

**Lego Explorers:
Taking Your Lego Play to the
Next Level**

**Presentation by Kayla Ferguson
Dubuque County Library District
kaylaf@dubcolib.org
563-582-0008**

**Lego Explorer Story Examples
A Pirate's Life
Jurassic Danger**

Lego Explorers: A Pirate's Life

Captain Blackboots of the dreaded pirate ship *The Black Shark* watched gleefully as the rival pirate ship, *The Blue Dolphin*, sank beneath the waves. That scurvy Captain Bluehat had dared to go up in a fight against them, but no one on the Seven Seas could defeat *The Black Shark*!

Blackboots smiled at his pet parrot who was sitting on his shoulder. "Now that's a sight I love to see, Rio, me matey. What do ye say we find out if that rumor about ole Cap'n Bluehat having a treasure map be true, eh?"

Rio flapped his wings and squawked, "Treasure map!"

"Aye, that be right," Blackboots said, stumping over on his wooden leg to the deck, where the rescued crew of *The Blue Dolphin* were huddled, surrounded by Blackboot's pirates. Captain Bluehat was unmistakable in his huge, bright blue hat, even though it was dripping wet at the moment.

Blackboots pulled out his curved sword. "Harr, a sad sight of a Captain ye be making now, Bluehat, me ole matey. Now since ye don't seem to have a ship, why don't ye be handing that treasure map over to yer ole pal Blackboots."

Bluehat looked wet and cold, but he still shook his head. "There be no treasure map. Me crew searched for months, but it was nothing more than ole wives' tales."

Blackboots grinned and brandished his sword. "Well, I think ye be lying. Hand over the treasure map or ye'll be walking the plank!"

"Walk the plank!" Rio squawked enthusiastically.

Bluehat started blubbing. "All right, all right, ye can have the map. Just don't feed me to the sharks." He reached into his overcoat and pulled out a waterproof bundle. Blackboots grabbed it and unwrapped it. "At last," he crowed triumphantly, "the map to the famous hidden treasure of Silver Reef will be mine!"

Challenge 1: Make the treasure map that will guide Blackboots to the treasure of Silver Reef.

"According to the map, we have to sail across the Cove of Jagged Teeth to the Cave of No Return," said Blackboots, inspecting the map.

"No return!" squawked Rio.

"Aye, but we will be returning and with treasure to boot!" said Blackboots. "Pirates, get ready the long boats!"

"Cap'n," said Crosstooth Wade, the First Mate of *The Black Shark*, "that be Jagged Tooth Cove we have to sail across. Everyone knows it be full of sharks that'll take a bite out of yer ship as soon as they see ye."

"Then we'll just have to be light and quick about it," said Blackboots. He pointed to three of his bravest and most loyal pirates. "Ye three, pick out our best longboat and let's get going."

Challenge 2: Make a longboat for the pirates, and it has to actually be able to float!

Blackboots and his three pirates got into the longboat and set off across Jagged Tooth Cove towards the large cave shown on the map. Their boat was so light and fast that they made it safely across, with only the sighting of one shark fin in the distance. They pulled the boat up onto the sandy beach and tied it to a large palm tree. Then they went to stand in front of the gaping entrance to the Cave of No Return.

"The map clearly marks that we must go inside to find the treasure," Blackboots said. "In we go, mateys."

They lit a torch and started into the gloomy cave. “Here on the map it be saying we should look for something like a large snake,” Blackboots said, pointing to the map. “Then we’ll know we’re on the right track.”

“Sure hope it’s not a real snake,” said Crosstooth Wade, who was not fond of snakes.

“Err, I be pretty sure it’s real snakes,” said One-eye Jack, who was up ahead with the torch. “Come have a look at this, Cap’n.”

It was a huge canyon right in the middle of their path. Below, they could hear the sound of tide water sloshing against sharp stones. By the light of the torch, they could see venomous sea snakes on the rocks. “There be no way across, Cap’n,” said One-Eye Jack. “What are we going to do?”

Challenge 3: Build a bridge that can span the canyon and that’s strong and wide enough for them all to walk across without falling into the water.

Safely on the other side of Snake Canyon, the pirates continued down the winding passage. “The legends say that Captain Redpatch of *The Red Kraken* was shipwrecked here on this island years and years ago,” Blackboots said. “He survived for eight years, living in this very cave. On the bay, he found the famous Silver Reef treasure and he brought it here and hid it in his cave. He was rescued years later and always meant to return to get his treasure, but all he ever made was this here map.”

Finally, they emerged into a huge cavern. Just like the legends said, there was evidence that someone had lived here a long time ago. There was a cot in one corner, a rickety table made from washed-up wood, fish bones on the floor, and even a big, old clock sitting on a ledge, though it had stopped ticking long ago. They circled the room, holding the torch high.

Blackboots pointed to a spot. “According to the map, ole Redpatch buried the treasure under his cot. Let’s dig it up, mates!”

They pushed the cot out of the way and starting digging. Sure enough, it was not long before their shovels hit something hard. Soon, they had cleared the dirt away enough that they could pull out the huge treasure chest. “But where be the key?” asked Crosstooth Wade.

Blackboots pointed to the map. “Redpatch hid the key, but there’s a clue here on the map as to where he put it. Hmm, it looks like it’s a riddle, mates.”

“I have a face, but no eyes, nose, or mouth. I have two hands, but I can’t hold anything. I can tell you what you want without speaking. What am I?”

Challenge 4: Solve the riddle and make the thing the riddle is describing.

“Of course, it be the clock!” said Blackboots. They all hurried over to the clock sitting on the ledge. There was a secret compartment on the bottom, and when they opened it, a large key fell out into Blackboots’s hands. The key fit perfectly into the lock.

The pirates leaned over eagerly as the lid opened, and sure enough, it was brim-full of silver and gold. “Harharr,” laughed Blackboots, letting the gold and silver coins fall through his fingers, “this be a day for celebration, mateys. We be rich! As I always say, a pirate’s life for me!”

Lego Explorers: Jurassic Danger

There were weird banging and whizzing sounds coming from downstairs again. Abby couldn't help but roll her eyes. Her younger brother Marcus was at it again with his crazy inventions. They never worked, but they always made all sorts of noise while she was trying to practice playing her guitar for the day when she'd be an awesome rock star.

Sure enough, she'd just started in on her newest song when her door slammed open and Marcus ran in, wearing safety goggles and waving a wrench. "Abby, Abby, I got it to work. You have to come and see!"

Abby rolled her eyes. "Your crazy inventions never work, Marcus. Can't you see I'm practicing?"

Marcus was undeterred. "It works this time. I tried it on Ginger," he waved his hands mysteriously, like a magician about to pull a rabbit out of a hat, "and she has gone back in time."

"Oh right, yeah, sure, you sent my cat back in time," Abby said. But then she thought about it. It had been odd that Ginger hadn't come from her lunch when Abby had opened her can of tuna and called for her. Better go and check to see what her crazy brother had done with her cat.

"All right, I'll look at your invention, but you better not have hurt my cat," she said.

"No worries!" said Marcus. He dashed off ahead of her. "Right this way."

Abby followed him down to the basement. It was filled with all sorts of junk and gadgets. "So where's this almighty time machine?" she asked.

"Prepare to be amazed!" Marcus declared dramatically.

Challenge 1: Build Marcus's time machine.

Abby stared at the beeping contraption. "Uh huh, so what time have you sent Ginger too?"

Marcus did his magician hands again. "I have sent her to the Jurassic period."

"Wait, what? Like with dinosaurs?"

Instead of answering, Marcus pushed her into the time machine and jumped in after her. He turned a gear, hit a blinking button, and cranked a gear. Before Abby could say "This isn't funny, Marcus" the machine started to spin and whiz. It was all Abby could do to stay upright.

It abruptly stopped. The doors opened with a hiss and Marcus jumped out. Abby stumbled out after him, still dizzy.

They were definitely not in the basement. All around them was thick, steaming jungle. A dragonfly with a head as big as a soccer ball whizzed right past them. In the distance was a smoking volcano.

"This does not look safe!" Abby said in a panicked voice. "Do you even know what sorts of creatures might be out there?"

"Of course, I do," Marcus answered brightly. He pushed a huge, thick book into her hand. "This book lists all the dinosaurs we might see."

Abby opened the huge book and started looking through it.

Challenge 2: Build your favorite dinosaur.

"Brontosaurus. Plesiosaur. Stegosaurus. Tyrannosaurus. Wait, like T-Rex? This is *so* not safe!"

"Oh don't worry. It's very unlikely we'll run into a T-Rex. And if we do, they're actually carrion eaters, so it probably wouldn't even try to chase us."

“I don’t like that you said ‘probably’. And I can’t believe you sent my cat here. She’s probably already been eaten by a Cat-eating-a-saurus.”

She started forward, calling “Here, kitty, kitty, kitty,” but Marcus pulled her back and pointed. A huge Stegosaurus with plates on its back and spikes on its tail longer than Abby’s arm lumbered past, chewing on a fern.

They started into the jungle, calling quietly for Ginger and on the look-out for dinosaurs. They spotted several smaller graceful two-legged ones with long necks that Marcus said were Ornithomimuses. Rustles in the dense foliage above proved to be a couple of bird-like Rhamphorhyncuses. Beside a creek was a herd of huge Brachiosauruses with necks taller than Abby and Marcus’s house.

There was still no sign of Ginger. Suddenly, there was a loud crashing sound somewhere behind them, like a gigantic creature coming through the jungle. “I really, really hope that’s just that Stegosaurus,” said Abby as they turned around.

A huge 20 foot tall T-Rex crashed out of the undergrowth, swinging its head around to look at them. Its mouth gaped open, showing off teeth as big as bananas.

“Remember, they’re carrion-eaters. They don’t like chasing live prey,” said Marcus.

The T-rex roared.

“Uhhh, I don’t think whoever wrote that book had ever met one,” said Abby. “It looks pretty hungry to me. Run!”

They took off through the jungle with the T-rex crashing behind them in pursuit. They were stopped however when they came to a rock wall that was too steep to climb. “Oh no, we’re trapped!” Abby shouted.

“Over here!” Marcus had found a little cave that was small enough for them to squeeze into but too small for the dinosaur. They crept in just as the T-rex snapped its jaws behind them and roared in frustration.

They crept along the tunnel until it turned into a bigger cave. “Hey, do you see a red light up ahead?” Abby asked. “And is it just me, or is it getting really hot in here?”

They emerged on a shelf inside a huge cave. Below them was a river of bubbling, smoking lava. “Look, we’re inside the volcano,” said Marcus pointing upward. Sure enough, they could see blue sky way above them.

“Great, either we go back and get eaten by a T-rex or we stay here and get boiled in lava,” said Abby.

“No worries!” said Marcus. “I have just the invention for this sort of thing.”

Challenge 3: Build a lava-proof vehicle for Marcus and Abby to use.

“OK, I have to admit this is kind of cool,” Abby said as they both climbed into the Lava-rover. They pulled the lid down for safety.

“Wait for it!” Marcus said. A big spume of smoke, steam, and lava shot up through the volcano shaft, catching the Lava-rover and propelling them upward. They shot up and up and up until they soared out the top of the volcano. Then the plummeted back towards the jungle below.

Thankfully, the dense trees softened their fall and the Lava-Rover bumped across the ground and skidded to a halt. They climbed out gratefully. “Glad we’re safe now,” Abby started to say.

They looked up and saw the T-rex standing at the edge of the trees, watching them. It started forward, but the Lava-Rover beeped loudly as the lid swung shut. The T-rex hesitated, looking nervous.

“Hey, it doesn’t like loud noises,” said Marcus. “We need to make loud noise and lots of it.”

“That gives me an idea,” said Abby.

Challenge 4: Build a rock guitar for Abby to play loud music to scare off the T-rex. You might also want to make something for Marcus.

The T-rex backed away from the loud noises then turned tail and lumbered off, looking for an easier and quieter meal.

“Woohoo!” the siblings shouted, giving each other a high-five. They stepped through a thicket of ferns and there was the time machine, just where they’d left it.

“Wait, but we never found Ginger!” Abby said worriedly.

“I think I hear something,” Marcus said, approaching the time machine. They opened the door, and inside was a ginger cat curled on a shelf sound asleep and purring.

“She was in here all along,” Abby said. “Now I definitely think it’s time to go home.”