

A student viewing guide

STORYMAKERS | R IS FOR ROCKET: AN ABC BOOK WITH TAD HILLS

This student viewing guide is designed for students in kindergarten through second grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

This Viewing Guide focuses on "listening and observing" questions which relate directly to the StoryMakers episode and are designed to engage students through the viewing of the episode of study through comprehension and prediction questions, and one or two written activities.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in Speaking and Listening and other relevant content standards.

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Growing up in a family of artists, engineers, and teachers has its benefits. As a child, New York Times bestselling author and illustrator Tad Hills was constantly encouraged to revel in his creativity. He wrote his first book at the age of eight as a gift for his parents. Besides writing, he's always had a fondness for building things — namely detailed Halloween costumes for his children — and uses this passion as a way to visually demonstrate storytelling.

"The feeling of accomplishment and the fun that I had in writing and illustrating that book is part of the reason why I write and illustrate kids books today." — Tad Hills

Tad's literacy focused Rocket series evolved from a 2008 Publishers Weekly cover. What started out as a pup with a bibliophilic bird atop his nose has led to six books and counting. Tad's first book in the series, *How Rocket Learned to Read* was a New York Times bestseller. Eight years later, *R Is for Rocket: An ABC Book* is the sixth book in the line, and features a surprise guest from Tad's Duck & Goose series.

You're invited to accompany StoryMakers host, Rocco Staino as he interviews Tad about tales of Halloween costumes past; how a playful wheaten terrier launched a series; and what's next!

Storymakers episode available at: <http://kidlit.tv/2015/10/storymakers-r-is-for-rocket-an-abc-book/>



STANDBY Before Viewing

You are about to watch an interview with author-illustrator Tad Hills and his dog, Rocket.

- Do you know what an "interview" is? If so, explain in your own words. If not, look up the definition in a dictionary.
- Do you know what an "author-illustrator" is? If so, explain in your own words. If not, look up the definition in a dictionary.

Tad Hills writes and illustrates several books, including two series: one with Duck & Goose and another about a dog named Rocket.

If possible, create a classroom library of Tad's books prior to viewing the Storymakers episode. Share a few of the books with the class.

Discuss the following:

- What are some questions that you think host Rocco Staino will ask Tad Hill and Rocket the dog? Create a list.

LIGHTS, CAMERA...

While You (and Your Class) Watch

Please Note that some students might find it necessary to watch the Storymakers episode more than once. Repeated viewings should be encouraged.

What do you see?

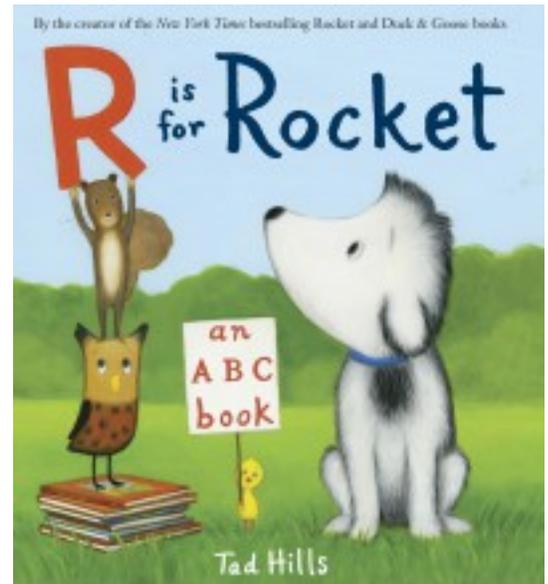
- Pause the video.
- Create a list of everything that you see.

What do you hear?

- Watch the video, paying close attention to everything that you hear.
- Whenever something is said that you think is important, write it down on a piece of paper. This is called "taking notes."
- OR, as a class, whenever something is said that you think is important, raise your hand so the teacher can pause the video and jot down notes.

Fast Quiz

- What color pants is Tad wearing in the video?
- What color bowtie is Rocco wearing in the video?
- How many Rocket books are there?
- Why is the Rocket in the books white with black spots?
- Which other of Tad's characters appears in *R is for Rocket*?
- What is the title of the book Tad made when he was eight years old?
- What kind of dog is Rocket?
- Name one or two of the Halloween costumes Tad has created.
- Why does Tad say making the costumes is like making a story?
- Name one or two titles other Rocket books.



ACTION!

After Viewing Activities

Further More—Additional Research and Questions

- What is one thing that you learned from the video that you didn't know before?
- Look closely at the list of questions you created before the viewing. Did Rocco ask any of the questions you predicted he would? If not, what do you still want to know?
- Visit www.tadhills.com for further research and to see if your outstanding question(s) was answered there.

- If you could interview Tad Hills and Rocket what is one question you would ask?
- Compile your questions and send them to Tad, either through the Contact page on his website, www.tadhills.com or via his Twitter feed at @tadhills. Be sure to use #kidlittv in your Tweet.

DIY Time—Design a Funny Hat

Tad Hills says that making a Halloween costume is like making a story. Start with an idea and then add pieces until they work.

You can view photographs of lots of Tad's Halloween costumes on his website at <http://tadhills.com/about/costumes#11>, including a link to a *Time Out New York* article with many more photographs!

Using Tad's Halloween costumes as inspiration, design a funny hat to wear. It can be a hat that you could wear for Halloween or simply something silly.

- Start with an idea.
- Draw out a picture of your hat.
- Determine what materials you will need.
- Gather the materials and start to build.
- Add pieces, as needed, until you have created your hat.

Does your hat look exactly like the design you drew or did you have to change some things as you built?

If so, what did you change and why?

Do you think the same thing might happen when writing a story? Why might some of the story change in the process?

What can you learn about creativity from building your hat?

Is it ok to make mistakes? Is it ok if things do not go as planned?

Based on your experience, if someone is trying to create something and they are frustrated, what advice would you give them? What might Tad Hills tell them?

