



Tuning Up

A Visit with Eric A. Kimmel
by Eric A. Kimmel
Photographs by Basil Childers

Summary

This is a short autobiography by and about children's author Eric A. Kimmel.

Ideas for Classroom Use

Discussion Questions

Note: These questions are presented in sections in case you want to read part of the book and ask/share questions along the way.

Why does Eric like "The Ballad of Jesse James" so much?

According to Eric, what are some things that make a good story?

What are some of the highlights of Eric's time growing up as a child in Brooklyn, New York?

Why does Eric say to "choose where you sit carefully? It may change your life?"

Why do you think Eric says that growing up where he did is the reason he writes the way he does?

Eric's Grandma was a very important person in his life and influences his writing? Why?

What are some of the stories that Eric's Grandma inspired?

Why do you think Eric calls his work space his "Hobbit Hole?" What does Eric like to have surrounding him when he works? Why are these things important to his writing process?

Why are musical instruments important in Eric's life?

Why do you think Eric says that "books have been my best friends all my life?" What does that mean? Are any books you've read, some of your best friends?

Describe the steps that Eric goes through in writing a book.
What did you learn about Eric's writing process that surprised you?

What do we learn about Eric's neighborhood, his family, his pets?



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Responding to the Text

Celebrate Eric A. Kimmel Day! April 30th!

Eric's birthday is really October 30th. We suggest that you celebrate Eric's ½ birthday on April 30th so that it doesn't get missed in all of the Halloween or Fall celebrations. Below are just a few suggestions for celebrating.

Celebrate with a ½ birthday cake!...or cupcakes might be easier. Eric loves all kinds of flavors, so just choose your personal favorite.

Read Eric Kimmel Books!

Spend an hour reading some of the best books on the planet! Encourage kids to read Eric A. Kimmel books individually, in partners, or in small groups to one another. See how many books the entire class can read in one hour! Keep a running tally on your board and then let Eric know how many books you read on his ½ birthday this year.

Design your own "Hobbit Hole!"

What would your ideal work space look like? Eric surrounds himself with the things that inspire him and those items that he loves most. What will you surround yourself with in your "Hobbit Hole?" What things do you love the most? Instead of "Hobbit Hole", what will you call your special place where you can write and create? What exactly will you do in your space?

Teach children how to create a 3-dimensional paper triorama of their creative spaces. Encourage them to use their favorite art medium and/or paper to create the room of their dreams. Be sure to give children ample time to finish this and then to share and display their trioramas. Directions for making trioramas are at

www.maasd.ecsd.net/triorama_directions.htm