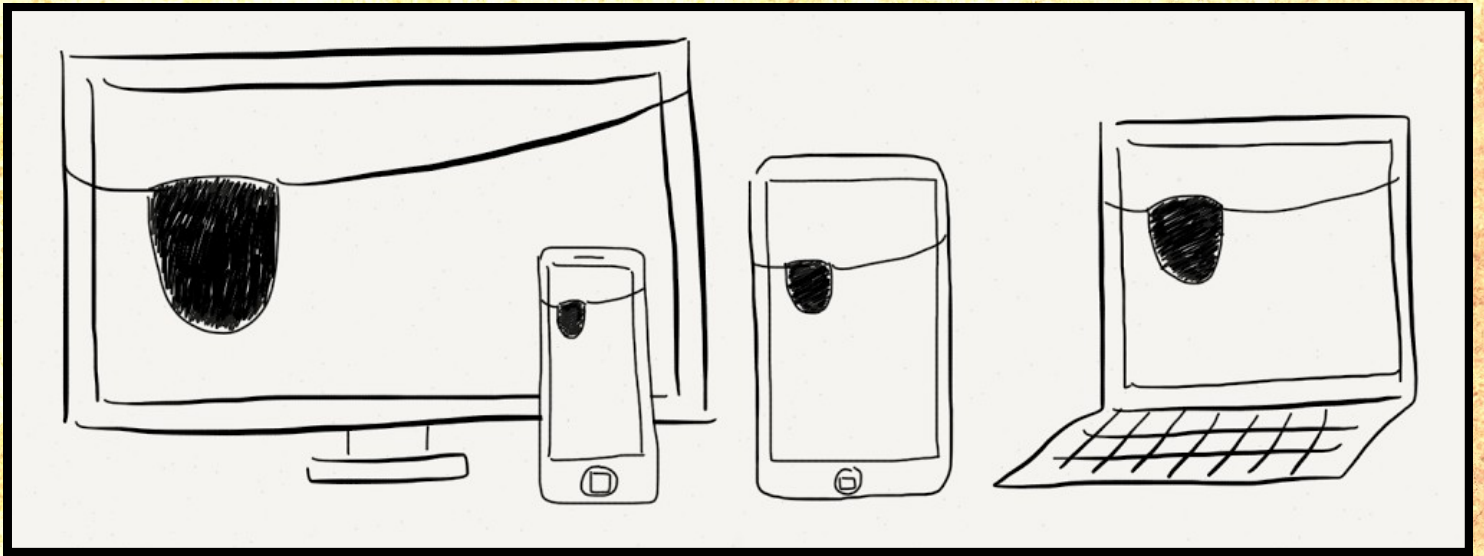


The Digital **PIRATE**



*Adding techno-wizardry to teaching
with passion and engagement*

A DITCH THAT TEXTBOOK GUIDE

TECHNOLOGY. CREATIVITY. INNOVATION.

BY MATT MILLER (@JMATTMILLER)



Pirates are daring and adventurous. They sail into uncharted territories with no guarantee of success. They reject the status quo and refuse to conform to any society that stifles creativity and independence. And besides, everybody loves a pirate.”

This is the premise of [“Teach Like a PIRATE,”](#) a book written by social studies teacher [Dave Burgess](#). He encourages teachers to increase student engagement and boost creativity through inspiration, practical techniques and innovative ideas.

With the technology tools available to many classrooms, there is plenty of digital swashbuckling to do. Great apps, websites and devices provide opportunities to engage students and learn in ways that were never before possible.

This guide, “The Digital PIRATE,” encourages teachers to provide those experiences by tapping into technology that grabs students’ attention immediately and redefines learning. This guide provides 20 classroom activity ideas based on the “Teach Like a PIRATE” engagement hooks and a free technology tool.

Hopefully, you’ll find some ideas to set sail on a great adventure!



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The hook: The Mozart Hook

The app/site: Garage Band

The activity:



Have students that are musically inclined? Give them an outlet! They'll have all of the tools they'll need in Garage Band to record a song based on the content in your class. They can sing and play instruments, recording it all in a sound file you can play for class or add to a video project.

[Get Garage Band](#)

[\(free for iOS 7\)](#)

[Garage Band ideas](#)

I.



The hook: The Involved
Audience Hook

The app/site: Poll Everywhere

The activity: Everyone seems to have an idea of where a story is headed as they watch it. Let students share their opinions with a poll — AND let them use their cell phones to take it! Poll Everywhere shows real-time results as students vote via text message or an Internet-ready device. Check the results to see who was right after the story is over!

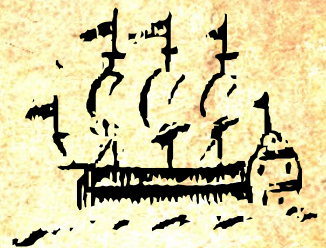


[Poll Everywhere](#)

[How to use Poll](#)

[Everywhere](#)

2.



The hook: The Picasso Hook

The app/site: Canva

The activity: Promotional and marketing materials are real-world products. Fliers or advertisements can be made for almost any content area. Canva makes them easy and attractive. Use Canva's free images and graphics (some are paid) with text to make your work look like a designer created it. You can save them as an image file or PDF or generate a link to them.



[Canva](#)

[Canva ideas](#)

3.



The hook: The Backwards
Hook

The app/site: WeVideo

The activity: Think of the TV shows and movies that start at the end with an attention-grabbing sequence before showing how it all unfolded. Use some photos, video clips and well crafted words to create a WeVideo video project painting the picture of where your instruction is headed. Then get started walking students through it.



[WeVideo](#)

[How to use WeVideo](#)

[Video project ideas](#)

4.



The hook: The Kinesthetic Hook

The app/site: ClassTools.net

The activity:



Scavenger hunts are great fun, with clues to follow and adventure to embark on. Add QR codes to the mix and it's techie heaven! Create a QR code scavenger hunt with clues about your content that lead students all over the classroom or building. They can be used during class time or for students to complete on their own time outside of class.

[ClassTools.net](https://www.classtools.net)

[QR code scavenger hunt how-to video](#)



The hook: The Safari Hook

The app/site: Camera app

The activity: One of the most overlooked apps on any device has to be the camera app. It has huge potential in the classroom. Turn students loose to find examples of whatever you're studying in the classroom, the school or the world around them. Document them with video or pictures and discuss them in class afterward. If students use their own cell phones, that's a bonus!



[10 ways to use iPad camera in class](#)



The hook: The Dance/Drama
Hook

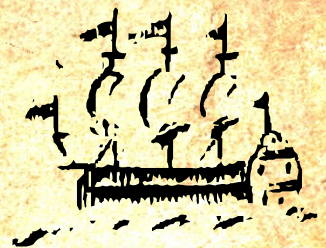
The app/site: YouTube

The activity: Virtually any kind of video imaginable is available on YouTube.



With a little luck and good search skills, you can find instructional videos of dances that pertain to your content area. Or, to reach the dramatically inclined, video a skit or re-enactment and add music, slow motion, visual filters and more using YouTube's Video Manager.

[YouTube Video
Manager](#)



The hook: The Real World
Application Hook

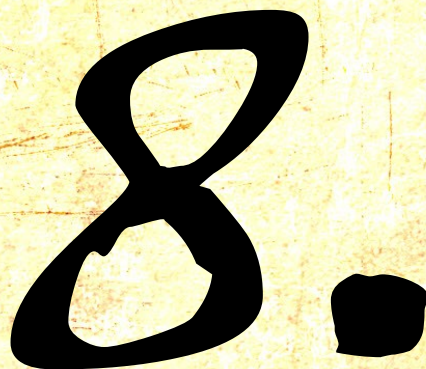
The app/site: Skype / Google
Hangouts

The activity:



Need a convincing explanation of how your content is relevant in the real world? Those experts are certainly out there and might explain the importance first-hand through a video chat. Often, businesspeople, professors and even celebrities make themselves available to classes via video through Skype or Google Hangouts. You never know until you ask!

[Connecting classes to the world resources](#)



The hook: The Opportunistic Hook

The app/site: CC or Google image searches

The activity: There's a reason people have said, "A picture is worth a thousand words" for so long. They're great to generate conversation and stimulate ideas. Creative Commons searches and Google Images searches can turn up the right image that will get the gears in your students' heads turning.



[Creative Commons](#)

[image search](#)

[Google Images search](#)



The hook: The Interior Design Hook

The app/site: Pandora

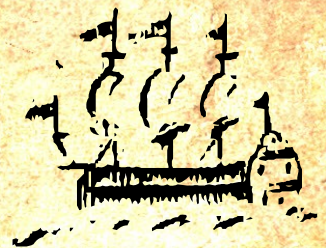
The activity: The Interior Design Hook is all about setting the right atmosphere so students can experience what they're learning about. Music is a powerful way to set the atmosphere. Playing the right Pandora station behind the activities of the day in class can put students in the right mindset and help them to feel the content.



[Pandora](#)

[Using Pandora in the classroom](#)

10.



The hook: The Board Message Hook

The app/site: PowToon

The activity: The Board Message Hook suggests that a provocative, attention-grabbing message written on the board can engage students before class even starts. Creating an animated “board message” (video) can do that in a flashy way. PowToon makes creating customized animated videos easy. Play one to start class to get everyone’s attention!

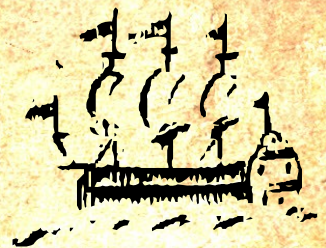


[PowToon](#)

[Creating your first](#)

[PowToon](#)

II.



The hook: The Costume Hook

The app/site: Voki

The activity: Voki creates talking heads (called avatars) that you can play for your class or embed on a website. Instead of dressing yourself in costume, have a character visit in the form of a Voki. Voki has several pre-made historical characters (like Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and Benjamin Franklin), or you can customize your own with lots of features.



[Voki](#)

[Using Voki in the classroom](#)

12.



The hook: The Involved
Audience Hook

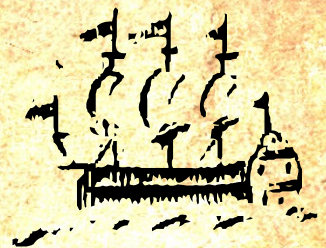
The app/site: AudioMicro

The activity: Sound effects can bring any story, lecture, explanation or narration to life. AudioMicro has hundreds of thousands of sound effects that can be played from the website on command. Imagine assigning a different sound effect to each student and having them play that sound effect when you say a certain word or phrase. Students are involved and engaged!



[AudioMicro](#)

I 3.



The hook: The Storytelling
Hook

The app/site: Storybird

The activity:



History has been passed down through generations by storytelling. It's powerful and memorable. Storybird can help tell your important stories in class using original artist-created visuals. Write a digital storybook around those visuals or find pictures that match what you want to say. Then share your Storybird with your class or anyone on the planet.

[StoryBird](#)

[How-to video on using Storybird](#)

14.



The hook: The Taboo Hook

The app/site: Camera app

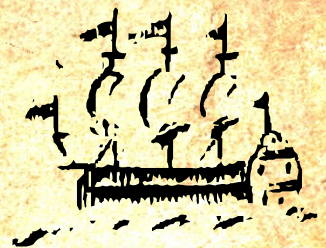
The activity:



Record yourself telling students some provocative, controversial secret about your content. For more impact, step out of class but push play before you leave. The video you steps in and can tell this secret — something you would NEVER tell them — to the students while you're gone. Return to class oblivious to what has just happened.

[“Teachers Have Style, Too!” \(re: Taboo Hook\)](#)

15.



The hook: The Mime Hook

The app/site: Gone Google Story Builder

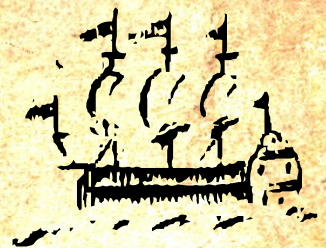
The activity: Using silence or written messages is what the Mime Hook is all about. Gone Google Story Builder allows users to create a video that looks like people are typing messages to each other in a Google document. Those written words could set the stage for a lesson or punctuate it at the end. Type the words and generate a link that anyone can view later.



[Gone Google Story Builder](#)

[Why You Should Heart Story Builder](#)

16.



The hook: The Teaser Hook

The app/site: Remind

The activity:



Marketers and advertisers know the power of anticipation. It's what makes kids unable to sleep on Christmas Eve! Remind lets teachers send text messages to their students safely and securely. A quick text message — which is VERY likely to be read — before an interesting class period will build anticipation that will peak when class starts.

[Remind](#)

[Using it with classes](#)

17.



The hook: The Contest Hook

The app/site: Kahoot!

The activity:



Students love games, and game shows on TV are very popular. Kahoot! brings the best of game shows to the classroom. Teachers set up questions. Students answer them with their devices, earning points for quick correct answers. Students can even create their own Kahoots to show their understanding of a topic. Engagement is always high when Kahooting!

[Kahoot!](#)

[Using Kahoot! in class](#)

18.



The hook: The Magic and
Amazing Hook

The app/site: Aurasma

The activity:



Aurasma uses a digital variety of magic and amazing. It's called "augmented reality," where it uses a device's camera and adds things to it that aren't there in real life. Record a video and choose something you want Aurasma to show the video on. When scanned, Aurasma will play that video over the top of your object — like magic!

[Aurasma](#)

[Resources for class](#)

19.



The hook: The Mnemonic
Hook

The app/site: Piktochart

The activity:



Mnemonic devices are clever memory aids that help us remember information. Anyone can come up with these tricks. Take those creative ideas and make them visual with an informational graphic on Piktochart. Use a pre-designed template or create your own graphic with images, text and more. Share your mnemonics visually with Piktochart!

[Piktochart](#)

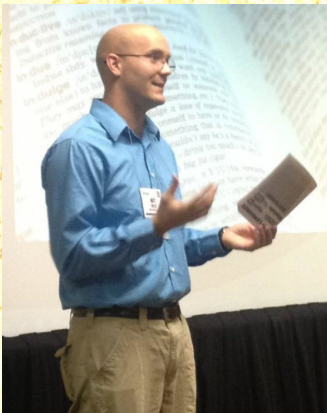
[Using Piktochart in
the classroom](#)

20.



About the author

Matt Miller is a high school Spanish teacher from West Central Indiana. He incorporates meaningful technology to transform and redefine learning. He also embraces PIRATE teaching practices to keep students on the edge of their seats. Matt created and writes the [Ditch That Textbook blog](#), which promotes less reliance on the textbook with an emphasis on creative teaching.



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Hire Matt to present

Matt is an experienced professional development speaker. He has presented at dozens of conferences, schools and school districts to thousands of educators. His wide range of topics span Google Apps, intentional tech use, blogging, global connections and beyond. His participants appreciate his practical, hands-on approach and his perspective as a practicing teacher.

Matt can present at your school, district or event. He can provide full-day professional development, keynote speeches and concurrent conference sessions.

See DitchThatTextbook.com/conferences for more info or e-mail Matt at matt@DitchThatTextbook.com to discuss pricing and availability.

