THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY

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Lesson Summary for Grades 1–3
Three Cheers for Tacky, a story by Helen Lester, is the focus for the learning activities in this lesson. The lesson includes two science activities in which the students use thermometers and gloves to discover how insulators work and explore vibrations and sounds. Lesson extensions are also provided for art, citizenship, language arts, life science, and mathematics.

Students are divided into groups of four, and each receives a ticket listing all activities. The ticket is folded in half and used as a folder to hold papers completed during the activities. Students rotate between the activities, circling completed activities on their tickets. You may want to set aside two hours for all students to complete most of the activities. The other activities listed in this plan could be implemented at different times throughout the week.

On the last day of the unit, have the students make a folder to provide an opportunity for them to apply their new skills and reflect on what was learned. You can celebrate the end of the unit by letting the students eat a frozen treat.

Featured Book: Lester, H. Three Cheers for Tacky; Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1996. (ISBN 0395731658) This is a story about a fanciful penguin who “marches to a different beat!” His friends do everything the right way while Tacky does everything in his own hilarious way. Tacky tries to conform, but his friends eventually learn to appreciate Tacky’s uniqueness.

Science Activity 1: Insulators
Students consider how penguins are able to survive in harsh climates by learning about insulators. After discussion, students predict which of various insulators would provide the best protection from the cold. Students then test their predictions by inserting their hands into “insulator gloves.” After determining which insulators are the best, students use thermometers to further measure the effectiveness of the insulators.

Objectives
1. Select instruments to make observations and organize observations of an event.
2. Evaluate a simple procedure to carry out an exploration. Identify and/or discuss the selection of resources and tools used for exploring scientific phenomena.
3. Evaluate observations and measurements made by other people. Identify ways in which organisms react to changing environments.
Materials
- 10 sandwich-sized plastic bags
- cotton stuffing
- feathers
- foam peanuts
- Crisco® shortening
- 6-inch x 12-inch brightly colored fabric
- Insulators Part 1—Worksheet
- Insulators Part 2—Worksheet
- ice
- plastic tub
- 5 small thermometers

Procedure
Discuss the climate where penguins live. Ask students if Tacky’s Hawaiian shirt would keep him warm in such a cold place. Ask them what they think would be a better choice. Chart student responses. Introduce the baggy coats for Tacky: doubled sandwich-sized plastic bags (one turned inside out and stuffing between the two bags). Stuff one of the following insulators between the two bags for each baggy coat: cotton stuffing, feathers, foam peanuts, a piece of fabric to represent Tacky’s Hawaiian shirt, and Crisco shortening (to represent blubber). Zip the baggy coats shut. Ask the students which baggy coat would keep Tacky the warmest. Have students record predictions on the Insulators Part 1 Worksheet, then test their predictions by inserting a hand into each baggy coat and placing it into ice water. Record the results.

Extensions
Place a thermometer inside each bag and allow a student to gently hold the bag down in the water. (This is necessary because some of the bags will float.) After 3–4 minutes, record the temperatures of each thermometer on the Insulators Part 2 Worksheet. Is there a difference in the recorded temperatures? Ask students to compare them to the tests done with their hands. Which do they think would be more accurate? Help students to understand that scientists often use tools to get more accurate measurements.

Follow-up Discussion
Discuss other uses for insulators (coats, houses, oven mitts, coolers, Styrofoam cups, wires).

Science Activity 2: Tacky Talkers
Students explore how vibrations make sounds by making a “Tacky Talker.”

Objective
1. Students learn that sound is caused by vibrations.

Materials
- white plastic or Styrofoam cups
- black and orange construction paper
- blue ribbons for bow ties (optional)
- string
- paper clips
- small sponges
• wiggly eyes (optional)
• Tacky Talker Pattern
• small tub of water
• glue or tape
• scissors

**Procedure**
In the stories about Tacky, he has a rather unpleasant voice compared to the sweet voices of his friends. Students learn about sound while making an instrument that imitates Tacky’s shrill voice. Have students do the following steps to make a Tacky Talker.

1. Poke a small hole in the bottom of a cup.
2. Insert a length of string and tie it to a paper clip. (The paper clip will prevent the string from pulling through the cup.)
3. Trace and cut the Tacky Talker Pattern. Use the large piece to wrap around the cup. This can be glued or taped to hold in place. Glue the small circle over the paper clip. (Eyes, a beak, and a bow tie can be added to the cup, if desired.)
4. Wet a sponge and wring out most of the water. As you put the string between the folded sponge and gently pull down, you will hear Tacky “talk.”

Discuss how sound is produced. Introduce the concept that movement is necessary to produce sounds. Students sit still and hear the quiet. When they move around, they hear sounds. Ask students what is moving on their Tacky Talkers to make the sound. Extend the concept by explaining about vibrations.

**Art Activity: Student Puppets**
*Students make puppets of themselves using small milk cartons. Wallpaper books will be available to make “Tacky” shirts.*

**Materials**
• small empty milk cartons (clean and dried)
• construction paper of various skin and hair color
• Puppet Head—Pattern
• Puppet Shirt—Pattern
• white glue
• wallpaper books

**Procedure**
Students make a puppet of themselves to go with their “I Am Special” story. (See Language Arts Activity.)

1. Have each student take one milk carton and open it up completely at the top.
2. Cut two opposite sides down to the base along the corners.
3. Gently pull the sides away from each other, folding the base in half diagonally. This makes the talking mouth of the puppet.
4. Cut off the top sections of the carton (about 1½ inch from the top) along the crease lines.
5. Trace the Puppet Head Pattern on construction paper and cut it out.
Instruct students to put a generous amount of glue on the front top of their carton. They need to rub their fingers for at least the count of 30. Tell students that they need to keep rubbing hard and count slowly. This will rub off the wax that prevents the glue from sticking. The glue will begin to feel tacky and will now hold the head section quite well. Have students repeat the process with the chin section. T-shirts can be made by tracing the Puppet Shirt Pattern on wallpaper samples or construction paper. Students can then be creative by adding facial features, hair, and arms and legs, if desired.

These puppets are a big hit with students as they love to make them talk. Students can have puppet conversations with each other or “read” their stories to each other, using the puppets to do the talking.

**Citizenship Activity: Map Skills**
*Students identify and mark on a map the areas where penguins can be found.*

**Objective**
1. Demonstrate map skills by identifying major continents and bodies of water.

**Materials**
- small maps of the world
- thin-lined markers

**Procedure**
Students use a bright colored marker to mark the areas where penguins can be found. Students identify Antarctica, Australia, Africa, and South America.

**Language Arts Activity: Venn Diagram**
*Students use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the story characters with real penguins. Creative writing includes students’ written cheers presented in a milk-carton igloo amphitheater. Students also write a short story about themselves describing the talents and characteristics that make them special.*

**Objectives**
1. Analyze the text, examining actions of characters and problems/solutions.
2. Compare and contrast elements, such as characters.
3. Read and appreciate different types of literature.
4. Write a short story.
5. Write a short rhyme.

**Materials**
- *Three Cheers for Tacky* text
- large pocket Venn diagram
- sentence strips
- 20–30 1-gallon milk jugs
- writing paper for stories
- cutting instrument
- hot glue gun
Procedure Part A: Creative Writing—“I Am Special”
Introduce and read the story to the class. Discuss the characters in the story and the characteristics that make Tacky unique. Help students to realize that each of them possesses special qualities. At their seats, students can then list their talents and special characteristics and use this list to write a story about themselves entitled, “I Am Special.”

Procedure Part B: Additional Writing Activity—Write a Cheer
Throughout the story, several cheers are presented by the penguins. Read the cheers together as a class. Ask if students know any other cheers. Several may know some football or basketball cheers, especially if they have older brothers or sisters. Point out the location of the rhymes in the cheers. Encourage students to try writing some cheers.

In the story, the penguins performed in an igloo amphitheater. A small version can be made using empty gallon milk jugs:

1. Clean the jugs and remove the necks.
2. To form the first layer of the igloo amphitheater, lay 8–10 jugs together on their sides in a semicircular pattern. Hot glue them together at contact points.
3. Use one less jug for the second layer. Alternate the jugs as if building a brick wall.
4. Continue in this manner until your wall is four layers tall. If you bring each layer a little closer to the center, the building will have a more curved appearance.

This “stage” is very lightweight and surprisingly sturdy. The student can take turns reading their cheers on the “stage” or practice reading their story about Tacky. Cheers can later be collected to put in a class book.

Procedure Part C: Compare/Contrast Real and Fantasy Penguins
Read a second nonfiction story to the class about penguins. Have students suggest ways that the story characters were the same or different from the real penguins. Write the students’ comments on sentence strips and have students place them in the appropriate location of the pocket Venn diagram.

Life Science Activity: How Penguin Parents Locate Their Babies
Students role-play parent and baby penguins by making special sounds to locate each other.

Procedure
Explain to students that penguin parents locate their babies by recognizing a special sound that their babies make. Divide students into pairs—one is the baby, and the other is the parent. Pairs decide on a special sound. Babies sit behind a large white paper or sheet used as a screen. Parents take turns calling for their babies by making their special sound. Babies come out from behind the screen if they recognize their “parent’s” call.

Mathematics Activity
Students place plastic bowling-pin penguins in correct order by following task cards specifying the ordinal number of each penguin. Students predict and record data by rolling two polyhedral dice and predicting the sum. Students will use manipulative “penguin beans” to check their guess. Number models will be recorded.
Objectives
1. Identify needed information to solve a problem.
2. Order numbers.
3. Add and subtract whole numbers.

Materials
- plastic bowling pins marked with the initials of the penguin characters in the story (G, P, L, N, T, A)
- index cards with ordinal number problems (for example, Tacky is 3rd, Perfect is last, etc.)
- plastic bowling ball
- penguin counters (purchased or made with lima beans, a small brush, and paint)
- cut-out paper icebergs
- polyhedral dice and regular dice
- Ordinal Numbers—Worksheet
- Additional Facts—Worksheet
- black spray paint

Procedure Part A: Predict and Record Data!—Ordinal Numbers
Spray paint a set of plastic bowling pins black. Hot glue flippers (paper or vinyl) and eyes. Tape or paint an initial of one of the penguin characters on each pin. Make a set of index cards with ordinal number problems for students to solve. For example: Tacky is third. Perfect is fourth. Goodly is first. Angel is second. Neatly is sixth. Where is Lovely? Students choose a card and line up the penguins in the order of the card. Students answer the question on the Ordinal Numbers Worksheet. The fun is knocking over the penguins with the bowling ball and starting all over.

Procedure Part B: Adding or Subtracting Penguins
Purchase or prepare penguin counters for students to use. To make small penguin counters, spray paint one side of large lima beans black. On the opposite side, paint eyes and a beak. Each student takes two cut-out paper icebergs and a pair of dice. Advanced students can choose to use the polyhedral dice and students still practicing basic facts can use regular dice. Students roll the dice one at a time, placing the appropriate number of “penguins” on each iceberg. They then guess the total number of penguins. Students count the actual number of counters and record the number model on the Addition Facts Worksheet. Subtraction facts can be practiced by using only one iceberg per student. They roll both dice and place counters matching the larger number on the iceberg. They then take away the smaller number to find out how many are left. Students record the number models on a record sheet.

End-of-Unit Folder
Objective
1. Students review skills learned in the unit Three Cheers for Tacky.

Materials
- 12-inch x 18-inch piece of blue construction paper
- copied sheets including a thermometer, map, poem, and blank lines
- black, white, and orange construction paper
- crayons
- markers
Procedure
Each student folds the blue sheet of paper, each side to the middle, making a cupboard. Open the
doors and glue the copied paper on the inside. Cut each cupboard door in half, making four doors
that open from the middle. Students write the question on the top left door “Where do penguins
live?” A map of the world is found under the door. Students use a bright colored marker to place
dots at the southern tip of South America, Africa, Australia, and along the coast of Antarctica.

Students write the question “How cold is it?” on the top right door. A thermometer is found
under the door. Penguins in Antarctica live in temperatures between 50 and 60 degrees Celsius
below zero. Students color up to the mark on the thermometer.

Students write “Penguin Poem” on the lower left door. The poem “A Black and White Riddle” is
under the door. Students read and highlight the rhyming words in the poem.

Students write “Penguin Facts” on the last door, lower right. They write facts that they have
learned about penguins during the week study.

References
Breathed, B. *A Wish for Wings That Work: An Opus Christmas Story*; Little, Brown: Boston,
Davis, L. *Penguin: A Season in the Life of the Adelie Penguin*; Harcourt Brace: San Diego,
1994.
Deguine, J.C. *Emperor Penguin: A Bird of the Antarctic*; S. Greene Press: Brattleboro, VT,
1974.

Handout Masters
Masters for the following handouts are provided:
• Insulators Part 1—Worksheet
• Insulators Part 2—Worksheet
• Tacky Talker—Pattern
• Puppet Head—Pattern
• Puppet Shirt—Pattern
• Ordinal Numbers—Worksheet
• Addition Facts—Worksheet
Copy as needed for classroom use.
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Insulators Part 1—Worksheet

Name _________________________________

An insulator keeps something warm or cold.

Predict:

1. Which bag will be the best insulator and keep your hand warm in the ice water?
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

2. Which bag will not keep your hand very warm?
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

Test:

Put each bag on your hand and put it in the ice water.

3. Which bag kept your hand the warmest?
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

4. Which bag allowed your hand to get the coldest?
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

Put the bags in order, best insulators to worst insulators. Write them here.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Insulators Part 2—Worksheet

Put a thermometer inside each bag. Each person in your group should hold a bag down in the ice water. Watch the clock for three minutes. Take the thermometers out of the bags one at a time and record the temperature of the thermometers.

1. Which insulator kept the thermometer the warmest?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. Which insulator allowed the thermometer to get the coldest?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Put the bags in order, from warmest to coldest. Write them here.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Did you get the same results? Why or why not?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. Was it easier to put the bags in order when you just used your hand to feel the temperature of the water, or when you used the thermometers?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Tacky Talker—Pattern
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Puppet Head—Pattern
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Puppet Shirt—Pattern
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Ordinal Numbers—Worksheet

Name ________________________________

Write the numbers to the bowling riddles.

1. ________________

2. ________________

3. ________________

4. ________________

5. ________________

6. ________________
THREE CHEERS FOR TACKY
Addition Facts—Worksheet

Name______________________________

Roll 2 dice. Use the penguin counters to help solve the problem. Write the number sentence.

1. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

3. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

4. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

5. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

6. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

7. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________

8. ____________  +  ____________  =  ____________

___________________________________________________________________________