

# 27 iPad Apps for Elementary School

A short overview of iPad apps for digital storytelling, math lessons, science lessons, and social studies lessons.



# iPad Apps for School

written by  
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### **ABCya Animate**

With [ABCya Animate for iPad](#) students build their animations by drawing, typing, and inserting images. Students can change the background of each frame, include new pictures in each frame, and change the text in each frame of their animations.

[ABCya Animate](#) could be a great tool for elementary school and middle school students to use to create animations to use to tell a short story.

[ABCya Animate](#) is currently priced at \$1.99.

### **Tellagami**

[Tellagami](#) is a free iPad that elementary school students will enjoy using to create narrated animations.

If you have ever used Voki or GoAnimate, Tellagami will feel familiar to you. Tellagami allows your students to create customized animated scenes in a matter of minutes. Tellagami does not require students to create accounts or have an email address.

Consider having your students use [Tellagami](#) to create narrated animations of their favorite scenes from books that they've read. Or have them use Tellagami to animate parts of stories that they have created from scratch.

### **Doodlecast for Kids**

[Sago Mini Doodlecast for Kids](#) is an iPad app that allows students to create short whiteboard videos. Students can create short videos by drawing on a blank whiteboard. Students can record their voices as they draw on the whiteboard. Students who are struggling to start their stories can use one of the twenty-three story prompts offered by Doodlecast for Kids. A student's video can be up to three minutes long. Videos can be saved to a student's iPad's camera roll and or uploaded to YouTube.

Sago Mini Doodlecast for Kids is currently priced at \$1.99 USD



### **Story Wheel**

[Story Wheel](#) is an app for the iPad and iPhone that is designed to promote audio storytelling.

Spin the Story Wheel on your device and when it lands on an image, dictate a short story based on that image. When you are finished recording, you can play your story back with animations generated by Story Wheel.

You can try the basic Story Wheel app for free. To get the most out of the app you will probably want to get the full version of the app for \$2.99.



### **Collins Big Cat Apps**

The [Collins Big Cat iPad apps](#) are part short story and part story creation tool.

Each of these free apps, produced by Harper Collins, contains a short story that students can read to themselves or have narrated to them. The stories contain interactive elements that students can move around on each page of the stories.

After reading and or listening to the story in the app students can create their own stories using settings and characters that match the theme of the story they just read. On each page students can select a background, drag design features into the background, drag characters into the story, add text, and record their own narrations for their stories.

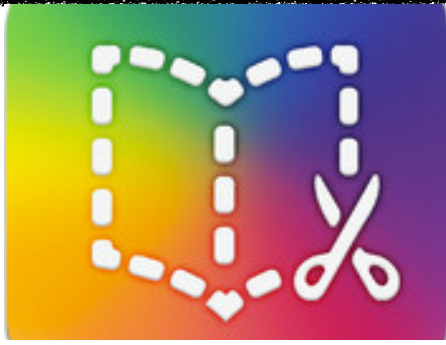


### **Little Story Maker**

[Little Story Maker](#) is a great little app that adults and children can use to create their own custom books on their iPads.

The app provides book templates that you complete with your own images, text, and voice narration. All of the books that you create are stored in your Little Story Maker bookshelf.

To create a book in [Little Story Maker](#) start by adding a title, add a cover image by selecting from your iPad's camera roll, then choose a template for your book. On each page you can add an image from your camera roll and type the text for your page. If you want to add narration to your book simply click the "record audio" button after typing your text. Then you can add narration that will play on the page.



### **Book Creator**

[Book Creator](#) allows anyone to create their own books using images, text, videos, and audio recordings.

You can arrange your book in three different formats; portrait, square, or landscape. Each page in your book can include pictures and videos from your iPad's camera roll and or from your iTunes library. In addition to the pictures and videos you can include as much as text as you can fit on each page. In fact, if you just want to have text on a page you can do that. If you would like to narrate your book you can tap the record button to add your voice to each page of your book. Every page in your book can have a custom color scheme.

You can try the app for free, the full version costs \$4.99 USD.



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### **PixnTell**

[Pixntell](#) is an iPad app for quickly creating simple narrated photostories.

To create a story using PixnTell all that you need to do is start a new project, select some images, place them in order, and then start talking about each of your pictures. You control the timing for each image. PixnTell allows you to crop your pictures, add text them, add filters to them, place fun stickers on your pictures, and draw on your images highlight a portion of them.

PixnTell could be a great app for students to use to create book trailer videos. PixnTell could be used by students to create short book reviews or book trailers. Have your students create drawings about their favorite books. PixnTell is available in free and paid versions (\$0.99 USD).





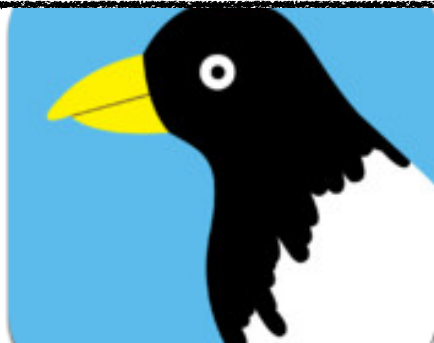
### **Easy Studio**

[Easy Studio](#) is an iPad app that children can use to create animated videos.

The process of creating a video on Easy Studio is a drag and drop process. To create a video a child drags shapes and characters into place on a scene. The process is repeated to create each new scene in the video. After all of the scenes have been created the child taps the play button to see how the video looks.

A child using Easy Studio for the first time can follow one of the six story templates to get a feel for how the creation process works.

Easy Studio costs \$3.99 USD.



### **Draw Your Stories**

[Draw Your Stories](#) is an iPad app on which children complete narrated stories by creating their own drawings.

The narrated stories contain prompts for students to draw things to fill-in the scenes. Draw Your Stories gives students small templates to trace to help them draw various objects into the stories they're listening to. Students can choose from a wide array of colors and brush stroke sizes.

[Draw Your Stories](#) provides one narrated story for free. Students can create as many drawings as they like in that story. Additional narrated stories can be purchased for \$0.99.



### **Puppet Workshop**

[Puppet Workshop](#) is a simple iPad app that you and your students may enjoy using to create digital sock puppets.

To create a sock puppet in Puppet Workshop select one of the socks from the home screen. You can decorate your puppet to your heart's content by adding buttons, strings, feathers, stars, and lots of other fun things to your sock puppet. You can enlarge, shrink, and rotate each element that you add your sock puppet. The background scenes behind your puppet can be altered too.

Puppet Workshop is available in two versions. The [lite \(free\) version](#) only offers two socks to design and has a limited amount of decorations. The lite version is more than adequate to use to decide if you want to buy the [full version](#) for \$2.99.

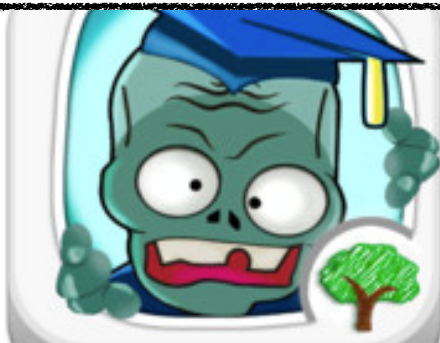


### **10 Monkeys**

[10monkeys](#) is an iPad app that elementary school students will enjoy using to practice their multiplication skills.

The premise of the game is that students have to free the monkeys by correctly answering multiplication questions as quickly as possible. Students earn points for accuracy and speed.

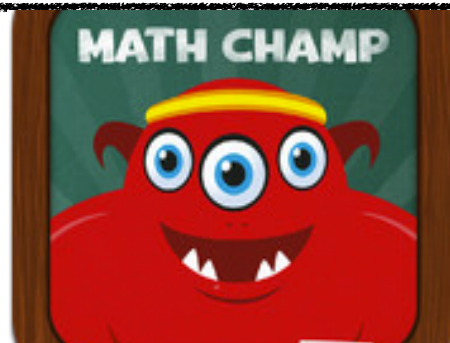
As students progress through the games they progress through the multiplication tables of two through ten. The last level mixes up problems from all of the previous levels. [10monkeys](#) provides multiplication tables as references for students to use when they get stuck on a level.



### **Math vs. Zombies**

[Math vs. Zombies](#) is a free iPad game with a spooky theme. The game has three virtual worlds each containing ten levels of basic math problems. The object of the game is to correctly solve as many math problems as possible before the zombies catch you. The math of the game is basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

If you're comfortable having your students play math games that have a zombie theme [Math vs. Zombies](#) offers engaging practice activities. Tap to Learn, the producers of [Math vs. Zombies](#), offers a few non-zombie math games if you're looking for something else to try on your iPad.



### **Math Champ**

[Math Champ](#) is a neat system of two apps working together to deliver math challenges to your students' iPads.

The [Math Champ Host app](#) is the app that you use to create classes and select questions to use in the quizzes that your students take on their iPads. With the host app you control when quizzes become active. The host app also lets you see how students are doing on the quizzes.

The [Math Champ Client app](#) is the app that students use to take the quizzes that you are pushing out to them. Students can compete to see who will become the "math champ" in your classroom that day.



### **Marble Math**

[Marble Math](#) is a fun mathematics game for kids to play on their iPads.

The game has students practice basic multiplication problems through a maze layout. Students are given multiplication problems to solve by rolling their marbles through mazes that contain the correct answers. Students have to avoid the incorrect answers while moving their marbles toward the correct answers. Students earn points for each maze they solve. When they reach 2,000 points students earn a new marble.

Students navigate mazes by dragging their marbles with their fingers. For an extra challenge students can navigate the mazes by tilting their iPads to make their marbles roll.



### **Motion Math**

Motion Math is a developer of iPad games for kids for pre-K and elementary school students. Motion Math currently offers five iPad games. My favorite of the games is Hungry Fish.

[Hungry Fish](#) is a simple iPad game in which students have to feed a fish the numbers that the fish wants. As the game progresses students have to add numbers to feed the fish.



### **Fetch Lunch Rush**

[Fetch! Lunch Rush!](#) is a neat use of augmented reality to create a mathematics lesson for young students. The free iPhone app (it also worked on my iPad 2) was developed by PBS Kids. The purpose of the app is to get kids moving about a room in search of numbers that are the correct answer to the questions posed to them on the app.

Students read the arithmetic problem on the app then search out the correct answer. When they think they have found the correct answer they scan it with their iPhone or iPad to find out if they are correct or not.

The app allows up to four players to use the same device.





### **Simple Physics**

[Simple Physics](#) is an iPad app that presents users with fun and challenging engineering problems.

The app has twelve challenges that progress in difficulty as you move through the app. The premise of each challenge is the same. The challenge is to create a structure like a bridge or staircase that can support a given amount of weight. You're given a budget for materials for each structure and you have to stay under that budget. When your structure is complete, test it to find out if it will work.

One of the things that makes the app good for students is that if they try to use virtual building materials that are too big, too small, or too weak they will see that immediately as they build and test their structures.



### **Marine Missions**

[Marine Missions](#) is a free iPad app from National Geographic.

The app features a series of educational missions for elementary school students to complete. As students complete the missions they learn a little bit about ocean life and marine conservation. For successfully completing missions students earn pieces to use to create their own marine creatures.

Students have the choice of using their fingers to tap and move things in the [Marine Missions](#) challenges or tilting their iPads to make things move. I tried it both ways and found the app to be much more responsive when I was in tilt mode than when I tried tapping and moving objects.



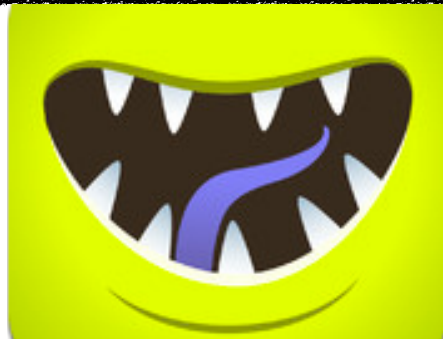
### **Kids Boats**

[Kids Boats](#) is an iPad app through which students discover animals of different climate zones.

In Kids Boats students navigate a boat down a river avoiding obstacles and collecting stars. Along the river students will find animals native to the climate zone that the river is in. At the end of each river students will see the animals of that climate zone.

Students can make boats move through [Kids Boats](#) in three different ways. The simplest way to navigate the boats is to drag and move the boats. Students can tilt their iPads to make the boats move. The third way to make the boats move is to blow on the iPad (near the microphone) and the boats will move.





### **Bill Nye Science Guy**

Kids love learning about science with Bill Nye The Science Guy. The [Bill Nye The Science Guy iPad app](#) is a free iPad app on which students can watch Bill Nye videos, play games, and discover kitchen table science experiments to do at home with their parents.

The app is beautifully designed. Students enter the app by “scanning” their thumbprints. After entering the app students select an object on Bill Nye’s desk. Each object launches a new element of the app. My only complaint about the app is that in the video section it looks like you have to buy the videos (it’s an option) even though you can watch them for free.

### **Healthy Heroes**

[Healthy Heroes](#) is a free iPad app designed to help children learn about healthy snacks and meals.

In the free app students feed healthy foods to a friendly monster. Before each activity students are shown a few healthy foods and they’re told a bit about the nutrition and calories of the foods. Then in the activity students tap mystery boxes to find the snacks and drag them to the monster’s mouth. Between each activity a short, healthy eating tip is played for students to watch.

[Healthy Heroes](#) could be a great app to include in an elementary school lesson about health and nutrition.

### **Discovery USA**

[Discover USA](#) is a geography iPad app that takes students on a tour of natural and man-made landmarks across the United States. Students are guided by an animated owl that talks to students at each stop on the tour. At each stop students learn a few facts from the owl. Before moving on to the next stop in tour students have to tap objects to answer some questions.

Students keep track of their progress in [Discover USA](#) by collecting animated bees to put into a hive. Bees are collected at each stop in the tour. Parents can monitor the progress of their children by creating a free account.



### **Tiny Countries**

[Tiny Countries for iPad](#) is a fun geography app.

The purpose of the app is to help students learn the locations of 75 countries, their capitals, their notable cities, and some of their unique geographic features. Students learn this information in a game format. The scenario of the game is this, students have to help capture the “evil” characters (the characters are farm animals) by correctly answering the questions faster than the evil characters. Before trying each of the missions students can review each of the countries by tapping on the “learn” icon in the game.

The app is currently priced at \$0.99 USD.



### **Geography Drive**

[Geography Drive USA](#) is an iPad app that challenges students to drive their virtual cars to each state in the United States.

Students move from state to state by correctly answering questions about each state that they visit. Students earn money for each correct answer. That money is then used to buy fuel for their cars and customize their cars. Students can also win trophies for accomplishments throughout the game. The game has more than 750 questions about state and national geography. Students will find questions about physical and political geography. There are some history questions mixed in too.

The app is currently priced at \$3.99 USD.



### **Kids Discover**

Kids Discover publishes a series of interactive magazines for kids to use on their iPads.

The [Galaxies issue](#) students learn through text, videos, and images. In the app students can take short quizzes to test their understanding of the materials they’ve seen. In the app students learn about nebulas, black holes, the Milky Way, and how telescopes work. [Kids Discover Galaxies](#) also includes some short biographies of famous astronomers.

Kids Discover Galaxies is appropriate for elementary school students. Most of the Kids Discover issues cost \$1.99 to \$3.99, but the [Galaxies](#) edition is available for free. Both the free Galaxies issue and the paid issues have received high marks from reviewers.

# About the Author

Richard Byrne is a Google Certified Teacher and author of the award-winning blog Free Technology for Teachers. Free Technology for Teachers received the Edublogs Award for Best Resource Sharing Blog in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.

In 2012 Richard received a MERLOT Classics award for contributions to helping educators discover and use educational technology.

In 2010 Richard was a finalist for ACTEM Technology Educator of the Year.

Richard has spoken at numerous conferences and schools in North America and Europe. If you would like help implementing the use of the tools and more in your school, please contact Richard.

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Image Credit: Ken Shelton

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