

Dear Teachers,

I am looking forward to coming to speak with your students! I have included an optional activity that you can do with your students sometime in the week before I arrive.

My book, *Sky Jumpers*, takes place in a town called White Rock, forty years after bombs wiped out most everything. Since so much was lost, the town focuses on inventing to come up with new technology. They have a huge celebration each year— The Harvest Festival— where each person aged 4 and over submits an invention that they've created for the Inventions Show.

I am a huge believer that inventing, creativity, and ingenuity make a big difference in all of our lives every day, and that kids really can change the world with their ideas. In *Sky Jumpers*, there is a chapter where the main characters are showing their inventions in class, prior to entering them in the Harvest Festival Inventions Competition. The scene refers to and/or shows each of the steps for the STEM Engineering Design Process, which are:

1. Ask questions about what kind of invention is needed.
2. Use your imagination to brainstorm ideas, then pick the best one.
3. Draw a design for your invention.
4. Build your invention.
5. Try out your invention.
6. Look for ways to improve it.

This activity will use the first three steps in the design process. Start by asking the kids to name some of the technology / inventions that they use every day, or that are important to them. (Everything from playground equipment to cell phones to refrigerators to the desks they are sitting at, and more.) Then have them imagine what life would be like if all of those things were gone. If everyone had to come up with an invention to make life better, ask them to think about what they would most like to invent. It can be something simple to something elaborate. They can come up with multiple ideas if they'd like before choosing their favorite. Have them draw their invention on the Design Your Invention page (below).

Between all classes who are participating, choose a total of 3-6 students from your school who showed great creativity, ingenuity, or thoughtful inventing. Please get the winning inventions to the person in charge of the assembly before it starts. During the assembly, I will call up each of the winners and show their invention. Then I'll give each of them some awesome *Sky Jumpers* swag and instructions for how to get their invention showcased on my website.

Thank you so much for all that you do! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.



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# SKY JUMPERS

## Design Your Invention

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Invention: \_\_\_\_\_

What does your invention do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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