they can walk, do not wear diapers—even *before* they are potty-trained.
- In rural India, many areas do not have a sewer system, so villages use a large field for defecating.

Using the Internet and the library, research a few different countries to learn about their bathroom habits, including public restroom signs.

The activity can either be done individually, in small groups, or as a class.



## Everyone Poops . . . in My School

Although we all poop, we are also all unique. Create and conduct a survey of students and teachers in the school. Include questions about their bathroom habits such as:

- Do you prefer the toilet paper to roll over or under?
- Do you wad or fold your toilet paper?
- How many squares of toilet paper do you use for each wipe?
- If you run out of toilet paper, what do you use?
- Do you read on the toilet or not?
- Do you read the graffiti in a public restroom?
- Have you ever walked out of a public restroom with toilet paper stuck to your shoe?
- How long, on average, do you spend in the bathroom?
- Have you ever texted or surfed the Internet on the toilet?
- Have you ever dropped something by accident in the toilet?
- What is the strangest bathroom you have ever been in?
- What is the best bathroom you have ever been in?



Display the results on a bulletin board for all to read. You might want to keep the answers anonymous.

## The Best Toilet Ever!

A search on the Internet for interesting toilets will find toilets that are fancy, toilets that are very rustic, and even toilets that look like musical instruments!

Have students create a story about the day they used the best toilet ever! What makes the toilet so wonderful? Does it wipe for you? Does it have a built-in television? Does it talk? Wackiness and imagination are encouraged.

Optional activities:

- Accompany the story with an illustration.
- Create a television commercial for your toilet.

