

Figure 6.2: Finding the Hook: Engagement Opportunities Through *SpongeBob SquarePants*

Content Area	Thematic Connection	Possible Student Activities	Next Steps
Math	Look for the presence of numbers in <i>SpongeBob</i> (e.g., on the menu of his favorite restaurant, The Krusty Krab), and use them to teach math skills. Then expand by segueing into higher-level calculations, algorithms, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate the cost of a meal or of multiple meals at The Krusty Krab. • Divide the cost per character of a shared tab at The Krusty Krab, or calculate what percent of the total bill was spent by each character. • Solve for items that were ordered at The Krusty Krab but didn't show up at the table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segue into skill building with addition. • Segue into skill building with division, fractions, and percentages. • Segue to unknowns, variables, and algebra.
English language arts	Use <i>SpongeBob</i> as a thematic jumping-off point for writing, reading, spelling, and grammar. Then expand by segueing into elements of setting, characterization, literary devices, story arcs, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a fantasy about an underwater adventure with SpongeBob. • Consider what's wrong with the spelling of "The Krusty Krab." • Read <i>SpongeBob</i> books (it's not exactly classic literature, but it is a place to start!). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segue to writing adventure stories on other topics to support skill building. • Segue to studying alliteration and other literary devices. • Segue to reading fiction on related topics, like <i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i> or <i>Magic Tree House: Dark Day in the Deep Sea</i>. Expand to other Magic Tree House books that lead readers on dozens of other adventures.

Content Area	Thematic Connection	Possible Student Activities	Next Steps
Science	Look for adventures that SpongeBob and his friends have that relate to science. Discuss those connections and then expand by going deeper into related elements of biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the marine life that SpongeBob encounters in his underwater community. • Research the composition of SpongeBob's home on the ocean floor. • Examine the variable speed and velocity of SpongeBob's dreaded rollercoaster ride. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segue to studying environmental issues that affect marine life and then environmental issues that affect humans. • Segue to studying the composition of sea water, the layers of Earth's crust, and Earth's atmosphere. • Segue to studying the physics of energy and momentum.
Social studies	Consider <i>SpongeBob</i> from a sociological and anthropological perspective. Discuss the show as if it represents a society. Then expand to topical lessons related to social structure, economics, government, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the social strata in SpongeBob's hometown of Bikini Bottom. • Consider whether SpongeBob's underwater community could be considered a civilization. • Investigate the labor laws that might have protected SpongeBob when he walked off his job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segue to studying income inequality or caste systems. • Segue to discussion of ancient civilizations and the development of modern civilization. • Segue to discussion of the development of labor unions, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, and immigration.

Note: This table is available for download from <http://barbaraboroson.com/FindingTheHook.pdf>.

So when you pop into classrooms, don't be surprised to find the students immersed in underwater fantasies or the curriculum saturated by fast-food facts and other obscure and wildly extracurricular investigations. It's all part of the journey toward engagement.