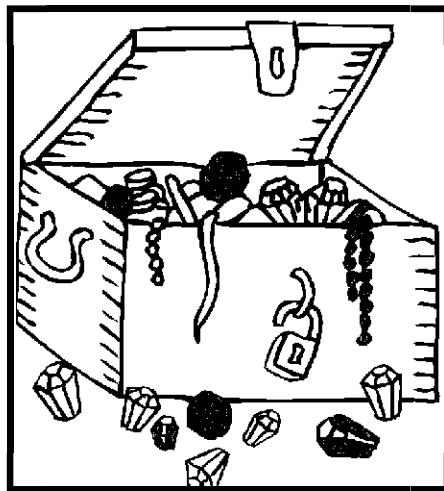


Primary  
Success  
Publications



# The Grade One Treasury



The 'Grade One Treasury' is a collection of ideas that were published in the "Share-One" Newsletter in the issues from 1999 to 2004. We must thank the hundreds (maybe thousands) of teachers who were willing to share their expertise to help others. Your superior knowledge and generosity has made this collection possible.



Published 2004  
Primary Success Publications

# The Grade One Treasury

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# In the Beginning....

## Ideas for the First Month of Grade One



"I firmly believe (and all my teacher friends who have taught Grade One and gone on to 'easier' Grades Two and Three) that Grade One is THE most challenging, time-consuming, important, curriculum-dense, and rewarding grade any human being can possibly teach!! One of my friends said to me the other day (she was a great primary teacher for 20 years) that no one respects Grade One teachers the way we should be respected. She further said that "Grade One is an island. It stands alone in education and is unlike any other grade taught." I like that. It is an island - and you can only understand that if you've taught it."

"My one bit of advice about Grade One (and any grade) - if you set high expectations for them and teach them to be responsible for their own work, you will be amazed at what they can do...even at this age."

'Primary' means first in time, order, or sequence; first or best in degree, quality, or importance; fundamental, basic, or elemental.

## Advice For a New Grade One Teacher

"Is there another Grade One teacher in your school? If you can make friends with her/him and try to match what she is doing for a year....perhaps ask your principal to assign someone to you as a mentor/teacher so they know it is their "responsibility" to help you out....if you are the only Grade One teacher, perhaps you can find someone in a school near yours ... it is nice to have someone to bounce things off. If nothing else, talk to the Kindergarten and Grade Two teachers to find out where they are at the end of Kindergarten and where they should be at the beginning of Grade Two."



### I Can Read!

"A couple of weeks before school starts I send each child a letter to introduce myself and to let them know how excited I am to meet them. I include a sandwich baggie and ask them to find a label at home that they can read to put inside it. (For example, Coke, Cheerios, Kleenex, etc.) I ask the children to bring the baggie on the first day of school. Each child gets a turn to 'teach' the class their word. Each bag is hole punched, put onto a ring and - voila! A class book that everyone in the class can read on the first day of school!"

# Before School Begins...

Be prepared! Here are a few things to think about before the first day of school.

- Where do your students spend their time before school? If they come directly to your classroom, what will they do until the bell rings? How do you want them to enter the classroom?
- Where will your students line up after recess and lunch? Will you have one line or two? Do you have several ways of having them line up - e.g. alphabetical order, by colours, etc.



- How will you get the children's attention? Say something special, turn the lights on and off, ring a bell, raise your hand or use other hand signal, etc.
- Will you have student helpers - and if you do, how will you choose them?
- Do you have homework policies? What is your procedure going to be for collecting and recording homework? If you have a home reading program, how will you keep track of books?
- What is your policy about excusing children to go to the restroom during instructional time? Do you have bathroom rules prepared? You may want to find a male adult to take your boys (female adult for girls.....) on the first day to discuss the rules.
- Have you planned your first week of school? Plan more than you think you will need, as the children will either do far more than you think they will do - or far less.
- What type of behaviour reinforcement/positive discipline plan are you going to use? It is best not to use a chart or colour code system if you don't have to, but the system you hope to use should be planned.
- What other class rules and procedures are you going to have? Write them down before the first day of school, and spend time the first day explaining them to your students. Realistically, you'll have to go over class rules and procedures every day for at least a week, to help your students learn your expectations. It helps to model these expectations. You can have the children give you the 'rules' - they will give you dozens of small rules, and then you can bring them down to a few broad rules - the ones you have planned!
- What type of letter will you send home with students the first day of school? The letter can introduce yourself and outline your goals for the year, and explain your rules, procedures, and behaviour management plan.



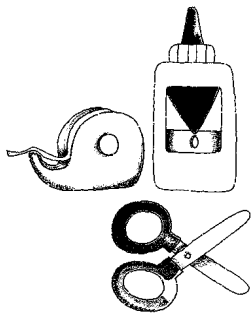
- What will you do about students who consistently don't complete their work?
- What are your policies for allowing children out of their seat during worktime? Will most of your work be assigned seatwork, or will your students spend most of their time out of their seats, doing individual and group learning activities?
- What is your plan for making sure that students who are absent are able to catch up their work? You can pop any work from a day into a file for the absentees if you feel that they must do everything done in class.
- Do you have cubbies or mailboxes for your students?
- Where do you want your students to keep their jackets, boots, shoes, backpacks, and lunchboxes?
- How will parents get information from you, and to each other?
- What will your rule be about interrupting you when you are working with a student or a group? Some teachers wear something special around their necks or wrists to show that they must not be interrupted - unless the interruption is extremely serious.
- What will your procedures be for parents who wish to see you or talk to you?
- How will you handle aides in the classroom or parent volunteers?
- If you get a special child, how will he/she fit into your classroom and procedures?
- What are your procedures for fire drills, etc.? Be sure to go over these the first morning, and take your students on a walking tour of the school, showing them where they meet and line up during a fire drill, if they aren't with you when the fire bell goes.



## **Things to do before the first day...**

- Make name tags for desks, coat hooks, bulletin boards, door, necklaces, helpers; on magnets, clothes pins and/or tongue depressors.
- Opening Exercises corner - Make or buy a calendar, weather chart, days of the week, months, today is ....., days in school chart, birthday chart, and tack up.
- Charts - alphabet, colour words, numbers and number words, poems, direction words, etc.

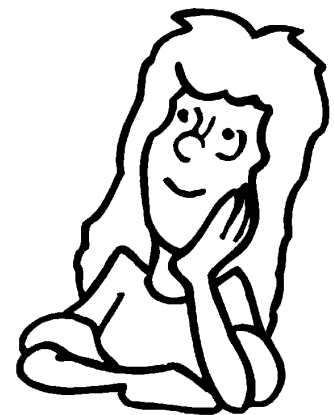
- Letters to parents and/or children.
- Prepare your computer files for each child and a data-base with emergency numbers, addresses, birthdays, etc.
- Rules chart.
- Review curriculum outcomes.
- Prepare a data-base or binder for marks and remarks.
- Know your programs and have at least one week's lessons, worksheets, flashcards, games, etc., ready.



- Have art supplies ready and paper supplies organized.
- Have plans for the handling of supplies.
- Have a decorated bulletin board with the children's names.
- One bulletin board should be covered and outlined, ready to put up children's work in the first week.
- Organize the classroom library, displaying books.
- Have books chosen to read to the class in the first week.
- Have a handy shelf for teacher's manuals, curriculum guides and useful books. Put boxes of themes and teacher "stuff" out of sight. If you have no room to put them out of sight, perhaps there is another place in the school - or leave them at home until you need them!
- Organize your own supplies - pencils, pens, ruler, chalk, scissors, glue, stapler, etc.
- Have file folders labeled with the children's names and portfolios ready.
- Understand your procedures - entering the room, bathroom, sharpening pencils, lining up, taking drinks, etc.
- And after all that - **relax and be rested for the big day!**

## **Good Advice!**

Buy *Getting Started in Grade One* by Primary Success Publications®. It will get you through the first 4 weeks.



## More Great Advice!

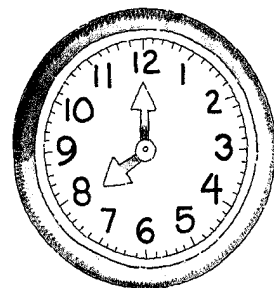
- Plan lots of little things to do - about 15 min per activity.
- Read lots of books - some with a follow up activity, some to enjoy, and some to choral read after they have read them with you. Plan on reading the same books several times.
- Assume they know NOTHING! You will teach them everything. Start with the most basic instruction. This is how we walk down the hall. This is what I expect you to do when your pencil needs sharpened. When you cut this is what you do, this is how you get rid of scraps of paper, this is how you paste. This is how you tear a page out of your workbook - do not be surprised if it takes you an hour to teach this.
- Work with the whole class until you find out what you have and have routines established.
- Plan all learning for the morning - after noon they will be dead in the water. Keep afternoons less stressful and fun for the first month.
- 

Get ready for the longest week of your life. It is exhausting for the children and you. It does get better.

Prepare yourself for the most rewarding year of teaching you will ever have. Grade One is a mission and a calling. At the end of the year proudly repeat to yourself - "I TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNOW! I TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNOW!"

\*Note: this is only good until August first when you go back to repeating to yourself -THEY KNOW NOTHING, THEY KNOW NOTHING.....

"This year I am going to make 11 x 17 place mats with their names, alphabet and the number line and then laminate them. This will cut down on the amount of glue that gets on the tables and it will be easy to move when they change desks."



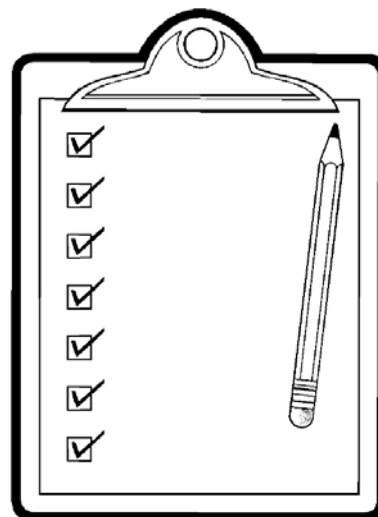
**Are You Ready?**

**Photocopy the following list of things to get ready before school begins.**



## Check List

1. Organize the classroom furniture. ....
2. Decorate the classroom. ....
  - Calendar bulletin board .....
  - Alphabet and numbers .....
  - Other bulletin boards .....
  - Word wall .....
3. Name tags - on desks, coat place, cubbies .....
4. Letters to parents/children .....
5. Organize supplies .....
6. Computer files (or binder pages) for marks and anecdotal remarks. ....
7. Review curriculum outcomes .....
8. One week's preparation: ....
  - daily plans .....
  - worksheets .....
  - flashcards .....
  - word wall words .....
  - games, breaks, songs, poems .....
  - books for read-alouds .....
9. Know procedures and routines .....



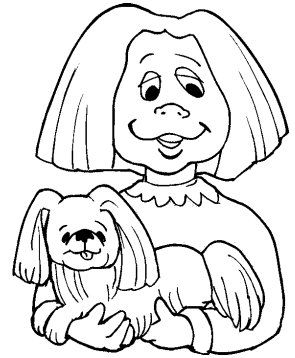
# Ideas and Activities for the First Day



- Read *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. Have each child trace a head and shoulders pattern and decorate it as themselves with yarn hair. Then they complete the sentence frame, 'I am important. I can \_\_\_\_\_.'
- For the first day graph have patterns of a bus, foot and car. The child chooses the one that represents how they came to school. This is an easy graph for the first day.
- Play the 'Getting To Know You' game. It works great with a snack like pop corn, pretzels, etc. Each child takes a handful, while sitting in a circle. For each piece they have they have to tell something about themselves. This is a delicious way to break the ice!
- Take a picture of each child on the first day. Take a head-and-shoulders shot with a plain background. This will be useful for many things - graphing, books, stories about the children, math, etc.
- A great book for the first day is *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. To follow up you can make a graph of the number of letters in each child's name.
- 
- Put a cut and paste book on Nursery Rhymes on every student's desk.
- Prior to the students arriving put their names on their lockers and on their desk and have a number of extra name tags ready for new students or changes to the class list.
- As the students enter write their names on their supplies. I try to have a mom or two helping as it does make things go easier. I have plastic tubs for my students so we put all the extra books, pencils, etc., into their tub and everything else into their desk. You can also use small plastic bags.
- Teach a poem and the letter Aa on the first day.
- Have the children's names printed on lined paper for them to trace and print on their own. Keep this sheet and put it into a binder which will hold a collection of different work the children do over the year. This is a great way to show off their work during parent-teacher interviews. It allows the student, the teacher and the parents to see how the student is progressing.
- In math introduce the number and concept of zero. You can also start on sorting objects which will move into patterns.



- Learn two new words. I am \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the afternoon, have a center time.
- Try to have gym especially if the weather is nice enough to go outside.
- Have the students draw a picture of their first day of school to take home to share.
- Play one or two getting to know you games or name games.
- In a postcard sent home before school starts, ask each child to bring in a 'favourite thing' to share on the first day. Introduce yourselves, share your favourite things, and then draw and write about it.
- Read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, by Eric Carle, and then go around the story circle playing a name game. Start by looking at a child and saying, 'Sue, Sue, who do you see?' The child answers, 'I see Aidan looking at me.' And so on around the circle.
- Play counting games with manipulatives, sing the alphabet, match upper and lower case letters, etc.
- Take a tour of the school, and practice fire drills
- Have the children draw a portrait of themselves after looking in mirrors and talking to one another about how special they are. Read 'I am Special'. Put these up with pictures taken with the digital camera and then file them and at the end of the year have them again do a portrait and compare them.



*Sing to the tune of London Bridge -*

This is <Emma>

We're glad she's here, glad she's here, glad she's here!

This is <Emma>

We're glad she's here.

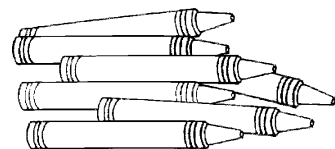
Say "Hello" to <Emma>. (and we take a minute to all say hello)

- Make the cover in the shape of a school house. The title of the book is *The First Day of School*. Each child has a book page in the shape of a school with the frame 'Today is the first day of Grade One. I want to learn all about \_\_\_\_\_' We share each page before we put it in the book. The back page is a comment page. As each child brings the book home their mom or dad can write a comment on the back.



## The First Week

- Establish discipline, so know what you are going to do in that area. When the children first come in they are so eager and will really listen to you, so try to think about procedures and how you want to do things, where you want things to go, routines for collecting papers, etc. If you get a routine going, it makes you and the children feel more secure.
- Early Grade One students tire easily. Plan a rest time after lunch and easy afternoon activities. When the kids come in from the lunch break, have the shades pulled down, the lights off, and quiet music playing. The kids can put their heads down for a while. This lasts for about 5 minutes. Then have them come to the circle and read a story to them. After this, do a fairly easy activity like art or respond to a story with a picture and a sentence, or do a whole class response. Teach a poem.
- Use lots of soft talking and acknowledge the length of the day. Afternoons are a good time for general learning centers, too, after you have modelled your expectations.
- You want to over-plan, but don't over-teach. Be ready to move on to another lesson when their attention spans max out. Alternate quiet and active lessons, too.
- Think in short segments, especially at first. Try to have the children printing or working at their desks for a short time, then have them doing something active, or moving to the rug.... vary the activity.
- Learn each other's first and last name when doing the Student News. In the beginning of the year, one student a day tells the class something special. Write it out starting with the child's name - e.g. "Katie has a new dog." Katie goes up to the board and reads the sentence by pointing to each word with a pointer. The class claps when she gets it right (in the beginning of the year some students may need help), then read it with her as she points to each word. Tap on each word as it is read. Later the students can read the sentence as it is spoken - faster and with inflection. Do 4 sentences a week, and each day read the sentences for the day(s) before.
- On Friday photocopy the four sentences and look for things using a yellow crayon, an orange crayon, and a green crayon - red is good for punctuation at the ends of sentences, and green is good for capital letters at the beginning of sentences. Look for sight words. Let students come up to the board and use coloured chalk, or highlighters on a chart.
- At the start of the school year, sit in the circle and select a question for the day, such as 'What is your favourite colour?' 'How many brothers and sisters do you have?' 'Do you live in the country or town?' Pass around a stuffed animal and when they get it they say, for example, 'Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my favourite colour is \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Read *My Head Is Full of Colors*, by Catherine Friend. The message is about all the things that you think about. After reading it the children do a follow-up activity where they write 'My head is full of \_\_\_\_\_. On our bulletin board your title might read 'My Head is Full of CHILDREN!'



- Learn names by doing the Cookie Chant. Chant with rhythm and lots of expression. Begin the chant standing, and each child sits down after he/she has had a turn so everyone gets a chance.

Leader: Who took the cookie from the cookie jar?

*Jackie* (child's name) took the cookie from the cookie jar.

*Jackie*: Who me?

Class: Yes, you!

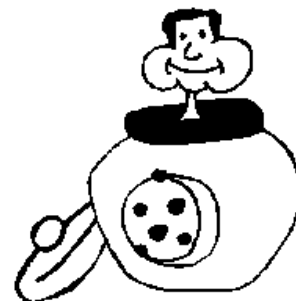
*Jackie*: Couldn't be!

Class: Then, who?

*Jackie*: *Liam* stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

*Liam*: Who, me?

etc., etc.



- Have the children write a similar poem. Put a picture beside each noun. This is good to teach the word 'a'.

School

*By Ms. Roberts*

A bus.

A book.

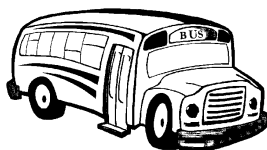
A pencil.

A crayon.

A child.

A teacher.

**School!**



- Play 'Name Games'**

Hickety, pickety bumble bee

Who can say this name with me? (*child's name*)

Let's all say it (*child's name*)

Let's all clap it (*child's name*)

Let's all whisper it. (*child's name*)

- Read *Mary Wore Her Red Dress and Henry Wore His Green Sneakers*, by Merle Peek. It's a short, simple, repetitive book. Then, have the children print their own in the same pattern as the book. The children can fill in the blanks on their page:

\_\_\_\_\_ wore \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ wore \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

on the first day of school.

*So, for example:*

Megan wore her blue skirt,

blue skirt, blue skirt,

Megan wore her blue skirt

on the first day of school.

Put a photocopied photo of the child on the corresponding page, read the book to the class, and then the children can read it themselves in the class library."

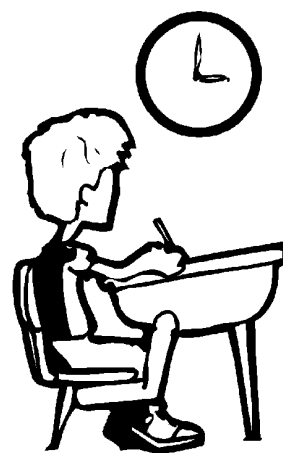
## Beginning of the Year Assessment

During the first two or three days of school, sit with each child (the others are drawing, looking at books, using math manipulatives or doing puzzles, etc.) and test them on the following items. It helps if you have an aide or parent volunteer to answer questions and help the other class members.

1. Can they read the alphabet, upper and lower case? (not in alphabetical order)
2. Do they know the sounds the letters make?
3. Can they read numbers from 1 to 10 and higher? (use a sheet that has the numbers on it, not in counting order ... all the numbers from 1 to 10, plus other larger numbers).
4. How high can they count, by rote?
5. How high can they count objects? (use 2 bowls and 100 teddy bear or other interesting counters, and have them count as they move them from one bowl to the other).
6. Do they know the names of all the colours? (use a sheet with colour circles, and ask them to say the colour names as you point to them).
7. Do they know their shapes?
8. Do they know their first and last name, address, phone number, and birthday?
10. Can they read any sight words? (I have a sheet with 18 or 20, easy ones like the, it, he, was, like, can).
11. Hand him/her a Level 1/Level A book, and ask him to read it. Hand it to the child upside down, so that you can see what he knows about concepts about print. If he CAN read it, give him progressively harder books to find out at what level he is reading. If he cannot read it, read a page to the child and ask him to read it back, pointing to each word as he repeats it - to see if he understands the concept of separate words.

All of this takes 10 to 15 minutes per student, and will allow you to quickly group students for reading and math small group instruction. Many of the skills above are kindergarten skills, but some of our children don't master them by the end of kindergarten. If they are VERY wiggly and inattentive, break their testing time into smaller segments.

You might also do parts of the Marie Clay Observational Survey beginning the second week, because it gives me a better feeling for where they are. Test them again on alphabet knowledge, If they didn't know all the letters and sounds the first time around. Using the OS, they get a point each for knowing: the letter name, the sound it makes, a word that begins with that letter. For example, many kids will look at the letter B and say 'bear'. That's worth one point, and it may be all they know.



## More Assessment Ideas...

"Before I start my assessment, I explain to the kids that "Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ is CLOSED when she's working one-on-one with a child, and you can only interrupt me for 'B' emergencies." B emergencies are bathroom, blood, and barf! They learn to respect my time with other kids, and they can almost always wait the few minutes it takes until I'm free to talk to them and help them with whatever they need. And they LOVE the idea of B emergencies. "

- It is helpful to ask the child a few questions. The answers will give you some insight.  
Does someone read stories to you at home?  
What is reading?  
Can you read?  
What is your favourite book?
- Read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* By Eric Carle. Then send the children to their seats where a sheet is waiting for them. There are two blanks at the top with a comma in between, where the child will write his/her name (e.g. John, John). Beneath that are the words "who do you see?" Filling most of the page is a large empty rectangle wherein the child draws a head-to-toe self-portrait. At the bottom, it reads "I see \_\_\_\_\_ looking at me."

After you have collected them, put the pages together with construction paper covers and write the name of the next person on the bottom line. The last page says "I see the class looking at me." On the inside back cover tape or glue a photo.

This is not only your first class book, but it's also your first assessment:

- Can they write their names?
- Do they know where to start?
- How are their letters formed?
- How advanced are their self-portraits? (These, by the way, are very helpful -- do they have bodies? hands and feet? mouths? hair? clothes? any width? what's the proportion to the paper? other objects in the drawing? etc.

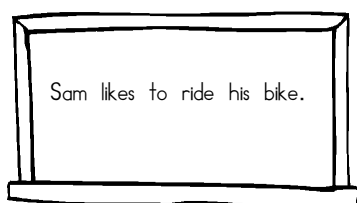
## Ideas for the First Days

"This year I made name tags for my students out of felt. I bought one rectangle for each of them and cut out an oval in the center. I wrote their names with fabric paint at the bottom. These slip over their heads and look like little collars. They wore them the first few days of school all day, and they are continuing to wear them to art, gym, music, library, and any time they come in contact with a teacher who doesn't know their names. They still look fantastic! They don't twist, tear, crumple, or turn around so that you can't read them like the cardboard name tags. These can be used on field trips, too."

Discuss school bus safety and write the rules on a chart. Each child then makes a school bus. Give each child a 9 x 12 piece of yellow construction paper. They fold it the hot dog way, then use scissors to round the 2 corners at the fold (this makes a flat-front bus, or cut out a rectangle on a folded corner to make a bus with a hood over the motor). The children glue 2 black circles on the open edge of the paper to represent tires on the bus and use crayons to add windows, a door, and children in the bus windows. On the inside of the bus, they copy one or more of the safety rules that are written on the board. To save time, you could prefold the yellow paper and draw cutting lines for children who have difficulties.

## Successful Opening Exercises - the First Week

"I always start out each day with some type of paper activity on their desk (called wake-up work). In the very beginning it is a colouring sheet to match my theme on my welcoming bulletin board and/or lockers. Those who finish early may look at books on the rug or read around the room. At my signal they are to put away anything they have out and to head back to their desks. Give lots of compliments when you see this happening... the others will want you to say nice things about them.

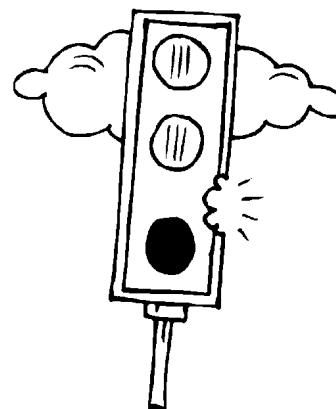


After the announcements, etc., I do a morning sentence on the board about them. e.g. I draw a name from a can of popsicle sticks, or clothespins, or slips of paper...whatever so I have all of their names... Then I ask that child to tell me something about himself/herself, and I give examples at first like...What is your favourite thing to do outside? Where did you go this summer? What is your favourite cartoon? etc. Then I might write on the board, "Sam likes to ride on his bike." The child comes up and gets

a pointer and points to each word as s/he says it. I help a lot here at first so they know how to do it. The first full day of school I put a sentence up about myself and use that. I put up a small picture to help them remember what it is about. I pretend I am a student and I go up and get the pointer and show them what to do. I take time to explain this because it is powerful for teaching students about word boundaries (as I write the sentences later, I talk my way through it and say things such as, "I need to leave a space here because this is a new word.") After the child reads it successfully with or without my help then we all clap, or do a silent cheer, or give a round of applause, etc. Then we ALL read it as the child points (I will hold their hand and help them point if they really don't get it yet) and we go SLOWLY and really point at EACH word. Then each child gets to pat his head or tap her shoulder and say, "Good Job!"...or something like that. I only do one sentence a day...4 days a week. The fifth day we do things with the sentence like colour the first letter green because it is the beginning of the sentence AND a person's name.....and green means go. We colour the period red because it is the end of the sentence and means stop. We MIGHT chose a sight word and colour it yellow every time we can find it. Keep it simple at first.

Then we go to the rug for calendar time...(this is a whole big thing of its own and has lots of learning attached to it...counting, patterns...lots of things. I start phonics work right away...mostly letter identification and sounds at first...I try to find interesting ways to do this.

These are just some ideas to get started. Use your curriculum guides. Make sure you fully understand the goals and objectives for Grade One. Get all of the manuals that are available for your grade. If you have someone to work with, find out if they have a yearly plan showing when to do certain things. "





# Bulletin Boards For A New School Year

Take a picture of every bulletin board that you do and put it in a photo album that you leave in my classroom. That way you can refer back to favourite bulletin boards of the past.

## We're All Here!

- Take a photo of your school and then copy the shape onto white paper so that it is large enough to just about fill a bulletin board. Cut out the windows and the school itself and tack it on a yellow background. The first day take digital photos of the children (head shots) on a plain background. Cut out the pictures to fit the windows and pop the children's pictures into the windows. You can title it "We're All Here!".



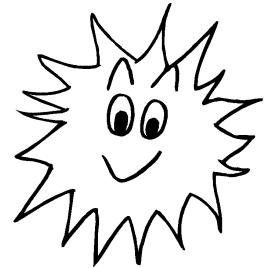
- This bulletin board can 'grow' as you make it. Cover a bulletin board with bright paper and title with 'Here We Are!'. The background paper can be decorated with the children's handprints. Fasten a piece of 18" x 24" coloured construction paper for each child to the bulletin board.

Print the name of each child on lines on a paper 3 inches wide and about 12 long. Each child follows the outline of his/her name with glitter, sequins or even with crayon or neon paint. This strip is glued at the top of the construction paper. Take a photo of each child. Information about the child can be added. Fasten the items up in the child's spot under the glittered name.

## Watch Us Shine

- Take a huge sun in the upper left corner of the bulletin board. Take thick yellow yarn from the sun to the names and pictures of the children.

- Make a huge sun. On the rays of the sun write the students' names. Then cut out the letters, 'You Are My Sunshine!' to go with this display. The kids like seeing their names on the sun and parents seem to enjoy the message.



- Make a big sun and add huge sunglasses usually found at the dollar store, then have little suns with the children's names on each.....title it..... 'I Have a Hunch - This is a Bright Bunch!'

## Adventures of a Bright Bunch

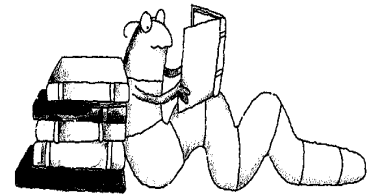
This is a great bulletin board which grows during the year - make a yellow brick road which goes up and across one of the walls in the classroom. Title it "The Adventures of a Bright Bunch". As the year goes by, add notes and/or pictures of special events on the road. Include new kinds of learning, visitors to the classroom, field trips, assemblies, etc., anything which the children deem important enough to add to the road. At the end of each month during Circle Time you can talk about all the things you have done and learned. As each month goes by keep adding to the list. On the last day of school you will have the whole wonderful year to discuss and remember!

### Names, Names

- Cut out the letters of each of the children's names in many different colours. Give them the letters in their names and they arrange them vertically any way they want and glue them together. Some kids go straight down, some like to kind of zig-zag it and some have come up with other ways. Gluing horizontally takes up too much room so glue them up and down. Laminate them, punch a hole in the top letter and hang them up. You can leave them up all year if you wish.
- Write each child's name in big letters on 6 x 18 paper. The children glue the bits of worn-out crayons onto the lines of their names. It makes an interesting display.

### Worms

Cut worm shapes out of wallpaper, and put a little face on each one and a child's name. Put a big book shape in the center of the door with a few corners missing and the bookworms all around. Label the book 'Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_'s Bookworms'.



### Feet!

- "Grade One - A BIG Step"

Make a big foot shape with a happy face on it. Cut out pairs of little feet for the children and put them around the big foot. Put the students' names and pictures with the feet.

- Putting Your Best Foot Forward

There is one footprint per child and the names are printed on the footprints. The bulletin board is used to display student work. Each Friday the students choose one piece of work (their favourite or best) to hang up underneath of their footprint. Some choose artwork, others choose stories they have written. The parents get to see new things up there all the time.

- 'Stepping into Grade One' - have an assortment of cut-out shoes with the children's names. Let the children decorate the shoes.

### Catch the Reading Bug!

Have the title on the board, and on the first day have the children draw and colour bugs with their names on clearly. Or ..... have a Volkswagen bug and the faces of the children looking out the windows.



### A Gentle Protest

For those Grade One teachers who have very large classes, here is a mild but effective protest:

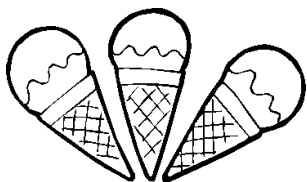
There was an old woman

Who lived in a shoe .....

Cut out a large boot and have the children's names on girl and boy shapes around it. You could also have the children draw themselves and print their names to put around the boot house.

### Treasure

Make a big pot with a rainbow coming out of it. Put gold circles to look like coins in the pot and wrote each child's name on a coin. Label it 'Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_'s treasures'.



### Ice-cream Cones

"Our Class Comes In (number of children) Flavours!"

Each child can make a large cone shape of brown construction paper with a scoop of their favourite coloured ice-cream on top. They put their names on the cone and their picture on the ice-cream.

### T-Shirts

- 'A Great Line-Up!'

Cut out brightly coloured t-shirt shapes. Print a child's name on each. Hang them with clothes pins to cords strung across the bulletin board.

- The first day of school take a picture of each child standing by a chart that says, 'My name is \_\_\_\_\_.' The kids write in their names. Make a t-shirt cut out of tagboard for each child. These t-shirts are hanging on a clothesline on the bulletin board as the children come in the first day. On each shirt is a child's name inside a cloud like decoration. The children may add simple decorations and colour. The caption over the clothes-line is, 'Grade One Fits Me to a T!' The photograph goes under the completed t-shirt.

- 'We'll Have a T-rrific year'

Make T-shirt cutouts with the names of the children. The children can decorate the shirts and the background might be a clothesline or big laundry basket.

### Fun in the Tub

Do you have a large class? Cut out an old-fashioned bathtub and mount on the bulletin board. Each child creates his/her face on a paper plate (or just a drawing), and adds yarn or crepe paper for hair, etc. All the heads are mounted above the tub. A poem to go with it - (this can be sung to *Popeye the Sailor Man*.)

There's too many kids in the tub,  
There's too many elbows to scrub,  
I've lost my knee, oh, where can it be,  
There's too many kids in the tub.

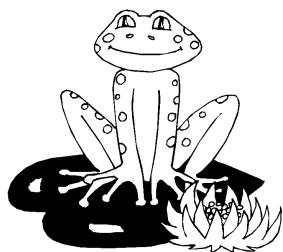


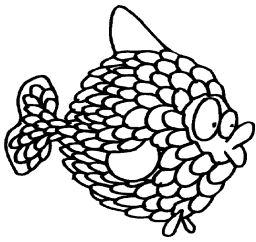
### Frogs

- "Take a Leap Into Grade One!"

Cover the board in blue. Make a large frog, with the teacher's name on it, sitting on a lily pad and surrounded the large frog with small, die-cut frogs with the names of the children.

- Place student names on lily pads and add a large frog to a board titled, 'I'm So 'Hoppy' You Are Here!' - or - 'Hoppy to be in Grade One!' - or - 'A Toadally Awesome Class!' - or—'Welcome to Our Pad'





### **Going Fishing!**

- "Fishing For a Great Class"

Cover the bulletin board to look like a pond and used brown paper to make a dock. Reproduce a child sitting and fishing and add each child's name on a fish.

- Cover your door with bright blue paper to represent water. Then use light blue paper to make 'squiggles' that look like waves. Find a fish pattern and bright paper to make one with each student's name on it. Title it something

like: 'Swim on into Grade One' or 'Welcome to our school' (a school of fish). You could also 'Leap into Grade One' using frogs sitting on lily pad.

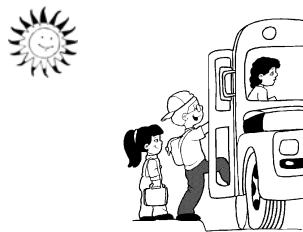
- 'Swimming into Grade One'

Make a school of fish swimming on a blue board with seaweed, coral, etc.

### **Off to School**

You can use the poem

Off to school  
We go together  
In September's  
Sunny weather!



Create a large school bus and put photos (or drawings) of your children's heads in the windows. Add your class name or the teacher's name to the side of the bus.

### **Popcorn**

- "Just Popping By or Look Who Popped In!"

Cut pieces of paper (one for each child) to look like popcorn and put a picture of each of your children's heads on kernel. Next make a popcorn popper and put it on the board.

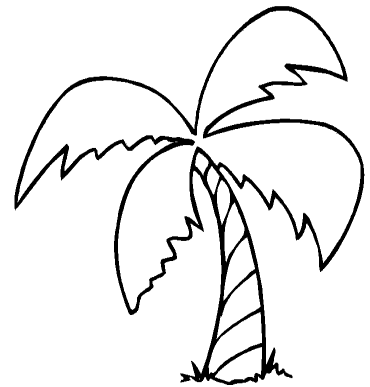
- "Popping Up in Grade One"

This one is easy to make. Cut out popcorn shapes from white tag and add the students' names and/or photos.

### **Chicka, Chicka Boom Boom - Look Who's in Our Room!**

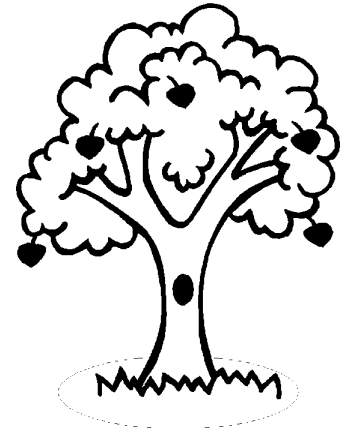
- Make a big palm tree (about as tall as the door) and tape it on. Then make coconuts for each child (a brown oval then a smaller white oval glued in the centre of the brown one. Write the names on the white part and crush shredded wheat cereal and glue it to the outer brown part. That is a little messy but effective. Put the coconuts up on the tree as well as some under the tree or falling off.

- Buy very colourful rainforest fabric and covered the tackboard with it. Some fabrics have lots of rainforest creatures on it. Then put up a coconut tree and put the kids' names on coconuts.



### Apples

- Make an apple tree on the wall by the door and put each child's name on an apple with the heading 'Look who dropped into Room 6'. Some apples are on the tree, others falling down, and still others are in a basket under the tree.
- Put apples on the tree with the children's pictures on them with 'We are a great bunch!'
- Make a large apple. Laminate it with a small picture of yourself on it. Then use cut-outs of apples and put the children's names on them. The caption can be... 'The apples of my eye'.
- At the beginning of the year- make a bulletin board that says, 'Ms. \_\_\_\_\_'s New Crop' with apples on a tree or another harvest fruit or vegetable



### We Are Stars!

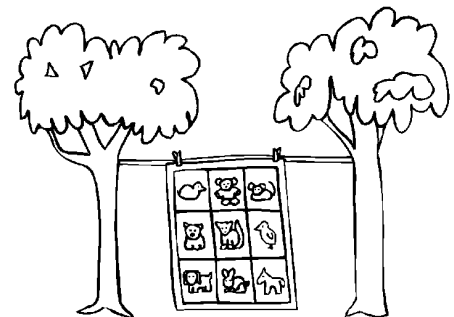
Make a large apple tree and put up the children's pictures and names on apples. Then one day in the first week, give each child an apple and cut the apples through the center to see the star. They can dip the apple cut in red paint and then make prints. Put the prints around the border of the apple tree.

### Colours

- This is a really cute "welcome back to school" display that is easy. Make a big paintbrush using brown paper for the handle, black paper for the brush, and a little strip of aluminum foil for the part that attaches the brush to the handle. Use coloured paper to add to the very tip of the bristles to make it look like it had been dipped in paint. Then cut out a bunch of paint blobs and write each child's name on a blob. The caption could be 'A Colourful Class'. A white background and lots of bright coloured paint blobs makes this really stand out.
- Find or make a crayon pattern and put it on different colours of paper. Then write the students' names on them and title it something like 'It's going to be a bright year' or 'Grade Ones are very bright'.

### Quilts

- Make a paper quilt using two colours of triangles. Perhaps one colour could be for the girls (right side up), another for the boys (inverted). Each child writes his/her name on a triangle piece with a drawing in pencil crayon of a favorite activity. Title it 'Our Class - Each is an Important Part'.
- Make a 'quilt' of construction paper. Punch holes in each of the 4 corners and then tie a bow of yarn from one square to the next to form a rectangle. Then staple this quilt to the bulletin board. Every month have the children draw a seasonal picture to go with the month. Staple their pictures on the construction pieces of the quilt. The label 'Our Grade One Quilt' stays up all year, as well as the construction paper quilt.

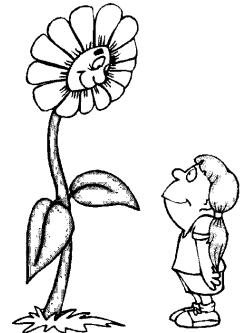


### 'We Go Together'

- This can stay up all year long. Make a quilt on your bulletin board. Staple up different coloured squares to make a rectangle, with enough squares for your students (4 x 5, 5 x 5, etc.) The squares can be made of paper or fabric sewn together. (Fabric is good if you sew - it doesn't show staple marks and it doesn't fade easily. It can be used year after year.....) Print a name at the top of each square. Now different projects can be put in the squares. For the first project, have the children make their faces using paper plates with yarn for hair. For autumn the children can do a leaf project, for Hallowe'en it can be changed to drawings of the children in costume, etc. The quilt background stays up and the squares can be changed often by stapling art or work projects.

### Sunflowers

- Make huge flowers with five or six handprints making the petals petal in various colours.
- Use a little poem about sunflowers and have the kids make sunflower masks (their faces in the center) and take a picture of them singing the poem together and swaying. Then turn the picture into a screen saver for the computer. After the picture taking, the children draw their faces in the flower centers and they go up on the bulletin board.



### Wild Animals

- 'We are WILD about Grade One!' Use pictures of lions, hippos, giraffes, and zebras for their names. Make the word 'WILD' with different 'skin' prints.
- Make a big dalmation with the words, 'Look who I've spotted in my class!'
- Make birds and 'We're off to a 'flying' start!'

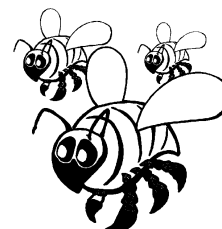
### A Circus Board

Have a ringmaster saying 'Starring Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_'s Grade One Class!' Have those neon coloured photocopy papers cut into star shapes and put the child's picture or names on each star (add a little glitter!). Some circus animals would also complete the bulletin board.

### Bees

- Use blue background paper. Sponge paint clouds, if you like. Put the bees on the board and use a marker to draw dashed lines behind the bees to show the 'flight patterns' (lines & loop-d-loops). Caption: 'Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Busy Bees'. Make a bee for each child. Use your computer to make fun-font name tags for each child (I would use a sheet of labels), and put it beside each bee. During the first day, get each child to tell something that they will be busy doing - i.e. 'I will be busy learning to read.' Write it on a white speech balloon, back-frame it with black paper, and put it on the board by the child's bee. An alternative would be to just use a few bees, but to post photos of each child. Make the speech balloons come from the photos!

Look at me  
I'm as busy as a bee  
On my first day of school  
At \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary!

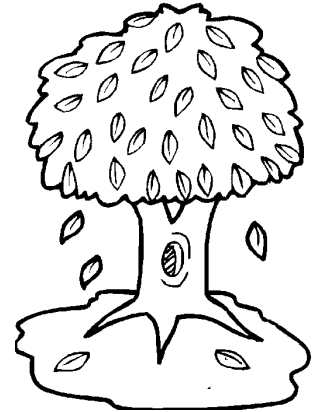


### It's Autumn!

- Make a maple tree. Use large butcher block paper and make big leaves of assorted fall colors. Make them stand out and look three-dimensional by placing tape on the back and puffing them in all directions. Place children's names on them and use the title: **EVERYTHING IS FALLING** (angle the letters)

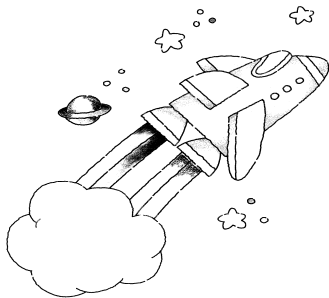
**INTO PLACE!**

This is perfect for the fall months. In October, there were falling leaves and you can put Halloween decorations up on it.



### Handy Ideas

- Have the children paint their hands and make handprints on chart paper or on separate papers and mount on the bulletin board. If you use the primary colours it makes a bright display. You can use the title 'One of a Kind Class'
- Have students help create a 'Handy Dandy Class' bulletin board on butcher paper. Place a class list in the center.



Try .....

Blast Off for a Great Year' - with the names on rockets.

'Mrs. \_\_\_\_'s Bunch' - balloons (you could have a clown holding them - the teacher!)

### **Names!**

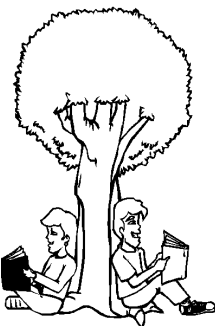
**K** is for kite  
**A** is for apple  
**T** is for turtle  
**I** is for igloo  
**E** is for elephant



# Classroom Management

## The Physical Classroom

- Provide 'visually quiet' areas of your classroom for students who are easily overwhelmed or distracted by too much visual stimuli. Bulletin boards, posters and student displays are wonderful decorations, but limit their use to just certain areas.
- Use a seating chart made with 'post-it' notes. This provides for easy movement of students on the chart.
- Each time you change to a new unit, you can rearrange the class room. Students are interested as soon as they walk into the 'new' room.
- Make your reading corner attractive by providing carpet squares to sit on. Some teachers have a couch or comfy chair. Have a basket full of Beanie Babies for the children to read to.



"The focal point of my classroom is a tree from floor to ceiling. At the beginning of the year I ripped pieces of brown paper so the children could paste them on the tree for bark. I call it 'The Reading Tree'. This is in my library area. Hanging from the ceiling are green leaves that I change to fall colours and in the winter the branches are bare. In the springtime the green leaves will appear. The area has two bookshelves filled with books and magazines."

- Sometimes children have difficulty seeing the book during storytime. You can have fat pillows, stools or large blocks of wood that will allow more children to see better. As the children like these, rotate their use by pulling name sticks or choosing a table, etc.
- It is helpful to have a secluded area in the room for children who are unable to display self-control and are instructed to leave the group entirely.
- Centres can be set up around the perimeter of the room. You can use tables and desks for these and rotate the centres every two weeks. The children move around to the numbered centres and check them off on a checklist after completion.

## Chair Pockets.....

- Teachers who have chairs and tables often find the children's personal supplies difficult to handle. One idea is to sew chair pockets. Chair pockets can be made in a variety of ways - they are a length of fabric folded as shown and the edges are sewn and turned (or they can be surged). The top pocket goes over the top of the chair back and the bottom pocket hangs behind for supplies.

You can use heavy cotton, denim or parachute fabric. The pockets can be colour coded to match your group or table colours. If your fabric has a right and 'wrong' side, the pocket can be cut in three pieces and sewn so the 'right' sides show outwards. Cut the fabric wider than the chair back for

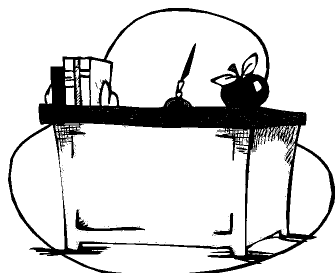


seam allowances, and decide what supplies will be in the pocket so the size will be appropriate. Cut and sew one pocket first, to make sure you have it right! Hem the horizontal edges. Wash them when they begin to look soiled. (It might be a very good idea to wash the fabric before cutting and sewing, as it may shrink.)

- If you plan on using them only one year, the children's names can be put on them with fabric paint or the children can decorate them. If you want to use them year after year, keep them bare.
- Here's how to make a chair pocket -take a length of stretch fabric and fold the ends to the center so that the ends were about 3 inches away from each other. Then serge (or sew) the 2 sides closed. Now turn one half inside out and put it over the chair and the other half is the pouch. You have to measure your chairs for the pouch width and measure how long of a pocket you'd like.
- Consider adding clear vinyl pockets to the outside of the pocket (3x10) so you can put name plates in there for each child and change them for the coming year or if the child moves, etc."

### **Organization of teacher's materials**

- Be a colour coder.
- A place for everything and everything in its place.
- Deal with every piece of paper as you get it. Act on it....file it...toss it out....refer it to someone else.
- Use your lesson plan book as a planner. Write down everything you need in it...even personal appointments.



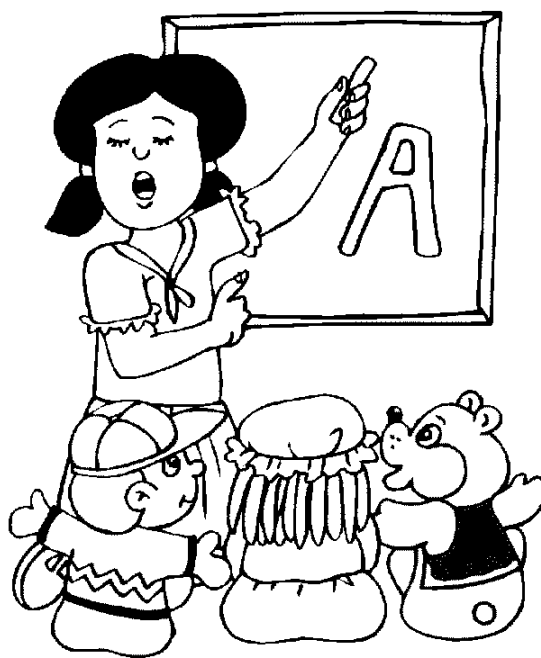
- Always try to clean your desktop before you go home. Once you make a habit of it, it will become second nature!
  - Be selective about what you keep on your desk. If you don't use it at least three days of the week, store it somewhere else.
  - Put a table or bookshelf near your desk and use it to store items that you need on a regular basis. Make sure it is for teacher use only.
  - If you don't want to have a desk, put your supplies in a rolling cart. Have a specific place near the door where people can leave you messages, etc.
- Instead of carrying books back and forth, home to school, get a suitcase with wheels or a canvas tote with wheels and a pull handle. The metal and cord suitcase carts are great for plastic containers and other things you need to take back and forth, as well.
  - Snip the top corner of all master copies so you don't accidentally hand out the last copy of something. Some teachers put a streak of yellow high-lighter on the masters.

"Another idea I use this year is having two sets of folders for lessons. I have one set in red labelled Day 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (we have a 6 day cycle) and another set in blue. This week is my red week and I have all the items I need for each day in folders, after the red day 6 it will be the blue week and this allows for me to plan ahead and place needed materials in the blue labelled folders before I'll need them."

- Whenever you create a unit or bulletin board, take pictures of it and store necessary parts in a file folder. When you are ready to do it again, pull out the folder and everything will be right there, especially exactly what it looked like.
- Have a file folder with pockets for each reading story. Put everything related to that story inside the file - spelling words, black-line masters, art ideas, overheads, word cards, etc. Write the phonics, comprehension, grammar, writing skills taught in that story on the outside of the folder.
- Have folders for all the math chapters, too, and science and social studies units. It's so much easier to find things. Re-file everything once a week or it will get ahead of you!
- You could have a big plastic tub for each month and put all monthly related stuff in there - bulletin board displays, stickers, art activities, window clings, etc. The related books to read in that month could be in a smaller tub.
- Have baskets for every day of the school week. As soon as you make photocopies, place them in the corresponding basket. You can also place the trade books you will be using that day in the correct basket. This way, you can come in the morning and have the day's basket all ready.
- Store sentence strips in the florist boxes they use to deliver long-stemmed roses.
- Use plastic boxes to hold files. They have lids and stack and look neat. They can be organized by months (and then any holiday/event) that month as well.

"I have had many compliments on my classroom. Friendly has been one of the words used to describe it. My room is an old style with big windows. The room used to have old ugly dirty shades and I bought flat sheets and dyed them yellow and did a little stitching to make a tube to put a curtain rod through and made curtains. That helped the room a lot. I then bought yellow gingham check material and some red with yellow, blue, and green letters all over it. I use it for my bulletin board border. My bulletin boards are basically the same all year round. My two small ones are my word walls. One for individual words and one for groups of types of words such as a list of compound words and a list of contractions. My third little board is my calendar. My one big board has laminated pieces of construction paper stapled up on it with two paper clips on the top of each sheet to hold up student work. I have a sign on it that says 'Take a

Look at Our Hard Work!' I just have to change the work. Around my room I have green and yellow laminated sheets of construction paper just like the bulletin board hot glued to the wall. The construction paper is all different sizes on the wall making a pattern. The students work looks like it has been framed. I also have plants in hanging pots; about six in front of my windows and then planters sitting on the window sill. I have found that the yellow and green keep me in better spirits through the gloomy winter."



## Time-Savers

"One of the things that I have learned to do to shorten the time it takes me to display children's work is to laminate construction paper and hot glue it to the wall or tack it up on a bulletin board. You can turn the either the portrait or the landscape way. After they are up attach two paperclips - plain are fine but the colours are pretty. After you have done this all you have to do is hang the student work up under the paperclips. The construction paper makes a pretty frame around the work."



- Any thing that you find yourself writing over and over again can be put on an address label. Keep a sheet of blank address labels on a clipboard to write any information that would be useful in anecdotal notes, and then just lift the label and insert it where you want it. When you receive your class list, make a sheet of name labels per child. This saves time labelling books, workbooks, journals, etc. for the entire year.
- Keep scissors, glue stick and a felt pen in your mail box in the office. Having these supplies close to the photocopier can be a real timesaver.
- Mark everything you can with each child. That way you don't have piles of marking after school, and the child can take the papers home that day.
- Make a plan book template on the computer using a spreadsheet. Keep a blank template and fill it in for each week. You will find it takes much less time than handwriting your plans. Print out two completed plans, and put them into a 3-ring binder facing each other, so the binder opened up is your plan book.
- Make a spread sheet containing information about each child - address, phone number, emergency numbers, etc.....post it by the classroom phone and in your daily planbook for easy access.
- Make a spreadsheet on the computer with an outline of your daily plans. Put as much as possible on it. Then print, and photocopy to save time writing the daily lesson plans.

"For the forms I need frequently I use a large capacity 3-ring binder with pocket pages. Each pocket page is labeled: notes to parents, office forms, behaviour forms, retention information, assessment forms, etc. I keep only the master copies of the forms in the appropriate pocket. This notebook has saved me lots of time when looking for forms I use regularly."

- Use a large 3-ring binder with dividers for Pre-Mid-Post Year tests, Benchmark tests, and the chapter tests from each textbook sorted only by subject. You might also want a section for the record-keeping sheets. Each time a test is needed you can go to the binder and find it quickly.
- Colour-code folders and notebooks to match the 4 Block colours: red, yellow, green, blue.
- Put stickers into envelopes by theme (Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving, etc.) File the envelopes alphabetically.

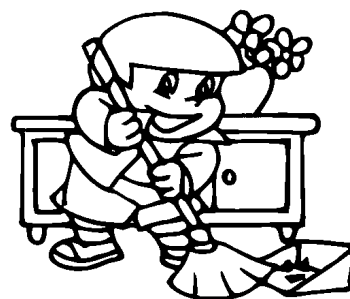
## Classroom Tidiness

"The first thing you have to do is admit to yourself that organization can never be done! Then try your best to come up with a system to 'try' and manage it. "

"Clutter is the sign of a disorganized mind and a lazy person - not something we want others to think of us at our job! Someone said 'A cluttered room is a place of shame' - perhaps a bit harsh - but it certainly lacks pride."

### Tips to keep a tidy classroom!

- Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. The minute that you see something out of place, say, 'Mike, please pick up that book and put it where it belongs.' Teach the children that the classroom belongs to us all and that we all keep it clean. Model this constantly at the beginning of the year. I'll pick up something and say, 'I noticed this piece of paper cluttering up our floor. Even though I didn't put it there, I'm going to pick it up because I want our room to look nice and neat.' On that same note, don't just pick up at the end of the day....do it all day long.
- Have a place to neatly put all papers that need to be re-filed and then do that each week. Each day would probably be better; but sometimes difficult to do.
- Have a time each week set aside to clean desks and clean and dust the room. The neater the children keep their desks, the less paper is floating out from them.
- Water plants regularly and shine their leaves....this really makes things look nice.
- Arrange your room so that the neatest area is what passersby look at as they glance in.
- Clean your desk off before you leave for home everyday. It is lovely to arrive in the morning and find a clean attractive working space.



"I have been able to keep my room neater by getting rid of my desk. I have a table, with a book shelf near it with my teachers guides, and a set of drawers on wheels that I keep my supplies in. I also have a caddy like what you would use for cleaning supplies that I can carry around the room with pens, pencils, scissors, etc."

- Keep students' work in coloured baskets.
- Put a tablecloth over a table that have boxes under it. You might also put Velcro around the sides of a table and add hemmed material. This might be done on the fronts of old bookshelves as well.
- De-clutter constantly. Throw things out. Don't gather piles and piles of activities to do for a book, holiday or activity. You won't do them all and you don't need a wide variety. Just keep the very best ones, the ones you actually use. Remember that having a clean classroom is a lot like housework. It never will get all done. Limit your cleaning and organizing to a short time each day - perhaps 15 minutes after school. Never leave the classroom untidy ..... you need to walk into the room tomorrow, look at it with pleasure, and get right to work, so it must be organized on the surface, at least. Make a list of daily chores and refer to it and stick to it.
- If you have a lot of bulletin boards, then consider putting the same border on all of them that can stay up all year.

"If you have a big cabinet or something that the eye is drawn to by size (and I have a huge tall built in cabinet that is UGLY), then decorate it very brightly and neatly. I have used the bright coloured solid contact paper that they sell in teacher stores and each door is a bright different colour. To tie it together, I've used two rows of the black and white checked contact paper."

### **Organizing your desk top**

- Always try to clean your desktop before you go home.
- Be selective about what you keep on your desk. If you don't use it every day, store it somewhere else.
- Use stacking trays or upright organizers (whichever you prefer) to hold important papers - better still - have a different place in the room to keep papers.
- Your desk is your private workspace. Make it nice! Add flowers or a plant, pencil holder - and get rid of everything else that you possibly can!



### **Keeping books in order**

"I took a couple of days last summer to put ALL of my own classroom library of books all around me on the floor. I organized them into about 15 or so groups like "favourite authors", fairy tales/folk tales, Eric Carle, Dr. Seuss, Non-fiction, Tomie dePaola, Transportation, Apples/Fall, Holidays, Feelings/Manners, Friends/Family, Dinosaurs/Dragons, and regular fiction that had no theme! I put a shape/number/letter that corresponded on a label on each basket AND on the cover of each book (in Sharpie) and the kids have had a GREAT way to pick a book and an EASY way to put them away. I rarely have a book in the wrong place because even early in the year the non-readers can find where the books go by using the shape. For example, Tomie dePaola has a T, Seuss has an S, Apple books - an apple, etc. I was absolutely amazed at 2 things - first, that I had so many books, and second, that the kids really are reading more because they can find what they want so much easier."

- Buy large multi-coloured plastic baskets or solid plastic containers for your levelled books.

"I am a true believer in tubing and displaying books to entice children. I really believe in the things that Jim Trelease says about book display -

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/contents.html>

Scroll to the bottom of the page and look at 'Rain-Gutter Bookshelves'. Cereals aren't arranged with the 'spines' sticking out toward consumers, even though it would probably take up a lot less space if they were. We buy with our eyes. Children are consumers - consumers of books."

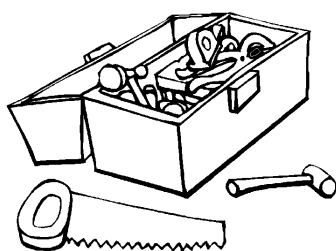
"I keep fiction book tables and counters on one side of the room and nonfiction on the other. This physical separation of these two main sections has been very positive. Even the kids that are not as quick on the uptake really understand this concept now. It has even carried over to their writing."

### **Organization of students' materials**

- Have the children keep their crayons in a small ziplock bag (with the zipper tab) instead of the box they come in or a margarine tub. Use a label and put the child's name on it. Each child can bring some of these zipper bags at the beginning of the year with their school supplies.

"I only ask for 'boring yellow pencils' on our supply list at the beginning of the year. One colour is easier for our 'community pencil' system. Then I have a 'dull' can and a 'sharp' can in the room. One of the kids' first jobs of the day is to come in and get a pencil from the 'sharp' can. If their pencil breaks, they simply get up quietly, put the old pencil in the 'dull' can, and get a new one from the sharp can."

- Use ice cream buckets that are placed under seats to hold materials such as crayons, glue, pencils, clay, snap-cubes and other manipulatives. The buckets can be placed on their seats at the end of the day to facilitate vacuuming.
- If you like to have your class share supplies, stress on your supply list is that you will be using the supplies as community property. Request that parents not put names on community supplies.



"At the beginning of the year I talk to my kids about the types of tools different workers have (construction, fireman, doctor, etc.). Then I tell them about 'school tools' (crayons, glue, scissors and erasers) that students and teachers use. At the end of each day I tell my students that they cannot get ready to go until their school tools are put away."

- Buy a huge jar of glue and the children have the smallest glue bottles. Fill them as needed.
- Use the little plastic milk caps (from the 2 litre jugs) for various things. One way you can use them is to pour glue into them and place one on each child's desk. Give the children a Q-tip and they dip it into the glue. This prevents the mess that occurs when they squeeze their glue bottles too hard.
- It is handy to have a table in the classroom where all work goes when completed. This makes it easy for the students to remember what to do with their workbooks, and you don't have to search through desks.
- Carefully pry off the little orange cap on the top of each new bottle of liquid glue. Take a Q-tip and coat the inside of the orange cap and the tip of the bottle where the glue comes out with a thin coat of Vaseline. Then snap the cap back on. This prevents the glue from sticking to the bottle and the cap. Or - spray Pam on the inside of the orange top..

## **Beginning the day**

"We have 'bell work' on students' desks in the A.M. which might be catch up work from the day before, but more often a fun activity like a word find, or colour words, etc. At least once per week I write a sentence on the board with 3 to 4 errors. The students have to write it correctly on paper with their name. After lunchtime outdoors, I have them put their heads down for about 5 minutes while I play classical music."

"I have the children's names in a pocket chart. Before they come to the carpet area, they flip their names over so they don't show. In the end, the names that are still showing are the children

that are absent. I always ask the kids who is absent - good practice reading each other's names at the beginning of the year."

- Since students often arrive at different times have some sort of activity page, journal, even a colouring page from time to time on their desk for when they arrive. Teach the children that they are to simply work on what is on their desk. This takes about a month to really become effective. Later in the year you might have them start with silent reading first thing in the morning.

## Getting their attention

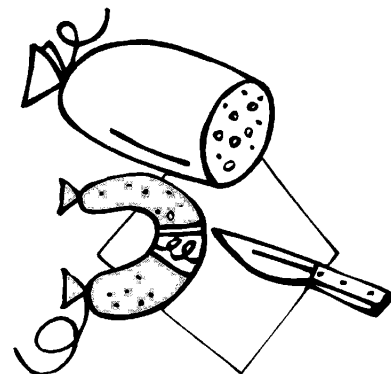
"Something I do when I want to be sure the kids are looking at me is play 'catch my wink'. I look them straight in the eye and wink at them. They wink (or blink if they can't wink) back at me. They can only do it if they're not looking around."

- If you want the children to be quiet.... have them close their eyes. Only do it if they will be safe of course... they have to pay attention to what they are doing and that makes them quiet.
- Raise your hand as a quiet signal, with the thumb and pointer fingers forming an L (Look, Listen, and Lock Lips). Have the children raise their hands, too, until everyone is quiet.

Some ideas to get attention:

1. flick the lights
2. clap a pattern that the students have to repeat
3. If you can hear me tap your head, if you can hear me tap your head and rub your belly, if you can hear me tap your belly and rub your head, snap your fingers behind your back, roll your head,' etc., until the whole class catches on and is doing it.
4. Raise your hand and wait until everyone else has raised his or her hand. It seems to go around the room quickly and they know that this is a signal to have mouths closed and eyes up front.
5. Keep an instrument that you only use when you want the children's attention. A rain stick is a good choice because it makes a quiet noise, but it is easily heard.
6. Start a chant such as A, B, CDE. The students echo and wait for instructions.
7. Say, 'Stop, Look and Listen'.

"I announce the word, 'Salami'. This stands for: 'Stop And Look At Me Immediately'. I have this on a poster on the wall. When I say this, I put my hands up in the air, shoulder height. Then I go into actions they have to do with me, and I don't say anything. I may reach up with one arm, then the other, or cross arms and reach up, then down, reach way over to the left or right with both or one arm, swing large or small circles with one or both arms, roll my head, etc. Good stuff for brain activity, I get their attention, and they join in. At times, when I need the students' attention and we don't have much time, I just say 'Salami' and put my hands up, I just put my hands back down, and make the announcement I need to make. This has worked well. I like that it's quick, and quiet."



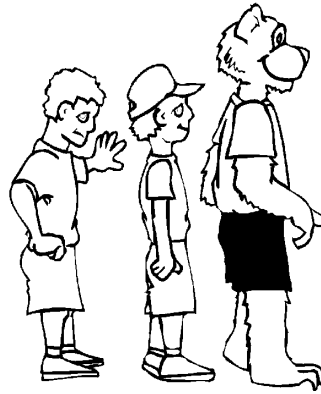
## Lining up and going places

Every line needs a leader (*point to the front*)  
And it needs a caboose, (*point to the back*)  
You need to stand straight (*stand very tall*)  
And you need to be loose, (*wiggle the shoulders*)  
Don't push, don't shove (*push away from chest with both hands and shake head no*)  
Everything will be fine...  
As we walk, walk, walk (*march in place*)  
In our straight line.  
Let's walk, not talk (*sign walk and shake head back and forth for no*)  
Let's go walking..... (*in a whispery voice*)

### Lining Up

I will not shove, I will not push,  
I will not try to pass:  
I will not lag behind the rest,  
I'll line up with my class!

- Do a chant with the students before leaving the classroom. Say, "Hey", the students say, "Ho", say, "Are we ready to go?" They say, "Yes!"
- Have a line leader. The line leader will do motions in the line while walking and the rest of the line must copy. It keeps the students focused on the front of the line.



"I've used the 'Magic L' to help my children line-up. They know that we don't leave the classroom until everyone has formed an 'L' with their left hand. The first day of school we discussed the correct direction an 'L' goes ..... if they do it correctly it will also designate their left hand. Before they can put an 'L' up they have to be looking forward, 'lips' are closed and ears are 'listening'. They have also discovered 'L' for line!

- Use this poem at the beginning of the year.  
Walking through the hallways  
We all QUIETLY go  
Taking care, all the way,  
To walk on our **MARSHMALLOW TOES**.



- Have the kids walk with peanut butter lips and marshmallow feet.
- Make the end of the line the most coveted spot by calling it 'The Caboose'. This person gets the very important job of ensuring our lights are shut off each time we leave the room.
- Have the students line up in alphabetical order. Whoever is the person of the day is the first one in the line, the rest have to line up in order starting at that letter. They get really good at learning how to put things in alphabetical order and you can easily tell who is missing.



Just when it was time for the students to line up at the door, the teacher announced, "O.K. everybody, let's be flying chipmunks!" The children all puffed out their cheeks as full as possible, opened both hands wide and anchored their thumbs on either side of their heads near their ears and 'flapped' slowly as they made their way to the door. When asked the purpose of this flying chipmunk routine, the teacher responded, "It keeps their mouths closed and their hands to themselves while they line up."

- We do the hallway poem before we leave to go elsewhere in the school:  
I'm giving myself a great big hug.  
I'm standing straight and tall.  
I'm looking straight in front of me.  
I'm ready for the hall.
- Have the children line up by number, but each day a different number starts the line. Today #14 was first in line and then 15, 16, etc. Number 1 is behind the last student followed by 2, 3, 4, etc. Tomorrow, # 15 will be first in line. This way everyone gets a chance to be first in line AND last in line.

## Transitions

- Five minutes before lunch stop all lessons and have each group of children (usually 4 at a time) go to the book shelf and pick 2-3 books and then put them on their desks, get their lunch boxes and line up to go to the cafeteria. When they come back after their playtime they know to sit down quietly. Give them a 15-20 minute DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read) where it is SILENT and INDEPENDANT reading time. They must read the books they have picked before lunch.
- One of the things that helps cope with transitions is to start singing a familiar song, or starting a clapping rhythm, or reciting a memorized poem, etc.

"I always use music for my transitions. I find that by the second week of school the children know exactly what to do when the song comes on. Makes it a piece of cake for subs, too. I choose specific songs for each transition and begin using them on day 1 and continue for the entire year."

*To 'If You're Happy and You Know It'*

If you're ready and you know it clear your desk.

If you're ready and you know it clear your desk.

If you're ready and you know it then you'll really want to show it.

If you're ready and your know it clear your desk.

If you're ready and you know it look this way.

If you're ready and you know it look this way.

If you're ready and you know it then you'll really want to show it.

If you're ready and you know it look this way.

Lift your chin,  
Sit up tall!  
Nothing on your desk at all.



- At the very beginning of the year take the time to teach the kids how to pass papers. Give papers to the first person in the row and show them how to take one and pass the rest. Also show them

how to hand things in by starting at the end of the row and passing them forward. This is a simple tip that can be a real time saver.

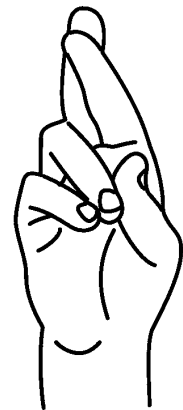
"'Quiet Time' is the time when we come into the classroom after break. No one is supposed to use a voice. Everyone goes directly to his/her seat and waits for the story of the day. I teach the children some basic sign language signs throughout the year, and they are allowed to use these 'words'. Table helpers supervise the quiet at their own table (but only with sign language!)."

"I use a 5 count most often and the rule is to be ready to work at the end of the 5 count. I think transitions will work well when you are consistent with how you handle them."

- Put a piece of tape or a mark on the floor away from the class sink This is where the kids begin their line to wait to use the sink. This allows them to use the sink one at a time.
- Try giving your children a 'one song break' during which you play an upbeat song and they can go to the bathroom, get a drink, or just move around the room and chat, dance, etc.

### **Bathroom routines**

- Instead of an interruption of "I have to go to the bathroom!" Show the children how to raise their hands with their fingers crossed in the sign for restroom. All you need to do is nod at them.
- Use a 'bathroom bear' or 'Beanie'. A child who is going to the wash-room must get the bear and put it on his/her chair, and replace it when he/she returns. No one can go until the bear returns to be used again.



"This year I combined my attendance and bathroom procedure into one. I got blank magnetic strips which have white writing spaces on the front. I put each of their names onto one. Near the door I have a metal chalkboard. I made a box shape on the board where I wrote "I am here". In the morning, they have to move their magnet into the box to let me know they are present. Throughout the day when they need to go to the bathroom, they move their magnet outside of the box. I can easily look over and see who is here and who is not. It's a great time saver!"

- Make two passes made from coloured recipe cards labelled boy and girl with pictures. Add a ribbon to each and hang them on hooks by the door. If the class is working and the teacher isn't talking or giving instructions, the children will know its fine to use the bathroom. They take the appropriate pass from the chalk rail and set it on their desk. When they return, the pass goes back on the hook.

"I have a poster on the wall right by the door with the girls' names listed on the left and the boys' on the right. There are clothespins clipped at the bottom. Each time child leaves the room, he/she clips the appropriate clothespin to his/her name. The clothespins are coloured according to the location: red for the girls' bathroom, blue for the boys' bathroom, green for the office, yellow for Learning Assistance. By looking at the colour clipped on the poster, I can tell who is where."

## Names on Papers

- Say... "Put your finger on your name, put your finger on your name, and...put your finger on your name." For some reason, saying it three times really does help!
- At the beginning and often during the year, especially with very important papers, say, 'Clap your hands twice when your name is on the paper' or 'sit hands clasped', etc.

"I had a problem with papers being handed in with no names. Finally, I explained to my students that not putting your name on your paper is like not putting your underwear on! Yes, it got lots of giggles, but they all put their names on their papers from then on!"

- Say that everyone who has their name on their paper can put a smiley face by their name. Tell one of the kids 'You wrote your name on your paper so nicely. Let me get you a sticker!' The rest will hurry and get their names on their papers.

*(tune - If You're Happy and....)*

Write your name on the paper. Write your name.  
Write your name on the paper. Write your name.  
Write your name on the paper  
Write your name on the paper.  
Write your name on the paper. Write your name.

*or:*

Oh the first thing on my paper is my name.  
Oh the first thing on my paper is my name.  
Oh the first thing on my paper,  
Oh the first thing on my paper,  
Oh the first thing on my paper is my name.

*or:*

Oh the first thing on my paper is my name.  
Oh the first thing on my paper is my name.  
Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ needs to know  
Who did this work and so  
The first thing on my paper is my name.

### Writing Names on Papers

The first thing I do is always the same,  
I pick up my pencil and write my name!  
And then when work is finished:  
The last thing I do is always the same,  
I check my paper and look for my name!

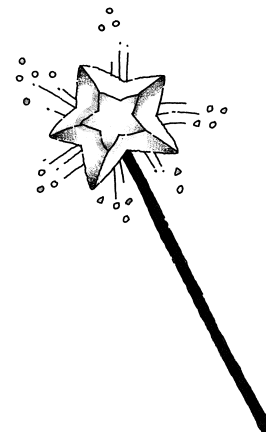
- At the beginning of the year, make a basket with a sign. The sign is a sad puppy with the words, "Nobody loves me". Place papers without names in the basket. Give the students a time frame to check the basket and reclaim their paper. Papers that are unclaimed are put in the trash can in front of the students, with an explanation.
- As papers are given out or notebooks are opened or workbooks, etc. Chant 'NAME AND DATE' and have the children repeat 'NAME AND DATE'. Do that 2 or 3 times. Then stop and say 'First you said it - now you do it!'
- Keep a highlighter by your desk. Have the children highlight their name as they hand their paper in. Grade One's love to use the high-lighter, so they won't forget to put names on their papers.
- Have your students put not only their names but their numbers on the paper.



## **When you are finished....**

Here are a few of the activities for students do when they are finished:

- Number Club Book. This is a bound book of blank 100 grids. Have the children write their numbers starting with 1 and just keep going. Once they write up to 100 they become members of the '100' club. You might also have a '500' club and a '1000' club.
- Keep a binder filled with things to do such as word searches, dot-to-dots, math worksheets, colouring pages, handwriting practice pages.....this book could reflect the themes or lessons that you are working on.
- Read the Room' using special sunglasses or a magic wand. You could have home-made binoculars made from paper towel rolls that have been cut in half and glued together.
- 'Write the Room' using a pencil and a clipboard, a dry-erase board, magic slates.....
- Have some quiet theme/lesson based centers that children can work in.
- Keep a basket with fun activities in it — special puzzles, surprise books, etc. .
- Keep a caddy of books on each group of desks, and change them often.



## **Helpers**

"Each of my kids has a daily job to do at the end of the day.....which by now we can pretty much get done in about five minutes. We change these monthly, and I let kids choose what job they want next whenever possible. My bulletin board just says simply 'OUR DAILY JOBS' inside a great big heart...then I found very large heart push-pins that I wrote the kids names on with a sharpie pen...the jobs are written on small heart cut outs, and the push pins with kids' names can be moved around each month to mark their new job.

### **Some classroom jobs:**

- \*Cubby Keeper (this person tidies all the cubbies, making sure big, flat items are on the bottom and water bottles standing straight up)
- \*Pencil Sharpeners (two kids use electric pencil sharpeners to sharpen pencils for the next day)
- \*Book Basket Boss (makes sure all books have been put back in book baskets and in the correct baskets)
- \*Dusters (two kids use electro-static dusters to dust the room)
- \*Sweeper (one child sweeps floor; trying to work dust and trash over by the trashcan...we do not have carpet in our rooms...of course, our janitor sweeps at the end of the day, but this helps him out a little)
- \*Paper People (2 kids pass out take home folders and make sure everyone has a Book-It note to take home in their library book for the day)
- \*Bookshelf Boss (tidies student bookshelves, makes sure all books have the spine facing out)
- \*Extra Job Person (does jobs for those who are absent and helps me with anything else that needs doing)
- \*Center Person (tidies Center tubs and makes sure they are ready for the next day)

\*Chalkboard Person (erases chalkboards)

\*Chair Person (Stacks chairs on table...this person also takes chairs down the next morning)

\*Pencil Policeperson (this is one of their favorite jobs....this is the only person who has permission to open desks and look for 'stray' pencils that haven't been turned in...we all use the same kind of pencils which are kept in community pencil cans labeled 'dull' and 'sharp', and sometimes kids forget to turn theirs in at the end of the day or somehow accumulate extra pencils in their desk.)

\*Desk Cleaners (three kids who get one wet-wipe each to clean everyone's desk with...if their wet wipe dries out, they get to give it one squirt from a water bottle and then keep cleaning)

\*Clipper (this person puts lunch clips back in their spot for the next day, and makes sure homework clips are arranged neatly in order, also)

### **More classroom jobs:**

ERRAND RUNNER

GARDENER - waters the plants

BOARDS

MAIL - have student helpers to help with distributing papers into the appropriate boxes.

CENTERS - check them at the end of center time or the end of the day to make sure everything is picked up and/or to dust, etc.

FLOOR PATROL - clean up and collect any lost items and put them in the lost and found box.

HOST/HOSTESS - The Host/Hostess would greet visitors, make them welcome, show them around, answer questions, etc.

LIBRARIAN - responsible for straightening all the shelves

ZOO KEEPERS - If you have hamsters, guinea pigs, fish or other pets in the room, this group is responsible for their care.

INSPECTORS - Check the classroom for untidiness or jobs not done well.

### **Clean-up**

"I believe that children are able to concentrate better in an environment that is neat, organized and attractive. Many Grade One teachers seem to think that 'more is better', and there is a tendency to fill every inch of space with 'stuff'. I think that when the room has too much clutter the children rarely look at any of it. How do you feel in a house that is untidy, with 'junk' littering every space? If you were an office worker, would your classroom be a place you would like to work? There hasn't been any research done on whether children learn better in a beautifully clean tidy environment with tasteful décor, but I would bet that they are happier, quieter, and do better work!"

Twinkle, twinkle little star  
Time to clean up where you are  
Put each thing back in its place  
Keep a smile on your face.

- Do the 30 second clean-up at the end of the day to get excess trash off the floor, straighten desks, tables, etc. Children love trying to beat the clock and get back to their seats before 30 seconds is up.



- When you paint, put newspaper on each desk, or make tables of 4 with newspaper. Try squirting the paint right on to the newspaper instead of using containers. Then when you are done just roll up the paper. Have the children put brushes in a bowl in the sink and clean them later.



"I often use something like the 10 second break...but I tell the children that I think magic elves come into the room and then I cover my eyes and count slowly to 10 (or perhaps 20 if need be) They love to scurry and tidy the floor, etc., and then be sitting back down when I uncover my eyes - thinking they have played a great trick on me. I deal with the other tidying chores by assigning one job to each child in the room ( I don't rotate jobs - that way they become an automatic part of their day). They are mostly quite small jobs. For example, three people are responsible for the paint table each day. One gets fresh water, one renews supplies and checks the brushes, and one washes the surface at the end of the day."

"I have solved the 'messy desk' problem in my classroom while using the desk fully (the inside, outside, etc.). Once or twice a week (minimally once) I will out of the blue - sometimes MID-LESSON or MID-SENTENCE yell 'DESK CHECK!!!!' There are individual and group prizes for perfect desks."

- When cleaning up, play Go Go Stop!
- Have the desk fairy come and visit the classroom and leave a small treat in the clean desks about once a week. Desks will be kept very tidy!
- Everyday before recess, lunch and going home, call 'Floor Check!' and each child has to get down and check under their immediate area.

"I have solved my pigpen problems by assigning one kid each day to be the table captain. I just put a coloured dot on their desk name plate. The captain's job is to check out the table at the end of the day and at various times during the day. The captain does not have to clean up after others but can call them back with a reminder. The table that looks the best in the afternoon gets to keep King George ( a realistic looking roaring lion) on their desk for the next day."

- Clean the chalk off your boards with a Puffs Plus tissue with lanolin. It takes off all the chalk.

"One of my favourite 'tried and true' tips for a quick classroom clean-up is 'Mystery Spot'. I tell the students I've chosen a 'mystery spot' (it might be a paper scrap on the floor, scissors not put away, chairs not pushed in, etc.) and tell them they may begin cleaning. Whoever finds the mystery spot wins a small reward."

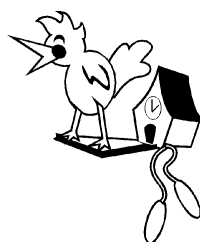
- Every morning draw a name stick and inspect that student's desk. If it is neat and there are no loose papers the student gets to have a little Beanie Baby type animal all day.
- Keep baby wipes handy for quick hand washing without a mess.

- Empty popcorn containers from the movies make great scrap buckets. You can put one in the centre of each table. The kids place their scraps in there whenever they are cutting.
- After a cut-paste craft project, play a game called '3,2,1, vacuum'. They compete to see who can pick up the most pieces of paper.
- Have a small vacuum and a whisk and dustpan. Kids love to use them!

## The end of the day

"We get our 'mail', backpacks and lunch boxes, and a 'three-count' drink. They listen to our class novel (and if there's time sing some familiar songs). We end the day with our 'goodbye song':"

Goodbye, goodbye  
The clock says we're done.  
We'll see you tomorrow.  
Goodbye everyone!



- At the end of each day, have the students decide upon a word or drawing that sums up or highlights the learning that day. Put these on cards, mount them on the wall and continue to string them around the room as the year progresses. The children will go through them often, remembering the interesting days.

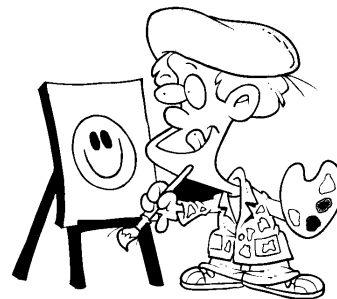
"I have a time that I call Closure. The children do their afternoon jobs (chairs etc.) and then we meet at the circle area. I have a little stuffed animal dragon and you can only speak if you are holding the dragon. We go around the circle and say 'I had a good day today because..'. At the end I get the dragon back - I also start the circle - and then I pass out their home/school folders. They put them in their backpacks and then line up at the door for dismissal. It has made the end of the day much calmer."

## Homework and Parent Communication

"I started sending home a set of 3 or 4 worksheets stapled together. On top is a 'Homework Coupon' copied on a half sheet of yellow copier paper. The worksheets let the parents know the spelling and vocabulary words. I also include worksheets that demonstrate what phonics or math skill we are emphasizing that week. (There are lots of worksheets that you will never use in class.) The coupon reads, 'Please have your parent sign this form and return this homework coupon for a special sticker on your homework chart.' A cover letter at the first of the year told the parents to do the 'home' work with their child and only return the coupon. The packet is sent on Monday or Tuesday and the coupon is due on Friday of the same week. I don't ask for the worksheets to be returned. The emphasis is on teaching the child responsibility of getting the papers home and the coupon back, and on letting the parents know what we are studying in class. The children love to see their chart get full of stickers and I can tell at a glance if someone is not making the home-school connection."

"I send a folder home every night. Each child has a mailbox where all corrected work, notes, calendars, notes from office, party invitations, anything goes during the day. Then I load the folders at night and send them home. Inside each folder I have glued a monthly calendar that lists library days, field trips, etc. Every morning the children unload their folder and put their homework in my mailbox."

"Happy notes: I keep a stack of small photocopied 'from your teacher' type notes on my desk. I try to send home one each day (to one student, not everyone!) and sometimes a few at a time...just little notes like 'I noticed Billy concentrating on his work today!' or 'Sarah lent a pencil to a friend who needed it today' things that they might need encouragement with. If you have the notes ready, you can just grab one and jot a message with the date. They love getting them."



"Our school bought folders that are very sturdy and look laminated with our school name on the front, school motto on the bottom, and the inside left pocket says 'take home' ...the right says 'bring back'. On the back are the four school rules. They give one to each child."

- Put your folders into large two gallon plastic baggies....they last all year.
- Run your pocket folders through the laminator and use an exacto knife to re-open the pockets. Be sure to put a cute name tag on the front. The folders will last until June.
- Send all the vocabulary word sheets home on neon coloured paper and don't use it for any other type of notes. It is easy to find when in a pile of papers. Chose a different colour of paper to send home letters. Warn the parents at the beginning of the year to look out for certain coloured papers.

## **Management odds and ends**

### **Magnets**

- Peel and stick' magnetic tape is wonderful! It can be cut to any length. Use it for your word walls or for the back of name cards or for anything else! They are super if you have metal chalkboards.

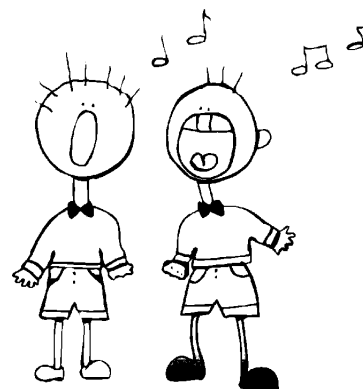
"I make small magnetic names of pupils and keep them on the chalkboard and find them useful to remind me such things as who needs extra help, who is out of the classroom (child posts name before leaving room), who hasn't completed work, who has corrections to do, etc. It prevents me from forgetting as it's so visual and using the magnetic names is so much more efficient than taking the time to write the names."

- Keep a big magnetic clip on the blackboard next to your desk and keep all extra papers in that clip. At the end of the week, pitch the papers that are no longer in use. Anything from work-sheets from memos to the office can go in the clip.
- Assign everyone in your class a number. Go alphabetically by their first names. They quickly learn their number and it is very handy in many ways. All the coat hooks, mail boxes, and book boxes are numbered, and you don't have to change name tags with each year.



- Make a class list on your computer with a little line next to each name. Keep several copies of this on hand at all times. It comes in so handy when you have to keep track of who hasn't returned a permission slip, who still needs to finish a particular project, etc.
- Bathroom tile board makes individual dry erase boards for student use.
- Nail polish remover works on dry erase boards that accidentally get regular markers used on them. Another way to remove permanent marker from a white board, trace over the writing with a dry erase marker and then erase with your regular white board eraser. Hair spray sometimes works, too!
- Cut tennis balls and put on the legs of desks and chairs and you lose the scratching noises.
- Use plastic snap hooks to hang posters, charts and maps around your classroom. They can easily be taken down for testing or to replace with new information.
- Tape a pen cap to your plan book and always put your pen in that spot. This way you always know where your pen is.
- A good way to help kids know how you want them to place their paper in front of them or to fold their paper is to say 'hamburger' or 'hotdog'. Hotdog is tall and skinny and hamburger is the opposite.
- If you use chart paper, laminate it and mount to your easel. Use the erasable markers. When you are finished with the sheet just spray with water and wipe with a soft cloth.
- Let one person divide the playdough but the other gets to pick which one he/she wants first.
- Keep an extra pair of kid size jogging pants and a t-shirt. If kids fall or get wet, etc., etc. they can change in the washroom and parents can wash them and send the clothes back the next day.
- Keep a list of parents' names and phone numbers by the phone in your classroom as well as a pen and a notepad.
- Get your kids to make their own lunch/snack mats. They draw a picture on a piece of paper, glue it on a larger piece of tagboard, and get them laminated. This way, your tables/desks don't get dirty.
- Put each puzzle into a ziplock freezer bag putting a letter onto the back of each piece (one puzzle has the same letter on each piece), cut the picture off the front and put it in the bag too. When you find loose pieces on the floor, you can find the puzzle with the matching letter and put it together.

"One thing that really works well in my class is singing - we have a song for just about everything - a good morning song to start the day, songs to get their attention, songs to reinforce skills, songs just for fun. Sharing songs builds a great sense of community and parents love them, too. The children have 'I Can Read' folders that contain the songs they've learned - they add their own illustrations. This year my class even sings in line for all the mothers who are waiting there for me to come and pick up the children each morning. It's such a nice way to begin your day!"



"I always have a few free clipboards. I keep about 4-6 free for a centre called Writing Around the Room, however when I have to remove a student from a table for talking or lack of cooperation I simply put them on the floor beside me and hand them a clipboard. They have an instant desk and I don't stop my lesson. Once they agree to co-operate I take the clipboard back and they can go back to their group. They can also be sent to the hall with these to work with a buddy or the TA."

"When someone gets chosen to do something or perhaps a group gets chosen, I say 'What do the rest of you say?' and they all chorus, 'Oh, well, maybe next time.' It really helps with the disappointment factor and kind of puts a funny slant on it."

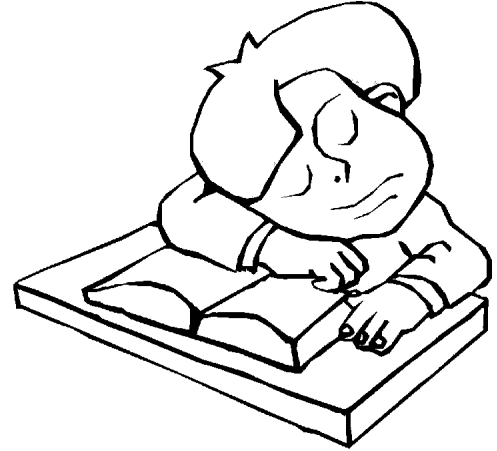
- Use Velcro on name tags. That way when they change desks, they just take off their tag. The name tags can have 100's charts, ruler, alphabet, and number line on them. They can take the name tags to centers with them as a helping resource.
- Print a class list of first names in large letters and post near the door. This is the leader of the day list (also, errand runner, etc.). An arrow that is paperclipped moves down the list to denote the assigned child that day. This helps with learning names - also the children spontaneously count number of days until it is their turn, etc.
- Make sets of address labels and name labels to use on 'praise' postcards sent home and to use in their books, workbooks, and journals.....it saves a lot of time. With the sets of address labels you can readily see how many postcards you have sent to that parent.

"A very helpful organization tool for me is putting the students names on craft sticks and placing the sticks in a container to be drawn randomly when I need extra helpers. I band the names after selected until every name has been selected and we start again. The kids love the fairness and it keeps me from overlooking some of those quiet ones or the rowdy ones you would rather overlook. Last year I actually had 4 different cups with all the students' names for different reasons: book nook, sharing after writer's workshop, extra helpers, and computer. It really solved lots of problems for me and the kids never complained who was selected."

- Instead of carrying books back and forth, home to school, get a suitcase with wheels or a canvas tote with wheels and a pull handle.
- Put a yellow highlighter dot in the upper left corner of the original paper before photocopying. The highlighter doesn't show on copies and then you will never accidentally use the original.
- Wikki sticks are wonderful. They remind me of a pipe cleaner in shape. They stick to paper and charts. They are flexible and can be cut for varied lengths. Keep them the original size and make them into circular shapes to put around words. They are wonderful for children with learning disabilities to assist them in colouring in the lines or with tactile letters. Any teacher store should carry them.
- Try the highlighter tape. This is wonderful as it can be put over a word on a chart and the word can still be read.



"Some children are off in 'la la land' while others are thinking about answers. A few years ago I started to have the kids tell each other if they agreed with the answer. Once someone gives an answer I tell the class .....if you think that is right put your 'hand on your head' or if you agree put your finger on your nose, or others: stand up, clap once, say yahoo, thumbs up, finger on your ear, cover your ears, etc. I tell the child giving the answer to look around and see if they are right or wrong. They are pretty honest and sometimes don't agree. Other times I tell them that I will take a few children's answers. Then I call on 3 to 5 children to tell the answer. If answers are different, which they are sometimes, that fuels a discussion and a think aloud to find the right answer. If we do work on the board, sometimes I tell the other children that they are going to be the teacher and check the work. They love it and it helps them with the facts or objective. This is working for me and my kids respond very well to this."



- Positive reinforcement goes a long way! Show students that you appreciate their best effort with the 'Classroom Wall of Fame'. When a student makes significant progress in a certain subject, photograph him or her holding their great work. Mount the photo along with a caption describing the achievement on the board entitled '*Our Wall of Fame*'. At the end of every month take down the photos and read the captions to the class, as you hand out the photos to the students to take home to share with mom and dad.

"I use a 'rainbow' table, where 5 or 6 children are across a table, all within arms reach. I learned to print well upside down, from right to left so the words were correct for the children. This is a very useful skill! I have dark laminate on the table, write on it with chalk and erase with a kleenex. The children write spelling or vocabulary words on the table with chalk, too. It is very handy!"

- Use the computer labels for tooth fairy envelopes. The label can have a picture of a tooth and beside it 'I lost my tooth at school today!' There are lots of uses for labels. I keep most of my cubby holes, record book, mailboxes, etc. in alphabetical order by their first names, so I make the tags with just their first names. I have Christmas tags, apple tags, pumpkin tags and of course followed by their name on the tag. I use them on their books, glue bottles, Christmas gifts, etc.

"I have an area in my room (either on a shelf on our worktable or in a container) where work that is handed out to the class is put if a student is absent for the day or even out for one class. The students quickly learn this system and then when I get a call 5 minutes before home time from a parent who wants homework, I can quickly find the work we have covered since the student has been absent.

As well, once the student is back, it is easier to catch them up or again send home work and I don't have to search through the books to find their book or look back to my daily planner to see what we did. This has also helped me keep my desk area more organized, no more loose worksheets just sitting on my desk."

## **Finding materials**

- Donations from businesses - Sometimes you can get something free or at a reduced price by telling them you are an educator. Grocery stores often have great seasonal posters that they will give away when the season is over.
- Garage sales - You can find everything from books to games to pillows.
- Retiring or moving teachers - Most retiring teachers don't want to store several years worth of materials. Whether they are moving down the hall, to another building, or to another town, most teachers do some cleaning out when moving.
- Going out of business sales - Sometimes stores even sell their fixtures, like magazine or clothing racks.
- Used book stores - Most used book stores have policies about the condition of the books they buy for resale.
- Dollar or discount stores - The merchandise changes often because they buy from businesses who are liquidating.

## **Drinking water**

"I allow my Grade One students to keep water bottles on their individual desks. I encourage them to freeze them overnight so that they stay cold all day - but to keep the desks dry we slip an old cut off sock over the bottom of the bottles."

"Brains need water to work efficiently. My kids have a water bottle on their desks. They soon get used to handling the bottles efficiently - they know that if they are playing with them I immediately take the bottle away for the rest of the day."

## **Birthdays**

"Our school does not permit treats to be brought in for birthdays. Instead, we send a letter home at the beginning of the year encouraging the students to give a book to the class on their birthday. It's a good way to cut down on the kids' sugar intake and build up your class library. I always let the birthday child open the gift for us and take their picture with the book. The photo is mounted on the inside cover so we always remember who donated it. Of course, it is not mandatory, but we still receive quite a few books."



- Put stickers in your plan book on each child's birthday. Assign summer birthdays a day in the year where there isn't much else going on. Notify the parents about this. Have a special box filled with stickers, poems, hats, pins, etc., and a birthday crown. Read a poem and sing a song. Have each child decorate a piece of paper for the Birthday Child. Have a standard cover ready that says Happy Birthday and bind the papers into a book the child takes home on that day.

# Behaviour Management

## Class Rules

*Keep the rules simple! Here are several options...*

Be a good worker.

Be a good friend.

Be safe.

## Important Rules (Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle)

Here are some rules for you and me,

See how important they can be.

Always be honest, be kind and fair,

Always be good and willing to share.

These are rules we all should know,

We follow these rules wherever we go.

### Rules Rap (lightly slap your knees to this one)

Rules can be helpful,

Rules can be good.

They help us behave,

The way we should.

We follow the rules,

And we don't do wrong.

The world's a happier place

When we all get along.



- DYB means 'do your best'. Post the initials in your room near the chalkboard and every once in a while say, 'remember to DYB'. They think it's a secret code and have fun remembering what it means.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Everyone has

1. the right to live safely,
2. the right to learn,
3. the responsibility to be polite,
4. the responsibility to be honest,
5. the responsibility to use time wisely.

- |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Treat others with kindness.</li><li>2. Listen carefully.</li><li>3. Follow directions.</li><li>4. Work hard each day.</li></ol> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Talk about routines at the beginning of the year and practice them and practice them and practice them. Always be consistent and when the rules are broken, consequences should happen immediately. The children will soon get to know that you are fair and set limits. If you have high expectations for behaviour the children will always achieve them.

- We come to school to learn.  
Our school is a safe place.

From those two rules, have the class brainstorm a list of what they mean. For example, 'We come to school to learn' means we have to be a good listener, we need to do our best work, we don't disturb the learning of others, etc. From 'our school is a safe place' means we keep our hands and feet to ourselves, we don't hurt other students either by hurting their body or hurting their feelings, we walk (not run) in the school, etc.

- Be Safe  
Be Respectful  
Be Responsible

Introduce one of these each week in September. Talk about the word meaning and how the rule could apply in class, in the playground, in assemblies, etc.

- 1. Say nice words.  
2. Take care of our classroom.  
3. Share our things.  
4. Do our best.
- Convince the children that there are no bad people, just bad choices. They should be made aware that they have every opportunity to make choices and can correct choices as the day progresses. When a child misbehaves, the class will know that the child isn't bad, he has made a poor choice.
- At the start of the year explain what it looks like to be sitting at your desk, concentrating on the work at hand. Have the children pretend to do just that and take a picture of them. Laminate the picture and tape it to the top of their desks. Now, whenever the child struggles to stay on task you just have to walk by and tap their picture as a reminder of what they should be doing.

### Rug Rules

1. Have bottoms glued
2. Have legs like a pretzel
3. Have frozen fingers - they interlace their fingers and keep on their lap

### Getting Their Attention

- Say 'Hey, hey, 1, 2.' The students respond with 'Hey, Hey, Look at you.'
- Clap a pattern and have the kids repeat it back.
- '1, 2, 3, eyes on me.' Reply: '1, 2, eyes on you.'
- Use 5,4,3,2,1 where  
5 means feet on the floor  
4 means bottoms on your chair  
3 means hands quiet on your desk  
2 means mouths being quiet  
1 means eyes on me



- Sing this very quietly. Only the kids who are listening hear it at first, then as you continue the rest of the class will gradually join in. You usually don't have to go higher than 3 or 4 and every one is listening.

Clap once if you can hear me. CLAP

Clap twice if you can hear me. CLAP CLAP

Clap three times if you can hear me. CLAP CLAP CLAP

- Start singing a song everyone knows, and soon everyone will join in.
- 'Eyes on me by the time we count to three.....1...2....3.'
- To *If you're happy and you know it*:

If you're ready and you know it clap your hands,

If you're ready and you know it clap your hands,

If you're ready and you know it then our class will surely show it

If you're ready and you know it clap your hands.



- Praise one or two children who are listening. This usually gets the other kids to follow suit. Say things like 'I like how quietly Johnny is waiting', 'Look how nicely Suzy is sitting at her desk', etc. The other kids start looking at what those kids are doing and start doing exactly the same thing.
- Teacher says : 'Hands on top!' (places his/her hands on head). Students immediately stop what they are doing and focus their eyes on the teacher and say 'That means stop!' ( in unison, of course).
- On the carpet: Say 'Magic 5' and then count back to 1. They need to be in 'ready' position: sitting, looking, quiet, etc. The '5' means - mouth, eyes, ears, hands, feet - but the kids just know it means get ready. If they are a little wiggly - say something like - 'Oh no - I hope the magic isn't wearing off!'
- Here's an oldie but goodie, the listening 'L'. When the children see you hold up your hand with thumb and pointing finger in an 'L' shape, they freeze and listen. (Do it with your right hand so the L faces the correct way to the children.....)
- Quiet, quiet  
Quiet as a mouse  
So no one will know  
That we're in their house.

## **It's Too Noisy!**

- When it gets too noisy during quiet work time say, 'Raise your hand if you are being quiet!'
- When the children are coming in from outside, have them line up. They put their hands over their mouths and then into their pockets - they are putting their 'outside' voices in their pockets. Then they take out their 'inside' voices from the other pocket. When inside, do gentle reminders about using their 'inside' voices.
- It is a learning curve for new grade ones to learn how to work independently and quietly at the beginning. Perhaps the trend towards tables and grouping desks together contributes to incessant talking. Grade One students benefit from having their own individual spaces where the temptation to talk and get distracted is minimized, so that they learn how to work independently. When you have students that never get the opportunity to work on their own because there is always someone

talking at their table or in the group, they become trained to seek others to complete a task instead of relying on themselves. Rethink the desk situation, and make group work a bonus activity to individual work.

- When we are really excited about something we can cheer, but have to do a silent cheer!
- Have a wooden star that you can place on random students desks that are caught being good. Call them the 'star of the minute'.



- Help your children 'find' their indoor voices. Have them repeat after you, 'This is my one voice (barely audible whisper), This is my two voice (soft whisper)' and so on with these bench marks - 3- regular whisper, 5 - regular speaking voice, 6 - presenting voice - up to 10 - a good loud shout. A zero voice then becomes just mouthing the words - no sound. After very little practice they seem to be able to find the volume when you call out a number. When they are working you can say something like - 'this is quiet work so I should only hear your 1 and 2 voices', or 'this is quiet reading time - you are the only person who needs to hear what you are saying so let's use our one voice'. When it creeps up to 5 or 6 remind them that they are using their 6 and they should be using their 2 voice. Practice the levels.
- Plan your day to alternate 'chatty' lessons with 'quiet' lessons. You can have a classroom signal (a stuffed animal in sight) that reminds the class when they are suppose to work quietly, independently so not to disturb others in the class.
- Take photos of the behaviours you expect - eg. kids with hands up, kids holding hands (for working cooperatively, etc. Put these pictures in stars. Then whenever you want to remind students of behaviours say 'reach for the stars' to remind them of how to behave.
- Here's a way to keep Grade Ones quiet for a short time.... Have all the students focus on the red 'second' hand of the classroom clock. For one whole minute they are to keep their lips sealed. What a long time it seems to them! Also, their teacher can be assured of a minute of peace....
- Tell them to close their eyes and put their hand up when they think a minute has gone by. It keeps them quiet for a minute to let the teacher talk to someone and it allows them to estimate the passage of time.
- Tell the child he must go out into the hall, sit quietly and find his good behaviour. Let 5 minutes pass and then go out and speak to him.
- When things get too noisy, have the students put their heads down for a minute. Tell them that they owe a minute of their time at recess but they can earn it back if they work quietly for the remainder of the time
- Play music very softly. It can be used to calm the children as they came in from music/PE/lunch etc. Greet each child as they come in with a finger to your lips quietly saying, 'The music is playing. Please be quiet.'
- Have a signal that means 'quiet and listen'. It could be a raised hand or a peace sign, a gesture or a sound, blinking the classroom lights, music, etc.





- Have a time-out corner with an empty desk. This corner should be near your desk and you can pull over a moveable stand so that it becomes very isolated. This is for students who really test the waters. Use the corner for two purposes, one for behaviour problems and also as an open desk for students who would like to sit there because they find it quieter.
- "There are times in class when I am speaking to an individual student in what has now become a rather tense situation. Emotions are escalating and egos are doing battle. Here's a simple way to not only help maintain my control but also avoid making statements I will later regret: I picture the student's parents standing right there with us. This compelling visual keeps me calm, focused, and professional. Sarcasm, intimidation, and rudeness are eliminated. I stay centered on the issue itself, and not the attendant emotional/psychological baggage that usually comes with the issue. Having the child's parents as imaginary witnesses helps to ensure that the comments I make now are appropriate ones. I want to be able to repeat them to the parents - word for word and tone for tone - if we have a conference later about the issue of the child's behaviour."

## **Behaviour Management Strategies from Teachers**

- "I use a three tier display: a sun, a partly cloudy sun, a storm cloud. I place clothespins with each child's name on the sunshine each morning. Very important that each child begins each day fresh and 'sunny', letting go of yesterday's problems! Warnings are given once. If given twice, clip placed on the partly cloudy sun. If there are no more disturbances, the clip is removed and returned onto the sunshine. If the problem continues, the clip is placed on my storm cloud (not a very nice place to be). There is an automatic note home, and recording of behaviour in my blue book. The notes I send home have copies in the file box, and children must sign anything I write down and place in the box. This comes in handy at conference time."
- "For consequences, I have a Behaviour Chart with a library card pocket for each child. In each pocket is a red card, a yellow card, and a green card. Each child begins every day with a green card. If I have had to speak to them a couple of times and their behaviour has not improved, I tell them they need to 'take a card' and this means taking the green card and putting to the back of the their pocket so the yellow card is showing. This is their reminder that they need to improve their behaviour. If their behaviour is still not improved, they need to take the next card, which would be a red card. At that point, they owe me something. It might be time at recess or lunch or after school, it might be good old-fashioned lines, it might be a letter of apology to someone, depends on what the problem was. If there are still problems, it is time to call the parents and I usually have the kids make the phone call and explain to their parent what has happened during the day. I am sitting right there so they have to tell the truth, and I talk to the parents as well. Normally, for a red card, I don't contact parents, but if it becomes a frequent happening, then they would be involved. For any behaviour which is dangerous to self or others, or blatant disrespect or non-compliance, the vice-principal or principal is involved."
- "Each table has a name. Last year's were 'A, E, I, O, U...and sometimes Y' (we occasionally had a Y table when someone had to be separated from the rest of the class). On the whiteboard, I tallied points that each table earned for good behaviour. At the end of each week, we counted the tallied points for all of the groups to determine that week's 'winner'....and that table would get to pick from the goody box. They were learning how to count tally marks, count by fives, and 'count on' as well as seeing which table 'won'."

- The traffic lights we see ahead  
Are sometimes green and sometimes red.  
Red on top, green below,  
Red means STOP Green means GO!  
Red on top - STOP STOP STOP!  
Green below - GO GO GO!



"I post the poem on a chart alongside a large 'traffic light'. I also use the light for classroom management: 'Tell me your name in a 'code green' (regular inside voice); 'Tell me your name in a 'code yellow' (whisper); 'Tell me your name in a 'code red' (silence). After practice, I can just say, 'Work at a code yellow' and they know to whisper, etc."

- "I use a points system. I give each table group a colour name, and give points for quiet tables and take them away from noisy ones. When they reach the desired amount, the table gets to choose a prize from the treasure box."
- 1. Establish rules and display them.
  2. Explain rewards for following the rules and consequences if they do not follow them (have a discussion what 'consequences' mean).
  3. The child gets a verbal warning.
  4. If the child continues breaking the rule, the child fills out a 'Quiet Time Sheet' with the teacher when time is possible. This is a reflective piece that helps them understand how that behaviour affected them, the class and the teacher. It is filed.
  5. If it happens again that day, the child fills out a Quiet Time Sheet and calls his/her parent with the teacher right beside him and explains what happened...this is hard for everyone, but it does the trick! They never want to do that again!
  6. If they would break another rule that day, they fill out a Quiet Time Sheet, meet with the teacher and principal and call the parent. The sheet is signed by all parties and parent. Behavior is a choice and a form of communication. It also can be learned when filling out a reflective piece."
- "When I praise the children I say, 'Doesn't James look so smart sitting there ready for me to read a story!' 'Look at all my smart students that are ready to listen.' 'All the smart children are standing in line nicely so we can go to lunch.' It is amazing how no one wants to be caught acting up when I make a statement with 'smart' in it."
- "I have two boys who need a bit of extra encouragement to behave this year. With them, I take 5 minutes at the end of the day and we review whether or not they think they made good choices. THEY are responsible for evaluating their day. I send home a little note with each of these boys every day telling their parents how they evaluated themselves and how I evaluated their day. The parents have really helped in this situation, too."
- "My most effective trick is a 'noise meter'. I have it on the board in front of the room. It is simply a half circle with 3 choices - Table voices, buddy voices, NO voices. I made it bright with pictures and colours. The children respond very well and tend to discipline themselves. Setting the noise meter with a long pointer is a class job, taken quite seriously. That same child will remind us all what kind of voices we should be using. Table voices are the very loudest allowed - you may talk so your entire table can hear you, but not the entire room. Buddy voices are quiet enough not to disturb others, loud enough to be heard by the person sitting next to you, your buddy! NO voices is just

what it means. I usually use this sparingly, during tests, visitors, just before lunch, to settle, or when I am giving special directions. Buddy voices is the norm. I allow soft whispering, or talking. Table voices are for indoor recess, group activities, experiments, before morning bell rings, and when we are packing up. The three levels seem to give the children needed time to socialize, but they know their limits."

- "I tell the kids that I will call the happiest group with the nicest smiles. This is such a simple trick. They sit so nicely and smile at me. They don't talk because they are too busy smiling. I use the same trick for walking in the hall. Our principal even commented that she couldn't believe that all my kids were smiling while walking down the hall. The whole thing just makes me smile!"
- "I play Quiet Chair. When an adult enters my room (parent, administrator, fellow teacher, etc.) the 'Star' for the day immediately goes to the front of the room and sits on my stool. The entire class becomes totally silent. The 'Star' counts silently to 10, points to the quietest child in the room and they change places. The game continues until the adult leaves and I am free again. Everyone that comes in my room is totally astounded!"



## **Reward Your Students**

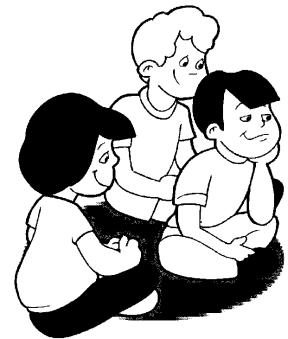
- Instead of rewarding students with candy or things you have to buy, try these rewards! Sit at the teacher's desk. Take care of the class animals for the day. Have lunch with your favourite person. Have lunch with the principal. Join another class for indoor recess. Have the teacher phone parents to tell them what a great kid you are. Draw on the chalkboard. Be first in line. Choose any class job for the week. Choose the music for lunch. Bring in a tape. Use coloured chalk. Do all the class jobs for the day. Take a class pet home overnight. Be a helper in the room with younger children. Help the custodian. Help the secretary. Help the librarian. Stay in at recess to play a game with a friend. Use stamps and ink. Invite a friend from another class into the room for lunch. Use the teacher's chair. Take a class game home for the night. Choose a book for the teacher to read to the class. Move your desk to a chosen location. Keep a stuffed animal on your desk. Have lunch with the teacher. Use the couch or beanbag chair for the day. Go to another class for lunch. Use the computer. Use the tape recorder and tape a story. Have a special sharing time to teach something to the class, set up a display etc. Be leader of a class game. Go to the centre or your choice during play centre time. Give extra centre time. Read to a younger child. Read to someone else. Get first pick of recess equipment. Get a fun worksheet. Choose a movie for the class to watch.
- Use the student's name first in the praise sentence really makes a difference. Most Grade One students don't really listen unless they hear their name! Most of the time try to make the sentences short, to be able to praise more students: 'Karen is ready.' 'Peter is following directions.' 'Megan is listening.'
- You can give out little certificates and notes of praise - great reading, helpful, clean desk, neat printing, good math work, etc.
- Rewards work better when they are intermittent and random. That way the child does not expect a reward but is sometimes reinforced for certain positive behaviours.

## **Being Good Friends**

### **The Wrinkled Heart**

"I do an activity with my kids that runs along the lines of this 'tale'. With the kids seated on the floor I start talking about the difference in the things we say that make people feel good or that hurt them. While talking, I am cutting out a big heart. After I have it cut out, I hold it up and tell the kids that each one of us starts out with a heart that is as pretty as this one. I ask the kids to start telling me things that a person might say that might hurt another person's feelings. With each response, I fold the heart (any direction....just put a fold in it). Eventually the heart is crumpled in my hands. I tell the children that each time they say something hurtful to someone, they are putting a little wrinkle in that person's heart. We talk about how someone's heart might begin to look like this crumpled heart if people continue to say mean things to them. I then have the kids start to tell me things that they might say to someone to make that person feel good. With each response, I unfold one of the creases in the heart. Eventually I have pressed out all of the 'hurts' ....except, of course, for the fact that the wrinkles can still be seen, even though the heart is now all the way unfolded. We talk about how we each have those wrinkles in our hearts from things that people have said to us, and how we want to be careful with what we say so as to not add more wrinkles to anyone's heart. It's a great activity.....and we put that heart up in a high corner of a bulletin board and leave it in plain view all year. Frequently someone will mention it....that their heart is wrinkled like that one, etc. It serves as a great reminder all year long."

- You choose one child a day and have that person sit in the middle of the circle. Go around the circle and ask each child to come up with a compliment for that child. You write it on a post-it note and hand it to the child. They read it and stick it to the child that is sitting in the middle. By the end, everyone has paid the person a complement and the child in the middle is literally covered in good feelings. Later that child can put his/her post-its on a piece of paper and you can photocopy them and send it home as a reminder of how great they are in others' eyes.

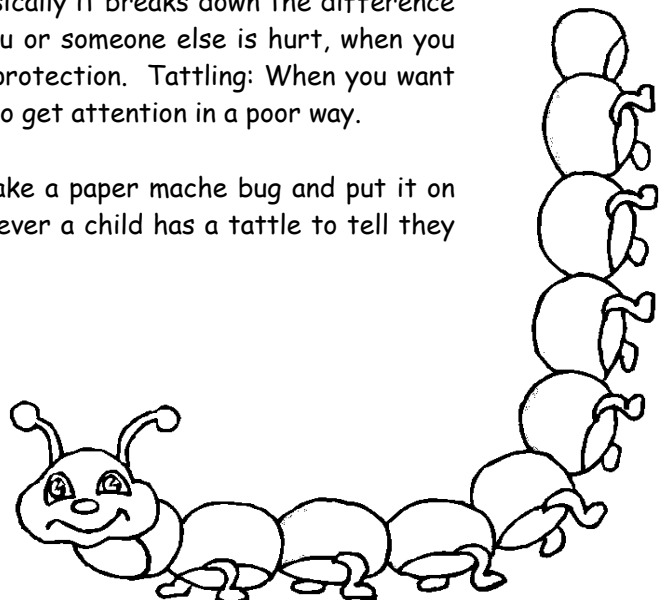


- Do an 'Acts of Kindness' Journal with your students. To model this, make a point everyday to write something in it about one child, a group, or the whole class. As the children write in the book, ask them to date everything they write and sign their name. You can attach a special pencil to it so they feel special when writing in it.

## **Tattling**

- "My response is always, 'What did YOU do about that?' or 'What should YOU tell that person?' This way they know I will not fix everything for them and it is up to them."
- Explain clearly what the teacher needs to know and doesn't need to know: someone is hurt, someone is doing something dangerous, someone is breaking a rule (jumping off the slide) and they can also tell you when someone has hurt their feelings such as being excluded from a game. Then ask the parties involved what they think could or should be done.

- Perhaps the quickest way to cure tattling is to have the tattler apologize to the student whom he tattled on. I tell them at the beginning of the year that the only reason they should be concerned with what someone else is doing is if that person is sick, if they are being hurt or hurting someone, or if they are damaging property. When someone comes at the beginning of the year to tell on so and so, you can just say, 'Really? You need to go and apologize to him now for tattling on him.' After they get past the initial look of disbelief and then see that you are serious, they go, apologize and that pretty much ends the tattling problem right there.
- If you have a problem, use your Helping Hands - 5 fingers
  - 1 - Tell how you feel.
  - 2 - Walk away.
  - 3 - Ignore.
  - 4 - Ask a friend for help.
  - 5 - Tell the teacher. Do not tell the teacher until you have tried to work it out using your 'Helping hands'.
- Whenever a child reports on someone else respond, 'Thank you for letting me know. I will take care of it.' Then if you need to address it be careful that the tattler doesn't see you do it. If you don't need to address it, don't. Because the tattler doesn't get to see the results of his tattling there is no reward for him. Also, no matter what took place, when a child goes home and tells his parent about something at school and the parent asks what the teacher said or did, the child can respond that you said, 'Thank you, I will take care of it.' This approach seems to take care of the one who tells for the fun of it and also for the one who actually has something that needs to be reported. When you do need to speak to a child who has done something wrong, make sure the tattler isn't watching.
- The first thing to ask is, "Did you use your words?" If they didn't talk to the offender about what was happening, they turn around and go back. If they did, they'll tell you what the emergency is (someone's physically hurt or being hurt, bleeding, throwing up, worse....).
- Make up a poster on 'Telling' and 'Tattling'. Basically it breaks down the difference between telling and tattling. Telling: When you or someone else is hurt, when you are feeling afraid or when you feel you need protection. Tattling: When you want to get someone in trouble, or you are wanting to get attention in a poor way.
- "My personal favourite - A TATTLE BUG - make a paper mache bug and put it on the wall with the sign 'class tattle bug'. Whenever a child has a tattle to tell they can go and tell the tattle bug!"



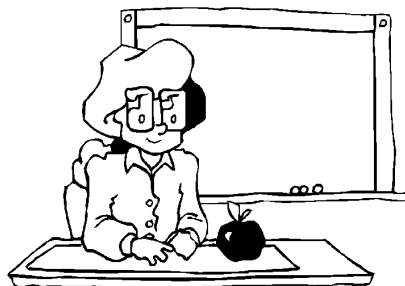
# Articles

## Making Teaching Grade One Easier

Teaching Grade One is very difficult and stressful work at best, so anything that will save time and stress is a GOOD THING. Sometimes we postpone change because all changes seem challenging. These suggestions usually do take more time in the beginning, but we need to go through that period in order to save time later.

1. Tidy up and organize the classroom. Mess is stressful! If you don't feel pleasure and pride in your classroom, you need to do some organization and learn some simple skills. Never make excuses that mess doesn't matter, and that it is just the way you are. People will judge you by your classroom. This may not be fair, but it is automatically assumed that if you can't take the time to organize your working environment, your lesson planning and the lessons, too, will be disorganized with poor learning conditions as a consequence. You are likely to spend extra time each day finding lost items or moving things that are in your way.

Don't have items on the floor other than furniture. Don't have piles of papers in sight. Have the children clean their desks or supplies and the floor several times each day. Clear off the top of your teacher's desk so it is an attractive workspace. Have themes and units in plastic tubs, out of sight if possible. Have attractive charts and up-to-date bulletin boards. Keep math manipulatives in neat containers, labelled. Keep bookshelves attractive.



Once you have it tidy, take ten minutes after school every day to keep it that way. The children will be able to help you, too, once things are in order. You are teaching them to be organized and orderly. How can you expect them to learn these skills if you are not modelling them?

You will find that you will enjoy teaching more. You will enter your classroom every morning with pleasure. Supervisors and parents will assume that you are just as organized in your lessons. Your stress level will decrease. You will save time because things will always be at hand, where you need them.

2. Teach prepared sequential lessons. Too much time is spent re-inventing the wheel! Find a program that suits you in each possible subject. The lessons will be set out for you - and someone else has done all the work. It is difficult to make subjects correctly sequential when you are trying to invent them each day. With pre-prepared lessons all you have to do is to make a note in your daybook for the lesson for the day!

3. Remember when you were in university and a professor told you about the proper sequence of a lesson? There was a review of previous learning, a teaching component, a hands-on component, a practice exercise and a conclusion. Sometimes we forget this! It still works best for the children's learning. For every lesson through the day have this outline in mind.

4. Mark as much as possible with the children. It is useless to mark after school and then expect Grade Ones to remember the exercise the following day. Anything marked after school is only for you,

not for the children's benefit. It takes time to mark in class, but the time is definitely worthwhile as you can give mini-lessons one-on-one as you mark.

5. Think about your day. When is your best time to work? Some teachers are morning people and some are more active later in the day. If you are a morning person, come to school as early as possible. Get as much work done as you can before school begins. Then you can disappear after school with a clear conscience!

6. Keep up-to-date marks and anecdotal notes at least weekly on each child. This makes report card writing and parent conferences a snap!

7. Do you have some discipline problems? This can be very stressful! Take the time to model routines and procedures with your children. Model your expectations. Keep the noise level as low as possible - noise leads to more noise! If you have some children with ADHD or other behavioural difficulties, keep movement in the classroom to a minimum. Tidiness comes into this, also. Children with problems are more comfortable in a neat, quiet, organized environment. Clutter, movement and noise will make the behaviours worse. These children need routine, too, and the moment the routine is changed they will have problems.

8. Do your daily plans a week in advance, on the computer, if possible. On the computer you can cut-and-paste to save time, and change things easily if your original plans don't work out. If you have your planbook done and sequential programs in most subjects, planning is almost non-existent! Then if you mark in class, and spend the ten minute clean-up time after school, there is no reason to stay late at school or take home piles of work!

## **Learning Modalities**

Everyone learns differently! We learn through a combination of the visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses. Some people are strong in all the modalities, but most of us are stronger in one and weaker in the others. Children, too, learn in different ways and it is important that we understand how individual children learn.

Children who are auditory learners may hum or talk to themselves frequently. They usually can sing well. They like poems, and learn best when you give them verbal instructions. The auditory learner likes listening to music and stories, and can give answers more easily by talking than by writing. Because sound variations are obvious to them, they do well if they are taught an explicit sequential phonics program.

Children who are visual learners will enjoy books and pictures. They notice that you have a loose or missing button. They remember how things look and can describe them in detail. They particularly enjoy movies and may be concerned about both their personal appearance and the appearance of their written or artistic work. Children who are visual learners can remember whole words by sight and do well if taught a sequential sight word program. Bright visual learners will also do well using the literature approach to teaching reading.

Children who are kinesthetic learners like to feel or touch everything they walk past or stand



near. They nudge friends, take gadgets apart, and love to play with clay, dance, and work on art projects. These children may be particularly good at sports, and can spend all day on the monkey bars, parallel bars, and swings on the playground. These children learn by using whole-body motions, hand actions and printing.

Most children learn through a combination of all the senses. 50% of children across the population will be capable in all modalities, generally with a strength in visual learning. These children learn well no matter what reading program the teacher uses! They do well if taught using literature, if taught a sight word or a phonics program.

It has been found that 10 to 15% of children have a severe weakness in one (or two) modalities. If one of the modalities is very weak, we say that the child has a learning disability - either visual, auditory or kinesthetic. These children will compensate by also having one strong modality.

This leaves 35 to 40% of children who are the low-average kids. The children in the lower half of the school population will have one strength, with the other two modalities weaker. The reading programs you teach really matter to these children and to the children with learning disabilities.

What impact does visual teaching have on a student whose primary learning modality is kinesthetic? Very little! What happens if we teach a visual sight word reading program to a child who is a strong auditory learner? The child will have lots of problems and will not learn well. What if we teach only phonics to children who are very weak in the auditory modality? These children will have great difficulties.

## **Discovering Modalities**

Careful observation can tell you which students may be having trouble learning in a certain modality and will help you understand their strengths.

Students who have difficulty with visual learning may confuse letters or words that look similar. They may reverse or invert letters. They may have b/d reversal problems and have difficulty with words that look alike. These students will also have trouble remembering sight words, and have to see a word up to 50 or more times before they remember it. Children with a visual strength will remember whole words easily.

Students who have difficulty with auditory learning will perform poorly to spoken directions. They may have articulation difficulties and/or poor vocabulary. The students may not be able to recognize rhyming words easily or distinguish between long and short vowel sounds or between the short 'i' and 'e' sounds. They may be unable to hum a simple melody on key. Children with an auditory strength will remember sounds and do well when taught blending techniques.

Children with kinesthetic or motor difficulties will have a hard time imitating gestures. They're likely to have poor balance and co-ordination. They usually do poorly with pencil-paper tasks. They have trouble staying within lines when colouring, and they can't keep time to music while marching or skipping. Children with a kinesthetic strength will remember words if the learning has a fine or gross motor motion attached to it. They print neatly and draw well.





## **Teaching to the Modalities**

Teaching Grade One is the most difficult and important job in the teaching profession! We have 20 or more little people who are depending on us. Every child is different and has different strengths and weaknesses. The classroom teacher is the person responsible for the learning or lack of learning of every child in her care.

Over the years there has been no perceptible difference in reading scores. Why? Because every program teaches only to one modality! The programs may dabble in the other modalities, but many children do not learn unless the teaching is explicit and sequential.

In the last 50 years we have seen the sight reading programs - the 'Dick and Jane' type - completely discredited, and in many schools the books were destroyed. This was disgraceful! Children who are visual learners (and this is the modality in which most children have a strength) learn very well from these basals. These readers were sequential and gave necessary repetition and practice to the children who do not learn words easily. The baby was thrown out with the bathwater. However, children with a weakness in visual learning did poorly on sight word programs.

Current research tells us that sequential explicit phonics improves reading, and so it does - but likely only because any explicit sequential program raises scores above programs that aren't built in a formal building block approach where there is review and today's lesson follows upon yesterday's teaching. Children who are auditory learners do very well when the teacher uses a sequential phonics program, adding phonemes and blending skills in a formal sequence. All children should know how to decode and encode with ease. Children with a weakness in the auditory modality do poorly when taught only a phonics program.

Most Grade One teachers are using literature-based methods to teach beginning reading, with guided reading lessons. This targets visual learners without the review and word practice that a sequential sight reading program provides. Teachers say that they teach 'phonics', but this is usually in the context of the literature being studied so it isn't explicit or sequential. The top 50% of children do well with this. They learn sight words visually and are able to take the phonics shown to the class and apply it. But the lower children and the ones with problems in one or more modalities - do not do well. Why is it popular? Teachers have been told that this is the way to do it, they don't have training in the other methods, it is considered good for children's self-esteem (but common sense tells us that learning to read would be a better way to raise self-esteem.....), publishers advocate programs to sell books, and teachers hang their reputation on a method and admitting that 'the emperor has no clothes' is a difficult thing to do. Reading Recovery teachers are hired to fill the gap, but as Reading Recovery does not teach either sight words or phonics explicitly or sequentially it gives the child more of the same. It is expensive and over-rated. The children's strongest modalities are not being directly targeted. Literature methods are valuable, however, if the children are also taught the skills and processes of reading first.

The answer is obvious, but difficult. Children who are visual learners need to be taught a sequential sight word program. Children who are auditory learners need an explicit sequential phonics program. All children also need to read literature and be shown reading strategies to put the sight words and phonics to use.

Children who are kinesthetic learners need to have hands-on learning in every lesson. They need to print daily, printing the words and practicing the skills taught. They need to be shown hand motions and body motions for the skills and use tactile surfaces to practice printing letters and words.

Primary Success has an answer - not the only answer, but an answer that will target the strengths of every child in your class. We suggest that you teach a simple phonics program such as

'Successful Phonics' in a 20 minute to half hour block to the whole class. Then teach a simple sight word program like 'Sight Reading - Start Right (Successful Sight Reading)' to the class for 40 minutes to 1 hour. This will begin as a whole class lesson, but grouping may be necessary later. Both these programs have kinesthetic exercises that accompany each lesson. These two programs would likely be taught in the early morning. Then, in the afternoon, tie all these skills together with a guided reading lesson using trade books, a read-aloud and a time for self-selected reading.

Try it! It is hard work, but compare the progress of your children. See if you can fully understand your students and their strengths and weaknesses. You may have some surprises - children who can learn phonics but can't remember sight words, a child who has an auditory learning disability but learns to read well using the sight words. While it is rare - you may even find a child who must learn through kinesthetic methods and is very low in both the auditory and visual modalities.

Teaching reading IS brain surgery!



## **Teaching Reading - Fallacies**

### **Children will learn to read as a natural process.**

Many educators insist that children will learn to read if they are simply immersed in a literacy-rich environment and allowed to develop literacy skills in their own way. If this were true, there would be very few illiterate people in this world! Learning to read is not only unnatural, it is just about the most unnatural thing people do. Learning to understand a language and speak it is indeed a natural process. Children will naturally develop language comprehension skills with little structured or formal guidance. Reading, however, is not natural. Speech has evolved over many thousands of years, but reading and writing are a recent acquisition. Literacy for everyone has only been a goal in the past hundred years. Educators who believe that reading is a natural process also believe that children who have difficulties in the early primary years will learn to read if given enough time and this literacy-rich environment. This is disastrous for children who have learning disabilities or the ones who come to school with poor literacy skills. Waiting for these children only widens the gap between the readers and the non-readers.

### **Self-esteem is damaged by homogeneous grouping for reading lessons.**

It is assumed by many Grade One teachers that by having whole class lessons, the 'low' kids will somehow not realize that they are not able to read while others are reading well. Children are much smarter than that! Every child knows exactly what others can do and he/she can't. Self-esteem comes when there is success, and success is much more likely to come in a small homogenous group that is being taught specific lessons that are directed to the group's strengths. The lessons need to be brisk, hands-on and fun - so the other children are envious!

### **All children will learn phonics if it is taught incidentally.**

Certainly some children will automatically learn decoding skills as they learn to read. These children will understand the letter/sound relationships without specific teaching. But many lower children and ones with learning disabilities will not learn these skills unless they are taught sequentially and specifically, and without this teaching will not be able to decode adequately.

### A sequential phonics program will teach every child to read.

No one program will teach every child in your class to read. Children are all different, and they learn differently. Sequential phonics works well for most of your class and will be necessary for many of your slow children, but there will be a number of children in every class that have auditory processing problems. These kids will find phonics difficult, if not almost impossible.

### Skilled reading involves using syntactic and semantic cues to "guess" words.

Actually, studies have shown that good readers almost never make any mistakes at all when they read. Good readers at the college level were given a text where there were words spelled phonetically and many nonsense words - and they read them flawlessly. However, when the text was concealed and the students were asked to guess each of the words in the passage one at a time, the students were able to correctly guess only one out of ten content words in the passage. Good readers make virtually no mistakes as they read. For good readers, word identification is fast, fluent, automatic and accurate - it needs to be so that their attention can be fully focused on understanding the text.

### Teachers and schools should only use 'research based' programs.

We should remember the researcher's slogan: 'Remarkable claims require remarkable evidence'. Too many mediocre programs are called 'research-based'. Take Reading Recovery, for example. It is doing a short-term, expensive and semi-adequate job of giving the children what should be taught in the classroom, but the 'research' sounds like miracles occur. With closer examination, much of the research comes from Reading Recovery itself, and many of the negatives are not counted in the research. For a critique of the RR research, go to:

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~bgrossen/rr.htm>

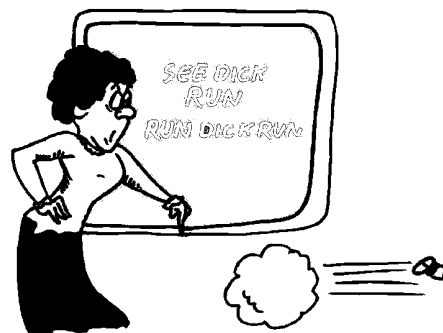
### A balanced reading curriculum is ideal.

Unfortunately, the term 'balanced reading' is not clearly defined. Most teachers currently claim to teach a balanced approach to their reading instruction, but what a 'balanced approach' means to one teacher may be very different from what it means to another. The balance most commonly used is to provide instruction associated with both the Phonics and the Whole Language philosophies in various proportions. Rarely does it mean the same thing for teachers, even in the same school.

## Reflections on Teaching Reading

I heard a quote about reading methods earlier this year, and when I heard it I applauded the sentiment: "If the horse is dead, it is time to get off." Then, with further reflection, I came to the conclusion that getting off horses may be the cause of some of the reading problems. Every time philosophies for teaching reading have changed, people have insisted that the previous philosophy or method was dead and left it behind and found a new one - sometimes better than the preceding one and sometimes not. And these horses were not really dead, just ageing! It is similar to the old saying that asks us to not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Each new philosophy has justifications. Educators are able to justify change, often by vilifying



the previous reading philosophy. Reading specialists all seem to attach themselves to a single philosophy, and stake their reputations on that one method. Teachers who are advocates of sequential explicit phonics or literature-based methods often close their minds to the advantages of other methods. For years teachers taught sight word basals, of the 'Run, Spot, run' type. Most kids learned to read! Then these basals were criticized as old-fashioned and not suitable for teaching children to read. Some teachers use only explicit phonics. Phonics works well for most children and most learn to read well. Phonics programs are often vilified as boring and non-creative. Now many teachers are using a literature-based approach. Most children are learning to read. Teachers vilify this by saying it does not target the needs of slower learners.

Anyone, teaching any method, can teach the top children in the class to read well. But..... and here is the catch ..... each of the above reading methods will leave some of the lower children behind. Teaching 'most' of the children to read is not good enough. The sight word basals left out the lower kids who were auditory learners. Pure explicit phonics leaves out the lower children who are visual learners. Literature-based programs leave out both, and this gap is usually filled with Reading Recovery, an expensive and (arguably) over-rated program. As each method becomes popular, the previous ones are considered dead horses, to be left behind without a thought.

Sight word programs, explicit phonics programs and literature-based teaching all have benefits. Sight word programs give the slower children who are visual learners the repetition of the sight words that they need and improve fluency. Explicit phonics targets the lower children who are auditory learners and gives all children necessary decoding skills. Literature-based programs give students the introduction to wonderful books and teaches reading comprehension.

Teachers who favour literature-based programs often feel that they also teach phonics and sight words, but it is impossible to give the lower children enough of what they need when done in a single lesson.

## **Rate Yourself!**

### **How well do you do these?**

- transition times (going from subject to subject) - How much time does it take? How much talking is allowed?
- lining up procedures - no fuss, noise, pushing
- going to lunch or special classes - walking quietly in the hall so as not to disturb other classes.
- end of school - Is there a chant or song used? Is there an obvious procedure being used?
- restroom - are your procedures efficient?
- moving around the room - Is there movement during the time you are talking? Are things arranged so that obstacles are not in the way of going to the pencil sharpener, etc.?
- are there efficient procedures for turning in homework?
- are there efficient procedures for turning in work as it is finished?
- are there quick procedures for passing out papers?
- is the classroom tidy and attractive?

### **Classroom instruction**

- what procedures do you use to get the class's attention?
- are there any rules for ways to sit or look?
- how do you treat a student who doesn't answer correctly?



- do you call on a few or spread questions around?
- do you follow a good lesson format? - review, lesson, hands-on, written or individual practice, conclusion
- are all the students listening to your lessons and able to understand the content?
- do you teach specific lessons to the lower students?

### When a child misbehaves

- how do you redirect a child?
- what is your tone of voice?
- is there sarcasm, etc.?
- how do you handle a person who always wants to give the answer?



### Reading Mastery

*The following article has been submitted by Boni Fulgham, a Grade One teacher in Dahlonega, Georgia. Reading Mastery is published by SRA and therefore easily available in Canada. It has been used for years with success.*

"We are in our first year of using Direct Instruction in K-5. It has many components. We are using **Reading Mastery**. Let me preface my rave review to follow by saying that I fought this program being adopted tooth and nail. I could not see my kids developing a love for reading by sitting directly in front of me and following signals to say letters, sounds and words in unison at a signal. I could not see myself finding any degree of happiness teaching in that way either, but..... the program really works. I don't have nearly as much trouble with off task behavior because they know exactly what is expected of them. The daily lesson is fast paced with a lot of positive feedback built in. Yes, you do have a script - which I followed rigorously to begin with, but now feel comfortable straying from slightly. As with any program you do have to make it your own to feel comfortable with it, but believe me the moans and groans (from the teachers) of the first few weeks have turned to smiles as we see the advances the students are making. Out of 126 first grade students we only have 3 who are still not able to read. One is staffed Mildly Mentally Impaired. The remaining two have severe Learning Disabilities coupled with ADHD, with one of these poor guys having a homelife so awful that he can't handle anything else right now.

The Reading Master program has a lot of comprehension activities built in along with Vocabulary Development. We gave the BLT (Basic Literacy Test) in September and again in January. Students should score 100 on the BLT by the end of 3rd grade to be on grade level. We had students who scored as low as 4-12 in August with an average score among this low group of 10. At the January testing one child in this group who is Mildly Mentally Impaired showed no change from his score of 4. The rest of the group showed good progress with one child (an ESL student) doubling her score. The entire group average had risen to 17. Among the highest scoring children with beginning scores of 40-46 (an avg. of 44) the January range was from 53-64 (an average score of 59). Their numeric gains were not as remarkable as the lower students but still excellent. Looking at the entire first grade with the highest and lowest scoring students removed (approx. 116 students) the average score was 18.5 in Aug. and 32.8 in January. This was truly a remarkable gain. A score of 33 - 40 is where you would like all children to be by the end of 1st grade and our average score is nearly there in January!

They love to read because they can read!

As for the love of reading that I was so concerned about - they love to read because they can read! We have never had so many children reading so well! We do use a literature series along with the Direct Instruction and I would highly recommend continuing whole language thematic teaching in addition to DI. We spend the first hour of the day in DI - THE ENTIRE SCHOOL! Everyone teaches reading - the Art teacher, PE, French teachers, Assistant Principal, Media Specialist. The purpose of this is to lower group sizes. It was a scheduling nightmare, but the school was committed to doing it right.

I know I sound like a salesman for the company, but I wanted you to hear from someone who did not expect to like it AT ALL! It works!

For research and more information on Direct Instruction and Reading Mastery, check out this website: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adiiep/rdgtxt.htm>

## **Becoming a Better Reading Teacher**

What can we do to give every child the best opportunity to learn to read? If the experts really knew the best way to teach small children to read - there would be only one method used. Instead there are 'experts' who advocate every possible way of teaching - many with opposing philosophies. These educators are always passionate about their own philosophy, and often ridicule and dismiss teachers who do not follow their methods. Who is right? Is there one right way or is everyone partially right? In this era of conflicting philosophies, all 'research based', what can we do to find the answer?



Try everything! If you believe in pure sequential explicit phonics, add a sequential sight reading program such as an old basal series. If you believe in literature based reading instruction, learn all you need to know to add a sequential phonics program to your instruction. Try the 4-Blocks, balanced literacy - try everything you can find! Have an open mind. Other teachers believe in methods that you may not think have merit - there must be something in their beliefs. Everything you try will give you a new perspective. Unless you try things for yourself you will not understand the benefits and deficits of each philosophy and how well the children will learn. Keep the parts that work best and throw out the rest.

Be critical. If someone enthusiastically tells you that his/her method of teaching reading is the most effective way, do not accept this on face value. Every program that is being used today is said to be 'research based'. Educational research seems to be able to prove anything you wish. You need to do your own research, not only by reading about programs or listening to the opinions of others, but by doing them with children.

Do not dismiss the older methods as poor. For example, the old basal readers with a controlled vocabulary taught almost every child to read, and a century ago children were learning to read well with systematic phonics. Alone these had defects and omissions, but there is much of value in these programs. Learning a controlled sight vocabulary does work well, and sequential phonics also works well. The concepts popular when 'whole language' was in vogue continue to be extremely valuable. When you add new methods to your teaching, do not throw out what you know works well. Add new ideas and methods to what you have been using.

The years you have spent in the classroom will not necessarily give the answer. You must continue learning and experimenting to find what is best for you and your students. Being a good teacher isn't enough, unless you are teaching to the strengths of each individual child. We close our classroom doors and become isolated and often opinionated in defense of what we are doing.

As every child is different, it should not be a surprise to discover that children learn differently. What works for one child may not work for another. To use only one method will leave some children in your classroom not learning to their potential. The 4-Block framework and Balanced Literacy begin to address this, but teachers should make sure that the programs done in the blocks or sections are the best for the children in the classes they teach. Some children will not learn without sequential phonics. Others need to be taught a controlled sight vocabulary in order to learn to read. Some children must learn through kinesthetic techniques. Others learn through personal experience vocabulary. Some children will excel through literature experiences.

Do not be intimidated by educational gabble. Listen and read critically. Find the success rates of the programs for the lowest 25% of children in the classes. There is a US methodology that teachers are presently advocating enthusiastically. In the first few paragraphs it is stated that schools using this must have Reading Recovery in place. It is expected that the program will not be very successful in the classroom for this important 25%. They call it a built-in safety net, but it is really a built-in failure for the classroom teachers!

There is a debate on whether homogeneous grouping for reading lessons is good or the opposite. If the lowest 5 children in your classroom are listening and working at their frustration level, something needs to be done. Experiment to see how their needs can be met, and find out how to change frustration into success. Grouping may be the best answer.

Any teacher can teach bright children. Most quick kiddies will learn no matter what method of reading instruction you are using. Never advocate a philosophy or method because of the progress your bright students make. Look at your lowest 5 children. Is the method you are using suitable for them? Are they progressing well for their abilities? Do they feel frustrated? Have you tried different methods and strategies to give them the best chance of progress? Don't say, "John is having difficulty learning to read." Say, "I am having a problem teaching John to read. What can I do to help him?"

You have the responsibility. Parents may be able to help, but there are many reasons why homework, even reading at home, may be unsuitable for some children. Special Education and Learning Assistance can help, but you are the child's teacher and specifically directed learning in the classroom is much more valuable than the time spent in the LA room. Lessons in the classroom can be carried over to other times of the day, whereas lessons apart are often done in a vacuum and the time is usually too short. Some parents and your LA teacher may help, but never blame the child's lack of progress on others, or depend on others to ensure the child's success.

A child learns to read by having the method taught that is the best for him. Teach to every child's strengths. After the correct teaching, the child needs reading practice and more reading practice. As in any other skill we learn, practice is a necessary part.

Methods and philosophies for teaching reading are constantly changing. What is the best advice? Do not pin your reputation to a single method. A handful of methods that can evolve as you expand your knowledge may not be as spectacular, but will enhance your power as a reading teacher and be best for your children.

It isn't easy! Teaching reading IS brain surgery.....



# Phonics

## Approaches to Phonics Instruction

*Most teachers are acquainted with several approaches to phonics instruction. The terms are confusing, and when you hear, "I teach phonics in my classroom", this can mean many different things. The distinctions between approaches are not absolute, and some programs of instruction combine approaches.*

**Implicit phonics** - This is the 'top-down' approach. Implicit phonics is looking at the whole word, and the children learn sounds by association. The sounds in isolation are not presented to the children except when associated with words they know.

**Implicit phonics may be taught in several ways:**

**Analytic phonics** - Children learn to analyze letter-sound relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.

**Embedded phonics** - Children are taught letter-sound relationships during the reading of connected text.

**Phonics through spelling** - Children learn to segment words into phonemes and to make words by writing letters for phonemes.

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**Explicit phonics** - This is the 'bottom-up' approach, which is moving from the smallest parts to the whole. Students first learn letters and their sounds, and then build and recombine them into syllables and words.

**Systematic phonics** - Systematic phonics instruction is the direct teaching of a set of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence.

**Synthetic phonics** - Children learn how to relate letters or letter combinations to sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form recognizable words.

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**Analogy-based phonics** - Children learn to use parts of word families they know to identify words they don't know that have similar parts.

**Onset-rime phonics instruction** - Children learn to identify the sound of the letter or letters before the first vowel (the onset) in a one-syllable word and the sound of the remaining part of the word (the rime).



# Phonics Instruction

- Systematic, explicit, synthetic phonics instruction significantly improves kindergarten and grade one children's word recognition and spelling. It produces the greatest impact on children's reading achievement when it begins early. Both kindergarten and grade one children who receive systematic phonics instruction are better at reading and spelling words than children who do not receive systematic instruction.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension. This is not surprising because the ability to read the words in a text accurately and quickly is highly related to successful reading comprehension.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is particularly beneficial for children who are having difficulty learning to read and who are at risk for developing future reading problems.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is most effective when it begins in kindergarten or grade one. To be effective with young learners, systematic instruction must be designed appropriately and taught carefully. It should include teaching letter shapes and names, phonemic awareness, and all major letter-sound relationships. It should ensure that all children learn these skills. As instruction proceeds, children should be taught to use this knowledge to read and write words.
- Phonics instruction is not an entire reading program for beginning readers. Along with phonics instruction, young children should be taught a sight vocabulary, engage in phonemic awareness activities, and listen to stories read aloud to them. They should be reading a variety of texts; and writing a Journal, letters, words, messages, and stories.
- How long should phonics be taught? Approximately two years of phonics instruction is sufficient for most students. If phonics instruction begins early in grade one, it should be completed by the end of grade two.



## A Phonics Primer

Phonics should be taught in isolation in the beginning of the reading process, and integrated into the complete reading process as the children increase their skills. There are three parts to a successful reading program - phonics, sight reading and language/literature.

To teach a phoneme, name the letter and say its sound. Discuss words beginning with the sound - all words beginning with the same letter do not necessarily start with the same sound - and draw pictures illustrating words beginning with the sound. Have the children trace the letter on tactile surfaces, on their desks, in the air (sky writing) or on the floor at the same time as they make the sound. **(It is very important to use the auditory, visual and kinesthetic senses simultaneously.)** Make sure every child can form the letter correctly (top to bottom) and say the sound correctly. Do a worksheet illustrating the sound. Teach only one sound at a time. For children who have difficulty, you can do activities, sing songs, eat, do art, make tactile letters - all using the sound.

Begin to blend words after the children have learned a few letter sounds. Use only those that

the class have mastered. The vowels will take longer to teach than the consonants. Every child should reach mastery at every level.

To blend words, have the child tap his finger under each letter in the word and say each sound, and then slide the finger under the whole word, blending the sounds together to form the word. Say, "/s/ /a/ /t/ sat" (When / / is used, it means the sound of the enclosed letter, not the letter name.) At first, bring the large letter cards together to show blending, and you can use your hand to slide the sounds together. If a child needs help, take his hand and blend with him, but try to get him to do it for himself. Once a child has the idea he will learn quickly.

Some children will have a great amount of difficulty blending in the beginning. For these children, use kinesthetic exercises with large letters, and do many words with these children every day until they understand the process and can do it themselves.

**It is important that you teach the sound correctly. It is especially important that all consonant sounds are kept short and spoken quickly. Often children struggle to blend consonant sounds with a vowel sound "uh" on the end of each one. For example, /b/ /a/ /t/ cannot be blended if the sounds are made by saying 'buh /a/ tuh'.**

To help keep the consonants 'short', the child can hold the first two fingers of his hand in front of the mouth like scissor blades, and 'cut' the sound off short as it is spoken.

Some consonant sounds come from the throat and the voice box and are 'voiced'. Some sounds are made in the mouth with air and are 'unvoiced'.

Be careful that any words you use have the correct sound. /g/ makes the sound in 'goat', not 'giraffe', /c/ makes the sound in 'cat', not 'city', and /e/ makes the sound in 'elephant', not 'early' or 'easy', and so on.

Sounds are taught in order of difficulty, from the easiest to the most difficult. You do not need to order them exactly as below, but the simplicity of blending and the clarity of the sounds should be taken into consideration.

Do a daily lesson taking approximately 20 minutes. Phonics can be primarily an oral lesson, with or without a short written or pictorial follow-up practice sheet. Each day the sounds already taught should be reviewed, words blended and a new sound taught if the previous ones have been mastered. There should be time for each child to practice the skills.

## **The Letter Sounds**

*These are given in a order that many teachers use. The simplest sounds are taught first.*

/a/ as in 'apple'.

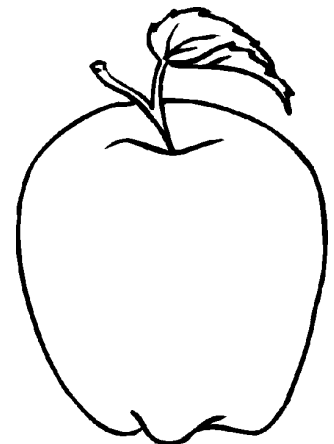
/t/ as in 'ten'. Keep the sound of /t/ very short and quick. The sound is NOT 'tuh'! /t/ is unvoiced. The sound is made in the mouth with the tongue and air.

/s/ as in snake. /s/ is unvoiced.

/m/ as in Mom. Make the sound with the lips together. Voiced.

/c/ as in cat. A short, quick sound. Not 'cuh', it is formed in the mouth with air. Unvoiced.

/f/ as in fish. Place your top teeth on the lower lip and blow. Unvoiced.



/b/ as in ball. Very short and quick. (Not buh!) Voiced. As the letter 'b' is frequently reversed in reading and printing, teach it as a bat and ball. Also, the lower case 'b' is the 'B' with the upper curve erased.

/i/ as in it, is, Indian. Before this you have only taught one vowel, /a/. Now things become a bit more complicated as you add another vowel. Make sure every child is voicing the /i/ correctly.

/h/ as in honey. /h/ is a puff of air from the lungs with the mouth open, not 'huh'. Unvoiced.

/j/ as in jump. /j/ is voiced. Keep the sound short.

/k/ as in kite. 'k' makes the same sound as /c/.

*For your information: To use the /c/ sound...c' goes before 'a', 'o' and 'u'. 'k' goes before 'e' and 'i'.*

*If you teach this to the children at a later date:*

Fat 'c' goes with fat 'a', fat 'o' and fat 'u'. Skinny 'k' goes with skinny 'e' and skinny 'i'.

/n/ as in no. The tip of the tongue is on the roof of the mouth.

'ck' makes the /c/ sound. Explain that 'c', 'k' and 'ck' make the same sound, but that 'ck' is used at the end of a short word. When blending, 'ck' is treated as one letter.

*For your information: 'ck' always goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.*

/p/ as in pet. /p/ is a small explosion of air. If the children hold their hands in front of the mouth they can feel the air. Unvoiced.

/g/ as in goat. Keep the sound short! Voiced.

/l/ as in lunch. Voiced. Double 'l' is treated as one sound and one tap.

/r/ as in rat. Keep the sound short. It's not 'ruh!' Voiced.

/d/ as in dog. Keep the sound short and quick - not 'duh!' Voiced.

/v/ as in van. /v/ makes the lip vibrate. Voiced. *Never end a word with 'v' Always add a silent 'e'.*

/w/ as in win. Voiced.

/o/ as in ox, odd, ostrich. We now come to the third vowel sound. The children usually find /o/ quite easy to blend.

/x/ is the sound of /ks/, as in ax. Unvoiced.

/y/ as in yes. 'y' is first taught as a consonant. Voiced.

/z/ as in zip. Voiced.

/qu/ as in quit. Always teach the 'q' with the 'u', as 'q' is never seen alone. The sound is /kw/. Voiced.

/u/ as in up. The fourth vowel.

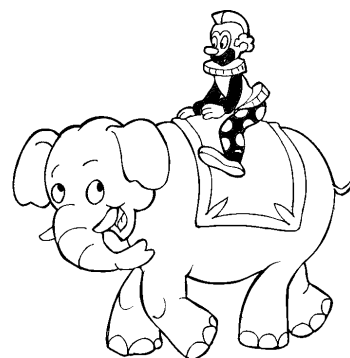
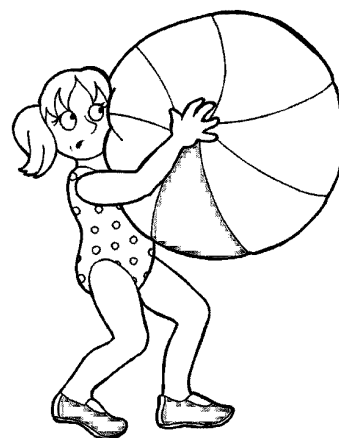
/th/ as in thin. /th/, /sh/, /ch/ and /wh/ are called '**digraphs**'. A digraph occurs when 2 consonants together make an entirely different sound. Depending on the word, /th/ can be voiced or unvoiced. Teach it unvoiced by slightly sticking out the tongue and blowing.

/sh/ as in ship. Finger to the mouth - be quiet! Unvoiced.

/ch/ as in church. Unvoiced.

/wh/ as in wheel. Unvoiced. A soundless whistle.

/e/ as in elephant. This is the hardest sound for the children to say and to remember, and it is easily confused with /i/. Make sure it is said correctly. It is placed late in the phonics process, because now the children will have developed the skills to differentiate the sound more easily.



# Alphabet Chants and Songs

## Alphabet Rhythm

A (clap) says /a/ (clap) like ap-(clap)-ple.  
A (clap) says /a/ (clap) /a/ (clap) /a/ (clap)

B says /b/ like baseball. B says /b/ /b/ /b/.  
C says /c/ like cookie. C say /c/ /c/ /c/.  
D says /d/ like dinosaur. D says /d/ /d/ /d/.  
E says /e/ like elephant. E says /e/ /e/ /e/.  
F says /f/ like fireman. F says /f/ /f/ /f/.  
G says /g/ like goldfish. G says /g/ /g/ /g/.  
H says /h/ like hospital. H says /h/ /h/ /h/.  
I says /i/ like igloo. I says /i/ /i/ /i/.  
J says /j/ like jumping. J says /j/ /j/ /j/.  
K says /k/ like kitten. K says /k/ /k/ /k/.

L says /l/ like listen. L says /l/ /l/ /l/.  
M says /m/ like mother. M says /m/ /m/ /m/.  
N says /n/ like nurse. N says /n/ /n/ /n/.  
O says /o/ like octopus. O says /o/ /o/ /o/.  
P says /p/ like pencil. P says /p/ /p/ /p/.  
Q says /q/ like queen. Q says /q/ /q/ /q/.  
R says /r/ like rabbit. R says /r/ /r/ /r/.  
S says /s/ like snowman. S says /s/ /s/ /s/.  
T says /t/ like turtle. T says /t/ /t/ /t/.  
U says /u/ like umbrella. U says /u/ /u/ /u/.  
V says /v/ like van. V says /v/ /v/ /v/.  
X says /x/ like X-ray. X says /x/ /x/ /x/.  
Y says /y/ like yellow. Y says /y/ /y/ /y/.  
Z says /z/ like zebra. Z says /z/ /z/ /z/.

## If Your Name Starts With.....

*(Sung to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")*

If your name starts with A turn around.  
If your name starts with B touch the ground.  
If your name starts with C then stand up and touch your knee.  
Clap your hands if your name starts with D.  
If your name starts with E wink your eye.  
If your name starts with F try to fly.  
If your name starts with G blow a kiss up here to me.  
If your name starts with H say "Hee Hee!"  
If your name starts with I tap your toe.  
If your name starts with J say "Ho! Ho!"  
If your name starts with K then stand up and start to sway.  
If your name starts with L say "Ole!"  
If your name starts with M make a smile.  
If your name starts with N shake a while.  
If your name starts with O put your elbow on your toe.  
If your name starts with P say "I know!"  
If your name starts with Q raise your hand.  
If your name starts with R you should stand.  
If your name starts with S you should pat your head, I guess.  
If your name starts with T say "Oh, yes!"  
If your name starts with U touch your eye.  
If your name starts with V pat your thigh.  
If your name starts with W, X, Y, or Z  
Clap your hands high over your head!



## The Alphabet Jive

Rhythm and music can help children remember the sounds of letters.

For the jive, when you see a letter inside the / / say the **sound**, not the name of the letter, and then do the actions in brackets.

A says /a/, a says /a/, alligator, alligator, /a/, /a/, /a/ (use your arms to imitate alligator jaws snapping)

B says /b/, b says /b/, bounce the ball, bounce the ball, /b/, /b/, /b/ (bounce an imaginary ball)

C says /c/, c says /c/, cough and cold, cough and cold, /c/, /c/, /c/ (cover mouth and pretend to cough)

D says /d/, d says /d/, down dragon, down dragon, /d/, /d/, /d/ (push hands toward floor)

E says /e/, e says /e/, elephant, elephant, /e/, /e/, /e/ (arm like a trunk in front of face)

F says /f/, f says /f/, fighting cat, fighting cat, /f/, /f/, /f/ (hands like claws scratching the air)

G says /g/, g says /g/, gurgling baby, gurgling baby, /g/, /g/, /g/ (wobble head back and forth like a little baby)

H says /h/, h says /h/, huff and puff, huff and puff, /h/, /h/, /h/ (move arms back and forth as if you are running)

I says /i/, i says /i/, icky ink, icky ink, /i/, /i/, /i/ (shake hands like they're covered with something icky)

J says /j/, j says /j/, jump and jiggle, jump and jiggle, /j/, /j/, /j/ (jump and jiggle)

K says /k/, k says /k/, kicking kangaroo, kicking kangaroo, /k/, /k/, /k/ (kicking feet)

L says /l/, l says /l/, lollipop, lollipop, /l/, /l/, /l/ (lick a lollipop)

M says /m/, m says /m/, marshmallow, marshmallow, /m/, /m/, /m/ (rub tummy)

N says /n/, n says /n/, no never, no never /n/, /n/, /n/ (shake finger "no")

O says /o/, o says /o/, octopus, octopus, /o/, /o/, /o/ (link thumbs and fingers as the octopus tentacles)

P says /p/, p says /p/, sour pickle, sour pickle /p/, /p/, /p/ (pucker face)

Q says /q/, q says /q/, quiet queen, quiet queen, /q/, /q/, /q/ (finger in front of lips as if to signal quiet)

R says /r/, r says /r/, rev your motor, rev your motor, /r/, /r/, /r/ (like riding a motorcycle and revving the gas)

S says /s/, s says /s/, sliding snake, sliding snake, /s/, /s/, /s/ (arm moving as though it were a snake sliding)

T says /t/, t says /t/, tickle the turtle, tickle the turtle, /t/, /t/, /t/ (tickle under your chin)

U says /u/, u says /u/, umbrella, umbrella, /u/, /u/, /u/ (move hand up as though putting up an umbrella)

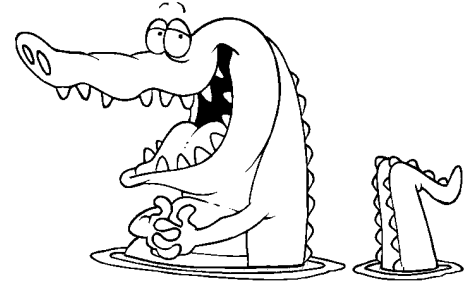
V says /v/, v says /v/, violin, violin, /v/, /v/, /v/ (play the violin)

W says /w/, w says /w/, wild wind, wild wind, /w/, /w/, /w/ (arms waving in the air)

X says /x/, x says /x/, exit, exit, /x/, /x/, /x/ (point at exit sign)

Y says /y/, y says /y/, yellow yo-yo, yellow yo-yo, /y/, /y/, /y/ (use an imaginary yo-yo)

Z says /z/, z says /z/, zip the zebra, zip the zebra, /z/, /z/, /z/ (do up imaginary zipper)



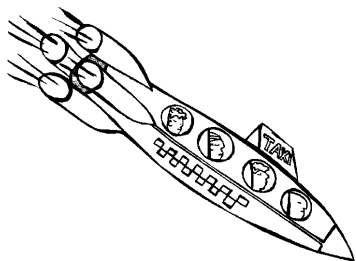
## Alphabet Chant

This /-/ represents the letter's sound. All vowels have the short vowel sound. Also, the song is sung as a call and response. The teacher (or child leader) says one line and then the class repeats it. If you are teaching sign language the children can make the letter sign with the chant.

*Sung to Frere Jacques*

(letter) (sound) (object)

A	/a/	apple (Kids repeat)	M	/m/	mouse	"
B	/b/	ball	N	/n/	nurse	"
C	/c/	cat,	O	/o/	octopus	"
D	/d/	duck	P	/p/	purse	"
E	/e/	elephant	Q	/q/	queen	"
F	/f/	frog	R	/r/	rain	"
G	/g/	goat	S	/s/	snake	"
H	/h/	hog	T	/t/	train	"
I	/i/	insect	U	/u/	umbrella	"
J	/j/	jet	V	/v/	van	"
K	/k/	kangaroo	W	/w/	wagon	"
L	/l/	let	X	/x/	??? (be silent)	"
			y	/y/	yo-yo	"
			Z	/z/	zero	"
			Now I know my ABC's			"
			I am a hero!			"



## Kinesthetic Phonics

A says /a/, a says /a/, Alligator, alligator, /A/ /a/ /a/ (point to imaginary alligator)  
 B says /b/, b says /b/, Bouncing ball, bouncing ball, /B/ /b/ /b/ (pretend to bounce a ball)  
 C says /c/, c says /c/, Cold and cough, cold and cough, /C/ /c/ /c/ (hand covers mouth)  
 D says /d/, d says /d/, Down dragon, down dragon, /D/ /d/ /d/ (point to ground)  
 E says /e/, e says /e/, Elephant, elephant, /E/ /e/ /e/ (cup hand over ear like trying to hear)  
 F says /f/, f says /f/, Fighting cat, fighting cat, /F/ /f/ /f/ (look mean, claw fingers)  
 G says /g/, g says /g/, Gurgling baby, Gurgling baby, /G/ /g/ /g/ (Hands up in air like baby)  
 H says /h/, h says /h/, Huff and puff, huff and puff, /H/ /h/ /h/ (hand on chest and pant)  
 I says /i/, i says /i/, Icky ink, icky ink, /I/ /i/ /i/ (try to shake ink off hand)  
 J says /j/, j says /j/, Jump and jiggle, jump and jiggle, /J/ /j/ /j/ (jiggle your arms)  
 K says /k/, k says /k/, Kicking kangaroo, kicking kangaroo, /K/ /k/ /k/ (kick with one foot)  
 L says /l/, l says /l/, Lollipop, lollipop, /L/ /l/ /l/ (lick the lollipop)  
 M says /m/, m says /m/, Marshmallow, marshmallow, /M/ /m/ /m/ (rub tummy)  
 N says /n/, n says /n/, No! Never! No! Never!, /N/ /n/ /n/ (scowl and wag finger)  
 O says /o/, o says /o/, Octopus, octopus, /O/ /o/ /o/ (move arms like octopus legs)  
 P says /p/, p says /p/, Sour pickle, sour pickle, /P/ /p/ /p/ (make sour face)

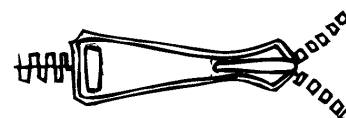
Q says /qu/, q says /qu/, Quiet queen, quiet queen, /Qu/ /qu/ /qu/ (finger across lips)  
 R says /r/, r says /r/, Run the motor, run the motor, /R/ /r/ /r/ (rev up a motorcycle)  
 S says /s/, s says /s/, Slithering snake, Slithering snake, /S/ /s/ /s/ (hands back and forth)  
 T says /t/, t says /t/, Tickle turtle, tickle turtle, /T/ /t/ /t/ (tickle under neighbour's chin)  
 U says /u/, u says /u/, Under umbrella, under umbrella, /U/ /u/ /u/ (hands overhead)  
 V says /v/, v says /v/, Violin, violin, /V/ /v/ /v/ (play the violin)  
 W says /w/, w says /w/, Wild wind, wild wind, /W/ /w/ /w/ (wave arms like a tree in the wind)  
 No rhyme for x  
 Y says /y/, y says /y/, Yucky yam, yucky yam, /Y/ /y/ /y/ (look disgusted)  
 Z says /z/, z says /z/, Zip the zebra, zip the zebra, /Z/ /z/ /z/ (zip and unzip a coat)



A is for alligator.  
 A is for ants.  
 A is for apples on my pants.  
 B is for bear.  
 B is for boat.  
 B is for buttons on my coat.  
 C is for cow.  
 C is for cat.  
 C is for caterpillar on my hat.  
 D is for dinosaur.  
 D is for dog.  
 D is for doll on my log.  
 E is for envelope.  
 E is for eggs.  
 E is for elephant on my legs.  
 F is for fire engine.  
 F is for fish.  
 F is for fox in my dish.  
 G is for girl.  
 G is for goat.  
 G is for gorilla in my boat.  
 H is for horse.  
 H is for hair.  
 H is for hippopotamus on my chair.  
 I is for igloo.  
 I is for ink.  
 I is for iguana in my sink.

J is for jelly.  
 J is for jeep.  
 J is for jacket on my sheep.  
 K is for kite.  
 K is for king.  
 K is for key on my string.  
 L is for lion.  
 L is for log.  
 L is for leaves on my frog.  
 M is for mittens.  
 M is for mouse.  
 M is for monkeys on my house.  
 N is for newspaper.  
 N is for nest.  
 N is for numbers on my vest.  
 O is for octopus.  
 O is for ox.  
 O is for ostrich in my box.  
 P is for pizza.  
 P is for pan.  
 P is for pencils in my can.  
 Q is for queen.  
 Q is for quail.  
 Q is for quarters in my pail.  
 R is for rose.  
 R is for ring.  
 R is for rabbit on my swing.

S is for sun.  
 S is for socks.  
 S is for snails on my blocks.  
 T is for tooth.  
 T is for truck.  
 T is for tie on my duck.  
 U is for underwear.  
 U is for up.  
 U is for umbrella in my cup.  
 V is for violin.  
 V is for van.  
 V is for violets in my pan.  
 W is for worm.  
 W is for wagon.  
 W is for wings on my dragon.  
 X is for x-ray.  
 X marks the spot.  
 X is for kisses. I have a lot!  
 Y is for yo-yo.  
 Y is for yak.  
 Y is for yarn in my sack.  
 Z is for zebra.  
 Z is for zoo.  
 Z is for zipper on my shoe.



# Activities to Teach the Sounds

*Action: food snack; make tactile letters; praise*

**Aa** - asking apples (set an apple on a desk and ask it questions!); apples, applesauce, asparagus; Apple Jacks, aluminum foil; astounding!

**Bb** - bouncing a ball; eating a banana, bread, beans; buttons, beans, balloons; beautiful!

**Cc** - cutting a cake; eating carrots, cake, cookies, corn; cotton balls, crayons; commendable!

**Dd** - digging in dirt; eating doughnuts, dates, dips; dots, dominos, dishes, plastic dinosaurs; delightful!

**Ee** - exercise; eating eggs; egg shells; excellent!

**Ff** - finding funny frogs (hidden around the room); eating fruit; feathers, foil, fingerprints; fabulous! fantastic!

**Gg** - gobbling grapes; eating grapes; coloured glue, glitter, grass; gorgeous! great!

**Hh** - hopping hundreds (count by hundreds as they hop); eating hotdogs, ham, honey; hearts, hair, handprints; heavenly!

**Ii** - move like inchworms; eat Indian corn; plastic insects; impressive!

**Jj** - jumping jacks; eating jam and jelly, jelly beans, juice; jelly beans, jewels, jigsaw p i e c e s ; jazzy!

**Kk** - kingly kisses (we practice kissing in the air - very funny!); eating kiwi; keys, k l e e n e x ; Kingly Kids!

**Ll** - looking at leaves; eating lemon, lasagne, licorice; lace, leaves, lollipops, letters; lovely!

**Mm** - munching marshmallows; eating muffins and milk; money, macaroni; marvelous!

**Nn** - nibbling nuts; eating noodles, nuts; nails, newspaper, nylon; nice!

**Oo** - obstacle course; eating olives, omelet; Cherrios (or other 'o' shaped cereal); awesome????

**Pp** - punching pillows; eating pancakes, pie, pickles; peas, popcorn, puzzle pieces, pipecleaners; perfect!

**Qq** - quietly questing quarters (hidden in the room); eating quiche? (sound isn't c o r r e c t ... ); quarters, quilt squares, Q-tips; quite \_\_\_\_\_!

**Rr** - racing rockets (balloon and straw rockets on a string) or rattling rocks (put rocks in a container and rattle if you can stand it!); eating raisins, rice, radishes; rice, rocks, ribbon, raisins; really \_\_\_\_\_!

**Ss** - sipping sodas; eating soup and sandwiches, salad; sand, seeds, sandpaper, string; smart!

**Tt** - tapping toes; eating tea and toast, tomatoes; toothpicks, tape; terrific!

**Uu** - putting umbrellas up; eating upside-down cake; ugly \_\_\_\_\_; unsurpassed! unusual!

**Vv** - voluminous voices (singing loudly!); eating vegetables; velvet, velcro; very \_\_\_\_\_!

**Ww** - weaving webs (from string); eating walnuts, water, wieners, watermelon; wire, wool; well done!

**Xx** - do eXercises; eat ????; x-rays; eXcellent!

**Yy** - do yoga or play with a yo-yo; eating yogurt (yummy!); yellow yarn; YES!

**Zz** - zany zippers (glue a zipper on a piece of paper and then draw a zany picture around it), zipping zippers; eating zucchini; zig-zag braid; zippy!





One teacher reviews a consonant a day at the beginning of the year. She sends home a list telling parents what letter the class is studying each day and asks that the children bring in one item that begins with that letter. As the children share the items she writes the name of each thing on the board. Each child get a 9"x12" piece of construction paper with the upper and lower case letter for the day written on it. They cut out a shape that represents that letter and glue it onto the paper: a bat shape for B, car shape for C, dog shape for D, etc. These are all templates and the cher traces around them on various colors of construction paper. After they glue on the shape they write the word for that shape on the shape and then they choose other words from the board to write around the shape on the piece of construction paper. These will later be part of their writer's dictionary that each child keeps at their desk in a 3 ring binder. The teacher also chooses a story that has lots of words with the target letter and after listening to the story, on the second reading they raise their hand when they hear a target letter and she writes those words on the board also. They do some sort of art project involving the letter and have a snack that goes with the letter, too.

The song is sung to the theme of *Love and Marriage*.

Q and U,  
Q and U,  
Go together like a  
Sock and shoe.  
Let me tell you brother,  
You can't have one without the...other!



## Teaching Short Vowels

- One way to teach consonants and vowels is to say that consonants only make one sound but vowels are special. They can say their name, their sound, (and when you get further along..) they can even make different sounds when with other vowels. Make vowels VERY special.
- Photocopy a page of large simple print (without 'y', if possible) and have the children hunt for vowels. They can some highlight all the vowels in the passage. Show that there is a vowel in each word.

- Here is a simple sentences to help your students remember the vowel sounds.....

Sam's pet is not fun.

Print it in a sentence strip and highlight the vowels in different colours.



You can use little stories for the short vowels.

a = open wide to eat an a-pple

e = grandpa can't hear well and says e-e-e - use a picture of a grandpa with an e for the ear

i = the dot on the top of the i is like an 'itchy' chicken pox - itchy sound - i i i

o = open wide you are at the doctor's office say o (as in pot)

u = you are trying to lift something heavy - u u u

Short a baby

He is crying. Put your hands up to your eyes like you are crying.

Short e baby

He can't hear. Put your hand up to your ear as if you can't hear what is being said.

Short i baby

He has been eating something sticky. Shake your hands like you have something sticky on them and say 'icky'.

Short o baby

He went to the doctor. Open your mouth and say short o sound.

Short u baby

He doesn't know the answer. He just lifts his shoulders and says 'uh I don't know'.



"It is Spring! Many children in your class will know the consonant letter sounds by now and be blending CVC words using /a/ and /i/. and maybe /o/. (Always leave /e/ until the last as it is so easily confused with the /i/ sound. To help the children remember the vowel sounds, associate a visual symbol with the letter and sound. For example, always say /e/ as in elephant.

It is also helpful to use a kinesthetic cue for each vowel sound. The 'Project Read' program uses these cues.

/a/ -Hold your hand flat under the chin palm down and as you make /a/ sound and your chin drops, drop your hand .

/i/ -As you say the /i/ sound, point your thumb under the chin and drag the thumb forwards past the chin and outwards.

/o/ -Point your first finger and make small circles in front of your mouth as you make the /o/ sound.

/u/ -Hold the hand up with the fingers together and the thumb spread to make the letter 'u' and the curved handle of an umbrella as you say /u/.

/e/ -With your thumb and first finger, push back and lift the corners of your mouth as you make the /e/ sound."

"I teach the short vowel and vowel variant sounds with a picture connected to a motion. For example, for the short a, you pretend you are holding an apple and taking a bit out of the apple. For the short e sound, you show empty hands and say with eyes wide and looking down at first one hand then the other and say EMPTY...you can also connect it to a broken egg and the empty shells on the floor. For the short i sound, you pretend that you are itching your head. For the short o sound, you make the sound the doctor tells you to with your mouth round like an o. For the short u sound, you point up."

## **Blending**

Put the letters down a slide - then the letters bump into each other like children on a playground slide. Draw a simple picture of a slide when blending words. Then slow speech the word /s/ /u/ /n/. Next say 'put it down your slide' and the children (often with a sweeping motion) put it down their slide and it blends.

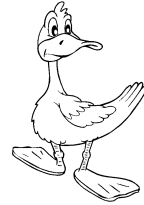
Where is short a? Where is short a?  
 Here I am. Here I am.  
 I am in a hat rack,  
 Cracker jacks and fat cats.  
 /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/

Where is short o? Where is short o?  
 Here I am. Here I am.  
 I am in a hot pot,  
 Rocky top and stop clock.  
 /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/

Where is short e? Where is short e?  
 Here I am. Here I am.  
 I am in a red bed,  
 Jelly eggs and jet sets.  
 /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/

Where is short u? Where is short u?  
 Here I am. Here I am.  
 I am in a dump truck,  
 Lucky duck and skunk bump.  
 /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/

Where is short i? Where is short i?  
 Here I am. Here I am.  
 I am in a big fig,  
 Silly Rick and pig wig.  
 /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/



**Open Court** teaches blending this way: For the word sun, for example:

Teacher points to the s, child says /s/, teacher blends to the u, child says /u/, teacher sweeps hand under s and u, child says /su/, teacher points to the n, child says /n/, teacher sweeps hand under entire word, child says sun

**Companion Reading** teaches blending this way:

Sam

ssssssssaaaaaaammmmmmmmm

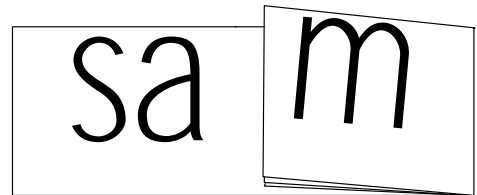
As you move your finger along the word the children say the sound and just change the sound when the letter changes.

You can practice blending words by making flip cards. It is best to teach the initial consonant with the vowel as the children get more proficient - begin teaching single sounds, and then to the initial consonant and the vowel. It makes more sense to blend from the beginning of the word rather than teaching rimes or word families. The kids shouldn't have to go to the end of the word and then back to the first sound. Their eyes should be tracking in a steady motion across the line of print.

Each day, start with the flip cards from the day before and then begin the lesson.

Create flip cards by writing a consonant + vowel such as 'sa' on the left side of the card, and then staple a pile of single consonants that will end the word on the right. For example, d, m, p, t, ck. Show the students the 'sa' part and have them say 'sa....' (singing the vowel, holding it for a second or two). Then show the d and they say sa....d, etc.

This can be done later with consonant blends or long vowels, too.



Old MacDonald had a farm  
A E I O U  
And on that farm he had some vowels  
A E I O U

There was a man who had a dog  
And Vowel was his name-o,  
A E I O U, A E I O U, A E I O U,  
And Vowel was his name-o.

### Practice Blending Sounds

*Practice blending by singing to 'If You're Happy And You Know It'.*

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, then, tell me what you've heard,

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

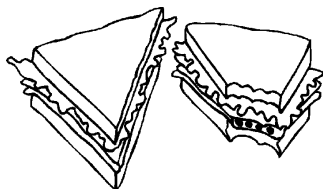
Teacher says /b/ - /a/ - /t/. (Students shout) bat!

### Colour Vowels

Vowels in pink - they're girls. Consonants in blue - they're boys.

Print your list words in colours. This is helpful for syllable separation rules. Students can be vowels (Girls). Consonants (Boys).

Stand in front of room holding letters. Then separate into syllables according to rules. (The girls as pink vowels and boys as blue consonants may not politically correct, but helps the children understand that every word and every syllable must have a vowel.)



Make 'sandwich words'! Start with a sandwich made from construction paper and inside put slips of papers with sandwich fixings written on them - PB&J, ham and cheese, etc., and some yucky ones like sardines and anchovies. Have the kids pick a slip and they all get tickled by what might be in the sandwich. Then talk about CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words being like sandwiches - you have to look deep inside at the vowel to be sure of what you are getting. Do a

few as a class (bat, bet, bit, but and some others) and then during our next reading time give them mini-post-its and have them look for sandwich words.

Teachers answer the question, "What can you do to help a child who is having problems with blending?"

- Have him write words beginning with 'ma', for example. Have him stretch the words to get those two sounds, have him write the letters that represent the sounds, then add the final sound as 'man, mat, map, mad, Max.' He has to attend to the sounds in order rather than thinking about the word family and hopping back to the beginning.
- Use magnetic letters and have him slide them one at a time across the table as he blends.
- Make up the word family and change beginning sound to form new words. Then take a word like bat and change /t/ to make new words, too, so that he can see how words can change that way also.
- While students can learn to read by learning sight words, blending does help them with new words and tends to make them more confident in their reading ability. The problem many people have with blending is that they do not actually blend the sounds but still try to say the sounds separately and just say them quickly trying to get them together. Try this method:
- Take phonetic words like *Sam man fan* and write them out like this:  
ssssssssssaaaaaaammmmmm

mmmmmmmaaaaaaaaaannnnnnnnnn  
fffffffffaaaaaaaaaannnnnnnnnn

- Teach the child to say the first sound as long as you draw your pointer under that letter and then to just change sounds without stopping when the pointer moves under a new letter. This allows for blending rather than stopping and starting a new sound. First, do it slowly and then a bit faster; when it is done a bit quicker the child can usually hear the word that is being said. This does take practice but most students can blend words after about two weeks of daily drill.
- To help phonemic awareness, call children using the letter you are learning instead of the correct letter. For example, Vanessa may become Manessa.

### Teaching the Digraphs

*This is a strategy from 'Project Read'.*

There is a family called the H brothers. H is the last name the way \_\_\_\_ is your last name. The first brother is C-H. He is the chopping brother. He saw a Karate show on TV and now he goes around chopping all

the time. He never touches anyone, but he practices on trees. One day he chopped a big C out of a tree. (We practice the chopping motion - saying ch-ch-ch).

Next was the whistling brother. His name is W-H. He wanted to whistle more than anything. But the only sound he could ever make was wh, wh. (We practice this sound).

I'm really embarrassed to tell you about the next brother. He's the naughty brother! He sticks his tongue out at people. He says-th-th-th! Everyone is so embarrassed!

What a funny family! There was ch brother saying ch-ch-ch; and wh brother saying wh-wh-wh; and naughty brother saying th-th-th. The fourth brother was the very good brother. He thought the rest were making too much noise and he said Shhhhhh! His name is SH."

"I introduced the H Brothers to my Grade One class in December. Their names are Whitney (who is learning to whistle and makes the 'wh' sound constantly), Chad (who likes choo-choo trains and runs around the house making the 'ch' sound all the time), Thad (a rather naughty fellow who is always sticking out his tongue and makes the 'th' sound), and Shane (the good boy in the family who is constantly telling his brothers to be quiet). I made posters of these unique brothers and the kids were quite interested in them. Today I had a mother (this is a FOR REAL story!) ask me who these brothers were and why they weren't in school and where they lived!"

S and H, S and H  
Say it very quietly  
Sh sh sh  
(one finger on your lips)

C and H, C and H  
Like a chatty chipmunk  
Ch ch ch  
(curl hands in front of chest like a chipmunk)

T and H, T and H  
Stick out your tongue  
And look at your thumb  
Th th th  
(hold up thumb)

W and H, W and H  
Make a silent whistle  
Wh wh wh  
(pucker the mouth and blow)



### Poem for the Digraphs

What is your sound?

C - h, c - h, what's your sound?

"ch" "ch" "ch" "ch" "ch"

"ch" "ch."

Chair has the "ch" sound.

So does scratch,

Also chimney and pumpkin patch.

C - h, c - h, what's your sound?

"ch" "ch" "ch" "ch" "ch"

"ch" "ch."

What is your sound?

S - h, s - h, what's your sound?

"sh" "sh" "sh" "sh" "sh"

"sh" "sh."

She has the "sh" sound.

So does fish,

Also shadow and birthday wish.

S - h, s - h, what's your sound?

"sh" "sh" "sh" "sh" "sh"

"sh" "sh."

What is your sound?

T - h, t - h, what's your sound?

"th" "th" "th" "th" "th"

"th" "th."

The has the "th" sound.

So does math,

Also thimble and secret path.

T - h, t - h, what's your sound?

"th" "th" "th" "th" "th"

"th" "th"

What is your sound?

W - h, w - h, what's your sound?

"wh" "wh" "wh" "wh" "wh"

"wh" "wh."

What has the "wh" sound.

So does why,

Also whisper and whiskers, my!

W - h, w - h, what's your sound?

"wh" "wh" "wh" "wh" "wh"

"wh" "wh."

## Teaching Long Vowels

### The Magic 'e'

It is the 'magic e' because it changes words like *hop* to *hope* and *not* to *note*, etc. Using popsicle sticks the kids make magic e wands. It is basically a popsicle stick with a star and the letter E glue to it and then some glitter added. List words like hop, not, man, ton, pin, etc., and they put their wand at the end of the word and read the new word. It is just like magic!

"Here's a song that helps teach silent e - the CVCe pattern.

The consonant takes a vowel,

The consonant takes a vowel,

Hi, ho the derry-o,

The consonant takes a vowel.

The vowel takes a consonant.....

When silent e appears,

When silent e appears,

It makes the vowel says its own name

When silent e appears.

Children hold letter cards as we sing and choose the next person to come up so there is a strong visual component as well."



Here is a list of 'magic e' words .....

at...ate bar...bare cam...came can...cane cap...cape car...care fade...fade far...fare  
fat...fate gal...gale glad...glade hat...hate made...made man...mane mat...mate pal...pale  
par...pare pan...plane rat...rate sal...sale sam...same scar...scare slat...slate star...stare  
tap...tape cod...code con...cone cop...cope dot...dote glob...globe hop...hope not...note  
pop...pope rob...robe rod...rode slop...slope tot...tote cub...cube cut...cute dud...dude  
tub...tube bit...bite dim...dime fin...fine fir...fire hid...hide kit...kite pin...pine pip...pipe  
rip...ripe slid...slide spin...spine spit...spite strip...stripe twin...twine win...wine

### Change words

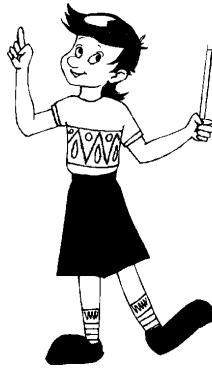
Who can turn a can into a cane?  
Who can turn a pan into a pane?  
It's not too hard to see,  
It's Silent E.

Who can turn a cub into a cube?  
Who can turn a tub into a tube?  
It's elementary  
For Silent E.

He took a pin and turned it into a pine.  
He took a twin and turned him into twine.

Who can turn a cap into a cape?  
Who can turn a tap into a tape?  
A little glob becomes a globe instantly,  
If you just add Silent E.

I'm just hangin' around,  
I'm not making a sound.  
I make the other vowel long,  
And that's the end of my song.....I'm MAGIC E!



### Long Vowels

Mail, sail, nail  
Say, hay, may  
What sound do you hear?  
Long a, long a, long a

Feet, heat, seat  
Bee, see, tree  
What sound do you hear?  
Long e, long e, long e

Five, dive, hive  
Pie, my, hi  
What sound do you hear?  
Long i, long i, long i

Boat, coat, goat  
Hoe, go, toe  
What sound do you hear?  
Long o, long o, long o

Tune, June, dune  
Blue, glue, clue  
What sound do you hear?  
Long u, long u, long u

### Short and Long

A is my name.  
Two sounds I make.  
Short a in lamb,  
Long a in cake!

I is my name  
Two sounds have I  
Short i in pig,  
Long i in pie!

U is my name  
Two sounds for you  
Short u in cup  
Long u in cue!

E is my name  
Two sounds for me  
Short e in hen  
Long e in he!

O is my name  
Two sounds I know  
Short o in pot,  
Long o in go!

When two vowels are in a little word  
The first one is loooooonnnng  
The second one is not heard.

## Teaching Blends

Introduce the blends with the 'BLENDER story' where you explain that a milkshake has two parts that are BLENDED together to make a shake (ice cream and milk). You could do the blending right then and there and make milkshakes or you might save that for last. Show a little mock activity where you have a student put in the letter 'b' and someone else puts in an 'r' and then reach in and swirl it all around and pull out the 'br' that you have hidden in the bottom of the blender - the kids think this is magic.

As a check for understanding hand each student a piece of highlighter tape and tell them to go on a BLEND SEARCH in any book in the room. Give them an index card. Tell them their job is to search for blends, highlight them with the tape and then record the words they found.

"I just taught a lesson on blends last week and I introduced it with the 'blending' idea. I start with a cup of water and a bottle of Elmer's Glue. We add some glue to the water and then students help me blend them together. Once they are completely blended I ask for students to take out just the glue or just the water. We finally agree that it is impossible and that's how I explain taking our blends apart once we blend them together. They make a bowl out of their hands and add sounds of 'b' and 'l' and mix and I hold up 'bl' which can never again be separated. I leave a big chart on the wall of a picture of a mixing bowl and we add post-its of any blends so we can refer to it in reading and writing. This was very effective and easy."

"Review or teach the blends by making a chart with each individual letter, then the blend (example c words, then l words, then cl words. Have the children supply the word for the chart. Next, use a cheap colourful kick ball that you can buy in K-mart or Walmart. Take a magic marker and divide it into large areas. On these areas write the blends. Toss it around to different children. Have them name the blend under each of their thumbs and give you a word that begins with each blend. Last, review all the blend words with the children, and then pass out your skill sheet. Allow the children to use the ball during free choice or center time."

### Consonant Friends

*Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*

A blend is made of two consonant friends,  
consonant friends, consonant friends.

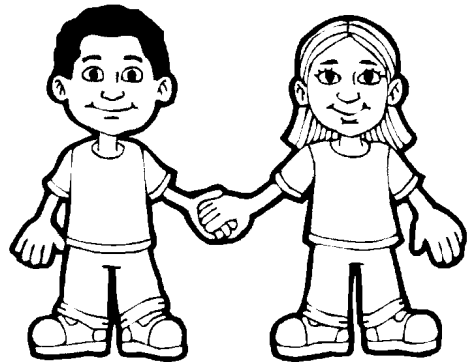
A blend is made of two consonant friends,  
that are seen and heard to-ge-ther.

B-l as in black and block, c-l as in clown and clock,

F-l as in flash and flock, consonant friends together.

G-l as in glass and glide, s-l as in slip and slide,

B-r as in broom and bride, consonant friends together.



A blend is made of two consonant friends, consonant friends, consonant friends.

A blend is made of two consonant friends, that are seen and heard to-ge-ther.

P-l as in plug and play, g-r as in grass and gray,

T-r as in trash and tray, consonant friends together.

D-r in dress and dry, f-r as in fruit and fry,

C-r as in crown and cry, consonant friends together.



## Soft 'c' and 'g'

"Here's a little chant that works well when teaching soft 'c' and 'g'. Every time we get to one of these combinations, we chant the rhyme."

ce, ci, cy, oh my!

ce, ci, cy, oh my!

ce, ci, cy, oh my!

Makes a c say SSSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

ge, gi, gy, oh my!

ge, gi, gy, oh my!

ge, gi, gy, oh my!

Makes a g say jjjjjjjj!

## R-Controlled Vowels

### The Bossy 'r' -

*This is sung to the tune London Bridge:*

Bossy r comes after a vowel, after a vowel, after a vowel.

Bossy r comes after a vowel, bossy r sound.

Bossy r changes the vowel, Changes the vowel, Changes the vowel.

Bossy r changes the vowel, bossy r sound.

When an r comes after an a, after an a, after an a,

When an r comes after an a, it says 'ar'.

Car and harp and chart and hard, chart and hard, chart and hard,

When an r comes after an a, it says 'ar'.

When an r comes after an e, after an i, or after a u,

When an r comes after these three, they say 'er'.

Her and germ and bird and nurse, bird and nurse, bird and nurse,

When an r comes after these three, they say er'.

When an r comes after an o, after an o, after an o,

When an r comes after an o, it says 'or'.

Horse and fork and short and corn, short and corn, short and corn,

When an r comes after an o, it says 'or'.



"Project Read has a good story to help explain r-controlled vowels that goes along these lines - Bossy R makes the 'a' call his sound 'r' like his letter name but will be polite and always let her go first. /ar/ e, i, and u saw that this happened so they stuck together and all of them agreed to say his sound but not his letter name. 'o' was a bit stronger and the deal she worked out with 'r' was that her name and his sound would be the sound they make together. /or/

"My class has fun with these stories. I introduce them on separate days and they are always anxious to hear what will happen to the other vowels."

'e' is the most popular of the three sisters and gets used the most in words. (er, ir, ur)

a and r together they say r  
a and r together they say r  
If you think Hong Kong is far  
Then don't go there by car!  
a and r together they say r

O and r together they say or, cha cha cha  
o and r together they say or, cha cha cha  
If you want to do a chore  
Then go and sweep the floor  
O and r together they say or, cha cha cha.

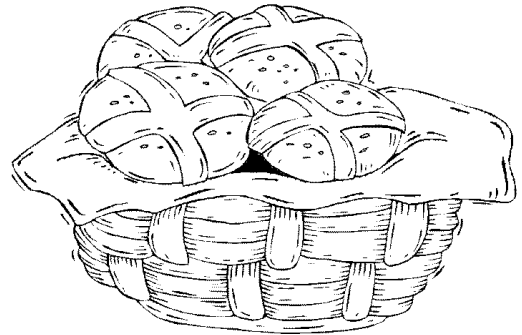
## **Other Ideas**

### **Learning the Sounds of "ea"**

We also have a little chant for "ea" to the tune of  
*Hot Cross Buns*

ea.....e (pronounce with a long e)  
ea.....e (pronounce with short e)  
ea.....a (pronounce with long a)  
Which will be the way?

Then try all three ways on a word such as steak, or  
bread, and see which way makes a word.



### **A Phonics Phone**

"It's an inexpensive telephone-type receiver that the child can hold in their hand, made of PVC pipe. There are right angle 'elbows' at each end, so that the child can talk into one end of the 'phone', and their words go right to their own ear at the other end. This helps the children hear the sounds that they are making.

Here's what you need for each Phonics Phone....

- \* One four to five inch 'nipple' or length of PVC pipe, 3/4" to 1" in diameter. Nipples have threads on them, but you could just cut regular PVC to the desired length.
- \* Two 'elbows', right angle connector pieces of PVC pipe, in the same size as the nipple or straight piece. If you're using threaded nipples, get threaded elbows and screw them on. If you're using plain PVC pipe, get unthreaded elbows and slip them on ... they'll fit snugly without glue. Put the three pieces together and you have a Phonics Phone. You can spray paint them in bright colours if you like, as some PVC has lettering on it. Please remember to use proper sanitary precautions with these phones. Periodically wash them and spray with Lysol. I would recommend that each child have their own phone."

"I bought PVC elbows at Home Depot and made what I call "phonics phones". It took three different pieces - all slightly different curves to make a curved pipe - rather like a banana! I have the children hold it up to their ear and talk into it. It is great to help them hear sounds in isolation. I also hook more pieces to it to make a "party line phone" so I can talk into it and the child can hear my voice."

# **B D Reversals**

Use words for the letters. b is a bat and a ball (the bat hits the ball) and d is a doorknob and a door (you have to touch the doorknob to open the door).

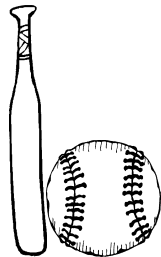
Write the word bed....imagine that the b is the headboard and the d is that baseboard and draw a bed around the word. Draw a little pillow showing the front of the bed. When the children say the word bed, they know it starts with b and ends with d., so if they say it and see this picture, they know which way the b and d go...

Have the children make a fist with their knuckles touching and their thumbs pointing up. B is on the left and D is on the right.

"This is a visual that I use with my children that really seems to help them. Remember how we make the sign with our hands for OK? Not the thumbs up, but making a circle with our thumb and pointer finger. Turn your hand so that you are looking at the 2 circles and put the rest of your fingers standing up, so that they form the sticks for the letters b and d. When a child is trying to decide which is which during reading or writing, they quickly form these and say to themselves, 'a,b,c,d'. This works for most kids!"

Here are two songs to go with your bat/baseball and drum/drumstick illustrations. While singing each song, use large motions with the arm to show each letter. During each line you will make the letter with your "magic finger." They are to be sung to "Are You Sleeping?"

Bat and baseball  
Bat and baseball  
Make a b, make a b,  
Bat and baseball  
Bat and baseball  
Make a b, make a b.



Drum and drumstick  
Drum and drumstick  
Make a d, make a d,  
Drum and drumstick  
Drum and drumstick  
Make a d, make a d.



It is not unusual for children to reverse letters and words when they read or write up to the age of 6 or 7. This is due to immaturity in brain development. Children who have problems with reversals usually also have problems with left-right directionality. Below are some exercises that have been found to help improve directionality and reduce reversals.

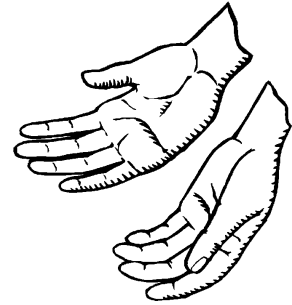
These children have spatial confusion. They are unable to differentiate left-right, on self, other, or paper. They confuse letter pairs as b-d, m-w, p-q. Confuses words such as was-saw, on-no.

## **To Improve b-d Reversals**

- Make each letter that may give difficulty automatic before the next one is introduced. Over-teach 'b', then over-teach 'd' before presenting both together.
- Each letter or number that causes repeated errors should be worked with by itself until the

problem is overcome.

- Trace, then write, the confused letter or word and pronounce it as written. This is using three senses at once - visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
- Use short frequent practice periods. Lengthen the time between practice sessions as the material is retained.



### To Improve Laterality:

- Trace hands on paper. Label "right," "left."
- Play 'Simon Says' - 'Touch right arm', 'lift left foot', etc.
- Child connects dots on blackboard to make a completed pattern; repeats process on paper.
- Child shows hands in sequence pattern: left, right, left, right, etc. Use marching as a variation.
- Child names objects on right and on left. He moves to different parts of the room and repeats.
- Arrange story pictures in sequence, left to right.
- Use lined paper for writing.
- Use a wristband to designate right or left hand whichever is the 'printing hand'.
- Tracing activities, left to right. Mark left with small 'x'. Use colour tracing to repeat.
- When beginning writing, teach the child to begin as close to left edge of sheet as possible (then can move only toward the right).
- In reading, use markers, 'windows', and other left-to-right directional aids.

### A Teacher's Opinion

"Here's my take on the matter! It is important not to make them the same way....one top down and then bouncing to the right and then one top down and bouncing to the left...To the child with 'sidedness' issues...that "feels" the same. Nothing distinct or differentiating about that. Combine auditory sensory stimulation (chanting or repeating aloud) with visual cues...on wall, desk, circled on alphabet lines for individual students.

Look at b and d .....From left to right, when you sweep your eyes, they do not begin the same way so do not let your students make them the same way - (think of cursive if you will).

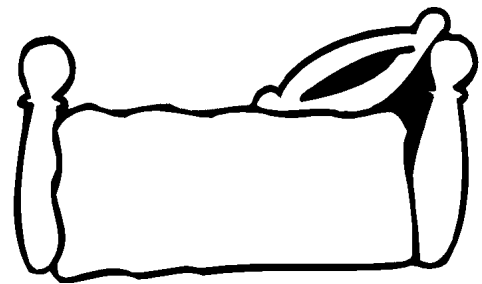
b = start at the top, drop the ball and bounce it away...(from your helping 'other' hand). Lefties bounce towards their helping hand as if to catch the ball.

d = around, up down...as we begin with the letter 'a' starting at 1 o'clock on the line and dragging to the left some before going around to complete the circle, they know the drill by the time we get to this letter. So we go around, WAAAAAAy up and down to end the letter. The story that goes with this is that in my classroom, all lowercase two space letters are teenagers...and we know what teenagers are like...anyway, you've seen d's Dad, haven't you?...a tad overweight...(the kids get to put a belly button on him when we practice that one...(so easily rewarded, aren't they!) Anyway, they have lots of doughnuts in that house...not exactly healthy eating. Teenagers are always on the go, sleep late, running late...so 'd' grabs a doughnut to eat on his way out the door, late for middle school..... and ...well, it is your typical sugar high...doughnut first (around) and UP , down...all that sugar on an empty stomach and they are bouncing all over the place. Then they get to put the hole in the circle for a doughnut and we actually make big ones and then smear puddle glue on the circle part and sprinkle on cinnamon sugar....cool! ...then eat doughnuts, of course. They associate muscle memory with auditory and visual memory!"

Vici

*Note: Friends on the 'grade\_one' list will recognize Vici's style. It could be re-written, but it would lose something!*

- "I show them how a lowercase b is inside the uppercase B. That seems to help them the best....as long as they know what a B is!"
- "Have students make fists with tips facing in and thumbs sticking straight up. You chant (holding the left hand up higher) "Breakfast in the morning", (now holding the right hand higher) "Dinner at night, 'B' on the left, and 'D' on the right!" (The left hand looks like a b and the right hand looks like a d with the thumb up.) B is for breakfast and d for dinner...."
- b is a bat and a ball. d goes around the driveway and down the road.
- "We chant (while we write the letter) with the letter b, "Straight stick down, around, b" reminding them to write the stick first and then put the round ball. With the letter d we say, "Go around like an 'a' with a tall, tall back, d.""
- "When a student makes a b/d reversal, ask the student to put up his/her thumbs. They ball the fingers together with the thumbs extending upward. The two hands are pushed together with the 'balls' - the round fists - touching and the thumbs on each end. The visual of the bed made by putting the thumbs up helps to show the shape of the letters b and d. In addition, for students who have the auditory discrimination skills to hear the sounds, the b is first, the d last, corresponding to the initial and final consonant sounds of b and d in the word bed and in the order of the alphabet. Thumbs down can assist with distinguishing the p from the q (visual only, not auditory)."



## More Ideas ....

- Associate the problem letter with another that is not reversed.
- Provide instruction on how to make the letter using different colours to reinforce the directionality.
- Give a verbal or visual cue to the student for correctly writing the letter (b 'looks at' C). Use a cartoon drawing of the letter to help depict this concept.
- Lowercase **b** is like uppercase **B** without the top circle.
- A cue for remembering **d** is that **c** comes first then adds a line to make the **d**.
- Mark all b's and p's red to indicate that the loop is on the right and all d's and q's green to show that the loop is on the left.
- Use textured letters. Have the student trace over the letter in the proper direction with the middle and index finger. Have him do this with eyes closed and then eyes open. Have the student repeat aloud verbal directions for forming the letter.
- Use children's clay to line a shallow rectangular shaped box. The student uses a broken pencil or item of similar size and strength to trace the letters through the clay. You and the child say the letter and the sound at the same time.

- Tactile impressions of troublesome letters can be made quickly and cheaply. Use sandpaper or screening. Tape the sandpaper/screening to heavy cardboard. Lay a piece of writing paper on the sandpaper/screen. Using a waxy crayon, draw the letter. The student then has a model to trace for tactile input. The rough side of masonite board also provides a good surface for making tactile letters. Whole troublesome words may also be traced (e.g., was, saw, dog, etc.).
- Writing on the chalkboard is helpful because it involves large arm movements and work can easily be erased. Say the letter name and sound as it is printed and cue. For instance, in making the letter b, you might say, 'First the bat, then the ball on the right, makes a b.'
- Persistent reversals may stem from the student's poorly established concept of left and right. In addition to paper/pencil tasks, the student needs instruction that will enable him/her to distinguish objects in the environment as being on the right, left, in front of, behind, next to, etc. the student. This instruction can be accomplished through games that involve directionality. The student may need additional instruction in body concept also.
- Persistent reversals may also mean a learning disability. There is an abnormality in the brain that 'sees' letters incorrectly. The child may see them reversed or flipped, horizontally or vertically. This cannot be cured, but the child can be given strategies to help his/her reading.

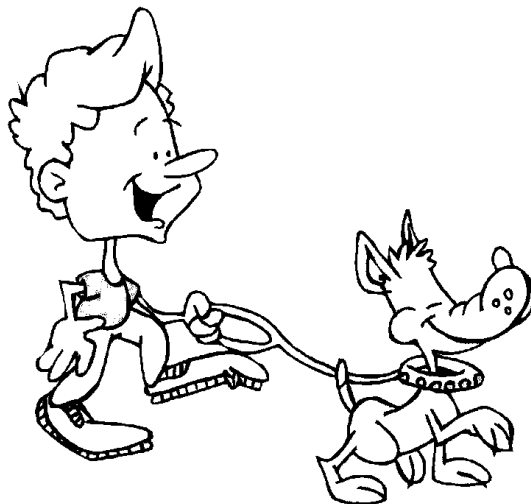
"Every time I give a spelling test I write the words 'boy' and 'dog' on the board and make a big deal about double checking anytime a word has a 'b' or a 'd' in it. If they do reverse on the test they have to write it correctly 10 times on the back but I don't lower the grade. After Christmas I start marking words with reversals wrong and take points off the grade. It does straighten out eventually but attention does need to be brought to the issue."

### **B - D Discrimination**

"Make pictures using graph paper and fill with b, d, g, q, p. Assign each a colour and then make pictures using the letters as the kids colour them in."

"I also circle the offending letters on the alphabet lines of students who can't get them straight. They can all say the alphabet so they know that the 'b' comes first."

*This was also offered by Vici, who signed the note, 'qoob luck!'*



# Reading Ideas

The more that you read,  
the more things you will know.  
The more that you learn,  
the more places you'll go.  
-from *"I Can Read With My Eyes Shut"*, Dr. Seuss.



## Teaching a Sight Vocabulary

- When working with slow readers or young readers, watch font size. Children 5 - 7 years of age are particularly sensitive to small print. People of all ages make more reading errors as text font size gets smaller.
- For students who have problems reading black text on white paper, use multi-coloured page protectors for students to lay on top of the text. Try this with your LD kids, too. Try different colours and see if a certain colour makes a difference for that particular child

"I use the Dolch sight words and give each child 8 words on a ring. (I pre-test in the beginning and use that to determine with what list they begin.) They return their rings each week and I test them and place a star on the card if it is known. Once a card gets 3 stars (the child has known it 3 times) the card is removed and a new card is added."

"I do 5 sight word sentences a week. I try to write a book each week that uses student's names and the 5 word wall words and have it go with something we are doing or something that I want them to remember. I keep track of the names I have used, and keep using names until everyone has had a chance. I laminate the covers and put the finished books in the classroom library. They are always a popular reading choice."

"Using blank name tags that stick on, write a sight word on each one. As the children come in, randomly stick on a name tag and that becomes his or her name for the day. They each have to refer to themselves by that word and others have to use it to refer to them. The kids love this. We usually do it once a week. I choose for myself the word that is giving the most kids difficulty so they have to see it and say it a lot. For example, 'Mrs. WHAT', a word that gives a lot of them trouble."

"To review sight words at this time of year, I put two words in each envelope and make enough envelopes to cover all students. The child picks an envelope, writes the two words at the top of a line piece of paper, and then makes a sentence using the two words. Everyone can work at their own speed while teacher circulates to see in they are really sentences. Later in the week I'll add three words to each envelope. Each envelope is numbered and children mark off the ones they have done on a number strip that they keep with their sentences."

"Here is a neat way to introduce/teach vocabulary! It's called a vocabulary flag and it's a paint stirrer with a piece of white cardboard across the end (like a T). You use it with the overhead. You take the flag to the screen and 'scoop' up a word and pull it off the screen. It projects on to the flag and it is sort of magnified and really makes the word stand out. After you're finished with the word, you scoop it back into its place on the screen. It's very amazing and kids (and adults) are speechless the first time they see it. It can be anything you have projected onto a screen. I just did it with Morning Message yesterday and the kids located the words in the message.

To scoop up the word you bring the flag and put it in front of the screen where the word is projected, so it's no longer on the screen, it is now on the white cardboard flag. I did a little scoop motion to make it apparent that I was in essence lifting the word out of the context and then 'scooping' it back when we were finished with the word."

- Choose 5-6 difficult words from a story and ask the children to write the words on a rectangular piece of construction paper. Draw a picture of their favorite character, favorite part of the story or anything about the story on the back of the bookmark. Then, we use the bookmark all week while we work on the story.
- Each week write the vocabulary words on one set of index cards. Whenever the children have time, they can pick a partner and practice reading the words.
- Make word cards on the computer and then laminate them and hole-punch them for a ring. Use index cards to write words for individual students if they are having trouble with them.

"I make Word Wall head bands. I cut paper in long strips. The kids use coloured markers and a pencil. They write sentences with the word wall words in them on the strips. The sentence is written in pencil. The word wall words are written with the colour they are on the word wall. They staple it and wear it around their head."

- Sing a Song of Sight Words - Practice sight words by singing them to a familiar tune or making up your own. If you run out of words before you get to the end of the song, just start at the top of the list again. Some songs to try include "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

"Word hunts:

- We look in various written pages of consumable writings like newspapers, magazines, etc. for a specific word ('the', for example). We use highlighter pens to circle how many we can find in a specific time (3-5 min.) and then count them. This not only helps them focus on one word but they must use scanning strategies, as well.
- We tally our results on scrap paper.
- Sometimes we search for words that have certain letters or combination of letters (like 'sh' or 'ai'). After listing them on scratch paper either the teacher or students list them on chart paper prepared for that purpose."

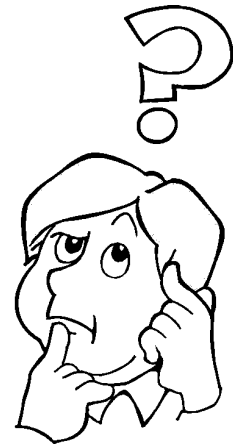




"Who', 'what', 'have', 'of', 'are', 'come' do not follow normal English spelling patterns. Phonics will not help decode these words. Therefore, these words need to be learned through alternate strategies. A friend of mine remembers learning these words 20 years ago as 'Outlaw Words', because they 'break the laws' of regular spelling. I use that term with my children which generates enthusiasm as we learn them.

As Cunningham advises, I use a word wall where I introduce five new words a week. Most are words that can be decoded and will be useful in decoding other words, but one or two will be irregular high frequency words, or 'Outlaw Words'. For a short amount of time each day, we do different activities to automate the recognition of all five words.

One day I will have my students write the words in the air, on their hand, and on each other's backs. Another day they will close their eyes and visualize forming the words one letter at a time. Students will spell the words with their whole bodies, becoming the shape of each individual letter and with the enthusiasm of cheerleaders, shout out the letters in the word. We play games like 'What's in My Head' where I give the children structural clues to a word that I am thinking. One of their favourite activities is 'Scavenger Hunt'. Students take the irregular word and search the classroom's books, posters, charts, boxes, and walls for that word. Each time they find the word, they record it on their individual paper and make a tally mark. This helps to automate recognition of these 'outlaw' words."



- Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com> and make up word find puzzles with your vocabulary words.
- Using the computer, print a number of vocabulary and other words in rectangles using primary font. The children cut them apart and can use them for flash cards, make up sentences (if you have some words beginning with an upper case letter), play word bingo, and then take them home to practice.

"I introduce five sight words a week. We work on these every day with the whole class.

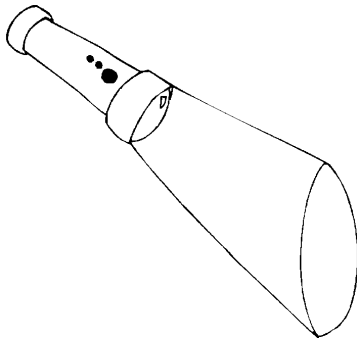
**Monday:** Introduce each sight word using magnetic letters. Then we play 'Magnetic Mix-up'. I mix up the letters in the word and a volunteer comes up and puts them back in the right order. I have index cards with the sight words printed on them.

**Tuesday:** We review sight words. Cards are still up. I put up one letter at a time and students try and guess the word. Play Magnetic Mix-up. This time I may combine letters from two sight words so they have to pick out the correct letters.

**Wednesday:** Cards with sight words are gone. Put up with magnets, Magnetic Mix-up (kids love this and I can call on different students each day.)

**Thursday:** We come up with sentences that use each word. After everyone gets a chance to tell a sentence about at least 1 word, I do a writing workshop mini-lesson and we try to use some of the words in our journals.

**Fun Friday:** We play a whole group game with the sight words. Concentration, word wall bingo, Who Wants To Be a Word Wall Wizard?, etc."



"I have a small flashlight and I turn off the lights and we sing the poem 'Flashlight, Flashlight'. I then shine the light onto a vocabulary word (the words are on index cards in a pocket chart). I choose a child to tell me the word. We continue this until all of the words have been said. We sing the poem to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, little star. My children love it. Most of them study the words for homework because they want to make sure they can say the words if I call on them.

Flashlight, flashlight,  
Shine so bright,  
Shine on this word with all your might.

We sing it to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, but the children can just say the poem."

## **Sight Word Games**

"We've been doing a little game for vocabulary with tap lights. We bought some of the tap lights (you can get them in different shapes) and have students come up individually, in pairs, or in small groups. We give students a definition and the first one to recognize the word taps the light and gives the word. You can also give the word and ask students to use it in a sentence."

"We do a bean bag toss. I bought a plain coloured shower curtain, and then drew lines on it to make 12 squares. For the game I attach vocabulary words one to each square with tape. Each word has a small number on the corner of the card. Divide the class into 2 teams. Each team takes turns throwing the bean bag to a square. If the student can read the word the bean bag lands on, the team gets the number of points on the card. If the student misses the word, his team can help after 5 seconds. The team with the most points wins the game."

"We play Bingo - I give the kids an 8x11 sheet of manilla paper. They fold this into 8 boxes. Then I choose about 12 words that I want to review. I write these on the chalkboard one at a time, talking about the words, making up sentences, etc. The children then choose any 8 to write on the Bingo papers with pencil. Then they put their pencils away and take out a red crayon. I have word cards and call the words one at a time. If they have the word they mark a cross on it with their red crayon. Bingo occurs when all words have been marked. We always play until everyone has covered all their words. Then we turn the paper over and do it again. The kids love this game because no one can lose!"

"Each week I print out my vocabulary list onto label sheets in multiples of 4. I then stick the labels on index cards to make 'Go Fish' cards. They love to play in a few minutes here or there or during Centre Time."

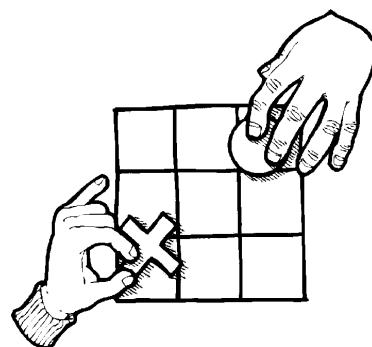
"My class loves to play 'Around the World'. All the students sit in a circle. (Or the students can remain at their desks.) One student stands behind one student who is sitting. The teacher flashes them a sight word. Whoever says it first moves on to the next student. The student that makes it back to their own desk or starting point is the winner."





"It's a simple one, but my kids love 'bang' ...the word cards are in a can. The student picks a card and reads it out loud. If he is correct he can keep the card, and it is the next student's turn. The object is to have the most cards at the end of the game. 'Bang' is written on some cards. When a student chooses 'Bang' he has to read BANG in a nice loud voice and put ALL his cards back in the can. There is always lots of laughing and anybody can win, not just the best reader."

- Make a simple game board with sight words. Use dice or spinner to advance across board. This is fun if you use different themes for the board, such as farms, ponds, neighborhoods, space, 'chutes and ladders'. The games also can fit nicely into a file folder. Once made and laminated they last a long time. You can make different pieces to coordinate with the board, farm animals, frogs, cars and buses, rockets, etc.
- Write the word wall words on name tags and have the kids wear them. Then put them in groups of five and as they have to pass a bean bag to each other, they have to spell that person's 'name'. You can do this to music and use the hot potato idea. When the music stops, whoever is holding the bean bag has to stay. The others rotate to the next group.
- Play 'Tic Tac Toe'. Give everyone a blank copy of the tic tac toe board, and put the list of words on the board. The children place the words where they want on their board. As you call the words out, you will have to say if it is an X word or an O. The first one to tic tac toe is the winner.
- Divide the class into X's and O's teams. Write words in the tic tac toe spaces. Take turns having a member of the team come up and selecting a space to read. If he is correct, they may put an X or O for their team. If they are incorrect, the other team gets to send a player to the board to try the same word. You can keep score if you want. You can already have these boards made up on overhead transparencies to save time and keep the game moving if you are using a variety of words, like the sight word list.
- The children are divided into 2 teams. Each team takes a turn attempting to pronounce a word turned up from a pile of sight words. If one team misses, the opposite team then gets a chance to pronounce that word in addition to their regular turn. Score is kept on the number of words each team pronounces correctly. Do not have members sit down when they miss a word, but have each team member go to the back of the line after each try whether successful or not. This enables all members to gain equal practice and does not eliminate those people who need practice most.



"Wordo is fun! Have blank Wordo cards with big spaces and give each child a copy. They print a vocabulary word in each space from a longer list of words - putting the words wherever they like. Play the game just like BINGO. Call out the words and have the students spell it out loud with you and then mark their spaces. This will give those who are unsure of the word some extra help. The first one with a row covered calls out the word 'WORDO!'"

## **Reading Strategies**

The more different ways we can teach and encourage reading, the better readers our children will be!

Model Reading - Teacher reading aloud

Shared Reading - Child joins in reading aloud

Guided Reading - Helping the child read

Oral Reading - Reading aloud to an adult

Collaborative Reading - Reading with friends

Independent Reading - Child reading alone

Assessment Reading - Watching the child read



### **Shared Reading**

In Shared Reading the teacher guides the reading of a big book, chart or other large text so all children can see and participate. The books chosen should be at a level suitable for all children to join in. The teacher reads the text first, and then the children are involved as they follow the second and following readings as the teacher points to or slides the finger or a pointer below each word in the text. Shared reading models the reading process and strategies used by readers. The teacher models early reading behaviours - moving from left to right and word-by-word matching. Shared Reading is risk-free, allowing children to focus on the enjoyment of the story.

The book that is selected must be interesting enough to read through a number of times this first day and through the week.

### **Ideas for Shared Reading**

#### **First Reading**

Introduce book - discuss title, cover picture

Predict what the story might be about

Have the children discuss prior experiences or background knowledge on the topic

The teacher reads the story through for enjoyment.

Re-read, encouraging participation in the reading of the story

Discuss the children's responses to the book

Teacher is almost entirely responsible for the reading of the text.

#### **Subsequent Readings**

Identify and discuss vocabulary. The high frequency words can be put into different sentences. Find specific words in the story.

Discuss interesting vocabulary.

Focus on the enjoyment of the story. Discuss ideas in the story.

Discuss reading strategies that the children will need to read the story independently.

Different levels of strategies or meaning may be used when you have small groups.

Have the children experiment with intonation and expression.

Discuss and practice fluency.

Choral reading with the whole group or small groups

Oral cloze (where the teacher pauses or whispers to let the children continue)

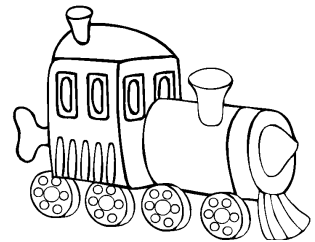
Dramatization or readers' theatre

Shared reading where small groups of children read certain pages

**Sequencing:** "Before reading the story, put the students in small groups (2-3) and give them a copy of the sentences to be sequenced. Have them cut apart the sentences and sequence them (do not let them glue them to anything - they need to be able to re-arrange them). Once all the groups are done putting the sentences in the order they think they should be in (they leave them on their desks or the floor - wherever they are working), gather together and read part of the story. Then ask them to go back to their groups and make any changes necessary to match the story. Again, bring them back together, read more, and send them back to make changes. This can be done several times. When we are all done, send them back to their desks to independently sequence the sentences. As you read, the students are delighted to confirm their predictions and anxious to get back and make changes. They end up being able to independently sequence the story much better than after just hearing it."

### **The 'Reading Train'**

"When it's time to read the guided reading selection silently, we set our chairs up in a straight line so that the students are sitting in their chairs one behind the other. After our book walk and predictions every child silent reads the book. I sit in my chair on wheels. I move from one child to the next as they read. The routine is whisper read when I am side by side with them and silent read when I'm not. This way I get to hear every child read at least two or three pages or the whole text if I need a running record. The rule is 'If you finish reading the book before the time is up.....read it again.'"



"Reading strategies are very important - you want the kids to have a full backpack of ideas to use.

- Using the first sound will help a lot of the time, but if not, cue the student to look at the beginning, middle and end of the word. Try find the chunk or little word in the big word, or take off the ending, and see the root word.

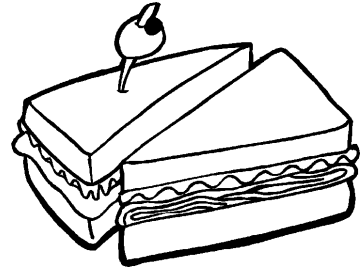
Then try:

- Skip and read to the end of the sentence. Sometimes that helps.
- If the student hasn't examined the picture, make sure he or she checks this.
- Ask the student to spell the word. Often spelling the word keys the student to look at those sounds, and he can figure it out.
- If this word is too hard, maybe you need to re-look at how you pre-teach vocabulary and examine that element of your instruction.
- In the end, I ask the student to sound the letter sounds they know and say it fast to see if they can hear it, and if they are having trouble I do it along with them. If that does not work, tell the student, and show them how they could get it. It is a coaching session; however, they need to learn to use these strategies independently."

### **Whisper Reading**

"I show the kids the 'missed step' in reading...called whisper reading. I show that when they gently press in on the ear, that their voice actually goes from outside of their head to 'inside' their head....they practice doing this to see (do it yourself, start talking, then gently press in on the little cartilage that can cover your ear...you will hear your voice come into your head!) I tell them that when adult readers read, they often hear this voice, even when they aren't using their vocal cords! I also tell them that some don't just hear the voice, they also see pictures like a movie..... Then I tell them that in order to start practicing getting that voice, they can hold their ears and whisper read.....this helps some move from the reading out loud and reading silently."

"I tell my kids that words are like sandwiches. You can have the same bread on both sides, but you have to 'look deep inside' to know what kind of sandwich you are getting. I use examples like peanut butter and jelly, yum, or a sardine sandwich, yuck. Words are the same way. Sometimes you have the same beginning sound and even the same ending sound, but the part 'deep inside' is different. 'Good readers always look deep inside because they want to read the word that makes sense, just like you want to eat the sandwich that tastes good.'"



"Word attack: Print the word, while calling its letters aloud. Say the word aloud before you print it, print it aloud and on paper simultaneously, say the word aloud again. Repeat 3-5 times. Move on to the next word. After word attacks are complete, return to the text and review (only briefly the places where these words came from. (to test the effectiveness, and to determine whether the student needs to repeat 3 or 5 times). After 1 word, cover the word and have the child spell it out loud to you and identify the word. In the future, this student will have 5 cues for retrieving that word.

- 1 - They have touch, they felt the word as they printed it.
- 2 - They will have sight, they watched as they printed it
- 3 - They will have speech, they spoke the letters and said the word
- 4 - They will have hearing, they heard it being printed
- 5 - They have the links between all these senses, making the word belong to them.

I talk about how they are learning to help them realize their meta-cognitive processes. I also point out that the word belongs to them because they have done everything to the word except for eat it. Perhaps if that would help, we could get some alphabet cereal and try that too. This usually brings a smile to their face - a welcome sight on the face of a child who is intimidated by reading. This works!"

## **Grouping for Language Arts**

Smaller groups help to individualize instruction for each student and the lessons can be targeted to the group and become more meaningful.

"The key to reading groups, I think, is careful kid-watching. I think groups need to be used as a tool - not over-relied upon or ignored. I do lots of shared reading (especially now) and independent reading with conferences. I use reading groups to address the issues that come up with a group of learners. If I have five or six kids who aren't using meaning, it just makes sense that I pull that group and work with them rather than addressing each one in a reading conference individually. I can also grab those children who aren't re-reading and teach them to do that in another group. Doing this moves everyone-low, high, and in-between. This is teaching at the point of need and making good use of the instructional time in the classroom. Since I view learning to read as a journey, not everyone is in the same place in the same time. Some kids may not be in a group at all some weeks. They may be accomplishing what they need through our conferences in independent reading and their needs may not be a pattern among the class."

"I teach three ability groups every day in my reading time. I find that the better readers get more discussion and comprehension lessons at their level, the average students get directed reading strategies to strengthen their skills, and the lower students get extra phonics and word attack skills that they really need to learn to read. These lower kids also get an extra oral reading group that my

aide gives. (Aides in my school can't 'teach' lessons, but listening to kids read is acceptable.) I teach three different programs in different books, so the children can't compare. I try to make the lessons for the lowest kids especially interesting, with lots of body movement, games, etc. Often the better readers envy the children in this group!

While I do groups the other children are doing a printing practice exercise, and then doing SSR in books that have been chosen to fit their independent reading level - and sometimes they do an exercise sheet that is at the correct level and goes with a lesson. I don't do centres - I found there was too much work for me, too little feed-back and too often the children did not actually accomplish what was directed at the centre. And they were too noisy and disturbed the lesson I was teaching.

This works well for me, and I feel that all my kids are getting a good start in reading."

### **Finding Classroom Books**

"I am now a firm believer in trolling the bookshelves of Goodwill. I stop in quite often - especially when there is a 50% sale! I have also been fortunate to have the checker take a look at a shopping cart full of books, and say, "You must be a teacher! How does \$5 sound?"

I am particular about the books I choose. I find so many that are obviously from kids' Scholastic orders that have spines that have never been cracked. Many are gifts from relatives - never opened. Others, sadly, bear the names of teachers who once sent them home with children, only to have them never end up back with their rightful owner. I often find Wright Group 'Sunshine' books, or books that come from current series.

When I bring in a bag of Goodwill books, the kids are excited. They peel the stickers off, and give them a disinfectant cleaning to remove germs and spruce them up. It is a great lesson for the kids to 'tub' the books, according to series, genre, author, etc. They love it!

The kids beg their parents to take them to Goodwill on book searches. They also are great garage sale shoppers. They know what I like! They bring the books into the class and do the prep work. Their favourite part is writing my name on the front with a Sharpie.

I urge you all to try this!"

"I like to frequent used books stores. One in particular had a higher socio-economic group that fed into it - great books at a great price. This store also had a teachers' account, so I didn't have to pay the full price for any of the books. Garage sales are another great source! Summer is coming and every weekend there will be garage sales and great book bargains. You will likely find books from other teachers' classrooms there!"



## **Reading Challenges**

"We are planning 'I love to read' month and 'Grade Ones are Driven to Read'. We bought race car party decorations, black and white check paper, made computer graphic race cars with our class names on them, little flags to chart the kilometres, gas pumps to record the number of books read. The kids add a gas pump for every 50 books read and move their car ahead 50 km. Our goal is to read 1000 books and then celebrate with pizza. (Last month we read 1600 books in 2 weeks - and celebrated with ice cream courtesy of our principal.) Last month's reading was the result of a class discussion on numbers - this month was the other classes wanting in on the action. I love 'I love to read' month."

"May is always our reading month. We decorate our doors and have a door contest and DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) every day. We set up teams of mixed grades and they have a goal of a certain number of books, then the administration has to do something neat if the school reaches its goal.

We have a story telling assembly and we have a reading night where we set up classrooms and have guest readers."

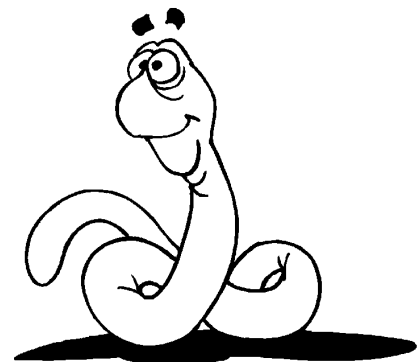
"I have an April reading contest. For the past two years, we have read over 2000 books with a class of about 20 students during the month of April. How did we do it? The first year, the principal agreed to let us shave his head if we read that much. Last year I kissed a pig and we got to splat pies in the faces of the other Grade One teachers and the principal. This year the principal will eat a worm. I got that idea from someone whose principal ate worms after the kids read on Dr. Seuss' birthday. One of our parents even saw him do it on TV. She was quite grossed out which is the best thing for Grade One kids. We like gross! We start April 1 and go through the 30th. Our goal this year is 2,222 books. I have 20 students and I am sure we will do it. The kids are so excited. Oh, the child who reads the most gets to feed the worm to the principal and I told them would probably get to be on TV.

If this is too gross, I saw a principal colour her hair purple when a class read a certain number of books. I think it washed out??? Anything goofy to get those kids reading. My whole class reading improves so much in April. Oh, we have a special party for everyone who reads over 100 books. That way one kid doesn't have to do all the work.

My rules for the contest are

1. Students may read the same book up to 3 times. This builds fluency and sight word recognition.
2. Students must read to someone and that person has to sign the back of the slip which has the title and student name on the front.
3. Students must bring the slips to school as they read them. No hoarding the slips at home. That way I can see who is reading and who needs extra help at school. Maybe no one will listen to them at home."

"We are having a worm race this year with a grid on a big bulletin board with each student having a cut out worm. Last year we made paper chains and hung them on the ceiling all across the room. The year before, we traced our feet and stapled them up around the room. We made it around more than 10 times. One year I had a paper tree with 20 branches. Each book slip was a leaf. I stapled 10 together to make a vine to hang off their branch. This tied in with a rainforest theme."



"I challenged my class of 22 kids to read 750 books for the month of April - all at home! I'm thrilled to say that they met and exceeded the goal! When I did the final tally we had exceeded 1000 books! I called the local paper - it is good to get some favourable school press. For motivation I made up certificates that they received at 25, 50, 75 and 100. They would announce things like "I'm going to read 4 books tonight to reach the 25 book club", etc. One of my weaker readers was determined to join the 100 club - and he actually did along with 2 others. I'm thrilled with their success and thankful to the parents for their commitment!"



"Each year my school does some sort of Home Reading Program. This year, we have changed it and I really like what we're doing. Each classroom is challenged to read 1000 books in a 1 month period. Each child will get a recording sheet for the week and fill in all of the books they've read at home. I will keep track of the books we read in class, including what we read during Guided Reading.

The classrooms that achieve this get attention on a bulletin board by the office."

## **Making Class Big Books**

"I make some of the class books out of construction paper and rings, or binder strips. A couple of years ago I found a company called "Bare Books". This company makes spiral bound blank big books. (They also make small blank hardcover books that I use for our Young Authors celebration in May.) I've found that the kids love these big books, they keep well for reading in centers, and I "auction" them off at the end of the year as prizes. (The kids love winning a class book.)

I try to have the kids write one joint book each month, or at least one or two each quarter. Here are some ideas:



1. Field trips, single trips or trips grouped according to quarters/seasons/topics (I take digital camera pictures, the kids sequence them and write captions. You could also have the kids illustrate without having to use the camera.) This year when the kids wrote "Fall Field Trips" each trip made up a new chapter. We had a book with three chapters.

2. If you have guest speakers/readers in your classrooms, the kids can summarize each session and have a picture with the guest speakers.

3. Special units or projects - to summarize each day's learning the class can write a summary, with the students drawing illustrations. The book becomes a journal of learning.

4. Poetry books (on a specific theme or using a specific style).

5. Write a book about your school. Have the kids interview the superintendent, principal, secretaries, cooks, custodians, other teachers, students that you have had in the past and are now in 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade, aides, etc. You need to have lots of interview practice first, and a written list of questions. I always send the kids in pairs or trios because they seem to do a better job, and they feel more comfortable.

6. Write a book about your town. We take a field trip to the courthouse, a law office, restaurant (Dairy Queen), the bank, public library and a store. Basically, we start at one end of town and walk to the other end, stopping along the way. It's a small town! Everyone knows we are coming and I bring plastic bags for each child, because the kids collect stuff all along the way. I also take pictures.

7. Have the kids do individual research on a topic and join the research together for a non-fiction book. Each child will write a short piece of research giving facts about their chosen animal. Then we will make a Rainforest Animal ABC big book.

Here's a month-by-month list:

**September:**

All About Me (every student gets a page),

ABC books (basic ABC books, ABC books on a theme, or ABC books with a sentence beginning with the same letter - Alice Alligator ate all of Amy Ant's apples. This kind of ABC book is the hardest, but it is fun and the illustrations are fantastic. Just be sure to provide lots of examples with published ABC books.



**October:**

We Are Thankful (big cornucopia on the cover),

Pumpkin/Scarecrow glyph books (kids made glyph and then describe with lots of adjectives)

**November:**

Flat "Stanley" (only I have them use their names instead of Stanley) Stories after the reading the book aloud.

**December:**

Christmas Past (interview their parents about their best Christmas memory)

The Gingerbread Man book (everyone gets a gingerbread man out of construction paper and then they decorate it at home - DON'T LET THE KIDS USE FOOD ITEMS - that was a BIG mess - kids describe their gingerbread man with lots of adjectives.

**January:**

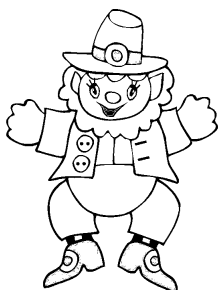
Constellation Book (the kids design their own constellation with star stickers and tell the myth of about how it came to be - we do astronomy in January)

Journey to the Pole - We are studying the Arctic and Antarctica and reading the Magic Tree House about Polar Bears. I'll expect them to provide lots of details about what they see - colours, animals, geography of the land, weather, light, etc.

**February:**

100 Day (kids choose 10 categories, they come up with 10 items in each category to write and illustrate) Example: one page could be colours (I don't let them use "regular" colour names like red or blue. They need to come up with 10 colour names like chartreuse or periwinkle. They use the dictionary or their colour box. Past categories that have been used are: countries, colours, girls/boys names, dinosaurs, reptiles, amphibians, animals of Australia, mammals, constellations, flowers, teachers, clothes, and favourite books.

How to spend \$100.00! (for 100 Day)



**March:**

Leprechauns (kids pretend to meet a leprechaun)

Spring is in the Air: A Collection of Poems (kids get an actual flower and write a poem about it)

**April** - my students are working on individual books for our Young Authors Celebration.

**May:**

Insects - research different insects and make opposing pages about each.

**June:**

About Grade One - things I have learned

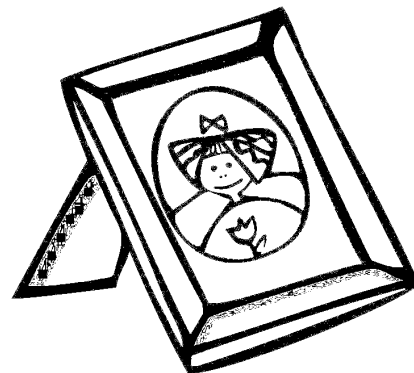
Grade One - the things I remember

"One of my teacher friends does a book wall. She keeps that space free for this purpose. Whenever they do some special activity or read a cool book or poem, she does a big book activity with her class. She does the title page and either individual pages or pairs, then she tacks the pages up on the wall in order...then it is there for a bit. It is great for read-around-the-room because it usually follows a pattern or else it is an activity they did together so it is ABOUT them and the interest level is high. Examples are when she takes them out to tap a tree, read 'It Looked Like Spilt Milk', the field trip to the fire station or hospital...whatever interests the children.

Last year, I did some books like that, but when I took them down I put the pages in a pile and kept doing that so at the end of the year I could put the child's individual pages into a big book especially for them. One thing I learned is to have the pictures made on smaller paper and glue it on the page. That way if there are mistakes, the whole page isn't ruined."

"When you complete a major concept in science or social studies or even if you do a take-off on a book that you have read, make it into a big book. Do the writing on the bottom of the 12 x 18 construction paper, then have the students illustrate on 8 1/2 x 11 photocopy paper. You can glue the picture page above your original writing either as it is, or by cutting around it in cloud-like fashion. Put the pages up on your book wall area in order, and it can be read when you read around the room. Students can read it as a center or as something you can do when you finish early. Leave it up until you do the next book, and then staple it and put it in the classroom library."

"I teach the children's names separately, discussing each one like Pat Cunningham suggests in her books. We interview the child, and add the information to a class book - I write in a blank book, one page for each child. When pictures have been taken, we receive 2 small pictures of each child. I mount one of these on the child's page, and it becomes a favourite class book. The names and the cut apart letters become a center with a pocket chart, and the kids spell each other's names by matching the letters to the cards in the pockets. Since this is separate from the words on the word wall, we can proceed with that, 5 words per week."



## **Reading Ideas**

"I do many activities to develop comprehension in class. Starting on day one I ask questions during read-alouds. As my students develop more skills I ask the questions in small groups. We illustrate pictures of: the main character, setting, the problem (what's happening), the solution (how did the story end) and more. Later I move to simple graphic organizers. With assistance we fill in the answers, first whole-group, then individually. I have many cute organizers and materials including a Story Wheel that students use to ask each other what the story was about.

To develop fluency I have found students need to start with materials that are just a tad easy. We are using HM. The materials include little phonics readers. First we read together, then I do all kinds of switching - (boys, then girls, one side of the circle, then the other). Doing multiple readings of text allow students to gain confidence and fluency. It is also supportive of those not quite at grade level."

"I'm an 'anti-center time' kind of person. It creates such chaos in my classroom that the children who are not completed their work are distracted to the point of not ever finishing. I like to do independent work time activities, ones that are not really 'center' based, but ones that can be done with books, pocket charts, etc., so that children can go and work on them when they are finished their work, but won't disturb the kids who are not finished."

"I don't do centers as a 'as you finish this seatwork move to your center' kind of thing. I try making it at the same time each morning or afternoon and have it be a set time that they all start at the same time. When I moved to having it be a set time - not contingent on finishing work - it was MUCH better for me AND for them. Some kids are slow workers and they should not miss out on centers (really a punishment!) because they are slow workers."

"I did *The Mitten* for my observation lesson. I printed out masks of the characters from Jan Brett's web site. I shrunk the images a bit and put them on sentence strips also with the characters name. I asked the students to recall the events from the story, or the order in which the animals got into the mitten. I used a sentence strip chart and had the students come up one at a time and put the animals in order from the one that went into the mitten first to the one that went in last. Then I had them use the character masks which I glued onto tongue depressors, to actually act out the story. I bought two king size blankets and cut out and sewed a REALLY BIG mitten, it looked like a big sleeping bag. Then I had the kids hold up the character on the stick and say 'I am the \_\_\_\_\_. I went into the mitten first (then next, then last)' they had SO much fun, the lesson was a real hit with the kids and the Principal, too! For independent practice I had them write an ending to the story because on the last page there is no text. My kiddos are STILL acting out the story during their free time and this lesson was over a month ago!"

### Choosing the Right Book

- Pick a Book with the 'Goldilocks and The Three Bears' strategy - one that's not too easy, and one that's not too hard, but one that's just right!
- Train your kids to choose a library book that is approximately at their independent reading level! The idea for the 5-finger rule is to open the book up to a page and try reading it. Each time you come to a word you don't know you put up a finger. Once you have 5 fingers up for one page, that means the book is too hard for you at this time...or at least for reading alone. I do tell the children if they want to read it badly enough, it is a book they could read with their parents (or the like) and could get a little help with the hard words.
- For emergent readers, you can't really do that for a page of reading...so you have to do it for a 2-page spread or for a few pages....and that is hard to define for the young ones. So you may start out with the Goldilocks rules...before you take the book back to your desk for reading, try to read a page or two. See if it is too easy, too hard, or just right.



### **Levelling Trade Books**

"I bought coloured dots (stickers) from Staples. There is one set that has 4 colours - yellow, green, blue and red.

Yellow - easy books - 2 or 3 words per page or very simple repetitive sentences. (generally these are the levels for September-October expectations)

Green - still fairly easy - but usually with a full sentence and may not always repeat. (beginning to mid-level grade 1 books)

Blue - moving into books with 1-2 sentences and often with new words (mid to ending grade 1 books)

Red - these are more difficult books - usually 3 or 4 sentences per page. (ending grade 1 books) After that I have a limited supply of books (some I gather from other classrooms) that I use for my top readers.



### **A Reading Fluency Scale**

Reader reads:

1. Word by word
2. Primarily word by word with some 2 - 3 word phrasing
3. Primarily by phrases (2 - 3 words) but sometimes word by word; sometimes gives phrases inadequate stress in relation to syntax.
4. Primarily in phrases with very little word by word reading; sometimes ignores external punctuation, generally reads in a monotone.
5. Primarily in phrases, attending to terminal punctuation, some internal punctuation is ignored, expression is not consistently adequate.
6. In phrasing with fluency using both terminal and internal punctuation; provides appropriate semantic and syntactic emphasis for the purpose of dramatization; expression approximates normal speech

### **Fluency Activities**

Once the student has had numerous exposures to highly frequent letter-sound correspondences and sounds of letter clusters, activities should focus on developing fluency. Word recognition fluency allows the reader to focus on comprehension.

- Have the student practice reading high-frequency sight words. One excellent method is to have the student repeatedly read phrases that include the sight words. This provides word-by-word readers with an experience in reading clusters of words.
- Have the student read words, phrases, or passages in 1-minute segments and try to increase the rate of words read correctly per minute. Have the student work toward rate-per-minute goals and record the results of each reading on a graph.
- Use repeated readings in which the student orally reads a passage repeatedly until a fluency rate is attained. This helps the student attain the neurological, cognitive, and affective experience of reading fluency.
- Model fluent oral reading (e.g., about 150 words per minute with 2 or less errors). Have the student read along silently in the text as fluent oral reading is modeled. Model reading can be accomplished by teacher readings, peer readings, teacher assistant readings, and taped readings.
- Have the student read aloud to other students.
- Conduct a readers' theater. Have students read their parts in a story or play.
- Review new vocabulary prior to reading a story or text. Multi-sensory techniques are excellent for learning new vocabulary.

"I was once amazed at the vocabulary this group of grade one students knew. They had a wonderful teacher who taught them in creative ways. One little thing she did..... When calling them to the rug...she would always say, 'I'd like you to sit on the perimeter of the rug,' or 'I'd like you to sit in the area of the rug.' This was a very easy way to teach them these words."

***Use some of these slogans on charts or banners around your classroom!***

READERS ARE LEADERS!

A BOOK IS A PRESENT YOU CAN OPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN!

A GOOD BOOK IS YOUR BEST FRIEND!

I LOVE TO READ BECAUSE IT HELPS ME MAKE FRIENDS!

I LOVE TO READ! IT MAKES ME RICH IN MANY WAYS.

READING IS THE KEY TO THE WORLD!

READING OPENS THE DOOR TO THE WORLD!

READ! JUST DO IT!

READING IS THE LINK BETWEEN TODAY AND TOMORROW!

GET HOOKED ON BOOKS!

LEARN TO READ AND READ TO LEARN!

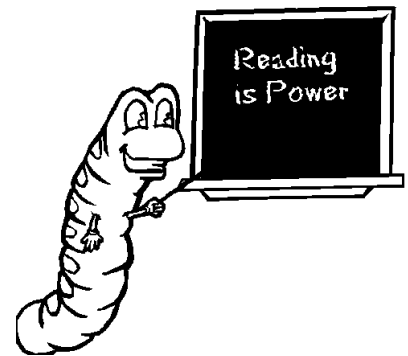
WRIGGLE INTO READING!

GET YOUR HANDS ON A GOOD BOOK AND YOU'VE GOT POWER!

LIONS AND TIGERS AND BOOKS - OH, MY!

FISH FOR KNOWLEDGE - READ!

CATCH THE WAVE - READ!



### **Reading Survival Kit**

"Here is a small gift to give to your parents! Print the following on colourful paper and then place the note and the needed materials into some kind of case (zip lock bag or yogurt container will do). Get some video labels and print a first aid symbol on it and the title READING SURVIVAL KIT. Place all of the items in the labeled container!

Your kit includes:

- 1.) RUBBER BAND - Reading stretches your imagination.
- 2.) MINTS - Reading can open a "mint" of information.
- 3.) BAND AID - Reading can mend the soul.
- 4.) SWEET CANDY - Reading gives the sweet satisfaction of learning something new.
- 5.) CERTS - Reading a good book is like a breath of fresh air.
- 6.) EMERY BOARD - Reading can take the rough edges off your day.
- 7.) Q-TIP - Reading helps open your ears to the meaning of words.
- 8.) GUM - Reading is something you should stick with.

~~ Remember to spend time reading with your child -- it's a gift that will last a lifetime."

### **Running Records**

"The easiest way I've found for doing running records (and for learning it) is to have a copy of the text typed out - at least double spaced - and with the same line arrangement as the book. You can checkmark the correct words directly on your copy of the text. (I usually just leave them blank.) Above the words you write incorrect words and also indicate if the child self-corrected, if you told them the word, if there's a long pause, etc.

"Another thing is to use an arrow over where they repeat themselves and indicate if they self-corrected. When you get the hang of it you can use plain paper. It is still good to keep the same arrangement as the text so you know where you're at when you're looking back. Indicate page breaks as well. For my class use I don't usually indicate hesitations (t-t-ta-tap, etc.) unless I feel it is important. for that child."

### **Sequencing - Story Worms**

"Summarize the story in 5-6 sentences. Type them in large font, print and cut out. Glue each sentence on to coloured paper (mine is laminated) that is cut in shape of a worm segment. Put the story title on the head of the worm (He is looking back at his body parts and has antennae - not a very authentic worm but very cute). Glue a magnet piece to back of each segment.



"Give the parts to kids - scramble them up so they are not in order. Have the group sort them out. Kids move the story parts around until the story is in order. Then you can give them another story with the segments drawn on paper with the words printed in each segment. They read, cut out the segments (big circles) and glue in order on the coloured paper. I call them Story Worms. I also use this idea as a graphic organizer for planning a story to write."

### **In the Pool**

"I used a pool last year as a Reading Center. The kids also liked to do worksheets, etc., there. I left it back by my bookshelves and there was plenty of room. My only rule was no shoes in the pool (which they loved!). I'm thinking of using it again this year and rotating it with some kid sized beach chairs and astroturf."

### **Printing**

In the 'olden' days the children learned to print well early in the grade one year, and then did reading exercises copied from the chalkboard. You likely did these when you were a child! Now these are out of fashion, and in some ways this is a pity. Children in most classes do not get enough printing practice and therefore their printing does not become automatic. Like reading, printing takes a lot of practice to become fluent. Then we expect them to do creative writing, and the physical chore of printing when they are not fluent too often holds the children back from being creative and printing more than a small amount. Children need to be taught to print neatly and with the correct spacing.

The printing exercise needs to have a purpose - a cloze exercise, matching, correcting capital letters and punctuation in sentences, etc. Use words that are in the reading for that day so the children are reviewing the vocabulary at the same time. The children can read their printed work to a partner when it is completed.

### **Feed Me!**

"I made a 'Feed Me Monster' that the children could feed words to. I took one of those small trash cans from Walmart with the dome lid that has the section that swings. I took that part out. I covered the whole can in lime green tissue paper leaving a hole for the mouth. I bought huge wiggle eyes and glued them on. I made a tail that starts at the back of the head and runs zig-zag down his back. I added a red collar around the top piece where it joins the bottom so I could take the lid off to

get the words out. When I tissued it, I used watered down Elmer's glue and small pieces of tissue in layers until it looked covered. I added feet to the bottom and arms to the side. The arms hold a sign that says 'Feed Me' in 'bone' font. I introduced him by reading the book suggested in the 4-blocks 'The Hungry Thing'. We happened to have the book at school.

"You could use the monster for many things. We feed him pictures, rhymes, etc. They have to know the word to feed him."

### **Practice Makes Perfect!**

"I have my Grade Ones reading for 30 minutes right now. We've been in school for 10 days. I did lots of modelling the first week and a half and they did very well today. Right now they're reading alone for 10 minutes, with a buddy for 10, and free choice reading for 10. They love it and are mostly all on task. I'll probably ease up to 45 minutes sometime mid-October.

I've been able to do it this way with every Grade One and or Two class I've had for the last several years. Oh, and by the way, it's not exactly 'silent' reading. But the kids manage to keep it to a low buzz."



## **Readers' Theatre**

"I want to share one of those terrific moments that teachers experience once in awhile. It's a moment that makes all the struggle teaching little ones to enjoy reading worthwhile.

We did our first Readers' Theatre of the school year this week. The children had heard the story read aloud and had acted it out in the classroom. They retold the story in sequence to help with comprehension, made individual illustrations of their joint writing effort. Their retelling was made into a simple Readers Theatre script. Each child got their part (randomly given), took one look at it and howled!

Most didn't know how to read many of the words. But within a day or so, with lots of practice and peer help (reading with various partners), they all learned their parts and were able to use a good voice, stop at periods, 'enunciate' as best they could with no front teeth.

They first read it for another grade 1 class who were so nice in their response and then went on to grade 2, 3 and 4 classrooms yesterday. Today we planned to visit two more rooms, but they begged to go to others - we ended up reading our script 11 times in the 2 days! Our class motto has become 'The More We Read, The More We Read ..... Better!'

My weakest students felt so successful and they were so kind to each other with help. It was a memorable day for me to be sure.

If you have never tried Readers Theatre with your students, I urge you to take a chance with it. The effort on your part is relatively small - the kids do the hard work. They see how practicing reading helps their reading to sound better (fluency), their reading vocabulary increases, and it's a wonderfully motivating activity.

There are many Readers' Theatre websites available with scripts already written, but I urge you to try making your own from a story retelling. It's the kids' own words - just one or two sentences each (you can edit for grammar, of course, since you expect to have a real audience) and they love that.

No memorizing lines, props, costumes needed!

For more about Readers' Theatre, see a list of sites on this webpage:

<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/reading/readerstheater.htm>



### Seven Steps to a Successful Reader's Theatre...

**Step 1:** Duplicate and distribute scripts.

**Step 2:** Read the script out loud to the children and encourage all children to join in on the repetitive words and phrases marked ALL.

Read the script using these techniques:

1. **MODEL READING** ( teacher reads )
2. **ECHO READING** (teacher reads a line, students repeat)
3. **CHORAL READING** (teacher and class read together)

**Step 3:** After the story has been read once or twice, you may wish to help children underline the ALL lines.

**Step 4:** Then, you and the children will be ready to read the script again, identifying each underlined section as it comes along.

**Step 5:** If simple solo lines or character parts are needed, assign or ask for volunteers. Help these readers underline their parts in different colour. Rehearse the lines with each reader.

**Step 6:** Read the story again, including all readers.

**Step 7:** Encourage readers to illustrate their scripts and start their own script collections in colourful binders. These scripts may be taken home for re-reading with siblings or adults.

Throughout the year, parts may be swapped, and scripts read over and over again. Perform your favourite and most practiced stories for parents on Parents Day!

### The Script

Have students highlight their parts. **Practice SLOWLY LOUDLY CLEARLY**

### Rehearsal

Practice the assigned parts sitting at desks. Practice the assigned parts standing at desks. Practice assigned parts standing at the front of the room. This becomes the STAGE. Two or more CASTS may do the same script. Also, discuss the meaning and job of an UNDERSTUDY.

Fold 12x18 black construction paper in half. The script is placed inside. The Reader holds the folder in two hands so it can be read. ( Do not cover face! ) Practice (REHEARSE) using the folder.

### Reader's Theatre - Goldilocks

One: A girl went to the forest  
To see what she could see,  
She saw, inside a little house  
A table set for three.

Two: Set set, set for three

Three: Table set for three.

All: *Refrain:*

GO HOME GOLDIE  
HEAR OUR CALL  
RUN LIKE THE WIND  
AND DON'T COME BACK AT ALL!

One: She stepped into the kitchen  
And ate the porridge there,  
Then thought, "I'm awfully tired,  
I must find a chair."



Three: I must find a chair.

All: *Refrain*

One: She sat and broke the little chair  
Then said, "I'll find instead,  
A not too hard, not too soft  
Just right feather bed."

Two: Hard soft, feather bed.

Three: Just right feather bed.

All: *Refrain*

One: Of course you know the story.  
The three bears found her there.  
All snuggled in the baby's bed  
Asleep without a care.

Two: No no, not a care.

Three: Asleep without a care.

All: *Refrain*

Four: Then papa said,  
 Five: (Pretending to be Papa bear):  
 "You ate the food!"  
 Six: And mama said,  
 Seven: (Pretending to be mama bear):  
 "That's true!"  
 Eight: And baby yelled,  
 Nine: (Pretending to be baby bear):  
 "You're in my bed  
 And broke my chair in two."  
 Two: Broke broke, chair in two.  
 Three: Broke my chair in two.  
 All: *Refrain*

One: Goldie swore she wasn't guilty.  
 She fibbed and then she lied.  
 Papa chased her out the  
 window  
 And as she ran, he cried,  
 Five: (using papa's voice):  
 GO HOME GOLDIE  
 HEAR OUR CALL  
 RUN LIKE THE WIND  
 Six: (using mama's voice):  
 AND DON'T COME BACK  
 Eight: (using baby's voice):  
 DON'T COME BACK

## Do Author Studies

"We feature a different author each month. At the beginning of the year I send home a list of each month's authors "for the refrigerator". I have a small bulletin board that says "Author of the Month" and I've made blow ups of one book for each author. There's a crate with many of his/her books. The kids are encouraged to bring their books too. I also have some stuffed animals, etc., of the characters such as Clifford or Arthur. Through the years I've accumulated activities to do with each author. I try to use authors that are still alive. We write to them and most always get a response. I always start out September with Mercer Mayer. The kids love his critters!"

### My Father's Dragon

by Ruth Stiles Gannett

This is an excellent read aloud for grade one! Here are some things you can do as you do this favourite read-aloud.

- Make a large wall map from the map on the inside cover. Follow the story on the map. You can have pictures of Elmer, the cat, the dragon and the other characters, and put them on the map as the story unfolds.

- List all the items Elmer put in his knapsack. Before coming to an item in the story, brainstorm ways the class thinks the item might be useful.

- Make a class book of the events - each child illustrating a page.

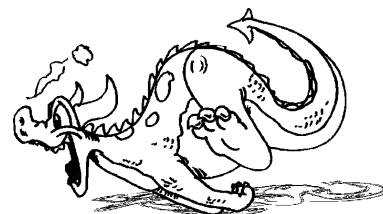
- Do imaging exercises - re-read descriptions of the little dragon or other parts of the story and let the children illustrate. Discuss the differences in the pictures.

- After reading the first chapter, ask the students to listen to find out the setting and characters in the story. After reading each chapter, ask the following types of comprehension questions:

Ask who, what, where, when, type of questions to make sure they are following the story line. Ask students to describe any pictures that came into their minds (imagery) as they listen to the story.

- Prior to reading, discuss the title of each chapter. Ask the students to predict what events might take place. Another opportunity to predict comes in each chapter as the students try to figure out what Elmer will use from his knapsack to try to help each animal he meets.

There are the two sequels - *The Dragons of Blueland* and *Elmer and the Dragon*.



## Nursery Rhymes

Many nursery rhymes come from English history. The meaning of the jingles have become obscure and descriptions of the origins differ. Some are violent or sad, such as "Ring Around a Rosie" which refers to the plague. 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' is about paying high taxes to the king. Whatever the meaning, children love them for the rhythm and rhymes.

"There is a super dooper list at [enchantedlearning.com](http://enchantedlearning.com). Go to the nursery rhymes section. I downloaded it and use it weekly to plan my lessons."

"Every Friday is Nursery Rhyme time in my grade one classroom as Friday's guided reading lesson. We do this during our guided reading block of four blocks. It's easier material that focuses on rhyming and my kids loved it. I was surprised by how few of them knew some of the nursery rhymes. I think that their favourite was Old Mother Hubbard."

"I do a unit on Nursery Rhymes at the beginning of the year. We study a variety of Nursery Rhymes - some that are familiar and some that are not well known. I make charts and the children like 'reading' them. They help to develop concepts of print, especially for the lower kids. I like to laminate the charts as I can then write on them with washable marker to show rhyming words, vocabulary words and the rhymes. After the children are familiar with a chart I put it into a centre for extra practice. One year I typed them out on a page and put them in a book that the kids could read during SSR."

"I found a number of Nursery Rhyme books in the library, and the children were delighted to find the ones we have studied and other ones they know. Sometimes there are differences in the words, and we talk about these."

"We put one up each day for the first couple of weeks. I cut it into line strips and put it into the pocket chart. They put it back together, find certain words that are repeated, sing them, act them out, find rhymes, read it to a partner and use them as puzzles. They are good to use for 'Read the Room'. I give each child a word on a card, and they see if they can get into the right order. We also guess the missing word and practice sequencing the lines and words."

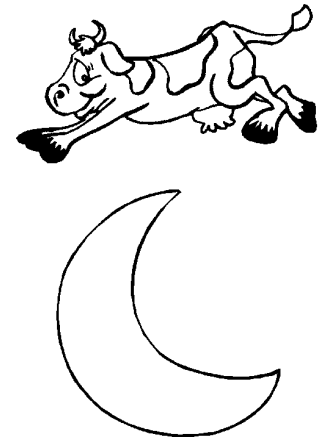
"Did you know that virtually every nursery rhyme can be sung to the tune of *Skip to My Lou*? For the shorter rhymes with just four stanzas, you end up singing the tune twice. It works really well for every one of the rhymes that I use."

This site gives you nursery rhymes to download - printed out for you in page form.

[http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/rimes\\_and\\_rhymes.htm](http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/rimes_and_rhymes.htm)

The Enchanted Learning site has them with rebus symbols and print-outs to give to your class.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Rhymes.html>



### Jimmy's Boa

"Read *The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash*. Since this story has so many quotes, I teach quotation marks during this story. We write sentences with the proper quotes on sentence strips and glue macaroni for the quotes and punctuation. The kids love it! I use elbow for commas, and quotes, shell for periods, and spaghetti for exclamation points."

### A.A. Milne's Birthday

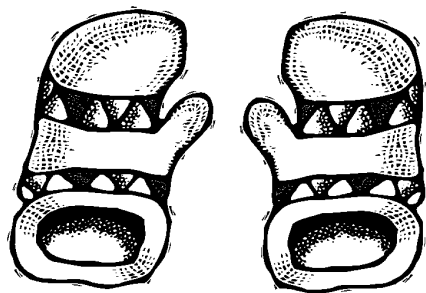
"My entire room is done in the Pooh theme so I could not miss A. A. Milne's birthday on Jan. 18. The students wore any clothes they had with Pooh or characters, brought stuffed Pooh characters, and lots and lots of books! We graphed our favorite Pooh character, made birthday cards for Pooh, learned who A. A. Milne was, handwriting practice was sentences the students gave using the character's names, and put the names in ABC order. Next week we will write some new Pooh adventures for creative writing.

"We used Pooh pasta for solving math problems.

"We of course had a birthday party! We had cupcakes and 'Piglet ice cream!' You make 'Piglet ice cream' by using 2 sizes of ice cream scoops and strawberry ice cream. The bigger scoop is for the head and the smaller scoop is for the nose. Cut a marshmallow in half for the eyes and add pig nostrils and eyeballs with chocolate syrup or chocolate in a tube. Cut pink ears from construction paper. They really were precious and the children loved them! One child brought his mom's Pooh which was very well loved and worn! It had a necklace that said 'I am 37 years old.' What a treasure!"

### Jan Brett

"I want to share a project I did with my kids. They loved it! We read Jan Brett's *The Mitten*. We cut out mittens and each child had to write opposites on their mittens. Everyone had a different set of opposites. We put these on a bulletin board. Then I ran the masks off of Jan Brett's website on to cardstock. I cut these out, laminated them, and put a paint stick behind them. I brought a big white blanket to school and we used the masks to act out the story. I also used the other story *The Mitten* by Alvin Tresselt and did a comparative study. We had so much fun!"



Go to <http://www.janbrett.com> and download wonderful calendars for your classroom with Jan's lovely artwork. Look under 'Activities' for 'Awards and Certificates', character masks for acting out her stories, Hedgeie's Valentine mailbox, stationary and oodles more. To find the entire list of items available on line, click on the 'Site Map'.

Click on the 'Activities' icon and have fun! The alphabet is wonderful and the pictures are great. There are dozens of art projects, great number cards to download, calendar pages, colouring pages, character masks, and lesson plans.

### Dr. Seuss

You will find lots of ideas in the 'Special Days' section of the book.

# Organizing Literacy Centres

Literacy centres are areas focused on different activities. An area will have one focus, but many activities may be offered at various levels. They can be portable (contained in a tray or box) or stationary.

Learning centres should not be an extra task to be done when other assignments are completed, but should be available to everyone. They give teachers time to work with small groups of students or assess and observe. The students must be trained to work independently and co-operate with one another.

When creating learning centres, teachers need to think about what the objective for each centre will be. Students should be working on things that are meaningful, not just busy work. The teacher needs to model each centre so the children understand the procedures and behaviour.

What centres will you have?

- Are all of them required or are some optional?
- How often will the centres be changed?
- What are the expectations? Are the children allowed to work together? Are they allowed to talk? What happens if they choose not to follow directions?
- How many students will be allowed at each centre?

Explain where each centre is and what occurs at each centre. Take a great deal of time explaining and modelling expectations and rules. Teachers should introduce each activity/new material and make sure that the students understand how to use it before they place it in the centre. Start with just a few centres and gradually increase the number offered.

Teach mini-lessons at the start of the year and as they are needed. Some topics to include are:

- How to use the equipment/materials
- How to share materials
- How to take turns
- How to use the management board
- How to solve a problem
- Where to go for help
- How to put things away
- How to switch to the next centre

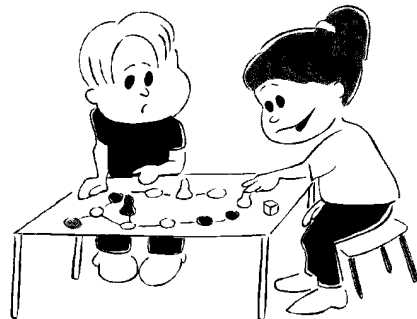
## Literacy Centre Expectations

### 1. Help yourself to learn

- Pay attention to your work
- Organize your materials
- Ask questions when you need information
- Talk yourself through complicated situations

### 2. Help others to learn

- Work without disturbing others
- Make positive and encouraging statements to others
- Share your knowledge and skills when appropriate
- Take care of the materials
- Clean up after yourself

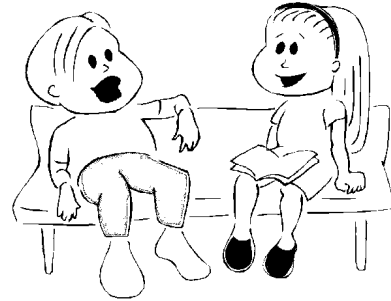


### Keeping Track of Work

There are many methods of keeping track of student work. Students can sign in and out of centres that they have visited. Students may turn in work in a number of ways. Some examples are a storage tray in the room where students turn in all of their completed work (may have sub-folders/baskets), collect products at each station, and giving each child a folder in which to keep all of their centre work.

### Centre Rules

- Do your best
- Read and follow all directions
- Use your inside voice
- Keep all pieces together
- Clean up after each use
- Ask other students before asking an adult



### Assessment

Teachers may assess their students' learning by observing both process and product. Some children will become careless if there is little checking. Computer games often provide scores, mark written work, have self-checking procedures, observations, etc. Discuss the product with the children frequently.

### Learning Centre Rubric

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Week of \_\_\_\_\_

Student used time wisely. \_\_\_\_

Student followed directions. \_\_\_\_

Children worked well independently and or co-operatively. \_\_\_\_

Work was done neatly. \_\_\_\_

Areas are graded on a plus or minus. If your child has received a minus in any area please ask him or her why and discuss this with him or her.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature

### Group Time

When centres are done for the day, teachers may want to have the class join together as a group to discuss centres. This allows students to reflect about the day and what they have learned. Some questions to focus on include:

- What did I do at centres today?
- What did I have fun doing at centres today?
- What didn't I like about centres today?
- What did I do to help myself become a better reader today?
- What did I do to help myself become a better writer today?
- What do I think we should change about centres?
- How did I solve a problem at centres today?
- How did I help someone else solve a problem at centres today?

### Student Directed Centres

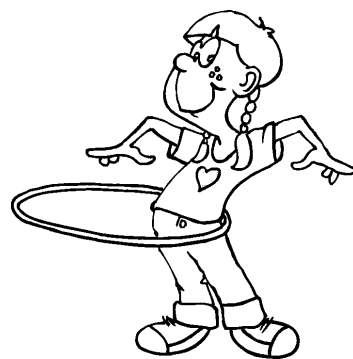
Students may have a chart for each week. Some centres must be completed and may be the student's choice. Students work on their own time and are not required to move to the next centre if they need a bit more time. It is important to consider how many students can be at each centre without it becoming too crowded. After they have completed each centre, they colour or mark in the corresponding box on their chart. Teachers may require the students complete a certain number of centres each day. After students have completed the mandatory centres they may work at choice centres.

### Teacher Directed

Teachers divide the class into small groups of students. The teacher may decide to group students with similar levels or with varying levels. Teachers usually provide a management board with the names of students and what they are to do each day with their group.

### Centre Management

- Teachers many use many different types of management boards. Boards can have hooks to hang names, velcro spots or magnetic placements. You can also use pocket charts and rotation wheels. Students must know where they are supposed to be, when they should be there, and what they should do while they are there.
- You can use hoola hoops to create centres for manipulative objects. It contains the student(s) and the small pieces that they are working with.
- Use the hook side of velcro to mark places on the carpet.



### Storage

- If you have enough space you can keep centres at their designated areas. Keeping permanent centre areas saves time, but it does take up a lot of space. A centre can also be simply a labelled tray or box that the children take to specified desks or a table.
- Designing and making materials takes up a great deal of time. Try to make the materials work with many different activities and centres. Game boards can be used in multiple centres. Volunteers and students can help make the materials as well. A benefit of making your own is that you can customize them to fit your needs - but making these can be very time consuming. Teacher stores now have game boards and many centre activities. These are expensive, but save time and effort.

## Centres

### Reading Centres

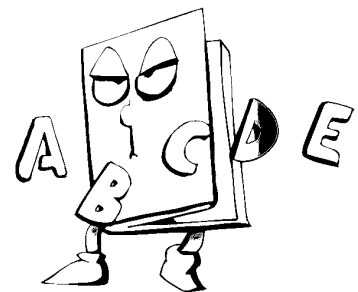
- Silently read books from the library independently. The children should have books at their reading level in a tub. They must know what tub is suitable for their reading level. The corner is set up for comfort and the children could sit on big pillows or in the rocking chair.
- The children read familiar Big Books alone or with a partner. They can use a pointer and ask one another questions as a teacher would.
- Buddy or paired reading - have a box of two copies of books at all levels. They read with a partner. This can be familiar or unfamiliar texts. Then they work with their buddy to draw or write about

their favourite part.

- Read books and magazines to a stuffed animal.
- Students can read from a box containing familiar reading material. Example: books from previous guided reading sessions, songs and poems collected in folders, any mini reproducible books made in class.
- Re-reading previous shared reading books and class-made big books. It is fun to keep a collection of pointers at this center.
- Pocket Chart and read poems, match cards, etc.
- Browsing Box - Each guided reading group can take the books read during group and puts them into a browsing box. They can look at the books as a group.
- Tape-A-Story - have blank tapes so the child can tape themselves reading.
- Take mixed up sentences from familiar stories and write them on sentence strips. Students put the sentences back into the correct order.

## **Alphabet Centres**

- Put letters in ABC order
- Sort letters with different fonts
- Match capital and lower case letters
- Put words in ABC order
- Organize the words on the word wall (take them down and then put them back where they belong)
- Put objects in ABC order: Students sort objects into ABC order. Example: book, crayon, dictionary, pencil.
- Digging in the Dictionary: word, page #, guide words, definition, sentence (simple dictionary)
- Alphabet Cards (cut the pictures apart from an ABC strip, posted the strip below the chalkboard, and attach Velcro to the wall and the pictures, so that they can be removed, mixed up, and matched to the right letter.)
- Make an ABC book on a certain subject
- Film canisters - have 26 of them labeled and use them for ABC order practice. Use the round alphabet stickers on top and on the sides, one letter per can. Keep them in a small plastic tray and the students put all 26 in order.
- ABC Books: cut out pictures and colour and glue them to the appropriate letter page.



## **Word Study**

- Read vocabulary cards with a partner.
- Cover an empty Pringles Can with plain paper (it's the perfect size for small hands to reach into without peaking). Fill it with small cards that are labelled with sight words. Also add 4-5 extra cards that are labelled 'BANG!' The students take turns drawing a card. If they can read the word they keep it. If they draw a Bang! card they must return all of their previous cards to the can, but keep out the Bang card. Eventually all cards get drawn and the one with the most words is the winner.
- Match synonyms or antonyms
- Match compound words, abbreviations, contractions, homophones
- Locate and copy words with a certain characteristic from a story (example: contraction, end in -ing).

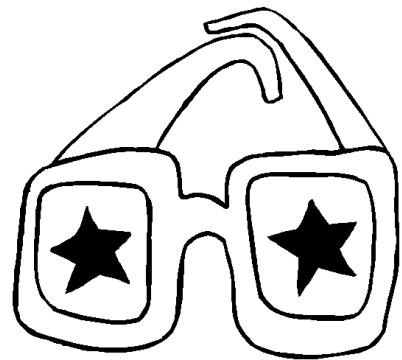


- Illustrate compound words. Write the word and then draw 2 illustrations (one for each part of the word).
- Cut out letters from a newspaper to make words from word wall.
- Make packs of words that the children have been taught in sight reading or in phonics and they can use them as flashcards. Make sure that one child in the group is able to check to make sure the answers are correct.
- Magnet letters are great ways for kids to explore words and letters. You can do anything from sort letters to rime and onset. The kids love to create sentences. Let them write the sentences down and share them later in the day.
- Have a variety of cards on rings hanging from a small rack. Try nouns, verbs, adjectives to create funny sentences.
- Sight Word Center (which changes to vocabulary center later) - They make the sight words with rubber stamps, magnetic letters. You could use the spelling words.
- Build a sentence - Kids choose sentence parts out of a bag. They put them together to make a silly sentence which is copied onto a sentence strip and illustrated.
- Do a word hunt (hunt for particular words, word families or words by number of letters, number of syllables, initial sound, ending sound, vowel pattern, part of speech)

### **Read and Write the Room**

**Read the Room:** Give the children tours in the first week to read signs, poems and other classroom print. Have a collection of glasses (without the lenses), magic wands, binoculars, pointers, etc., and the children go around the room in partners pointing to a word and reading it to the partner.

**Write the Room:** The children in the group each have a clipboard, inter-lined paper and a pencil. They go around the classroom printing any word that they can read. The teacher can assign things to look for; words that have a certain vowel, endings, initial consonants, verbs, nouns... The students have a clipboard and paper to write down their discoveries.



### **Listening Centres**

- Have stories on tape. The children must be taught to use the tape recorder and to follow the tape in books that accompany the tapes. If time permits, the children can illustrate the story.
- This centre can be sometime referred to as a Read-Along Centre. Place a collection of books and tapes for them to read along with. Try using a listening log. The student writes an entry in his personal log or a class log. He/she enters date, book and a short review.
- They can write spelling words that the tape dictates.
- Listen to directions on a tape to complete a skill sheet or complete another task (draw a monster with one head, two ears. . .)
- Do phonemic awareness exercises.
- Listen to a story (without a book to see) and illustrate one scene or the beginning, middle, ending scene.
- Listen and recall a sequences of letters, numbers, or words.
- Listen to the beginning of a story only. Finish the story with your own words or pictures.

## **Writing Centres**

- There are lots of writing materials, such as: thank you cards, blank books, individual chalkboards, crayons/markers/dry erase, lined paper, stamps, word family word lists, pictures to inspire writing, etc.
- Have a 'book-making' centre: a large collection of materials are needed, paper, pencils, felt pens, stapler,... to create student made books.
- Writing Centre - There are many ways you can work this centre; story starter or free writes.
- Writers' Workshop Folder - (work on something in progress)
- Write in your journal.
- Typewriter - find an old manual typewriter.
- Stamp a story.
- Write a letter.
- Use individual chalk boards or whiteboards.
- Writing Folder - This is where the children make books and write stories that they will share during group. Have different blank books and the kids can 'write a book'.
- Journal Writing - (can be a teacher directed topic if you choose)

## **Printing Centre**

- Great place to practice handwriting previously taught. Try using laminated sheets, fancy paper and pens.
- They can use wikki sticks; pipe cleaners, etc., to make letters.
- Copy seasonal poems.
- Copy the morning message.
- Copy from a favourite book.



## **Spelling Centres**

- Write spelling words using letter stamps, shaving cream, magnetic letters, stencils, gel pens on black paper, "magic erase" boards, pasta, cereal, clay/play dough, water (example- Q-tip on a chalkboard), a typewriter, glow in the dark materials, water-colours, by finding the words in a magazine or newspaper, cutting and gluing them, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, Wikki Stix, etc.
- Sort words (number of letters, number of syllables, initial sound, ending sound, vowel pattern, part of speech).
- Illustrate words.
- Salt/Sand Box Spelling: Pour some salt into a box top. Students write the words with their fingers in the salt.
- Make word searches with the spelling words.
- Write a short story using the spelling words.
- Rainbow words: Trace spelling words over and over using different colours.
- Have students roll a die and then they have to write their word that many times
- Find the value of your spelling word (A=1, B=2, C=3, etc.)
- Complete a teacher created crossword puzzle or word find
- Disappearing words: Example: happy, happ\_, hap\_, ha\_, h\_\_\_\_
- Reappearing words: Example- \_\_\_\_\_, k\_\_\_\_\_, ki\_\_\_\_, kit\_\_\_\_, kitt\_, kitte\_, kitten
- Coloured vowels and consonants: write the words with the vowels having one colour and the consonants another.

- Word Shapes: Outline your words using graph paper (hanging letters, middle letters, tall letters).
- Find high frequency words in the newspaper and highlight.
- Make a flip chart to make words: Example- ill with b, d, h, j, k, m, p, s, t, w to flip to make new words.
- Supply endings to words. Students have to give the first letter or letters. Examples: \_ump, \_\_\_ing, \_at
- Egg Carton Spelling: Write spelling words in an empty egg carton (one in each egg hole). Put a small object such as a bean in it. Students take turns shaking the closed container, opening it, and having the other student spell the word.
- Magnetic words - supply a metal tray and letters with magnetic tape on the back. You can also have family endings - \_at, for example, and the children use the magnetic letters to change the words.
- Playdough: this centre is an all-time favourite. They sit at the art table with the playdough and make the weekly wall words.

### **Overhead Centre**

- Have a small container of letters and the children write as many words they can make. There is also a mystery word that uses all of the letters.
- Children love to illustrate poetry using overhead pens. Try having the kids create their own pictures for books they are reading.
- Overhead - put cloze paragraphs on it (kids love working on the overhead).

### **Personal Information Centre**

You can provide laminated tag with the headings:

Name  
Age  
Phone Number  
Address  
City, Province  
Postal Code

Have a file with a copy of the information for each child so they can check their answers.



### **Poetry Centre**

- Each child can have a book of previously taught poems to read, cut and paste this week's poem into poetry notebook.
- Have a big book of rhymes.
- Have copies of nursery rhymes.
- After poems have been taught in guided reading, cut them apart and have the children reassemble them in a pocket chart. This can also be done by cutting apart a page with the poem and cutting and pasting it back in the correct order. Depending on the levels, this can be done by line or word.
- Charts of previously read poetry make great centres. Add a supply of pointers and there you go!
- Poetry Box - have poems that are laminated, and another set that are the words cut apart. The kids put the words together and glue them and illustrate it. Have pieces with magnets on the back for them to put in order, too. The kids use pointers to read the big chart and can stick wikki sticks or highlighting removable tape over words.

## **Science / Social Studies Centres**

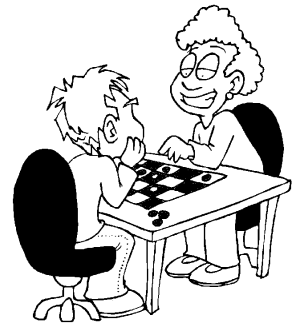
Supply maps, magnets, plants, non-fiction books on our current topics, sequencing life cycle pictures, magnifying glass, science collections, etc.

## **Computer Centre**

- Pick an educational game each day for this centre, or have the children do some writing on a simple word-processing program.
- Choose computer programs that are easy to use and teach simple skills in an interesting way. Depending on whether your kids used computers in Kindergarten - they may need practice using the mouse. Interactive books on disc such as "Grandma and Me" (an oldie but goodie) will improve mouse skills and teach computer use.
- The students can have a log to record what CD they did and three new things they learned.

## **Centre Games**

**Checkers** - this is played just like regular checkers. Buy inexpensive checkers sets and write words on each square (use a white-out marker on the black squares and a sharpie pen on the red squares) Before a move can be made the student must read the word and their partner agrees that is the correct word. Games plays according to the usual rules for checkers. This games works especially well with high frequency words.



**Teepees** - take a 6" circle made on our Ellison machine. Cut a slit in the back and tape it to look like a teepee or circular tent. On each circle write a word. Two students choose 6 teepees from a box that is at their level (colour coded). The first student hides his eyes while the partner hides a linker cube or teddy bear or other plastic toy under one teepee. The first student must read each teepee correctly to check to see if that is the one with the surprise! Then they change positions and keep playing.

**Concentration** - have cards made up on coloured index cards of all word families and high frequency words. There are 20 cards in each set, 10 words written two times each. Two students play. The first student lays out the 20 cards. The second tries to find a match. They play until there is a winner. They will then switch to a different deck of cards in the same level.

**Bingo** - Make a bingo sheet and write in the words you need. Each set of words has a handmade spinner. Children play in a group of 4 - 6. One child is the spinner and they spin to see what words to call. Play as regular bingo.

**Go Fish** - play using same decks of cards as concentration uses. Play according to rules.

**Old Maid** - play using same decks of cards as concentration uses. Play according to rules.

**Wordo** - This is basically tic-tac-toe using a standard word-o sheet. Leave several different groups of words that are on the level the group needs to practice. One child chooses which deck to play. One child is the caller. He/She calls out the words and everyone writes them wherever they want on the sheet. The caller mixes up the deck and calls out words. The winner gets word-o first. A new person is caller who mixes up the deck and they play again.

**Flip Books** - Make these books from lined manila sentence strips. They have the same word family and different onsets. Each student takes one set in their colour tub. They then take the recording sheet and draw each picture after they read it.

**Magnetic Read and Spell** - Have inexpensive magnetic letters and cookie sheets. Each child takes a cookie sheet and bag of letters. They then reach into the box and pull out a picture. The pictures are all in the word pattern that the student is learning (example: short vowel /a/) They pull out a picture of a cat and they know they write the word with letters on the cookie sheet. They turn over the picture and the correct spelling is on the back. They put that picture back and choose the next picture.

**Word Stamping** - This is great for either learning spelling words or word patterns. Buy several sets of letter stamps. The students stamp each word in the box of the word stamping sheet and then draw a picture of it if possible.

## **Word Building Games**

**Spin a Word** - Make a set of rimes common in English. Examples are *at, ap, am, an* and so on. Put 6 parts on each spinner. You can also have spinners with consonants and blends. Two students have 2 spinners. One is a chunk and one is either a consonant or a blend. The first student spins on each spinner to see if it makes a word. Then the second student tries. They try to make as many words as possible. Keep a list of all possible words that can be made in a bag with the spinners to keep disagreements to a minimum.

**Word Toss** - This is a variation on spin a word. Put chunks and consonants on small wooden cubes. Each student takes turns trying to make a word. The winner has the most words.

**Word Family** - Put pictures on papers with lines and laminate them. Children write as many rhyming words as they can think of with vis-a-vis pens. They wipe them off before they leave.

**Make a Word Charts** - Put up a chart on the wall that says 'Make a Word' at the top. Put a picture of an item of high interest such as a dinosaur. Take the letters in the word dinosaur and mix them up on the next line. The job is to make as many words as possible from those letters.

**Build a Word Cubes** - Print letters on cubes. Paint the vowels yellow, the blends green, the consonants blue and a bossy E purple. Students try to make as many words as they can. They have approximately 45 cubes to work with to make words. They write the words on recording sheets.

## **Teachers Talk About Literacy Centres**

"One literacy center that I have used all year, and just love, is this one: I created a spelling counter, in which the student walks along a counter and learns how to spell and use a word in a sentence. I post the new spelling word for the day; then they take the written letters I have made on poster board and recreate the word in a pocket chart; then they move to the magnetic letters and they have to make it again; then they write it on a white board; next they stamp out the word; and lastly they have to use the word in a sentence."

"If you plan what the other kids are doing while you teach 'Guided Reading' with something that they can do independently and train them by modelling the expectations they will surprise you. My children read with a partner, do word sorts, white boards, magnetic letters, word wall practice, poetry, or finish up other work.

I have a chart that where my kids go to see what they can do if they finish. The groups have colour names. I place things on the chart that the groups are capable of doing.

I have a little lamp, and when it is turned on, they know that there is to be no talking. Sometimes I play classical music very low in the background to help calm the room, and at the same time have some 'noise' that is pleasant for them. They like to hear it, so it is encouraging for them to keep the tone of the room quiet. I call it 'thinking music'."



"I have four main centers - Reading, Writing, Thinking and Creating - with choices of activities in each. I have four tables which give me four groups of 5 or 6 kids. I rotate table groups through the four centers on Monday through Thursday and leave Friday open for Free Choice. We have about 20 or 25 minutes a day for this. Depending on the week, I might have up to five choices at a center. And if there is something that is a must for everyone to do, I might only have one 'choice'. At first, I start with fewer choices. A lot of the center ideas I use are great because I don't have to change them every week. Also, the centers have to stay the same for a week for everyone to have them."

"I have a class that struggles with working independently. Their response to anything and everything presented was 'I need help!'. In December I started a routine that seems to have helped. When they are doing co-operative group work - such as centres - I won't come over to help for just one hand raised. They have to talk within the group and decide that no one knows the answer to the question. Then they all raise their hands and I will help. Everything else is the same - I walk around - spot check things, encourage, etc. But I won't stop for one raised hand, I just say 'I can't see one hand, you need to talk to your group.' It really seemed to be a confidence builder when they realized that they could do more of their work on their own with a little help from their friends! There is a big difference in centre time - it is so much calmer and I'm not running around trying to keep everyone going. Until this point, I haven't been able to do small groups during centre time because they were so dependent on me."

"I use these three rules:

Use a whisper voice. Co-operate with others at your centre. Do your job at the centre.  
In each centre there are specific tasks to do. The children must know exactly what is expected and the sequence of the tasks. Model your expectations."

"I love to have my students 'read around the room' and read big books together when at literacy centers. I found an inexpensive way to make pointers for them. I buy a bunch of chopsticks at a local Chinese restaurant and put those pencil erasers on top...usually seasonal ones. The kids love them."

"I have gone through quite an evolution with my centers, until I found a system that worked for me. I started out (years ago) with the free choice thing....YUCK. No control. Then I told the children which center they were to go too.....they had no choice, and part of me felt they should have some

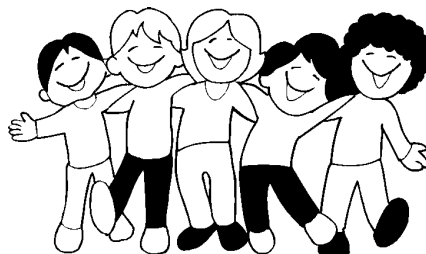
choice in centers. Then I went to the system where the children 'sign up' for centers.....4 kids can go to lego, 2 can go to the computer, etc. Aaaahhhh! Control and choice! BUT we spent all our center time getting 'who was going where' sorted out.

Then at a BER workshop, I found the ultimate. I probably don't do it justice, but I like the framework it gives me. I have 5 centers...Reading, Writing, Thinking, Creating, and Free Choice. My class is divided into groups and each group goes to their assigned center each day. No choice! BUT, each center has options. For example, the kids going to the Reading center may choose to read at their desks, read quietly with a friend, read the room, read a magazine, read flashcards with a friend, or whatever options I have introduced to the class. The Writing group might choose to write at their desk, write with a friend, use magnetic letters to write words or word families, etc. The thinking center could be your theme based stuff, or computer games, or puzzles, or a lego challenge like build a round tower, etc. This way, I still have control over the centers and the kids have some choice. The best of both! The centers don't have to be big and complicated, and maybe only two or three choices are needed for each center, each one introduced and taught before being added to the options."

"Organizing centers can be a problem! Try keeping the materials for each center in a bucket. An idea from Linda Holliman is to include pieces of fabric with your buckets. When the kids get the center bucket, they spread out the fabric and that is their area. It confines the space, so you have some control over how far the supplies for that center can go."

"I spend one hour four days a week doing Guided Reading. This is when I read with three small groups of children (as described by Irene Fountas and Gay Sue Pinnell in "Guided Reading"). I have divided my Grade 1 and 2 class into five flexible, levelled reading groups. During this time the other children are working in random, mixed-ability groups on various literacy centres. The ideas for the majority of my centres come from the Grade 1 listserve and from Fountas/Pinnell.

"The children currently have a choice of 14 different literacy centres. I have printed the centre names on pocket chart cards, so that in any given week there are 12 different centre cards arranged in a pocket chart in a 4 X 3 grid. On the chalk board, to the left of the pocket chart, I have arranged a cluster of four groups of student pictures (magnets are attached to the back for easy movement). At the start of guided reading the children find their picture (these groups change often) and check to see which centre they are to begin with. As they begin their first centre I call over one of my reading groups (different from the literacy centre groupings). We read together for approximately 15 to 20 minutes (I also do a running record during this time, which adds up to 12 a week). At the end of this time I tell the students to check the pocket chart to see which activity they are to go to next. Everybody cleans up and moves to the next activity while I pull over my second group for the day. This is repeated until everyone has either been to three different centres or has read with me and visited two different centres. The next day I simply move the row of three centre cards down to the next group, so that during the week everyone has the opportunity of visiting 12 different centres a week."



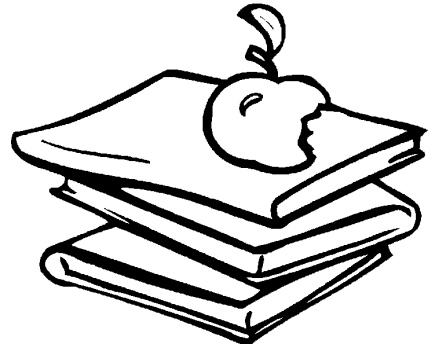
# Word Walls

The word wall must be interactive.

It is a teaching tool, not a decoration.

The teacher must 'teach' the word wall, not just 'have' it.

You will use high frequency words, that are used the most often in writing and reading.



- As this is the most important use of space in the classroom, choose a large enough space. A word wall has the letters of the alphabet at the top, and words are placed under the letter with which they begin.
- Make sure the words are printed large enough for every child to read. Put some words up, and then go to the other side of the classroom and see if you can read them.
- Make the tag on which the words are printed a contrast to the bulletin board background. The words usually are printed on a light colour and the background darker - e.g. yellow tag for the words on a dark green or blue background. Pastel word cards on a white wall are also suitable.
- Some teachers cut around the word shape and some print the words on a rectangle. The jury is still out deciding which is best.....
- Print the words clearly in the form you would like the children to print. If possible, do them on the computer in a bold primary font. In Grade One you may want to print the words on lines to show letter sizes.
- We would like the words to last without looking 'dog-eared', but generally it is not a good idea to laminate them. Often there is light reflection, and the children can't read the words from their seats.
- The words are usually removable. If it is possible to move the words around, then a child can take a word to his desk, the words can be changed to alphabetical order as they are added to the list, etc. If you have a magnetic chalk- or white-board, then put a strip of magnetic tape (available in a large roll at craft stores) on the back of each word. Another idea is to put a strip of velcro vertically below each letter heading and have each word with a strip of the opposite velcro on the back. Get the velcro that has adhesive on the back. Put the soft fluffy side on the bulletin board and the looped side on the back of the words.
- A word wall is only useful if it is taught every day and if the teacher refers to it constantly. The children must spell the words on the word wall correctly in all their work.
- Starting the word wall with your students' names helps add interest and motivation.
- Most teachers add five words each week. These can be sight reading words or spelling words - they must be high frequency words.
- Every day schedule a time to chant, cheer and clap these words. Teach the new words and review the words already on the wall. Teaching the word wall words should be a multi-sensory activity.



### The Word Wall....

- Add words gradually, five a week. Be selective about what words go on the wall, limiting additions to those really common words that children use a lot in writing.
- Make words very accessible by putting them where every student can see them, writing them in big, black letters, and using a variety of background colours so that the most often-confused words (there, their; what, when) are different colours.
- Practice those words by chanting and writing them.
- Do a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled instantly and automatically.
- Make sure that Word Wall words are spelled correctly in any writing students do.



### A Word Wall Week

**Monday** - Introduce the words, look at them individually, talk about the letters, sounds, anything unusual and practice reading them. Then the children go to their tables and they number 1 to 5 down the side of a paper and print the five new words as you dictate them, one at a time in random order. Tell them to try and spell them without looking at the board, but if they're not sure then it's fine to look (this takes the pressure off everyone, but they're still practicing the words). Then ask someone to read the first word, someone else spells it, everyone spells and claps it, then they give themselves a check mark ( or correct the word if it was spelled incorrectly). Repeat this for all five words.

**Tuesday** - Review the 5 words again orally, and sing all the words on the board to the tune of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. Then they sit down again with papers numbered 1 to 5 and play a rhyming game. Say something like, 'The word I am thinking of starts with /f/ (the sound) and rhymes with bunny. What's my word?' They look under the 'f' column, find 'funny' and print it. Afterwards mark it together as you did on Monday.

**Wednesday** - Chant/sing the wall again. Give one child a pointer (and sometimes a paper megaphone) and he/she points to a word and yells "Give me a 'what!'" ..... for example. Everyone looks at the word and yells "what!" The children take turns doing this.

**Thursday** - Play 'Be a Mind Reader'. They have their papers numbered 1 to 5. Tell them you are thinking of a word wall word and you are going to give them clues. They try to read your mind and figure out the word. They print their guess beside each number, even if it's the same word. The clues are:

- 1) it is one of the words on the wall
- 2) it has \_\_\_ letters
- 3) it begins with \_\_\_
- 4) the vowel is an \_\_\_
- 5) it rhymes with \_\_\_.

Most kids have it figured out by the 4th clue. The hardest part for the lower kids is remembering the previous clues and remembering that their guess has to fit all the clues, not just the current one.

**Friday** - Play 'Word Wall Basketball'. Choose one person to keep score. Set up a large basket with a metre stick on the floor about 2 1/2 metres from the basket. Form two teams and they line up behind the metre stick. The first person on Team 1 is given a small nerfball. Show them one of the words (printed on separate cards). If they can read it correctly then they throw the ball in the basket. If it

goes in the basket the team gets 2 points. If they miss they get 0 points. If they don't know how to read the word they can ask their team-mates. Then if they get the ball in the basket they earn 1 point. Play through all the cards.

### **Word Wall Lesson Plan**

Every Day:

Work with the following words:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Have students:

- see the words.
- say the words.
- chant snap clap stomp cheer . . . the words. (do the activity circled)
- write the words and check them with the teacher.
- trace around the words and check with the teacher.
- complete this 'On the Back' activity \_\_\_\_\_



### **Some 'On The Back' Activities**

#### **Be A Mind Reader**

You need to have at least 20 words up on the wall before you do this activity. Number the paper from 1-5. Tell the children they will guess your word from the clues. The first clue is always that the word is on the word wall. Other clues can be 'it has \_\_\_\_ beats'. 'It begins like \_\_\_\_'. 'It ends like \_\_\_\_'. 'It is a noun, verb, etc.'. 'It has a \_\_\_\_ for a vowel.' The last clue is usually a sentence with the word missing in it so everyone can get it. After each of the 5 clues they write a word on their papers.

Other clues you can use -

It starts with (sound)

It has # of letters

It is something I did already (past tense word)

It is something I'm doing now (ing word)

It rhymes with \_\_\_\_

I use the body motions for each letter as a clue also - tall letters hands up, y and other low letters hands down to the floor, and regular size letters to the stomach, i to the eye, and contractions hands over head and to the side."

#### **Add Endings To Words**

Practice adding endings to new or old word wall words. For example have the students number from 1-5. Have them find clap, chant and write the word help. Then have them add the ending "s" to make helps, then "ed" to make helped, then "ing" to make helping and finally "er" to make helper. This is a good way to practice word endings.

#### **Guess The Covered Word**

Have a word covered on the overhead. Have students try to guess the word wall word by revealing one letter at a time.

#### **Wheel of Fortune**

The teacher or a child picks a word from the wall and draws lines on the board or overhead for each letter in the word. Children can guess vowels or consonants. Correct letters are written in the lines

and incorrect ones are listed in the used letter box. They **MUST** guess all the letters before saying the word. One turn per person.

### **Ruler Tap**

A ruler is used for this activity. The teacher says a word then taps out several letters in the beginning of that word without saying those letters. When the tapping stops, the teacher calls on a child to finish spelling the word out loud. If the child correctly spells the word, the child gets to call out a word and tap some of the letters.

### **Wordo**

Wordo is a variation of Bingo. All you need is photocopied sheets on which 9, 16 or 25 blocks have been drawn. Have students pick words off the word wall they want included in the game. As you choose a the students pick a block to write it in on their Wordo sheet. You write the words on small index cards. When the sheet is filled up you are ready to play. Shuffle the cards and call out one word at a time. Have students chant and spell the word as they cover it. The first person with a row covered calls out 'Wordo!' You can not play full card like Bingo.

### **Make a Sentence With Word Wall Words**

This activity is hard to do until you have up about half of the word wall. First you make up sentences only using word wall words and student's names and have the students write them as you dictate them. Then later on have students try to make up sentences using only names and word wall words.

### **Opposite Riddles**

After you have a good number of words up on the word wall you should have a good number of words that have opposites. Have them number their paper from 1-5 and give them a riddle similar to this: Word number on begins with the letter "p" and is the opposite of ugly. Continue with 4 more riddles.

### **Word Wall Chants**

"My word wall process goes something like this. I hold up the actual word and say "The next word we are going to work on is (students say it if they know)." We look at it and cheer it three different ways. Then I write it on the overhead and they write it on their paper. If it is the first day for the word, they watch while I write it. We trace and check and then on to the next word. We cheer a lot of different ways. After spelling class I usually feel like I need a shower! The kids love the movement and are ready to return to their seats for writing. I usually do all the chanting before I do the writing."

"Some of our more unusual ways are listed below. There is one movement for each letter of the Word Wall word. Say the word, spell it and say the word again."

**Mouse** - squeaky voice with hands curled up by face

**Robot** - in robotic voice with arms moving back and forth

**Sing opera style**

**Fly it** - like a bird - arms flapping up and down

**Chicken** - arms folded up to make wings and head moving forward

**Nose** - hold your nose and spell it

**Beat it** on our desks

**Cheer It** (Give me an 'h', etc.) like a cheerleader.

**Pat** - We pat our heads for tall letters, tummies for short letters and knees for letters that go below the line.



**Snap and Clap** - We snap for the vowels and clap for the consonants.  
**Raise the Roof** - We just push up toward the ceiling, one push for each letter.

**Ketchup** - Shake our hand like we're trying to get ketchup out of a bottle.  
**Disco** (Hand up for consonants, hand down for vowels)

**Box It** - Pretend to be a boxer and spell.

**Throw the Stars** - Throw one hand at a time toward the ceiling for each letter.

**Be the Letter** (Body Language) - Lots of letters we just make up. When we can't think of anything we just contort our bodies. For the 's' we slither down to the floor while saying 'e -e-e-s-s-'. A fun one to do.

**Mexican Hat Dance** (alternate feet in front)

**Flapping and Nodding** - Pretend you're a bird and flap your wings and nod your head for each letter.

**Stomping** - Just stomp your feet for each letter.

**Clapping syllables** - Just clap for each syllable, not really spelling, but I use it before we spell so they can hear the syllables.

**Explosion (Volcano)** (whisper, normal, loud) They love to do this. Pretty self-explanatory.

**Marshmallow clap** - Almost clap but stop before your hand touch. Say each letter.

**Hula** - hands on hips, swivel, hands in air to say word

**Jumping Jacks** - One letter for each movement.

**Toe Touches** - touch your toes for each letter.

**Batter Up** - We get into the batting position and swing on each letter as we say it

**SLOOOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWW** We hold the sound of the letter or a few seconds like sit...  
s.....i.....t.....!

**Motorcycle** - We just hang on to 'handle bars' and pretend that we are doing wheelies..!

**Dribble and shoot** - Dribble the letters and shoot the word.

**Ride the horse** - This is pretty wild so we don't do it often. They turn their chair around and straddle the chair. Then they rock back and forth and wave their hand in the air for each letter (like a cowboy riding a bucking horse.)

**Push-ups** - They love to choose this for the long words because I always tease that they are trying to kill me!

**Blowing kisses** - Blow a kiss for each letter. On the word use two hands to blow the kiss and extend both arms out and up. Tons of fun, you feel like a movie star!



## **Teachers' Comments on Word Walls**

**Teaching Names** - Have the children's first names become word wall words. Cover five names (first names) a week and then start the 'real' words but the names go up just like any other words.

"A few teachers in my building have stopped doing word walls because they said that they weren't effective. In many cases, the reason was because using the word wall wasn't something that the children were taught. Our word wall words are brought up constantly during the day - morning message, word wall time, specific word wall activities, clap and chant, etc. You can't just introduce the word, stick it on the wall and then expect the magic to work. It is a skill that needs to be mastered, developed, and used. Plus, the children **MUST** always be accountable for spelling the word wall words correctly! In any writing that a child does, if a word wall word is spelled incorrectly they have to go back and fix it - no exceptions. The use of spelling patterns and activities that support them should

also be tied to the word wall words. If you are doing the 'an' family then you need to have them look for 'an' words on the word wall."

"I make my own word wall words on the computer in primary font, cut around them, glue them on different colours of poster board, then place transparent contact paper on the back only. That way I can either place tape I can take off without ruining the word or, what I have done lately, place rectangles of magnetic tape. I have my word wall painted with magnetic paint so that has worked very well."

When you are making your word wall, here are a few suggestions:

- Put up only 4 or 5 words each week, working with them all week until the children are totally familiar with them.
- Print out the words in a primary font on your computer.
- Print the words onto a variety of bright distinctive coloured sheets.  
Cut around the word shape.

*"I whisper a word in one student's ear who is holding a pointer.*

Find the word,

It is near.

Where's the word?

It's right here! *(Student with pointer points to it)*

Say the word. *(Class says word)*

Tap each part. *(Tap syllables)*

Say the word.

What a start!

Time to spell,

Close each eye.

Do it now,

Don't be shy! *(Class spells with eyes closed)*

Say the word,

Loud and clear, *(Say word again)*

One more time.

Now let's cheer! *(Everyone cheers)*



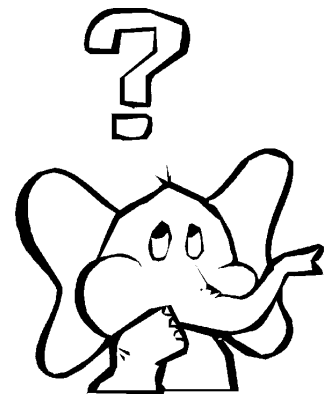
### **Flashlight Tag**

"A class favourite of my little friends is flashlight tag. We usually play once a week. I feel that it is important to get every one in the room involved, so I have a flashlight for each table and mini-chalkboards for everyone. I have 4 tables in my room, so four children stand up in front of the word wall and the rest of the class have their chalk and boards ready to write. At the beginning of the year I started out by asking the kids to 'spot and write' the word \_\_\_\_\_. The 4 children with flashlights find/'spot' the word on the word wall and the rest of the kids print the same word on their boards. Then the writers can check to see if they spelled the word correctly by looking at the spotters light beam. I also like this because no one child is standing at the front of the room alone, possibly unable to find the given word (they have three other friends able to help them find the word if it is personally difficult for them.) After a few words, the 'spotters' return to their tables and pass the flashlight to another child at their table. We play until everyone has a chance to spot some words.

"At this point in the year, I sometimes still tell them a specific word, but I also will give them a sentences orally with a word wall missing. 'The girl likes \_\_\_\_\_ cat.' Then the children can spot/write any word that would/could fit. 'a, the, that, their, my, her, etc.' We then talk about the different possibilities that the kids spotted or wrote. Sometimes I will also tell them clues about certain words such as what it might rhyme with or whether it has a silent e or a certain vowel/digraph sound that we are studying. We can then talk about all of those possibilities."

"We do 30 minutes of word wall activities every day. On Monday we get 5 new words. I show them the word and call on 4 or 5 kids to use that word in a sentence. We discuss where the word should go on the wall and I put it up. I choose a child to pick an activity to spell the word with - stomping feet, clap, snap, jumping jacks, jog in place, pencil taps..... Then we get air pencils and write the word in the air. Finally, they write it on their paper. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we do a variety of activities. We play Read My Mind, Word-O, fill the sentence (close activity), Mystery Word, Stair Steps, Word Shapes and sometimes we write the words in alphabetical order.

Mystery Word is played on the overhead. I put up the letters from one of the word wall words scrambled on the overhead. The kids write what they think the word is and I choose one child to come up and put the word in order. "Stair steps is harder to explain. They choose one word from the wall and write it across. They use the last letter of that word as the first letter of the next word and write it going down. They continue the steps as far as they can. My high kids love it!! Friday is our word wall test. After that we do a word from Making Words. Lately, I've had the Making Words word at centers to see how many words the children can make from these letters."



"I put up the Word Wall words 5 at a time weekly. My kids counted their words this week, and found 135, which I realize is more than Pat Cunningham recommends, so this week we will retire some to the Hall of Fame, the ones we all know so well. Since we have to assess our Grade Ones on all 220 Dolch words at the end of the year, I try to keep adding words as long as I can and have them coordinated with the stories in our anthologies. We spend 10-15 minutes per day on Word Wall, and always write our 5 words on 1/2 sheets of writing paper. Monday - new words are introduced, spelled, stapled up, then snapped, clapped, and written. We talk about similarities to words already up, and we mourn the lack of q and z words every week! Tuesday - We snap, spell, and write the new words. We do an 'on the back' activity - only we mean on the back of the paper! It's usually taking a word and adding endings, or changing the beginning letter, or writing pairs of opposites. Wednesday and Thursday the kids like to do 'Silent Word Wall'. I put the magic star on the board so no one can talk, and then I give visual clues, like pointing to a colour or direction, anything to help them write the word I am thinking of. Then I go to the marker board and write my word. They're very pleased if they got it, but sometimes there's more than one possibility - if I point to a girl, it could be her or she, for example. I'm always glad to have that pointed out and discussed. The class also likes to do a list of words that makes a sentence, or that all start or end in the same way. In addition to Read My Mind and these activities, I send the new words home in the weekly newsletter, and a list of the complete wall every month, and lots of kids practice at home. I have to say that these activities and the daily routine of them really work, and my kids know the 135 words at an average of 90%."

# The Four Blocks

Four Blocks is a multi-method, multi-level literacy framework developed by Pat Cunningham and Dottie Hall. The Four Blocks - Guided Reading, Self-Selected Reading, Writing, and Working with Words - represent four different approaches to teaching children to read. Daily instruction in all Four Blocks is one way to provide numerous and varied opportunities for children to learn to read and write.

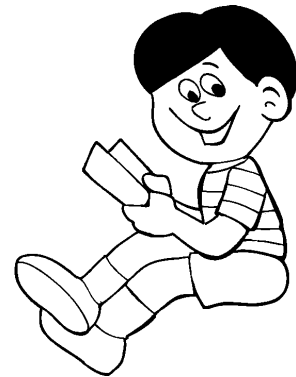
***A Brief Description*** - An overview of the blocks. The following comes from Joe Fuhrmann and is used with his permission.

## Guided Reading

- Exposes children to wide range of literature, teaches comprehension strategies.
- Teach children to read in materials that become increasingly more difficult.
- You can use a basal reading series, trade books, Big Books and/or other text-based material.
- 10 - 15 minutes - The teacher directs a whole group lesson to build on student's prior knowledge, leads shared, choral or echo reading, discusses key vocabulary in context of the story, and teaches to other identified needs.
- 15 - 20 minutes - Reading of text using flexible grouping - partners, small groups led by adult, play school groups or individual reading.
- 5 - 10 minutes - Teacher leads closing activity - discussion, acting out the story, writing in response to the story or other related activities.

## Self-Selected Reading

- To build fluency in reading, to build confidence by allowing students to work with text most appropriate to their reading level, and to allow students to read books that interest them.
- 5 - 10 minutes - Teacher reads aloud to students on a variety of levels, topics and authors.
- 15 - 20 minutes - students read from books in their group's basket. The teacher holds conferences with individual students at this time.



## Writing

- Modelling by instructor of the writing process, practice applying knowledge of phonics, and to build confidence as a writer.
- 10 minutes - The teacher writes and models the things writers do, including selecting a topic, spelling troublesome words and editing.
- 15 to 20 min. - The students write on a variety of topics. The teacher conferences with individual students.
- 5 - 10 minutes - Selected students share their work and answer questions.

## Working With Words

- Learn to read and spell high-frequency words and learn the patterns which allow children to read and spell lots of other words.
- 10 - 15 minutes - Five words are introduced each week. These new words and old words are practiced daily by clapping, snapping and writing them.
- 20 - 25 minutes - Children learn how to use word patterns to read and spell using a wide variety of

activities, including 'Making Words', 'Be a Mind Reader', 'Guess the Covered Word' and other exercises.

*For more information, go to:*

<http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/column.html>

<http://www.wfu.edu/~cunningh/fourblocks/>

[http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/general\\_information.htm](http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/general_information.htm)

<http://www.readinglady.com/>

### **A Teacher's View of the Four-Blocks Framework**

"The four-block sessions are a little shorter in the beginning...and each of the 4-blocks are really in 3 or more parts. There is usually a type of pre, during, and after for each session. The writing and self-selected both have a sharing component after. There is lots of modeling!!! All have to fit into the time slots so you get everything in. One of the ways to get everything in is to integrate subjects.

People have to look at the things they cannot change, then work in their blocks around that. The blocks do not have to be boom boom boom...and it depends a lot on teacher's personal preference. Also, there are no 4-blocks police (!) so you do a lot of fudging and 'learning' at first until you tweak it to get it right.

One of my goals is to set up a schedule and make myself stick to it because I can get going on something and run out of time for something else. I will still allow myself to do that when something is going really well, but on the whole I really believe in the balanced literacy part and want to give every student the opportunity to learn in the way s/he learns best.

The exciting thing is, it isn't so different from what you already do...it is just more of a structure that enables you to fit it all in, reach all learners and reach all levels..."

## **Guided Reading**

### **In the Beginning**

We can hope that all the children come into the Grade One classroom in September knowing all the concepts of print and being ready to jump into reading. Many Kindergarten teachers try to give guided reading lessons with Big Books and poems and have many children in the class at Level 4. You cannot, however, assume that all the children will have the concepts of print. Here are some ideas from teachers:



"I begin the year doing a lot of shared reading in the first two months. I use a lot of big books. We do choral reading and echo reading. The children point to the words as they read. As most of these books will be memorized, I have them find certain basic words that are repeated. We discuss the pictures and the stories and do picture-walks before reading."

"I use a lot of poetry in the early months. I try to find poems with vocabulary I want the children to learn. We read the poem together and in partners. Another copy of the poem is cut apart into lines, and the children reassemble it in the chart holder. Then the poem may be cut into words and reassembled and read. Poetry allows the children to begin partner reading on a simple level, with all children succeeding.

All of this is multilevel because some children are still learning the concepts about print but others can read the text on their own. Of course, much phonemic awareness is interjected as well as



phonic instruction. I find that the first 6 weeks has the reading and word block overlapping one another."

"In the beginning of the year we discuss how all of the children can read (even though they think they can't), why it's important to read, and what types of environmental print they see around their neighbourhood. Each child brings in a label or sign that is familiar and that he can 'read'. Then we all share them. The children are amazed to be told that they are reading these."

### **Guided Reading Lesson**

- Early in the year the class may be taught as a whole. After that it is usually preferable to teach small groups of children at the same reading level, or a few children who are lacking a particular skill. The rest of the class will be engaging in independent or shared reading activities.
- Before the reading, predict the story from the cover and illustrations. Discuss similar stories so they can integrate previous knowledge and use that to prepare mentally for the current story.
- When the children oral read, they can all read softly at the same time. Have the children start their oral reading at different times, so they are not reading together. They should each be reading at their own speed at their own place.
- Listen to hear what strategies children are using, so you can comment positively on one or more of them following the session. If you notice a particular word or phrase is causing difficulty, use that as the mini-teaching theme following the reading of the book.
- While you are teaching a small guided reading group, the other children should be profitably engaged. Some possible literacy centres for groups can be: Independent Reading, Shared Reading, Alphabet Centres, Read Around the Room.
- Teach the letter names and the letter sounds. Teach blending strategies. Give lessons in sound-letter relationships that are organized systematically and that provide as much practice and review as is needed.
- Help children learn to preview selections, anticipate content, and make connections between what they will read and what they already know.
- Give instruction on how to improve comprehension (e.g. rereading, asking for help and advice, looking up words).
- Guide children to compare characters, events, and themes of different stories.
- Encourage discussion about what is being read and how ideas can be linked.
- Teach letter knowledge and phonemic awareness.
- Have instruction on letter-sound correspondences and spelling conventions.
- Have daily sessions for independent and supported reading with attention to both fluency and comprehension.

### **Making Words**

#### **Steps in planning a 'Making Words' lesson**

- Decide what will be the final word in the lesson. In choosing this word, consider its number of vowels, child interest, curriculum tie-ins you can make, and letter-sound patterns you can draw children's attention to through the word sorting at the end.
- Make a list of shorter words that can be made from the letters of the final word.
- From all the words you listed, pick 12-15 words that include: (a) words that you can sort for the pattern(s) you want to emphasize; (b) little words and big words to make a multilevel lesson; (c)

words that can be made with the same letters in different places (e.g., barn, bran) so children are reminded that when spelling words, the order of the letters is crucial; (d) a proper name or two to remind them where we use capital letters; and (e) words that most of the students have in their listening vocabularies.

- Write all the words on index cards and order them from shortest to longest.
- Once you have the two-letter, three-letter, etc., words together, order them further so that you can emphasize letter patterns and how changing the position of the letter or changing or adding just one letter results in a different word.
- Store the cards in an envelope. Write on the envelope the words in order and the patterns you will sort for at the end.

### **Steps in teaching a 'Making Words' Lesson:**

- Place the large letter cards in a pocket chart or along the chalk ledge.
- Have designated children give one letter to each child.
- Hold up and name the letters on the large letter cards, and the children hold up their matching small letter cards.
- Write the numeral 2 (or 3, if there are no two-letter words in the lesson) on the board.
- Say, "Take two letters and make a word. Use the word in a sentence after you say it."
- Have a child who has the first word made correctly make the same word with the large letter cards. Encourage anyone who did not make the word correctly at first to fix the word when they see it made correctly.
- Continue having students make words, erasing and changing the number on the board to indicate the number of letters needed. Use the words in simple sentences to make sure the children understand them. Cue them as to whether they are just changing one letter, changing letters around, or taking all their letters out to make a word from scratch. Before telling them the last word, ask "Has anyone figured out what word we can make with all our letters?" If so, congratulate them and have one of them make it with the big letters. If not, say something like, "I love it when I can stump you. Use all your letters and make \_\_\_\_\_."
- Once all the words have been made, take the index cards on which you have written the words, and place them one at a time (in the same order children made them) along the chalk ledge or in the pocket chart. Have children say and spell the words with you as you do this. Use these words for sorting and pointing out patterns. Pick a word and point out a particular spelling pattern, and ask children to find the others with that same pattern. Line these words up so that the pattern is visible.

### **Sample Lesson**

**Materials Needed:** (*Sample Lesson*)

List of words to sort for patterns (*in, is, it, sit, set, net, nets, kit, kits, kite, kites, Kit, sent, ten, tent, tents, Kitten*)

Words printed on individual index cards

Pocket chart, Cardboard letters: **e i k n s t t**

Duplicate, mount, and cut apart one set per child and one large set for the pocket chart.



## Procedure

The remaining 20-25 minutes of words time is given to an activity which helps children learn spelling patterns. A variety of activities are included in this block each day, the most popular of which is Making Words. Making Words is an active, hands-on, manipulative activity in which children learn how to look for patterns in words and how changing just one letter or where to put a letter changes the whole word. The children are given the six to eight letters that will form the final word. The teacher begins with two letter words, then builds to three, four, and five letter words (example: it, in, pin, pit, rip, run, runt, punt, trip, turn, print, turnip). They then sort the words according to a variety of patterns including beginning sounds, rhymes and endings and use words sorted to read and spell words with similar patterns. Word wall is practiced every day but the second activity varies. In addition to Making Words, this second activity could be Rounding up the Rhymes, Guess the Covered Word, Using Words you Know, Reading/Writing Rhymes or another activity through which children learn how to use patterns to decode and spell hundreds of words.

- Use the word list (or make up your own letters and words)
  - (a) words that you can sort for the pattern(s) you want to emphasize
  - (b) little words and big words so that the lesson is a multilevel lesson
  - (c) words that can be made with the same letters in different places (e.g., *ten*, *net*) so children are reminded that when spelling words, the order of the letter is crucial
  - (d) a proper name or two to remind them where we use capital letters
  - (e) words that most of the students have in their listening vocabularies.
- Write all the words on index cards and order them from shortest to longest.
- Place your set of large letter cards in a pocket chart and make sure every child has a set of cardboard letters.
- Hold up and name the letters on the large letter cards, and have the children hold up their matching small letter cards.
- Write the numeral 2 (or 3, if there are no two-letter words in your lesson) on the board. Tell them to take two letters and make the first word. Use the word in a sentence after you say it.
- Have a child who has the first word made correctly make the same word with the large letter cards in the pocket chart. Encourage anyone who did not make the word correctly at first to fix the word when they see it made correctly.
- Continue having them make words, erasing and changing the number on the board to indicate the number of letters needed. Use the words in simple sentences to make sure the children understand their meanings. Remember to cue them as to whether they are just changing one letter, changing letters around, or taking all their letters out to make a word from scratch. Cue them when the word you want them to make is a proper name, and send a child who has started that name with a capital letter to make the word with the big letters.
- Before telling them the last word, ask "Has anyone figured out what word we can make with all our letters?" If so, congratulate them and have one of them make it with the big letters. If not, say something like, "I love it when I can stump you. Use all your letters and make **"kitten."**
- Once all the words have been made, take the index cards on which you have written the words, and place them one at a time (in the same order children made them) in the pocket chart. Have children say and spell the words with you as you do this. Use these words



for sorting and pointing out patterns. Pick a word and point out a particular spelling pattern, and ask children to find the others with that same pattern. Line these words up so that the pattern is visible.

- To get maximum transfer to reading and writing, have the children use the patterns they have sorted to spell a few new words that you say.



"For the words block, there is so much to it that is exciting. In the beginning of the year you do the student's names (and there is a whole month of this and all of the things you can do with it). Children learn about each other, learn to make connections because of people's names, same beginnings, rhyming things, so much more. When you start the full word block, you start with 5 word wall words. You only do 5 a week. You choose them based on those you will need for the week that you will be tying in in other way, esp. writing and reading. Sometimes it can work the opposite...you work your words in whenever you see the opportunity. ***You do not put any words on the word wall until you have spent a week working with them!*** This is important. Each day you do something physical with each word and write the word. e.g. for the word ***and*** you clap each letter as you spell it, you can jump each letter as you say it, you can do a yo-yo motion for each letter as you do it, and before you write it, you do a printing lesson for each letter and have the student write the letter...you can practice the sound for the letter IF it makes that sound in the word...or mention how it does not make its sound in the word. (Some of my student's favourite actions to do for each letter included making a snowball...pick up a bunch of snow, and each time you pack it say a letter...when done with the word, throw the snowball as you say the word...they loved basketball shoot, picking a bouquet for Mom near Mother's day, etc.) You do these words every day in the first 5-10 minutes...the first 3 days exclusively...the last 2 days you add in other word wall words (review, not new) after you have some up on the wall that you spent 5 days with. I may stay with the 5 and add on a couple, especially depending on how difficult they are.

Another activity in the words block that particularly addresses letter sounds is 'making words'. You start with one vowel words. e.g. sand. On the desk of ***each*** child are the letters a d n s (the vowels are in or on red or pink). Before you start, have the students hold up the letter that is the /d/ sound (or depending on the level of the students...hold up this letter...it is the letter 'd') You do this for each letter in the beginning. Tell them there is one letter that is a word by itself. See if anyone can tell you what it is. Have all students pull that letter down in front of them. Now tell them to make the word ***an*** by adding one letter. Someone comes up to the sentence chart and do it for the whole class. Then tell them to make the word ***and*** by adding one more letter. Continue this process. They can put all of the letters up and make the word ***as***. Here they can hear/learn that the letter ***s*** can make the sound of ***z*** sometimes.

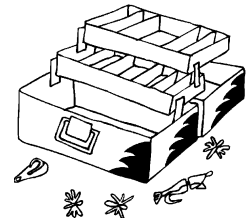
There is a lot of cross checking and cross-learning going on...especially phonemic awareness with rhyming and word family activities...and it can all be done off the word wall. There are cloze activities. There are ***Guess the Covered Word*** activities. There is ***Be a Mind Reader***...on and on and on. There is a ***FEED ME*** monster that can be used for review of letter identity, letter sounds, sight words, rhyming words, even content review, math number review, color words, number words on and on and on.....

Once you get into it, you see so much more you can do!"

## Making Words - Organization

"I have printed off a grid of small squares in a row for "blank" cards... eight in each set... they were very easy to do on the computer. My master has about six sets of cards on a page, so I can print a bunch at a time on construction paper. Each day when we are doing MAKING WORDS, the class finds the 8-card "grid" on their desks... and my "sample" larger letters are displayed at the board to show them what letters we are using that day. One of their morning "tasks" then (while I'm doing lunch count and attendance, etc.) becomes copying the letters for the day from my pocket chart and cutting these out. I've also attached clear library pockets (actually, I used cut-up baseball card display pages) to the backs of their seats... as they finish cutting out their letters, they store them in the clear plastic pockets on the backs of their chairs. The cards stay there until we are ready to do MAKING WORDS as a class, and then they all get their cards out very quickly. They NEVER lose their cards now, since we started "storing" them in "pockets" that way! As we are doing the MAKING WORDS activity, I manipulate the large cards at the front of the room, having them manipulate their own cards at their desks. I call on volunteers to spell each word orally, rather than having a child come up to the front of the room to physically spell the word(s) on display...saves quite a bit of time that way."

"I keep my letters in two fishing tackle boxes I got from Home Hardware. They are clear plastic with removable pieces to arrange in the inside. One has vowels on red, the other has all the consonants. The children pick up the letters I have put out from the box into margarine tubs."



"We store the letters in the pockets of a slide sheet, (the plastic sheets that hold the slide negatives from when you take pictures with your camera - you can get them at a film developing store). We put two of each letter in a pocket in alphabetical order. It is very easy for the kids to find the letters that they need. The slide sheets are stored in duotangs so each child gets a duotang with the slide sheets in it. It is very easy to pass out and the letters are easy to find and put away."

"I use the computer for making words with grade one. I open a new document and type the letters I need. I experiment with the font size (55 or 60 depending on the font). Then I copy and paste as many times I can on one page and then print out that many pages as needed for 20 students. Then I save the BIG WORD into a making words folder. There is no need to store the words anywhere. I give the students one strip of the letter and have them colour the vowels red. Then they cut out the letters and are ready to go."

"I keep my letter cards in those paper folders that have the brads down the middle. I put in three sheets of those plastic sheets that you use to store baseball cards. Each letter has its own pocket (and it's see-through so the kids can tell right away where it is). I laminated and cut my own cards - I used the paper cutter (I want them to look good and last a long time - so I didn't want the kids doing it). I had the kids put them in ABC order in the folders (that was enough of a challenge!). "

"In the hardware section of the store they sell a square box that has a bunch of little plastic drawers. It is used to store screws and nut and bolts. I labeled each drawer with a letter and when we use them I line the drawers up that we need and the children pass through like a buffet."

"I typed the letters for each lesson in the book about an inch apart. I have about 5 lessons to a page. At the end of the letters I wrote the page number for that lesson. I run the 5 lessons and use

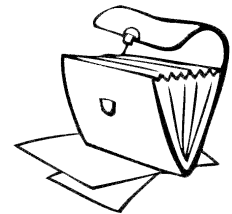
the paper cutter to cut the strip for the one that I'll be using that day. All that has to be done is to let each child snip each letter off the strip. They put all the letters at the top of their desk and 'pull' each one down as we need them. When we get to the final word, we keep adding a letter and they call out words until it is guessed. So far it has worked great and they love to shout (in classroom voices) their guesses without raising hands."

"I have laminated sheets with Velcro strips on them to hold the letters with Velcro on the back. They make the words on the bottom strip. This takes lots of time to make (I had helpers do it) but once they are made you just pass them out and they have everything they need. Works for me."

"We do a giant 'Making Words' with all the Grade One children on special days. We wear the posterboard letters (lowercase on front, capital on back, consonants in black, vowels in red) connected with a wide strip of ribbon over our shoulders like placards. We gather all our Grade One students in one place, our Multi-Purpose Room/Little Gym. They sit on the floor in front of us and we face them. We have a giant dry erase board on an easel there to write the words as the kids 'find' them. We talk first about why five of our letters are black and one of us is red. It makes a great 'teachable moment' when we ask them why one of the teachers is always in the words we make. After we make each word, we cheer them by using 'Give me a g, give me an o, give me a t, what's that spell?' chant. (With so many students, it is great!) We scramble up when the child says 'Spell got. You need g and o and t.' Then they have to put us in order by telling us who goes first, second, and third. The children love this, and we 'ham it up' to make it more fun."

"I went to a tile store, put on my pathetic, poor, sad teacher face and asked if they had any 1" tiles that they would be willing to donate to a teacher. The guy came out with handfuls! I put a letter on each tile and put a strip of magnet on the back of them. They are in my letter center, and the kids can put them on a cookie sheet to practice making words."

"It took a few tries for my kids to really get into it....but now they love it. I use a large alphabet expando file. I have made sets of 25 letters - vowels on red oaktag and the others on white oaktag, laminated and cut them out. I put them in zip lock baggies by letters. One side has the capital and the other the small letter. I just pull the letters I need for the day. We play the counting game as I and 1 person from each table try to distribute all the letters we will need by the time the class reaches 60 (say one thousand after each number for idea of second) - this has really helped to speed up the process! We do the activities and then use the same game to collect and sort and put away the letters."



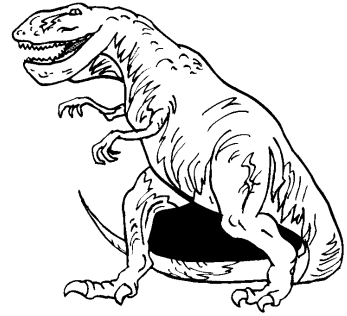
### **Self-Selected Reading**

Self-Selected Reading includes (and usually begins with) teacher read-aloud. The teacher reads to the children from a wide range of literature. Next, children read 'on their own level' from a variety of books the teacher has gathered together and keeps on a bookshelf or (more popularly) in dishpans or buckets. The teacher selects books for the classroom library on themes they are studying, easy and hard library books, old favorites, new easy predictable books, etc. While the children read, the teacher conferences with and takes anecdotal records on several children each day. Some teachers choose to spend part of this block with a small group reading an 'easy' book together and giving them instruction 'on their level'. The block usually ends with one or two children sharing their book with the class in a 'reader's chair' format.

## Writing Block

### What to do When You Can't Spell a Word

When primary students write, they can not spell all the words they want to use - unless they limit what they say to words that they can spell. Children can and will choose 'easy' words if the teacher (or a parent) talks too much about 'spelling it right'. When children limit their word choices, they no longer write about an 'enormous' dinosaur but a big one. Food is not 'delicious', it is good. Friends are not 'fantastic' or 'wonderful' to play with, they are nice. Children, whether eager or reluctant writers, need to feel free to express themselves and use the words they want to tell their story.



The Word Wall and other visible words in the room will help with lots of words but there are many words young children have in their speaking vocabulary that are not in their reading or writing vocabularies. For these words, we ask children to do what authors (and adults) do - say the word slowly and listen for the sounds they hear and write the letters those sounds represent. Sometimes adults are right and sometimes they are wrong. . . just like children!

It is a good idea to have a mini-lesson on 'What to do when you cannot spell a word' early in the school year. After that, model what you do about spelling words for several words - but not all the words - in each mini-lesson. For this mini-lesson, the teacher takes a big piece of chart paper or an overhead transparency and begins to talk and write.

"Today I am going to write about the snow we had yesterday. I'm beginning with a capital because sentences begin that way. Yesterday was January 28. I can find the words January and yesterday on our calendar board. January is at the top; it is the name of this month. I know that under the calendar it says: Today is \_\_\_\_\_. Yesterday was \_\_\_\_\_. Tomorrow will be \_\_\_\_\_. So I can look there and find the word yesterday."

Once again for the second sentence, I start with a capital letter and write: "We 'had' (had is easy because I can look on the Word Wall for it) 'six' (The word six is under the number words in the front of our classroom so I know I can write the word six.) 'inches' (I look around the room for the word inches and I don't see it. If it's not on the Word Wall and I cannot find it anywhere in the room I'll stretch it out and sound spell the word - i-n. . . c-h. . . e-s. ) 'of snow' (I can find snow on the theme board where all the winter words are listed under winter pictures.)"

The teacher does the same thing when she writes her next three sentences: "I made snowballs. I made a snowman. I had fun in the snow." Letting children see what adults and good writers do when they need a word they can't spell is important. Authors don't stop their writing and look up a word. They keep writing and spell the word as best they can. Then they hope that spell check will find and fix it. If not, they depend on their editor to be sure everything is correct before going to print! Young children need to learn to have a spelling consciousness - that means spelling words as best they can in first draft and getting them correct in the final draft. Looking words up in the dictionary belongs in the editing stage - not the first draft.

# Words, Words, Words!

## Compound Words

Play Snowball! Have pairs come up with a compound word. One of the children writes the first part on his sheet of blank white paper, and the second child writes the second part of the compound on his sheet of paper. Record the compound words on the board and talk about the ones they made. Have all the kids with the first part of the compound words come to the front of the room and all the kids with the second parts of the compound words to go to the back. They make a ball with their papers and proceed to have a snowball battle. Some teachers only let the kids throw once, but you can keep it going for a while. Then the children pick up one snowball each. Have them silently walk around the room to see if they can find a word to go with theirs to make a compound word.



This activity can be done with any type of matching activity.....colour words and colours, upper and lowercase letters, etc."

Have each child make a pair of mittens and print each half of the compound words on one of the two mittens. Decorate the mitten pairs and hang them on a clothesline on the bulletin board.

A good introduction lesson for compound words that is very visual is using a plate of butter and a picture of a fly. They are two separate words with two separate meanings.... put them together and you get something brand new.... butterfly. Brainstorm a list of compound words, then make a compound word book. You can use large 12 x 18 writing paper, folded like a door, with 2 openings on the front. A word is written on each side of the 'door' like FIRE and MAN, Then inside is the word fireman. The children illustrate each word. It's a good visual exercise.

You can make a game to play where you put the two words of compound words on different cards, then the children have to match up the words that go together to make a compound word

e.g. play mail summer snow sun house ground box house man shine boat

They have to have all of the words matched up to complete the game.

If you give each student a card, they can take the cards around and find another child to make a new word.

This is a game for a small group and used after you have done a lesson on compound words. Make up a set of cards with one word of a compound word written on the card. For instance one card might have 'base\_\_\_\_\_'. The first child draws from the pile and gets a point if he can say baseball. You might also play a form of Memory. Make up cards with one word of a compound word written on two cards.

As an example, on one card write 'base' and on another 'ball'. For Memory, try to have at least 8 matches or 16 cards.

"After we have generated a list of compound words (with some thrown in by me that will work well with the lesson) each child or you could do a pair sign up for a compound word. Then they take an 18 x 12 piece of construction paper that has been folded for them and illustrate their word with cut

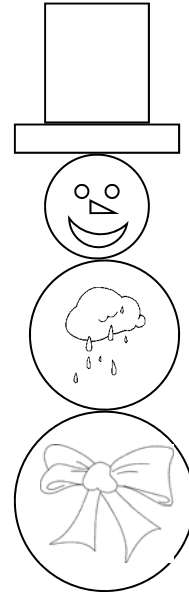


construction paper.

The way to fold the construction paper: lay it the long way so that 18" side is towards stomach. Take one of the 12" sides and fold towards the middle until it is 4.5" in, or to the middle. Repeat with other 12" side, so that now it looks like doors.

If the word is cupcake, on one door make a cup out of construction paper, on the other door make a cake with construction paper, then inside the doors make a cupcake and write the word underneath."

"We make a three 'body' part snowman out of white construction paper. The top part is the head and we draw on eyes, carrot nose, etc. Then we draw a picture of the first part of a compound word on the middle section. Example: rain. Then, a picture of a bow is drawn on the bottom section. We then make a TALL top hat for our snowman, out of black construction paper, that can be folded down in a forward fold. Under the fold we print in white pencil the word rainbow. Each student chooses a compound word after we have brainstormed together and have put them all on the board. After everyone is finished, I display the snowmen on the wall in our hallway next to the lunch room. I put up a posterboard explaining the 'game'. The whole school gets involved as the idea is to look at the two pictures on the two body parts and guess the compound word that they represent. Once they have guessed they can flip the fold up on the hat to see if they are right. The snowmen look really cute marching down the hallway in a row."



For compound words, use craft sticks. They are nice and wide and store easily in a coffee can. Write words that they can recognize and put together to make different compound words. Then have sturdy clothespins in the can as well and they can clip the words together to make compound words. Some of the children record them on paper and top kids make sentences with them.

"One game we play for compound words is this: put half of the word on one card and the other half on another card for each compound word. Pass out the cards until you use them all. The kids try to find their partner and if they do, they bring it to you, tell you what it is, and line it up on the floor, then return to their seat. The kids get different words each time you pass them out."

"We have been working on both compound words and contractions. I use the following representation, 'rather like what happens on the playground sometimes when you might just run to meet up with a friend, hold hands and keep running together or really run into someone and fall down...' My kids loved it! This gives a more graphic representation of the similarities and differences between the 2 types of words."

"I teach contractions and compound words at the same time. I explain that sometimes 2 words get joined together. Sometimes, the words get joined together so quickly and fiercely that some of the letters get tossed right out as they crash together. The apostrophe gets put in to mark the place where the missing letters should be. I then explain that at other times, two words come together calmly and slowly and gently 'touch' and no letters get displaced. I do a lot of visuals with the two."

## Contractions

"For contractions, I give the kids big letters making two words (can not). Then we 'squeeze together' pushing an 'n' and the 'o' out and an apostrophe slips in. Kids not playing take turns telling the players what to do."

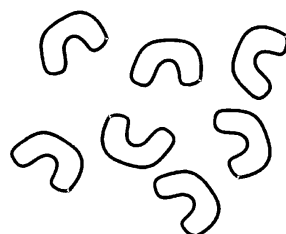


"To teach contractions, I tell them that all the letters are waiting in line (e.g., can not). Some of the letters went to the bathroom (the n and the o). The apostrophe is holding their place in the line. The kids think it's pretty funny and it seems to stick with them."

"When I teach contractions, I write the words 'is' and 'not' in large letters on the chalkboard and then I blow up a balloon and write the letter 'o' on the balloon. I use the balloon to cover up the 'o'. Last, I pop the balloon and what is left is the apostrophe! The kids get a real 'bang' out of it!"

"For contractions I use this thing called a Contraction Contraption. It's a piece of paper that is slit on the left and right side. I label the left side 'in' and the right side 'out'. Then I cut paper into slips. On the left side of the paper I write the two words that make up the contraction and on the left side the contraction. Then, the kids slide the paper into the Contraction Contraption. What goes in as 'I will' comes out as 'I'll'. The kids really love this and it has worked for me!"

Use elbow macaroni to represent apostrophes.



"I make big letters and give one to each child, like c a n n o t. Then I give another child an apostrophe. They have to figure out who goes out and where the apostrophe goes."

"First, we learn that 'to contract' means to get smaller. 'to expand' means to get larger. We contract and expand our arms, legs, mouths, etc. From there, I give each child a piece of paper with the words printed on it, for example, C A N N O T. Draw a dotted vertical line between the two N's and between the O and T. Match the dotted lines, and fold (so the N O don't show - they stick out the back). The students will now have the word CANT. Add a detached glittery apostrophe and you have your contraction. Then we expand and contract and read and have fun."

"I always tell my kids that the apostrophe points down to the space where you left out letters. I tell them that it's there to say 'I know, I know! I left out some letters right here!'"

"We talk about 'smooshing' the two words together to make it shorter. They love the word 'smoosh'....."

### The Contraction Song

I'm the first word; don't change me!  
Don't change me, don't change me.  
I'm the first word; don't change me!  
Oh, no, just let me be.

When you change the second word,  
Second word, second word,  
When you change the second word,  
A shorter word you'll see.

Certain letters are taken out,  
Taken out, taken out.  
Certain letters are taken out.  
One word will remain.

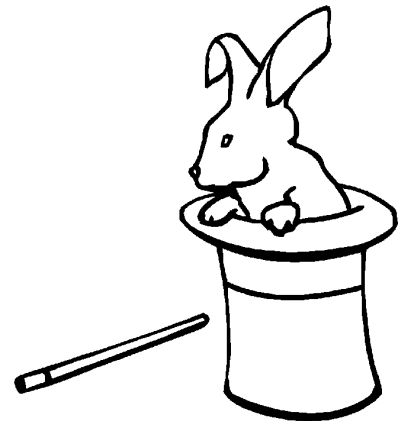
Apostrophe will fill that space,  
Fill that space, fill that space.  
Apostrophe will fill that space,  
The rest will stay the same.

Can't and couldn't, isn't, too.  
Isn't, too, isn't, too,  
Won't and I've and let's, it's true,  
Contractions every one.

I'm and she's and you're and he'd,  
You're and he'd, you're and he'd,  
Wouldn't, didn't, we'll and she'd,  
Good! And now we're done.

### Adjectives

"I was teaching my class about adjectives and I taught them the word 'adjective' as well. The next day we reviewed..... I asked who remembered the special word that is for a word that describes..... One girl's answer was 'magictives'! The more I thought about it - the more I loved it."



### Syllables

"Have the students put their hand under their chin. Then they say the word. Each time their chin drops down that is a new syllable. The kids really catch on quick. We do Hiaku after they learn."

### Word Puzzles

"The children love to do those using their weekly spelling words in the word work centre. We usually do that on Mondays. I use: [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com) This free on-line program will also do crossword puzzles and mazes."

"I bought a word search program. It is really neat because you can put your own words in and choose how difficult to make it, the size of the font, etc. It's called *Word Search Studio* by 'Teacher Created Materials.'"

# Teaching Poetry

"I have a poetry box in my classroom. In this box, I have many different poems (which I add to throughout the year). They are each laminated onto tag. On the back of each I have taped on an envelope. The students read the poems in the poetry box. I make another copy of the poem, and cut it into words or phrases or lines, depending on the time of year. The students can take these bits out of the envelope and then put them back into order using the front of the poetry card to help them."

"OH BETTY-SUE, MY HEART  
DOTH BURST.  
I LOVE THEE MORE  
THAN LIVERWURST..."



"I love doing a Poetry Centre. The kids each have a poetry notebook where they glue small versions of poems I have on chart paper. (First we do a 'Shared Reading' lesson as a group.) The kids illustrate it and/or highlight certain words depending what skill we are focusing on that week. It could be anything from words beginning or ending with a particular letter, describing words, compound words, contractions, silent e words, rhyming words, etc. I also have a pocket chart in the Poetry Centre with the same poems on sentence strips. The children mix them up and try to put them back in the correct sequence. Finally, this centre has a chart stand where I hang all the chart size copies of the poems and this becomes part of 'Reading the Room' centre where the children reread their favourites."

"At the beginning of the week I write a simple poem on chart paper and colour code each of the sentences, with a coloured dot, at the start of each sentence. We practice reading the poem orally daily. I make up a large font copy of the poem in which each sentence is colour coded, and cut up a copy of the printed out version. Then students who are at the poetry centre can rearrange the words into sentences and put them into a hanging wall chart. I keep the class copy of the poem hanging near the poetry centre so that students can refer to it. I also print out a copy for each student in the class which they decorate and place into poetry folders. The students use all copies of the poem for 'Read the Room'. I also print out a copy for the computer centre so that once a week, students can type it into Kidpix or Powerpoint and add graphics."

## **Continue to follow this procedure throughout the school year:**

- Introduce a new poem by reading it to the class. (I try to do this with lots of expression to give the students some idea of the possibilities of the poem.) You may want to pick poems that go with a subject you are studying or the season of the year.
- Pass out a copy of the poem and have the children follow along as you reread it to them.
- Choral read the poem, with you as the leader, to keep the class together.
- If there is new vocabulary in the poem that is crucial to comprehension, discuss it the first day the poem is introduced.
- As poems become 'old' poems, use them to work on word skills. These can be done orally, or as pencil and paper activities.
- Allow children to read individual character parts during the group choral reading.
- Read narrative poems as mini-Reader Theatre scripts. This should be done after the children are very familiar with the poem. A child is assigned to each of the character/narrator parts or to a particular stanza of the poem. The group of children presents the poem at the front of the classroom.

- If you have too many poems to read all at once, have the children take turns picking an old favourite to read. This can go on as long as you need. It is a great way to fill up those few minutes while waiting for PE, art, etc., when there isn't time to start another lesson.

### Teaching Poems

- Introduce the poem by reading and pointing to the words as you model for the children.
- Print each sentence on a sentence strip and display in a pocket chart. Cut apart words in the sentence to put back together.
- Enlarge the poem in a poster machine, and display or place where children can easily access to explore and read.
- Use a variety of pointers, wikki sticks, post it notes, and gadgets to highlight letters, chunks, and words in the poem.
- Add poem to a poetry book so the children can organize, add, and review poems regularly.
- Illustrate the poem in the Poetry Book, bulletin board, mural, or class book form.
- Encourage children to highlight with a yellow crayon or marker words they can read.
- Use poems that integrate with the subject matter you are teaching.
- Find the words that rhyme, and highlight them.
- Change the poem using other rhyming word families.
- Use picture clues next to some words to help children recognize the words.
- Reinforce letter recognition by having children find and highlight letters inside words.
- Create a sets of words from the poem that can be used for bingo or other word games.
- Act out the poem.
- Make a transparency of the poem and display on an overhead. Provide pointers and overhead manipulatives to utilize with the poem.
- Make other words from key words in the poem.
- Identify word wall words that are in the poem and highlight them.
- Review the poems over and over again for mastery.
- Let the children read the poem using a flashlight or penlight to shine on each word.
- Ask questions about the poem.

"We have read a poem every week since school began. Each child keeps a poetry collection in school and will take it home at the end of the school year. They just can't wait to do this. I follow the same format every time. This is what I do:

I type the poem and read it to the class just for enjoyment. Then I read it again, slowly, to 'really get everything'. I pass copies of the poem and place the poem on the overhead. Students go wild at this time trying to find all the words they know and circle them.

We read the poem together, then they illustrate the poem with something that will help them remember the poem and what it's about. I have copied several of the kids' illustrated poems, laminated them and made a classroom anthology for SSR. I made sure each child had a poem, even if some of the poems were repeated. I began with nursery rhymes and songs, moved to short poems and now I have been using poems that tell a story."



"I do a poem or a song every week in addition to my big book during shared reading. I start by singing it or reading it to them on the first day. Day 2 I sing it as our transition to get them to the floor from centre time. As they get to the meeting area they join in and we sing or read it one more

time. Day 3 we read it and use it to practice the reading strategy or skill that we are working on. For example, we may look for little words inside of bigger words, words chunks, endings, etc. Sometimes I will mask parts of words on day 1 and as we read it we will work on the strategy of 'What would make sense?' and attack it like a 'guess the covered word' activity. Day 4 we may do some sort of sequencing activity with the poem. The kids also get a copy for their poetry binders and we read it together as a group. Day 5 we do something different with it. Clap it, chant it, sing it in a funny voice, whatever the kids choose.

These poems and songs then go into my poetry center where the kids can revisit them. In the center I also make available to them Wikki Sticks, highlighting tape, and write on/write off markers that they may use to continue practicing these skills independently. I have also made transparencies of some of our more popular poems and put them in a binder for kids to use on the overhead during center time as well. They just love this. We project them onto the chalkboard so they can then use the chalk to hunt for rhyming patterns, etc."

"Here are some activities I do each week with my weekly poems. I do not do all of them each week! Each day, the students read the poem. Towards the end of the week, we re-read the lines many times to practice fluency. Sometimes I point to the words, and sometimes the children do. I also do a lot of phonics using the poems. Example: put the notecard behind the word with 'ing'. Put the card behind all the words that have long 'a', etc.

At the end of the week, we do the rounding up the rhymes and they illustrate a typed copy of the poem and put it in their poem folder. These go home every Friday and come back on Monday.

LINE MIX-UP - The teacher mixes the lines of the poem and has students fix them.

WORD CUT-UP - The teacher cuts the words of the poem apart so the students can see and change a few around so the students can correct them.

FILL IN THE BLANK - The teacher pulls words out of the poem and has students place them back in the correct place.

MATCH-UP - The students match notecards with words, blends or digraphs on them to the poem.

WORD SUBSTITUTION - The teacher places a different word in the chart and students need to find the mistake.

LETTER MIX-UP - The teacher changes letters around in the words and students find the mistakes and correct them.



### **And.... A Poetry Center**

"It has a chart stand with lots of poems hanging on it. These are poems we have read together as a class. There is also a desktop pocket chart stand with a new poem in it each week. The poem is on sentence strips and also written in complete form. It is also on individual word cards...the kids read, mix, fix, read again. There is also a tub full of 3-ring binders that have various poems inside in page protectors. Then I have a tub full of published poetry books like 'Where the Sidewalk Ends', etc. The kids each also have a pocket portfolio thing with individual copies of all the poems we read as a class...these may be some of the same ones on the chart stand. They read and illustrate these. Then I just have a basket with accessories like fancy pointers, highlighting tape, fly swatter frames, etc. It is one of the kids' favorite centers."

## Poetry Notebooks

"My poetry notebooks are poems we read as a class, usually going along with the season, an approaching holiday, a unit we are studying in class, etc. I generally choose the poems. I have an extensive collection of poems I've found in books and on the internet, and poems I've written myself. We do about one poem a week; sometimes two. I put the poems on transparencies. For the first reading we read together from the transparency with the overhead projector, which enables us to discuss various word patterns we see, look for word wall words, use vis' a vis' markers to highlight word endings or contractions or other things we happen to be studying at the time. We do this on Monday, and read the poem together several times. I also pass out copies of the poem to the students on Monday, which they read silently or with partners and then illustrate. On the other days of the week, we re-read the new poem of the week in unison, and then the leader of the day gets to choose one or two 'old favourites' for us to read together, as well. The children always have their poetry notebooks available as a reading selection, and I often give them a 'have-to' assignment, like 'choose 4 poems and read them silently' or 'practice reading one poem with lots of expression and share it with a buddy.' Sometimes I will let the kids tape-record themselves reading poems. Sometimes, we also memorize some of the poems that follow a set theme, and then share these with other classes at our Monthly Student Assembly - last year we memorized some funny food poems to share and made murals to go with the poems. (I think memorization is very good for kids!) My children and their parents love our poetry notebooks! The notebooks are an important part of my reading curriculum."

"We do a lot of poetry too. We study a couple of poems a week. Each poem covers rhyming words and all the phonics. The long and short vowels are covered. I make a large poem on chart paper or put it on a transparency. We use yellow highlighting tape for short vowels, orange for long ones. Rhyming words are covered in green. For something different we will use wikki sticks. The kids then highlight the same words on their own poem that is kept in their poetry folder. Everything is coded whether it is tape, wikki sticks, vis-a-vis, or the kids crayons and markers. They love this. We also do a comprehension check on the poem at the end of the week."



"I give one poem a week. It is in a pocket chart. I try to pick poems with the high frequency words, blends, digraphs or word families we are studying. I introduce it on Monday in the circle. We say it several times. Then I remove the title and ask, "Do you think we know this line?" Eventually the entire poem is turned over and we are saying the poem by memory. This is very powerful. Most of the kids know the poem within ten minutes. Then I give them a copy. They go to their seats and decorate the page and read the poem, sometimes with a buddy. The following school day we bring the poetry folder to the rug with a pencil and play games with it. For example, I say, "My word has three letters." They hunt through the poem (this helps with scanning skills and visual discrimination). I keep giving clues until they find the word. Then I tell them to circle it or underline it. As the year goes on, I let the children give the clues. I try to get parents to use this technique at home, too. The poem goes home in the child's reading binder as a source for nightly reading materials. During the remainder of the week we come to the circle and the children can stand up and recite any poem in their folder. If they say it absolutely perfectly, they get a teddy bear by their name on the poetry chart in our Poetry Place."

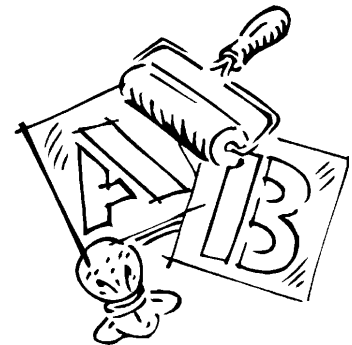
"You can enlarge the poems on the copier onto 2 or 3 sheets and glue them down to a piece of posterboard. Then the kids can decorate around it. I love this idea... very little prep!"

# Spelling

"In grade one, we don't begin the spelling program until the end of January. I tape the core words on each desk each week. This way the words are looked at every day, and I find that the children learn them more solidly. When they misspell a word in their daily work, it is highlighted with a marker, and they re-write the word correctly. All words are previewed, and used during the week. I also teach my kids how to use their personal dictionary. Many children of them don't like to use invented spelling and go to their dictionary in search of the word."

"I use the five weekly word wall words for spelling as well as reading. I introduce them with the clapping and snapping drills on the first day, and through the week we review and drill the words each day. Also each day we do one of the following exercises:

- Word searches. I make my own wordsearches at [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com). I also copy graph paper and have my kids make their own word searches to trade with others.
- The children cut letters from newspapers or magazines to spell the words. I put a waste paper basket on each table to try to cut down on the mess!
- My kids love to do spelling aerobics! As you spell the words aloud, you touch your stomach for letters that are written in the middle line, touch your toes for words that go down in the basement (like g, p, q, y, j) and reach over their heads for words that stand tall (like b, d, f, h, k, l, t).
- We write spelling words with the vowels in red and the consonants in a different colour. My kids like to play 'Disappearing Words'. Write the word on the chalkboard twice with water and then two students come up and fan on the word to see who can make it disappear first.
- I have a set of alphabet stencils. I cut the sheets of lower case letters into single alphabets (they come with a number of alphabet fonts on each sheet), and the children trace the stencils to print the words.
- Some of the children are printing the words in large font on the computer while others are doing activities at their seats. I have this set up on each computer with a word processing program and primary font.



"We do these activities as we spell each word. We clap our hands high in the air in front of our heads if the letter is a tall one, 't' or 'l', for example. We snap our fingers if the letter is short, like 'a' or 'o'. We scoop with our hands by our sides if the letter goes under the line, like 'y' or 'g'. So c-a-p would be snap, snap, scoop, and f-l-a-t would be clap, clap, snap, clap. They really like doing this."

"If each child has a 'word book' or dictionary with a letter on each page and extra pages in the back, you can:

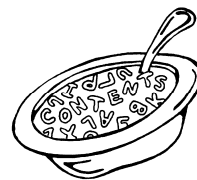
- Have an extra 'Try it!' page in the back ..... when a child needs spelling help, he writes the word on the 'try it' page and shows it to you. You can't give help till he has written the word. Then you can say...'you spelled it right except for this letter.....what else could it be?' Also.....if kids have no clue how to spell it they can at least write the beginning and ending sounds with a line in between 'e.....f' (enough). After you provide help on the word and it is spelled correctly on the 'try it' page, kids then



enter the word in their books according to the beginning letter. Kids remember which words they have written on the 'try it' page and they know these words are in their books.....this fosters independence and works very well. Also...

- Have children enter the spelling words each week into their word books according to their beginning letters.

When you introduce word wall words, kids add them, too."



Choose five words and spell them out in alphabet pasta (or alphabet cereal), then glue them on Popsicle sticks. Pass out small paper cups of pasta to each group of desks and they help each other search for letters.

"We revisit and review constantly, rather than the traditional spelling method of doing a list of words one week with a test at the end and never doing those words again. Research shows that in order to really learn something we need repetition and lots of it!"

"We completely stopped doing formal spelling 'tests' this year...and we're teaching spelling with activities...and I absolutely love it. I always found that there wasn't a lot of carry-over in grade one spelling. Kids would get a word right on Friday's spelling test, and then mis-spell the same word on Monday. We're using lots of the usual word wall activities that have helped our kids learn to automatically spell the words on our word walls, which are mostly sight words. We sing our word wall words to various tunes, for example...and play 'laser tag' where we use a laser pointer to quickly point the various words on the word wall and the kids have to follow the 'red dot' with their eyes and say the word the pointer stops on. Those are just a couple of examples.

We've also concentrated very heavily on 'chunking' this year. Many of our word wall words have various 'chunks' highlighted. Kids are encouraged to use words they know or parts of words they know to help them figure out other words..... both when spelling and reading/sounding out. (We do a little game where I say a big word, and then they check the word wall for highlighted words that will help them spell the word I've said. I've made a list of these that correlate with my word wall words.)"

"The very best method I have ever used for spelling is the Stafford Method of Spelling. Every Thursday, after sending spelling homework the other days, each child gets a 3 column print out with the amount of lines corresponding to spelling words. In the first column the child attempts to spell the word all by himself. I have them colour over it with yellow colour crayon so that they don't change it for the next part. In column two I write the word along with the students on an overhead spelling the word out loud as we write. Column three is for anyone who missed the word to write the word with me again. If you spelled it right the first time, you don't have to write it the 3rd time. I tell my students if they want to write and spell with me a 3rd time anyway it's good practice, but they don't have to if they got it right."

"I start my spelling program in January. I use a variety of word lists and programs and have more or less developed my own system. I focus on the short vowel sounds to start and as the students become good at doing these, then I add blends, etc. For my 'top' group of spellers I will give them a lot of commonly used words to learn. I usually have 2 or 3 spelling groups especially after the first month of spelling. It takes a bit more time to give the tests each week, but I like to ensure my 'top' group is being challenged and my weaker group is not frustrated. Even my special needs students take part and

we work on basic words such 'as, the, is, I, like, look' so that they can progress to writing their own sentences.

I start with the consonants in order.

B words

big, bag, bit, beg, box, bun, (etc..) - usually 12 words total.

I also write two sentences -

The big bus is yellow.

The box is on the bed.

"When I mark the test, the students at the beginning get a 1/2 mark for having the beginning and ending sounds right and a full mark if all letters are correct. They get marked for each word in the sentences as well and marks for proper punctuation as well.

"The second test would be C words. I find that this really reinforces those short vowels and helps with basic spelling and reading skills. The sentences allow me to add basic spelling words to the test. I also give 2 or 3 bonus words which are part of the sentences. So for the B word test, the bonus words would have been 'The, on, yellow'. Later the tests will cover sh, ch, wh words, ing words, etc."

"We do these activities as we spell each word. We clap our hands high in the air in front of our heads if the letter is a tall one, 't' or 'l', for example. We snap our fingers if the letter is short, like 'a' or 'o'. We scoop with our hands by our sides if the letter goes under the line, like 'y' or 'g'.

So c-a-p would be snap, snap, scoop.

f-l-a-t would be clap, clap, snap, clap.

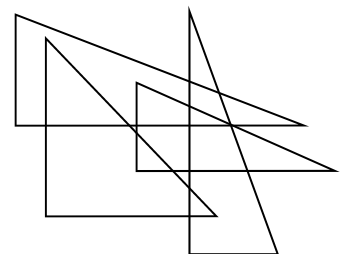
They really like doing this."

## **Spelling Lesson Ideas**

1) "Monday, they write Triangle Words (example below).

Your words are 'shape' and 'happy' so the triangle would be as follows (after they write the word, they draw a triangle around it. Some weeks, the work takes the front and back of one sheet of paper. Even my largest writers never had to use more than one sheet of paper)

s	h
sh	ha
sha	hap
shap	happ
shape	happy



2) I make word search and cross word puzzles with their words using the website <http://www.puzzlemaker.com> .

3) On days that I have them put the words in ABC order during class, I give them a sheet (changes often) to use with the words after they have been put into ABC order. An example is below.

- Write the first word 5 times.
- Write the 6th word with your eyes closed.
- Write the 7th word with the hand that you don't normally write with.
- Use the 4th word in a sentence.
- Spell the 2nd word by cutting the letters from a magazine or newspaper.

etc. etc. (I just make up things. The kids love this and beg for it on weeks that I don't use it.) I normally have at least 10 things for them to do and then I include the following

Place each word in the correct column.

<b>Easy</b> I can spell these words.	<b>Moderate</b> I might have to write these one or two times to remember them.	<b>Hard</b> I will have to study these words.

4) I type the words with three different spellings and only one choice is spelled correctly. The student has to circle the correct spelling.

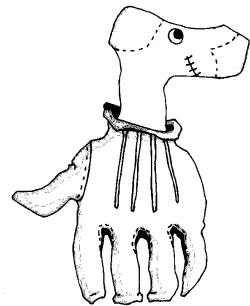
5) Scramble the words and have them unscramble. Or, sometimes I have the kids scramble the words for homework on one night and then the next day during class, they exchange sheets and unscramble.

"Last year we had a very interesting inservice about learning styles and one of the things that really stuck with me and that I used was to have children write things you want them to remember (like Spelling and Vocabulary words) in different coloured markers in letters at least 3" high and post them in the places in the room where they look the most often: door, window, ceiling, pencil sharpener! It really works!"

"Project Read helps children learn to spell '\_ould' words with a little story about Larry Dean. His mom calls him 'LD' for short. LD likes to play outside but it has rained for several days. He is finally able to go play, but he must promise not to get in the mud. Well, LD gets in the mud, and Mom says to him, 'Oh, you LD! Wait until your father gets home!!' The children will remember what she said to LD and this helps them tremendously spelling could, would, and should. I also make a big deal out of the LD story. I tell the children he lives near the school and say they may even know him. Miraculously some of them do!"

"Magnetic letters are a favorite with my class. I think the reason for this is that after they complete the assigned task they are allowed to make other words and I always show a lot of excitement when a child comes up with a new "big" word. There is now quite a competition to be able to spell out a Big Word there and students often come to class prepared with a word they have learned - holding on to it like a precious treasure until they can get to that center and display their new word! Our latest treasures were: Mississippi, invention, massacre,...!"

"We practice our spelling words with sock and chalk on mini blackboards. The students love it. The socks are clean and from my vast collection of old tube socks. This year, I'm doing 10 words weekly but from the same word family. This is tied into our strong



"Sparkle is a spelling game that your students will LOVE! I have my Grade One students stand in a circle. I say a word and the first child says the first letter of the word. The second child says the second letter, and on and on. When the last letter has been said, the next child says "Sparkle!" The next child has to sit down. Then you start the next child on the next word. It is a fast moving game which works on those listening skills, too! (Also, if a child does not get a letter correct, they have to sit down.) There were some concerns over making a child sit who did not have a chance, but I haven't found it to be a problem. They just laugh and go on. What I like best about the game is that it is not always my best students that win. It is truly a game that anyone can win. They beg for more and more."



A teacher asks questions about spelling dictation:

"Is there one 'right' way to do it? At our school, we were directed to say the sentence once, have the children say it, give them time to write it, and then read it slowly for the children to proofread and edit. This works fine for most children. But what about the children with poor auditory memory who can't remember what the sentence was? Basically, I'm wondering WHAT we are testing. If we are testing spelling, why are they looking at the word wall? If we are testing word wall use this method makes more sense. If we are testing auditory memory, I guess it's OK with the way it is. Are you supposed to use ONLY word wall words?"

"When I dictate a sentence from the word wall, yes, I let them look at it! I tell them that is how they learn to use the word wall, by using it! I also say the sentence more than once. I say it slowly, then I repeat it 2 or 3 more times. When I grade my spelling tests with the one sentence I dictate, I check it for:

1. Upper case at the beginning
2. Ending mark at the end
3. All word wall words spelled correctly

They have learned after a few of these dictations that they have to rely on the word wall, even if it is to just check their work. I have so many that use phonics, which is great, but I want them to start really using the word wall."

# Teaching Writing

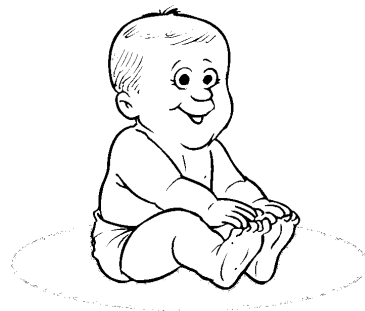
Writing is a much more difficult skill than reading. In order for a child to print a sentence, he must go through the following steps: he must decide on his topic, he must understand what a sentence is and form the sentence in his mind. He must think of the sequence of words and know what word comes next. He must think about the spelling of each word in turn - the phonetic sounds, or where the word may be found. He must be able to print the letters legibly (this is a difficult task in itself), putting the letters in correct sequence and spacing the words. He must review his sentence as the words are printed. He must be able to read the words that he has printed - to himself or to another person.

Many small children find this a formidable task. Some of your students may be ready to do this early in Grade One or even Kindergarten, but many of your students will not have the skills necessary and will be very frustrated if they are asked to write too early. There are prerequisites to writing, and giving the children time to gain these will make the writing process much smoother.

That does not mean that you do not teach writing! Every day the teacher should model the writing process, going through the steps and vocalizing the writing process. Each day discuss topics, sentences, using interesting language, capital letters and punctuation. Talk about the sequence of words. Discuss the spelling of the words and the strategies for spelling that can be used. Teach the children to print fluently and neatly on lines, and give them lots of printing practice. By the time they are ready to write, they will be reading simple material, will be able to spell a number of words accurately or phonetically or find them on the word wall. When the children have the prerequisite skills they will be anxious to write and because they understand the process you will find that their writing is much more fluent and interesting.

## Writing Rubrics

"This is a writing rubric that the children understand! One teacher I read about used pictures of a baby that she had cut from a magazine. Number 1 was a picture of a baby with his arms reaching up and laughing - the caption was "Wonderful!" Picture 2 was a baby sitting down and smiling, and saying "Okay." The third baby was sleeping and the caption said "Zzzzzz!"



"I started something new this year. I have set up standards for writing and have made a poster to hang in the room.

1. I will do my best printing.
2. I will use capitals and punctuation.
3. I will make it interesting.
4. I will do my picture in detail.

At the end of the week I tell the kids to find their best piece of work and I put it in a plastic page protector and they put it back in their 3 ring binder that is just for their best work. The piece has to meet the standards on our chart or we don't use it. They become the judge along with me and decide if their piece is quality work or not.

I had the parents send in an inexpensive 3 ring binder at the beginning of the year. The kids love to have a new piece every week and they really try hard to do quality work for this special binder."

### A Writing Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Story Title: \_\_\_\_\_

How I feel about my story: (smiley faces here)

- \_\_\_ 1. I read my story to myself.  
\_\_\_ 2. I read my story to a friend. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My story has many details. It describes:

- \_\_\_ 3. Who  
\_\_\_ 4. What  
\_\_\_ 5. Where  
\_\_\_ 6. When  
\_\_\_ 7. Why  
\_\_\_ 8. My story has \_\_\_\_\_ sentences.  
\_\_\_ 9. Each sentence starts with a CAPITAL letter.  
\_\_\_ 10. Each sentence ends with a . or a ? or a !



"Here is our kid-friendly 'Good Writer's Rubric' that is posted in our room. I usually have the kids reference it to evaluate their own writing, as well as have them choose one of these as their goals for writing (and then I have them evaluate their own papers to see if they achieved their goals). We have been focusing on using descriptive words (details) in our writing and the kids are enjoying expanding their sentences with great descriptive words.

I also talk about the rubric in terms of stars. '3 Stars' means you are ALWAYS doing these things. 'Two stars' means you are SOMETIMES doing these things and 'One star' means you ARE NOT doing these things quite yet. All the kids want to be '3 Stars'!

- 1) I talk about one idea.
- 2) My writing makes sense.
- 3) I explain my feelings. (I feel happy because...)
- 4) I use details.
- 5) My sentences are complete.
- 6) I remember to use capitals at the beginning of a sentence, for people's names and for 'I', and periods, question marks or exclamation marks at the end of the sentences.
- 7) I write neatly and I use spaces.
- 8) I can spell many words correctly.
- 9) I write down all the sounds I hear and know.
- 10) I write as much as I can.

Rephrase as necessary so that your children understand. I refer to this list quite a bit so the kids are quite familiar with it."

### What Will I Write?

"On the last day of the month we look over the calendar and remember important events that occurred that month. As well as special holidays and events, important happenings maybe the loss of a first tooth or someone being sick. Each child writes what is important for him. Some children just list events and the more capable students write in complete sentences. The next page is a sample of the sheet I make for this project. The box at the top is for a specific picture - see January 04."

"I like ....." sentences are a developmental 'thing'. The first half of the year I just want them

to WRITE! Now...they are starting to add details about why they like something or somebody. I start the change by modeling my own 'I like .....' sentences... making them silly and then more realistic. By the end of the year most have moved away from the simple 'I like' sentences. Another thing that helps is the use of 4 square modeling. Those who aren't familiar.....you divide a piece of paper into 4 equal sections. Number each box (1-4). In the first box they write 'I like...'. In each of the 3 remaining boxes they tell a reason why they like the person, place or thing. Actually, we are getting ready to do this for Valentines Day. They write 'I love.....' (hopefully a person) and then 3 supporting reasons. They are rewritten (neatly, with corrections) onto large decorated construction paper hearts."

"We just did a writing activity last week that was a huge hit. All the kids brought in beanie babies or stuffed animals and they wrote a story about their animal. Afterwards we took pictures of them with their beanie babies and their story."

"We brainstorm a class list of 'When you are stuck for something to write about' topics. They usually come up with a long list and I put it on chart paper for everyone to use."

"I will let the ones who have a hard time draw a picture for 5-10 minutes and then they have to write about their picture."

"One thing I did for my class was I had them make a list of 'likes' and 'dislikes'. This included anything from ice cream to stepping on gooey bubble gum. When they can't think of a topic, have them take out their likes/dislikes list and pick something from there to write about."

"I put the name of an animal on the board and draw it. Then I write about four clue words to get them going. They have to write 5 sentences about that animal and draw it."

"I saved pictures from magazines. I mounted them on black paper and on the back I wrote some related vocabulary words and for some I put questions, titles or story starters. The kids can then pick a picture and write a story about it. It also allows good writers to try new topics."

"Here is a Creative Writing idea to share: We read a story about a winter coat (*Mrs. Toggle's Zipper*) and then I had the kids write about their coats (old, new, colour, zipper, hood, buttons, snaps, etc.) They had a great time doing this. I let them get their coats out, spread all over the room and really examine their coats. They were fascinated because they'd never really looked that closely. They counted the number of buttons, pockets, etc., (some even counted the # of teeth on the zipper!) and many used them as mats to sit on while writing. I think next year I'll turn this into an art lesson too and maybe have them trace a coat onto an appropriate colour, add cotton for fur, etc."

"Next week we will make snowman stories. I have a snowman template with lines on the bottom half of the snowman. The students will have 4 to 6 snowmen pages. On each page they must write one sentence about their snowman. 'My snowman has a red scarf.' 'My snowman is wearing mittens on his hands.' 'My snowman's name is \_\_\_\_\_.' We'll brainstorm snowman words and go from there. Once they write their sentences then they'll cut out the snowmen and we'll make a little booklet to put on our display board."

"We will continue to write little stories - other good ideas



- write about their pet
- describe their house
- write about their family
- tell about what they like to do at recess

As with anything in grade one, it just takes a lot of modeling and practicing. Once they learn some basics, they'll continue to improve."



"One writing idea that I really like is to have the children create a birthday card on the day of that child's birthday. Besides stating 'Happy Birthday' and 'Your Friend,'... Each child must write:

I like to work with Peter on \_\_\_\_\_.

I like to play \_\_\_\_\_ with Peter.

At the beginning of the year we generate what they might add to those sentence starters, but later in the year the students start making their answers personal.

I have created a special paper for this card with writing lines at the top of the page and at the bottom. When all the children have finished their page I bind all the pages into a 'Birthday Book'."

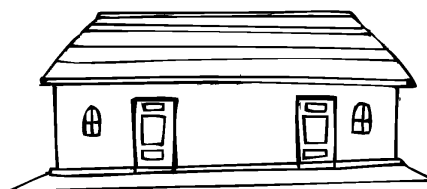
## **Writing Mini-Lessons**

"I begin each writing period writing on the overhead in front of the entire class. I write for about 10-15 minutes, starting by talking to myself out loud....'what do I want to tell you about today?' And then I go through different topics that I may want to write about, all the while thinking out loud so they can hear what a more proficient writer is thinking about before writing. Many kids think that adults 'just write'.....they see us after we have perfected whatever we are doing. They don't 'see' what goes on in a more proficient writer's head. I tell them that, for me, what I am saying out loud is actually going on really fast in my head. I'm just slowing it down so they can see and hear it.

Have a very short lesson at the beginning of each writing period. Try to keep it to under 5 minutes, as you want the children to have all the time they need to write. Only discuss one area in each lesson. You can discuss capital letters at the beginning of sentences, periods, spacing, what makes a sentence, using interesting vocabulary; and later in the year you can have mini-lessons on keeping the day's entry on one topic, run-on sentences '.....and.....and.....and.....', too much use of "Then....." at the beginning of sentences, using other punctuation such as commas, question marks, quotation marks, etc. Teach what is needed. You will often see children needing reminders in one skill, and then you can teach one or more mini-lessons on that skill.

"I do a mini-lesson most days...like on choosing topic, or spacing, or capitalization, punctuation, making good word choices, etc. Some days I model-write on the chalkboard or overhead projector for them, before they begin."

"I use the 'front and back door' phrase to get my students to understand that sentences are like units, they have a beginning and end or 'doors'. By making little brown doors and posting them on an 'actual' sentence on the wall, gives them a visual reminder. When they are writing sentences I will say, "Make sure you check your front and back doors" so that they check for the capital letter and the punctuation."





"I dye macaroni to use as quotation marks. I call them '6's' and '9's'. This way they get the direction correct. I also use the correct terms. We create a dialog between Beanie Babies. They use the macaroni as quotation marks. Mix food colouring with rubbing alcohol and shake the macaroni in a baggie. Don't be stingy with the food colouring. You must use enough to get bright vivid, colours."

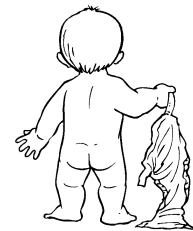
"To help with using periods we sometimes follow up a writing time with 'Period Patrol'. As a student reads his writing to the group, the audience holds up a red stop sign with a period on it indicating they heard the end of a sentence and a period must be in the writing. If it is not there the writer then edits his work. They really like to do this and are especially proud when they have already put all the necessary punctuation on their paper so the Period Patrol did not find any sentences that needed editing."

I am a little sentence,  
And I will be your friend  
If you start me with a capital,  
And mark me at the end.

Capital letter, capital letter,  
Where do I belong?  
I begin the sentence  
Or the sentence is wrong.  
A period is a dot,  
I know he is my friend.  
When I write a sentence  
I put him at the end.

"Each day when we do news I have been writing the first five sentences on the board. We give sound effects to all of the punctuation and the kids love it! Sometimes, for short stories, we will read with the sound effects. The students then realize in their writing that they forgot a 'clap'. The sound effects are theirs and they draw the punctuation in the air with their finger."

"Several years ago I attended a writing workshop. One of the ideas that has worked well for me is to ask if your sentence has its shirt and pants on...the shirt being the capital and the pants the punctuation. You tell the children you can't bear to see a naked sentence!"



"When we write a sentence in class I walk around and say, 'Now, I'm going to see if I can 'catch' anyone!' They know what this means.....I say, 'I caught you!' if they forgot their period or question mark, or capital letter. 'You got it!' I say to the ones who remember. Grade One students must be reminded constantly of punctuation."

"I often will read their story and 'act like' I am out of breath - because there was nowhere for me to stop and take a breath. Then we reread it, and when I stop and take a breath, they 'hear' where the period needs to go. After a few lessons and practicing, they soon can do this by themselves."

"I have used a traffic light as sentence ending signals.

Red light = period, question mark, exclamation mark = stop, take a long breath.

Yellow light = comma, semicolon = slow down, take a short breath.

Green light = no punctuation = keep reading."

"During modeled writing, we always say 'End of a thought, a polka-dot called a period.'"

## Journal Writing

"I do journals every day. Now that the children are used to the procedures, two of the days each week they are done in the writing centre. For the first few months I use the half-and-half books - where the lined half has the inter-lined spacing. The children then can print a story and illustrate it. (If you can't get the exercises books, use half-and-half paper.) As children begin to write more, they move on to a fully inter-lined book. Some children spend too much time on the illustration and little time on the writing, and others scribble an illustration - so the use of the half-and-half must be modelled and thoroughly understood. I start out doing mostly frames - sometimes following stories we have studied or about something personal."

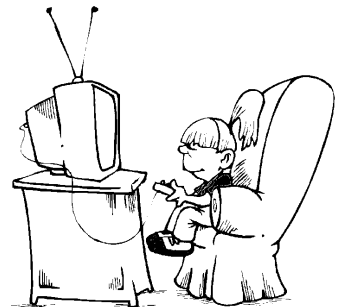
"I do not do Journal writing everyday - I tried that for a year and felt bogged down. I feel that journals are very helpful to document children's writing/spelling/growth. I want my kids to correct everything in their Journals so they practice the formal writing skills. I use the journals at parent teacher conferences and to document their growth in their portfolios."

"We write every day, but do not do Journals every day. Quite often I give topics. Early in the year, we do a lot of pattern writing. I usually base my sentence patterns on Wright materials, but many things can be adapted to a writing pattern. The writing of patterned sentences also reinforces basic sight words. The success they feel from completing writing patterns really helps as they evolve into more independent writings."

"I always have each student read his/her journal writing to me. I point out the things they did correctly and the spellings they used that were close. I talk briefly about the things the child forgot (punctuation, capital letters, spacing, etc.) and model strategies for spelling, etc." Later in the year I have them do some proofing before they come to read. I have a list of things that they must check."

"We start each day with journal. Friday is always free choice and the other four days are a prompt in the form of a question. We read the question together and discuss the correct way to answer it so that the reader will know what the question was. They then know that the supporting sentences must be about the topic. Each child shares his/her answer out loud before writing and claps hands to demonstrate where a period would go. We did this consistently from day one. I often write my response on the board for them."

"I start journal time by writing myself. I say to myself, I could write about what I ate last night, I could write about what I watched on TV, and then I say, "Oh, I know what I'm going to write about!" I write it on the board (not reading what I am writing) something about my day or what I will be doing. The students read what I am writing. Afterwards we circle the word wall words that we found in my writing. One of my students came up with that idea. I then turn to the class and say, "Now you tell me something!" We do this first thing in the morning for about 25 minutes. After ten minutes I go around and check their work. I do check errors and I correct them, but I don't collect their work. I used to give my students story starters but I think this works better. Some students write the same thing over and over again, but I try to encourage them to write about something else."



"Rather than using sentence starters, I use a journal word. I put a word on the board and the students can write whatever they want about it. Many times different students go in different directions with the same word. I model often, thinking aloud as I write an example. When I started having each student share his/her journal each day (or as close as we can get), the quality of writing exploded! Recently we moved into using characters, setting, events, problem, solution, etc."

"When I start journals I pick a student to be special person of the day (usually going down the class list). That person talks about themselves. The key new words go on the blackboard. They then draw and colour a picture and write about the person. I give them the starting sentence, Today's special person is..... I keep expanding the length and adding new vocabulary, incorporate punctuation, contractions, etc. When we run out of students the secretary and principal come in. I even have had parents come and talk about themselves then writing about them, increasing the expectations as we go along. I use a notebook, top half blank (for picture) and the bottom lined. When they fill their book they have quite a keepsake!"

## **Writing Ideas**

"I use 'help bags'. These are little felt bean bags. I pass them out at writing time and they put them in their desk. If they are really stumped, they put it out for help but .... they keep writing. Since they don't have their hand up they are free to draw a line, put a beginning sound, and keep going. This seems to satisfy their need to get the correct spelling or get help with phonetic spelling but doesn't leave them sitting there waiting for help."



Date stamp each day's writing

"If the kids read their writing aloud in the 'author chair' they see the need for spaces between words and neater writing. They realize that even they can't read their own writing and often will work harder to make it easier to read the next time.

I look for every opportunity for 'real' writing, such as penpal letters, notes to remind someone of something (they leave notes to the janitor to leave more paper towels, notes to their mom to please include a napkin in their lunch, etc.), cards to people for occasions.

"It also has been really motivating for them to write to a student who moved away and who corresponds through email. It is a neat way to practice finger spaces, capital letters, and punctuation. They are intrigued when the computer indicates a grammatical error. I am hoping to get more comfortable with KidPix so we can do more writing using it.

"I start using dictionaries around this time of the year. We look up our spelling words each week and read the definition aloud. They also have a little personal dictionary that they love. It's called 'Words I Use When I Write'. It lists commonly used words in alphabetical order and has lines in each section to add their own words, names of family members, etc.

"When having students write things that will be shared with the class follow these directions:

1. On one side of the paper have students write their ideas, stories, etc.
2. On the other side have students draw their illustration.

This really works well if you glue the story on a sheet of construction paper and glue the illustration on the other side. That way nothing shows through on either side. This is a way for students to share their work without trying to read upside down or sideways. I tried it with my grade one children and it really made a difference. No more shouting out - 'I can't see the illustration!'"

### **Five Steps in the Writing Process**

"I teach the steps of the writing process. The first step - **Brain Drain** - is when the writer thinks of all the things that could be included. With grade one children, we use word webs most often.

The students put the topic in a circle and then draw extensions with details about the topic. The second step - **Sloppy Copy** - is when the writer gets their ideas down on paper. The word sloppy does not mean sloppy handwriting. I tell my students that the important part is getting it down on paper and not spending time worrying about capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc. The third step - **Goof Proof** - is when we actually edit for any mistakes. Sometimes working with a partner makes this step much easier. Students can help each other find the mistakes in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and making sure it makes sense. The fourth step - **Neat Sheet** - is when we rewrite and make all the corrections. Students are encouraged to use their best handwriting so that others will want to read it and legible handwriting is a must when we share with others. The fifth step - **Final Fame** - is a finished piece that has gone through all the steps of the writing process and can be shared with someone. Students may choose not to share a finished piece with anyone other than the teacher which is fine."

"I tell my children to 'get in their bubble' while writing. If they talk they might burst that bubble. You can hear a pin drop in my room. I can then call one child at a time to conference while the other children are writing. Then we all go to the Author's Chair to share."

"During writing workshop the students know to 'ask three then me'. I also have a white board where they put their name instead of coming up to me during a conference, and then when I have a minute I check the board and check in with those students. Often by then they have worked things out on their own."

"After they are finished the day's writing, we meet on the rug for Author's Chair. This is a time where we celebrate each other's writing accomplishments. I have 4-5 kids share each day (everyone has their day to share). The kids take questions and/or comments. I have had to model appropriate questions and comments. We get stuck in a rut sometimes, repeating the same questions/comments over and over again. At that point, I model a new question/comment. After a compliment, the author is encouraged to say 'thank you'. At the end, the audience shows appreciation in some fashion....like silent clapping, Thunder clap (one loud clap)."



"Take one writing sample from each child. Have them print it out as perfectly as possible and illustrate the page. Photocopy the pages and bind them so each child gets a copy. This makes a nice keepsake."

"We look for a 5 sentence paragraph! Can you believe it? Actually we teach them the framework of 'FIRST, NEXT, THEN, FINALLY and I FELT...' By the time that is filled in (on an umbrella with 5 raindrops) they have a whole paragraph."

"One writing activity that I do is called 'WHOO IS IT?' I have them write 5 sentences, all clues about themselves. I always tell them to put in one 'clinger clue' that lets the parents know for sure which one is their child. After the students have their ideas written on paper, I meet with each of them to help with spelling and clue ideas. The students then rewrite their clues. The students then color an owl head and wings pattern that I have and we glue it to look like the wings are holding our papers. We hang them in the hallway with numbers on them, not names. Their parents have to guess which one belongs to their child. I always save the first copy. This gives parents a good sample of their work before my help, and their finished project. It also allows parents to compare their child's work to the others in the classroom. Kids like to trick their parents by not putting their name on their papers. Examples:

I am a girl.  
I have blue eyes,  
I like to eat pizza.  
My favourite toy is Barbie,  
I have a cousin named Darin.

I am a boy.  
I am seven.  
I like to play soccer.  
I have one dog.  
My name starts with B.



"When I first heard about students writing descriptive paragraphs I thought, "My students will never be able to do this!" But I decided to give it a try. Last year during the fall we did a leaf unit. Each student took out his/her favourite leaf from a collection that had been gathered on a leaf walk. We talked about using our five senses to observe the leaves (we even used microscopes). Then, I wrote something like...

I have a leaf. *(The first sentence tells what we are writing about.)*

My leaf is brown. It smells like grass. *(The second and third sentences describe the item.)*

I have a leaf and I like it. *(The fourth sentence restates what we are writing about and tells a little more information.)*

"Then I erased my sentences and asked the students to write their own sentences. I also asked them to draw a diagram of their leaf (we had already talked about drawing pictures with words and arrows). Each student shared their writing with the class and we hung them in the hall for all to see. I used a rubric for them to self-assess and then for me to assess. (One set of papers we did I had my principal grade. She loved it!)

"Of course this is a very simple beginning that increases in complexity with the children's knowledge of this type of writing and their overall writing development."

## **Letter Writing**

"I stand up before the children. I put both hands on my head and say **HEADING**, then I put both hands at my mouth and smile very big and say **GREETING**, then I take both hand down the sides of my body as I wiggle a little and say **BODY**, then I use my right arm and hand to make a motion like I am slamming a door (closing something up) and I say **CLOSING**, then I make a squiggly motion with my right hand like I am signing my name and I say **SIGNATURE**. Then the children get up and we do it about 3 times together. They love it!

"Before we write a letter, we fold our paper in half vertically and then flatten it back out. The

fold line is where the heading starts as well as the closing and signature. I always want those three lined up in the same place.

After they copy a letter from the board, I give them a little sheet with the 5 parts written in individual boxes. They cut the 5 boxes up and glue them onto the letter in the proper place. Kinesthetic and tactile again. I either run this sheet off on coloured paper or let them colour the boxes as they please. I guess you could colour code each part if you like. That might help some students.

I also write a letter on chart paper, laminate it, put magnetic tape on the back and stick it to the chalkboard. I have the 5 letter parts written on tag board, laminated with magnetic tape. I walk around the room and hand the 5 parts out and have the children go to the board and label the five parts. We do this about 6 times. I also put a letter and the 5 parts on a bulletin board for them to see daily."

### **Parts of a Letter**

*(tune The More We Get Together)*

First you write the HEADING, the HEADING,  
the HEADING,  
First you write the HEADING,  
The month, day and year.

Next you write the GREETING, GREETING,  
the GREETING.

Next you write the GREETING,  
You start off with Dear.

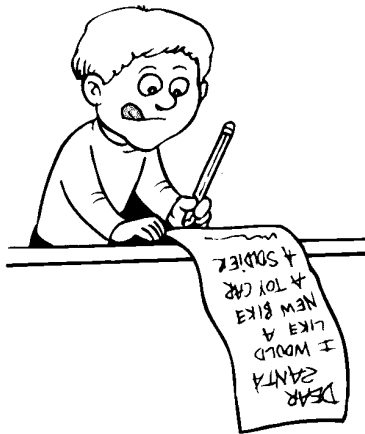
Next you write the BODY, BODY, the BODY.  
Next you write the BODY,  
You ask and tell some things.

Then you write the CLOSING, CLOSING,  
the CLOSING.

Then you write the CLOSING,  
Your friend, or I love you.

Sign your NAME right under this,  
under this, under this.

Sign your NAME right under this.  
And your letter is through.



### **Bulletin Board Titles**

"How about... Write for you, write for me! or.....Spread the word! or.....We have a WRITE to share! or..... We've got the WRITE stuff!"

# Printing

## Teaching Printing Lessons

"Correct posture is a must - I call it 'get your five things together' - feet under desk, bottom on seat, back straight, eyes on me, ears listening.

A good sharp pencil and a good eraser are a must.

I am also a firm believer that handwriting must be taught starting in Kindergarten!"

"For a printing lesson I require them to have:

1. A clear desk - nothing on it except their printing book and a sharp pencil.
2. Correct posture - chair supporting their back, sitting up straight, all six legs on the floor (four chair legs and two child legs), sitting in close to the table, eyes and ears on me.
3. Book sloping the correct way, depending on handedness.

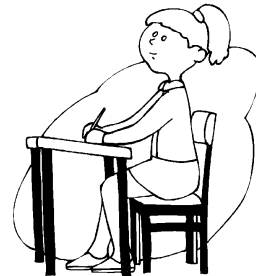
When we start, I write the letter on the board that we are working on. My board has a section with lines so they can see how my letters relate to lines on the page. They write a line of lower case letters and a line of upper case, with at least one finger space between each letter. I often ask them to SAY with me the steps for forming the letters. For a 't' - "t is a tall letter. Start at the top and pull the pencil straight down. Lift the pencil. Cross the 't' halfway down with a short straight line in the direction in which we write." For round letters I use the clock face as a reference. For example, for 'c' - "c is a short letter. Start at 2 o'clock. Go back through twelve and right around in a circle, finishing at 2 again." The directions are important for when they start cursive next year.

Once they've done the two lines of letters, we write a sentence. For example, 'Timothy and Tania take tokens to the table' with as much of the subject letter as possible. I often use the children's names if I can, or other things to make it relevant to them.

We then do a 'pattern' using the shape of the letter, where they can use colour. The lesson takes 20-30 minutes. I try to do a lesson each week."

"Our handwriting books have the lines clearly marked and the children are expected to have letters of uniform size and spacing, spacing between words, correctly formed letters and so on. I do not encourage them to rush through this - this is somewhere we learn to do our best work in our other books."

1,2 Get ready, please do
3,4 Feet flat on the floor
5,6 Pick up sticks (pencils)
7,8 Sit up straight
9,10 Write neatly then



"Here are some suggestions for teaching letter formation -

- To show that we always begin to print letters from the top, have the children stand and make huge letters in the air, beginning with their hands raised. (This is undoubtedly unnecessary to say, but if you are facing the group and demonstrating - make sure you reverse the letter so it is correct to the children .....)
- To have the children 'feel' the letter, have them print it on the carpet (floor writing), on desks, on bits of fabric with a nap, on the wall and in the air (sky writing).

- Have a space at the chalkboard for each child and have them begin making the letter as large as possible and then smaller and finally on lines.
- If you have small individual chalkboards or white boards, as the children to first make a highway (or have the 'highway permanently on the board) - and then practice printing the letters the correct size.
- Use inter-lined paper or books for the children to practice the printing. Letters have their 'heads on the ceiling and their toes on the floor. Some letters are tall like a two story house, some have only one story, and some have a tail that goes down in the basement.
- When doing a printing lesson, it is preferable to print one letter perfectly rather than a lot of incorrect ones. Quality instead of quantity!"

"My students came in printing all over the place. Their letters were formed incorrectly and were anywhere but on the lines. I started out being very picky about their letter formation. One thing that has helped them see the difference between well-formed and sloppy letters is that I model correct and incorrect letters myself on the overhead. I show them, in fine detail, what the correct letter formation looks like and how to write it. Then I do some that are not resting on the 'floor' or that don't touch the ceiling, maybe that go down into the 'basement' and so forth. We talk about what is wrong with them. Then I do a few more that are correct. When they do their own, I don't ask them to do more than 3-5, but I do expect (near) perfection. If not, they have to do them over.

I also have been picky about colouring within the lines. This isn't an art activity; this is a fine-motor development activity. We don't do a lot of colouring, but it does come up sometimes in math or in other content areas. I will not let them scribble or turn in sloppy work. They now know they will have to do it over if it's not neat. I can see an improvement in everyone's handwriting because I have set the standards and stick to them. They are learning what 'quality work' looks like and how to do it.

Of course, I have my share of immature writers who need more time and I make individual allowances for them, but even they are getting much better."

I spend approximately 10 minutes a day teaching printing - letter formation and spacing, etc. The kids practice on individual white boards (I have lines permanently on the boards) and then on inter-lined paper. Then they do a reading exercise each day that is printed and we often print poems, too. I feel that they need to practice their printing until it becomes quite fluent. This way they don't think about the printing part of the creative writing process."

### Printing Poems

One, two, sit up please do.  
Three, four, feet flat on the floor.  
Five, six, pick up pencil sticks.  
Seven, eight, paper straight.  
Nine, ten, write neatly then.

1,2...paper towards you.  
3,4....feet on the floor.  
5,6....pick up your 'sticks'  
7,8....back up straight

Look at the letters, look at them all  
You will see that some are tall.  
You will see that some are small.  
And some dip down below them all.

Tall! b d f h k l t  
Small! a c e i m n o r s u v w x z  
And these dip down below them all!  
g q y j and p  
That's ALL!



The first verse we would recite any time (because it's easily memorized).

The second verse is only done when we have the poster version of the poem in front of us.



### Making Letters the Correct Size

"Here's an idea I picked up from a colleague last year. For kids who have trouble making their letters the right size on lined paper, trying highlighting the lower half of the line (i.e., from the dotted line down on interlined paper). This area is where all the 'small letters' should be. For some reason, this highlighting on their paper seems to focus some of these kids and helps them put their letters on the line and make them the right size."

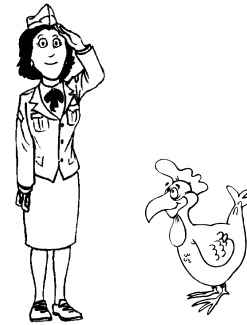
"When teaching handwriting I use brown, green and blue lines on the board. The brown (the dirt line) is on the bottom, the green (the grass line) is in the middle and the blue (the sky line) is on the top. I then explain the procedure of the letter I am teaching by referring to the name of the lines. I keep the children's attention and they better understand the process."

"For spelling review I use body spelling. The children put their hands in the air for tall letters, hands on hips for short letters, and touch toes for descending letters. This is also handy when we are doing printing exercises - the children 'act out' the word before printing it."

"I use skyscraper letters, house letters and cave letters."

"We use ceiling letters and diver letters."

"Tall letters are soldier letters, they stand straight and tall and walk on the ground. Mid-line letters are chicken letters, they walk on the ground and are short. Descending letters are fish swimming in the pond."



"The ones that I have liked the best are giraffe, hippo, and monkey letters (the monkey's tail is the part below the line)."

### Spacing

"Spacemen are a technique to help children make spaces between words. Using a tongue depressor, paste two wiggly eyes on the top, and make a mouth with a marker. They look like spacemen! Then, the children use them after they write a word to insure that they leave a space before the next word."

Teachers use a finger space between words.

"I bought fake fingernails, painted them red and hot glued them to popsicle sticks and they have to use them as finger spacers."

"I have had students that didn't see the spaces for love nor money. Put them on the computer to do word processing and sit with them, at first saying 'space' and showing them how to hit it with the side of their thumb. Because they need to focus less on letter formation, there is a little room in their brains left to think about the word "space". Lo and behold, about half of them leave the computer after a time or two and start spacing.....!"

"We use popsicle sticks or tongue depressors and put cute little stickers on one end. The

student uses the stick to place a space between the words or the letters that he/she is printing as neatly as he/she can."

"My children use 'stick people'. Each child's stick person is a tongue depressor with two wobbly eyes glued on and a smile and eyebrows drawn with a marker. We use them during the early weeks of school when we write. The child puts the stick person down to leave spaces between words. At first I thought this was a gimmick, but it really seems to help some remember to leave a space. They also love this little stick person and many end up colouring theirs and personalizing it."



"When I teach handwriting I tell the kids that the lines are like a peanut butter sandwich. The top line is the top slice of bread, the dotted line is the peanut butter, and the bottom line is the bottom slice of bread. They like this and it makes it easy for them to visualize what I mean. I often wonder what another adult might think if they walked into the classroom while I was saying, 'The letter 'm' begins on the peanut butter. Did you put your pencil in the peanut butter to begin 'm'? The kids understand totally...an adult might think I was nuts!"

"I tell my kids that if they leave too much space within a word - I will draw a jelly bean there. I do this when I check their work - with various colour markers. Letters or words that are too close get peppermint sticks - just two vertical lines next to each other in red. If they leave too much space between words I draw rainbows to connect the two words. They seem to really like this idea! I just give reminders like - 'watch out for the jelly beans and the peppermint sticks' and it seems to help."

"I take regular popsicle sticks and draw 2 eyes and a mouth on them. The mouth is a circle. I write their names down the side. I call them Mr. Squeeze and we use them during writing. The idea is that Mr. Squeeze helps to keep words from getting 'squeezed' out. The kids love them and they last all year."

## **Printing Ideas**

### **Printing to Learn**

A staple part of the Grade One classroom has almost disappeared. Teachers used to teach children to print neatly and accurately and have them practice printing until it became automatic. This seemed to disappear in the late 1980s, when "Whole Language" and literature based reading became popular and has never come back into vogue. They used to teach formal printing from the first day of school. The children were taught to print on lines, using inter-lined paper and exercise books. First they learned the letter formation and then they copied a letter or a short word a number of times, copying the teacher's model. By October this had progressed to copying one or two sentences from the chalkboard to an half-and-half interlined exercise book and illustrating it. By November the children were copying four or more sentences, and doing a task with each. The task might be filling the blanks (cloze exercises), putting the words in order to make a sentence, matching, or other exercise, using the sight words taught or words used in the phonics program. By January the number of sentences had increased for the capable students to perhaps eight, and the children had learned to do a number of different exercises without specific direction. The teacher insisted on neatness and a specific format to the work.

There are a number of reasons why this is advantageous.

1. Because of this extensive practice, by the spring in Grade One most of the children are printing fluently and automatically. When they write in their Journals or do other creative writing, they do not even think about the printing process. To write stories, they must think of the main idea, the specific sentence, the word and how to spell it and the printing of the letters. This removes one of the barriers to good creative writing. It frees the students to be more creative and lets the writing flow. When the children do creative writing, they will do much more and it will be of higher quality.

2. There is a book called, "*What Are the Other Kids Doing?: . . . while You Teach Small Groups*". Teachers are usually trying to group for Guided Reading and this is a big question. If you have the children do a printing exercise from the chalkboard that suits their capabilities, that partially answers this question. The children at their desks will be focused and profitably busy. This will give you a quiet time to teach your Guided Reading groups without interruption.

3. If the words and sentences used in the exercise are from the previous lesson, this gives an additional review of the skills you are teaching. Having a 'job' to do in the printing makes it necessary for the child to read and understand the sentences so that it isn't a rote exercise. As they read as they are printing, the words are becoming more familiar. This is an excellent way of reinforcing vocabulary and skills.

4. There will likely be one or more children in your class who are kinesthetic learners. These children need to feel the letters and the words, and printing is one important way to do this. Without this practice, these children will have more difficulty learning the reading vocabulary.

5. This teaches neatness and organization of work. Untidy, poorly printed work leads to unnecessary errors in spelling and sentence structure. If the printing isn't well done and the work looks untidy, children don't take care with other aspects of the assignments.

Perhaps the old-fashioned terms are preventing teachers from doing this! Many teachers would not think of having the children 'copy from the blackboard' or do 'seatwork'. Could we call it 'Vocabulary Practice'? or 'Reading Jobs' or 'The Printing Process' .....?

If you haven't done this, try it next year! Call it by an interesting name, and be able to justify it to administrators who may question this 'old-fashioned' practice. You know how important it is to have quiet time while you teach your groups. You will see the benefits in all the work your class will do, especially in creative writing.

"You might want to try a game that my class loves. We use an overhead, but you could have the children write on the chalkboard, paper, or whatever. I choose a letter to review, and we go over the correct formation, line placement, etc. Then I choose one child to be the judge and go in the hallway. Three kids come up and try their best to write the letter neatly and correctly. They return to their seats and we chant, "Here comes the judge! Here comes the judge!" while the judge comes over to see. The judge circles the best letter and then we reveal who the person was who wrote it. It is great review. I think it is great for the kids to see their peers form the letters - they watch so closely to see if it is being done right."



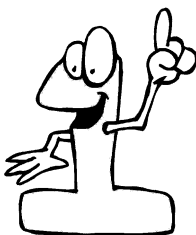
"I use highlighters or light coloured pencil crayons or the new funky pens to print things and have my students trace these. I often do this at the beginning of the year for those who are unable to print their names. This is also good for journal writing at the start."

# Math



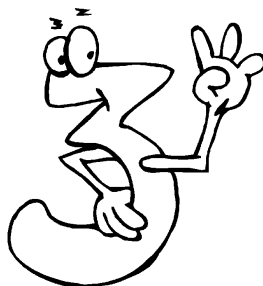
## Printing Numbers

Start at the top and you'll be a hero,  
If you go all around to make a zero.  
Start at the top, it is such fun  
To come straight down to make a one.  
Curl around and down and before you're through,  
Go straight across to make a two.  
Around the tree and around the tree,  
That's the way to make a three.  
Down and across and down some more,  
That's the way to make a four.  
Down and around, sakes alive,  
Put a hat on number five.  
Start at the top and curl really quick,  
That's the way to make a six.  
Across the sky and down from heaven,  
That's the way to make a seven.  
Make an S and do not wait,  
Go back up to make an eight.  
First a hoop and then a line,  
That's the way to make a nine.



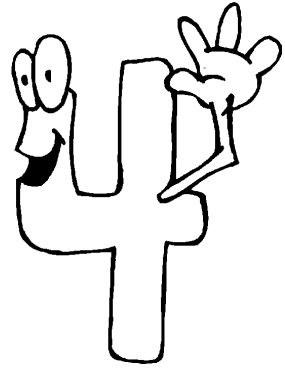
Number 1 is like a stick  
A straight line down that's very quick!  
For number 2 go right around  
Then make a line across the ground!  
Go right around What will it be?  
Go round again to make a 3!  
Down and over and down some more  
That's the way to make a 4!  
Go down and around. Then you stop  
Finish the 5 with a line on top!  
Make a curve. Then a loop  
There are no tricks to making a 6!  
Across the sky and down from heaven  
That's the way to make a 7!  
Make an 'S' And then don't wait  
Go up again to make an 8!  
Make a loop and then a line  
That's the way to make a 9!  
Make a 1 and then an 0  
10 are all your fingers you know!

0- Around we go to make a zero  
1- A straight line for one is fun  
2- Around and back on a railroad track, that makes 2.  
3- Around the tree and around the tree, that makes three  
4- Down and over and down some more that makes four  
5- Fat old five goes down and around  
Put a hat on top and see what you have found.  
6- A line and a loop the six rolls a hoop.  
7- Across the sky and down from heaven that makes 7.  
8- You make an S and do not wait ,  
You go back up to make an 8.  
9- A loop and a line that makes 9.



Pull straight down a 1 is fun,  
That's the way to make a 1.  
Around, and down, and out go you,  
That's the way to make a 2.  
Around, and around, just like a bee,  
That's the way to make a 3.  
Down, across, and down once more,  
That's the way to make a 4.  
Short neck, tummy fat,  
Number 5 wears a hat.  
Down, around, in a circle you go,  
That's a six, just as you know.  
Straight across, slide down from heaven,  
That's the way to make a 7.  
First a snake, then come back straight,  
That's the way to make an 8.  
First a ball and then a line,  
That's the way to make a 9.

- 0 Start at the top and around you go. It's always fun to make a zero.
- 1 Numeral writing can be fun, especially when you run with one.
- 2 Around the zoo and back to you. That's the way to make a two.
- 3 Around a lake and around a lake. Numeral 3 is fun to make.
- 4 Down and over and through the door. It's very simple to make a four.
- 5 Over, down and around the bend. Numeral five will be a friend.
- 6 With numeral six you start at the top. Down and around without a stop.
- 7 Across the bridge and down the slide. Numeral seven will be your guide.
- 8 Make a snake and add a tail. With numeral eight you'll never fail..
- 9 Do your best with numeral nine. Make a hoop and then a line.



### **Teaching Numeral Formation**

- Trace the outline of different numbers on wallpaper. Cut them out into 5-6 pieces and give out as puzzles. Use different paper for different numbers.
- Choose a manipulative and form the numeral with the manipulative.
- Do the above with edibles. Children may eat the final numeral (fruit pieces, raisins, cereal, popcorn, pretzels, chocolate chips, cheese, pickle cubes).
- Make numerals in shaving cream or pudding.
- Have children trace around their numerals with a crayon. Have them change colours and trace until no room is left on the paper.
- Roll a snake out of clay. Provide each child with a numeral card. Lay their snake on the card forming the number.
- Make numerals out of prepared biscuit dough.
- Stamp out numerals 0-9 and then have children trace over them.
- Using precut 1 inch squares of construction paper make a mosaic of the numeral.
- Stuffed numerals. Cut about 8" wide numerals from butcher paper, 2 of each number. Have each group of students twist sheets of newspaper and tape to one of the butcher papers. Staple both numerals together, enclosing the stuffing.
- Cut numerals 0-10 from sand paper. Have students place a sandpaper numeral under a sheet of paper and rub with a crayon.
- Paint with water on a sidewalk.

Write the numbers in corn starch, pudding, on chalk boards. Trace over the number with different coloured crayons, chalk, water colours and more. Use noodles, beads, seeds, etc. Glue over the letter. Use the children's bodies and create the number (you will need several children). Make giant numbers on the sidewalk outside in chalk.

## **Counting**

### **One-To-One Correspondence**

Sometimes we assume that all our children can do this - and then find that a few children are really having problems with manipulatives.

- Every morning have one child count the boys, the girls, and the children at school today - have him go around the circle touching each person as he counts, and remembering himself, of course.
- Take egg cartons, and print a number in each pocket with a felt pen - 0 to 10 in mixed order and with each egg carton different than the others. The children can go in pairs. One child puts the

correct number of beans in each pocket, and the other child takes them out as a check.

- Do estimation jars, and have children count the objects. Watch the counting to make sure it is accurate.
- If a child is having difficulty, have him drop rocks into a can. The sound adds another modality to the exercise.
- Have the children tell one another what they are doing as they count with one-to-one correspondence.

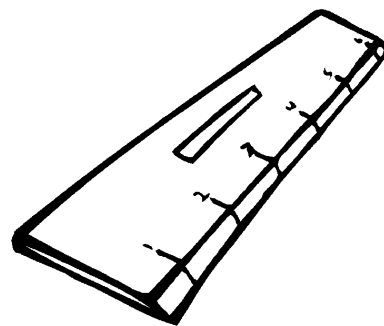
### Count On, Count Back

Before beginning addition and subtraction, the children must be able to count forward and backward (to 10) beginning at any number. Say, "Count on from 5." The child does not say the 5 - he begins at 6 and counts 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Or say, "Count down from 8." The child does not say the 8 - he begins at 7 and counts 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0.

Do this on a large floor number line. If you say "Count on from 5", the child goes to the 5 and stands on it but does not say that number, then walks forward in the squares saying 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. If you say, "Count down from 8" the child stands on the 8 but does not say it - he begins at 7 and counts 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. Once the children are comfortable with this and do it correctly on the floor number line, give them individual number lines for their desks and practice this.

When they begin to add, they use this skill. For example, if they are adding  $4 + 3 = \underline{\quad}$  they stand on the 4 but do not say it. Now they take 3 steps - 5, 6, 7.

The reason this practice is valuable is that we don't want the children to count from 1 each time. This is teaching 'conservation of number'. We know we have the first number, so we don't have to count it out. If the children practice this conservation and it is taught and practiced early in the addition and subtraction process, it will improve understanding and the children will find the work much easier.



### **The Countasaurus**



*Teacher:* I'm a countasaurus. I'll tell you what to count.

I'll give you a number. You give me the amount.

I like to eat numbers. I like them large and small.

In all the ways that you will hear, I like to eat them all.

I'm very hungry. Feed me 10 claps (*kids clap and count to 10*)

I'm still hungry. Feed me 20 pats. (*kids pat lap and count to 20*)

I'm very very hungry. Feed me 10 toe touches. (*kids do toe touches and count*)

*Keep on making up things like foot stomps, waist bends, arm twirls, etc.)*

Last Verse: I like to eat numbers. I like them large and small.

In all the ways that you have heard, I like to eat them all.

If you have a 100 pocket chart, you can leave some numbers out and the kids have to put the missing numbers in the right places.

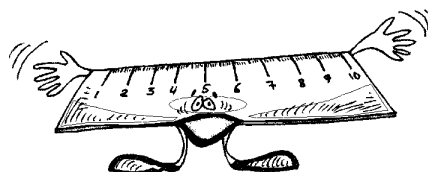
## Skip Counting

Use acetate paper to highlight numbers when skip counting. Look for patterns that are created when you are skip counting.

"We have been practicing skip counting to 100. First we traced our hands and put them in the hallway with numbers and the sign, 'We can use our fingers to count to 100 by 10's.' Then we took off one shoe and traced and cut out feet. Kids numbered the toes. We then used book tape to put a sign on the hall floor, "When we count by 5's we can use our toes." and then taped the feet with the appropriate numbers down the middle of the hall floor. It's really fun to watch the kids walk down the hallway. When they get to the feet, they all slow down, step on the cutouts and count to 100 by 5's."

"When we count by 10s we clap on the 10. Then when we count by 5s we pat our lap on the 5 and clap on the 10. When a student has to count by 5s and they forget, I start the pat/clap pattern and it helps them to remember."

"My class uses regular 8 x 11 inch white computer paper to make a HUGE number line all the way to 100. Each child colours a different number on a different sheet of paper until all 100 numbers have been drawn and coloured (this takes about 2 or 3 days). The kids love to put different decorations and stripes, dots, etc., on each number. I have them make all the 10s in red so they will show up really well. (10, 20, 30, 40, etc.) Then we glue all the numbers in order on a looooooong sheet of paper and put it out in the hall on the floor. We estimate how far it will stretch.... to the next room? out the door? to the playground?



After they are all glued onto the long strip, we tape the strip down on the floor in the hall (nice custodians are a must for this project!) and 'walk' from 0 to 100. Then we go back and hop by 2s. From there, it is easy to jump by 5s and run by 10s.

This is a great way to learn how to count to 100 (forward and backwards) and to see how 'groups of 10' look in the big picture."

Have the children sit in a circle. Count by tens, let's say. Each child says one number....10, 20, 30,.....to 100. The child who says 100 is out. Play continues until there is one child left. Do it by fives to 50, and by twos to 20, but it also can be extended. The kids love it, and are hearing the counting over and over again. You can also easily spot the children who don't know it.

"We play the same game except we do it that anyone who is on a 10 is out. It works great for all skip counting since you do 10's in all of them. So if you are counting around in a standing circle - 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 - the child who said 10 is out - they sit down in their spot - keep going - 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 - that child is out. It's funny to watch because you see them trying to figure out where they are going to be and some of them figure out they're going to be out! It's also great for going over 100 with the skip counting because if you combine 2 classes together to do it (we did it last year with the whole school - only 80 students at the time - it was hilarious!). It can go on for a long time!"

"Play "Buzz!" Have the children stand in a circle, and count by, let's say, tens. The person who gets to 100 says '100 Buzz!' and has to sit. If they count by fives, the person who says 50 has to sit, etc. The kids love it, and you know in a minute who knows these sequences."

### The Skip Count Song

*(to the tune of "Skip to my Lou")*

Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
We can count to 20.

'2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20!'

Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
We can count to 50.

'5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50!'

Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
We can count to 100.

'10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100!'

### "Skip" Counting

*Tune: Skip to my Lou*

Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 2's  
We can count to 20.

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 (chant this line)

Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 5's  
We can count to 50.

5, 10, 15, 20, (up to 50)

Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
Skip count, skip count, count by 10's  
We can count to 100.

10, 20, 30, 40, (up to 100)

"I use a lot of movement in mathematics. We put a giant numberline on the floor and have the students hop on the even numbers as they count by 2's. We have them do rote counting, shouting even numbers and whispering odd. We do both activities forward and backward. For tens, we stand up and raise both hands with fingers spread on each count. Fives can be done similarly with one hand. We also had students make handprints and then count by fives to see how many fingers were on the paper. We also use dimes and pennies to work on place value. We'll be adding nickels soon. I have kids count their way out the door to catch the bus. Each day I announce the pattern. They have to listen to the person in front of them and say the next number."

### Skip Counting by 2's

*(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)*

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14

We will skip count as a team!

16, 18, 20, 22

Not much longer until we're through.

24, 26, 28, 30

This is more fun than chasing a birdie!

32, 34, 36, 38

Counting by 2's, isn't it great!

40, 42, 44, 46

It's much better than picking up sticks!

48, 50, 52

Now the rest is up to you!

Ringo, Rango

Tingo, Tango

Dinosaurs have hives

Ringo, Rango

Tingo, Tango

I can count by 5's

5, 10, 15, 20, .....

*As you chant you clap/snap or clap/slap your legs*

Dinosaurs have hens

I can count by 10's

Dinosaurs have shoes

I can count by 2's





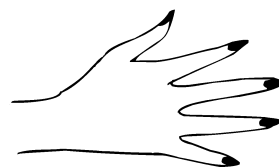
### Counting by.....

"We all stand in a circle. I decide how we are going to count - by 10s or 2s or backwards or whatever - and what number we are going to start on and stop on. (I've learned to write them on the board so we all - mostly me - remember).

"Suppose we are counting by 10s from 10 to 100. We start with Joshua - everyone points to Josh and he points to himself and we all count out loud: 10, 20, 30, .....100. Everyone points to each child and says the number in turn. Whichever child's turn it is at '100' will sit down and we'll begin again at #10 with the next child. We just go round and round until all the children are sitting. They like it and it's great for a little movement."

"A neat idea for teaching counting by 2s and 5s (or any other number) is using the whole body. For 2s, have the students clap their legs and quietly say '1' then clap hands and shout '2!' clap legs for 3, hands for '4' and so on. Then for 5s, they clap on feet, knees, hips and shoulders while quietly counting 1-2-3-4, then clapped hands and shout '5!' then repeat with 6-7-8-9 on feet, knees, hips and shoulders, and so on. Eventually we silently say the in-between numbers, and eventually they don't need the in-between numbers!"

"I have my children trace their hands and then decorate - nail polish, etc. They go across the top of the board and then we have a visual for counting by 5's and 10's."



"I put actions with it. For 10's we start squatting on the ground and grow slowly until we get to 100 and then shout '100!' with our arms in the air. The kids love this. We HAVE to do it everyday, although they all can count by 10's. For 5's, they put their hands on their hips and move their hips from side to side as they count. They look so cute doing this. My kids love the actions and it helps them learn."

"For counting by 2's, 5's and 10's I often just do it during the day as time-fillers when we are standing in line to go to the gym, or waiting for the bell to ring at the end of the day. Sometimes I will have them sit in a circle and pass around a stuffed animal counting by (whatever we are working on that week). When we get to 100 (10's or 5's) and 50 (2's), the student with the stuffed animal gets a prize. We continue until everyone has a prize. Those who are 'out' early and have a prize gather around the outside of the circle to help count. I've done this a number of times this year and they never seem to get tired of it. We started with using tens and ones with the calendar. I have a 100 chart that we have added a new date for each day we are in school, we also add a stick to our container and count the sticks each day so by the time we get to the unit of tens and ones the students are becoming used to counting 10, 20, 30, 40, 41, 42, 43 and so on."

### Practicing Numbers

"Give the students a grid with the numbers 0- 20 on it arranged 0- 10 on the first line, 11-20 on the second line. Using beans or other small objects have them cover numbers that meet certain criteria. (e.g. cover numbers greater than 12, numbers smaller than 15, numbers between 6 and 17, numbers with the digit 3 in them, etc.) It is great if you have an overhead of the chart and have the students tell you what numbers to cover so they practice reading numbers as well, and then they can compare their chart to yours. Later in the year you can do this with a 0 to 100 chart to practice larger numbers."

## Zero the Hero

"In my classroom Zero the Hero comes on every tenth school day for the entire school year. He leaves a note, a book about a math concept, some kind of work/activity and a special snack. (Cheerios, Froot Loops, mini-doughnuts, life savers, etc.). Zero very often throws in a poem, too."

"Zero can be an action doll (Superman with a zero on the chest), a stuffed toy, a puppet, or even a parent or school person who puts on a special t-shirt, cape and mask and who visits every 10 days. Zero can even be invisible - who comes in the night and let the children imagine what he looks like."

"We understand what the number "0" means on the prairies as we have temperatures that go way below that during our winter months. We selected a penguin as our Zero The Hero because his body is shaped like a long zero and he is so cute and cuddly!"

### **Sing a special song on Zero's special days!**

*Tune: This Old Man*

This old number,  
It means none.  
It is even less than one.  
With a z-e-r-o-  
That spells ZERO.  
This old number is my hero!

### **Zero The Hero**

*Tune of: She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain*

When you see a zero on the number line,  
Better watch out for a signal or a sign.  
From our friendly super hero,  
Who loves the number zero.  
Oh, he always comes to visit right on time.

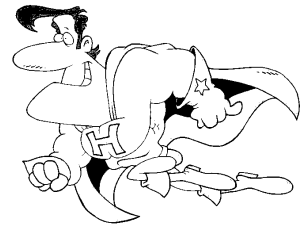
### **Zero the Hero**

Zero, the hero, came to school.  
Zero, the hero, knows a rule.  
Zero, the hero, stays in a space.  
So all the other numbers  
Get in the right place.

### **Zero Hero Song**

*(tune Frere Jacques)*

Zero Hero, Zero Hero,  
We love you.  
We love you.  
Though you may be nothing,  
We really think you're something.  
Yes, we do. Yes, we do.



"Zero the Hero comes every tenth day of school. I use Cheerios for Zero the Hero and also white hole reinforcers. In fact, last year I put a hole re-enforcer on every child's forehead and 'crowned' them Zero the Hero. They were super heroes all day!"

"I love ZERO THE HERO. I first heard about him years ago and I have modified the idea to fit my classroom. He comes every 10th school day and leaves us a special bag filled with a note, a book about numbers and a special treat for snack that has to do with zero or a circle. In the note he always makes a comment about the room and then leaves math problems for them to figure out. I use popsicle sticks to count each day and on the tenth day they go 'bonkers' (fly out of the basket) and we then bundle them and move them to the tens basket. Because of ZERO THE HERO my kids were very good with place value. They would start telling everyone that ZERO THE HERO would be back in a certain number of days. They lived to see the special bag on the chair. What's nice about the idea of a Zero the Hero is that you can make it into whatever you want. I also use special poems about him that we recite on his days. I think that he is a great way to teach math skills."

### 20 Days (Change the number to other tens)

I'm Zero the Hero and I'm here to say,

"Hooray, hooray on your 20th day!

Congratulations on your second zero.

That's the favourite number of Zero the Hero.

You have 2 zero bands and 2 bundles of straws.

And now we need lots of applause.

The 10's cup has 2 bundles - WOW!

Let's count by 10s to 20 - right now!

I'm Zero the Hero - let's cheer today

Hooray, hooray for our 20th day!

Good bye for now, here's a treat from me.

It's round like a zero, what can it be?"

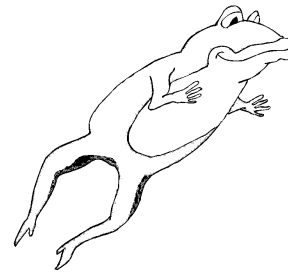
## The Number Line

"We walk out the addition problems. I tape a number line to the floor and they start on the bigger number and then took the same number of steps as the number that was being added. I had a larger number of kinesthetic learners, and so anything that got them moving was great.

Make a large number line on the floor sort of like hop scotch. They draw a number from a bowl (make sure the numbers are limited to maybe 1-5). When they pull the first number, ask every time if they really have to step out this number - why step it out when you know what it is? Go directly to this first number! Then you choose a number to add on, keeping it to 1, 2, or 3. They walk or hop that many more and see where they stopped. Someone else writes this on the board to make the equation.

When you use a number line to do subtraction, again ask the children if they really have to step off the first number. They know the number where they begin, so go directly to it, and then step or hop the second number, counting down."

"One way to teach using the number line for addition/subtraction is by making a number line on the floor of your classroom. I had the kids call adding 'bunny hopping forward' and subtracting 'froggy leaping backward'. You can have the kids actually do this (bunny hop/froggy leap) for problems - that way, they can actually FEEL the problems!"



"The children hold a rope clothesline across the room and hang big numbers on the line. Kids hop ahead for counting on and back for subtraction. Another way is to put numbers on desks at the edge and have kids hop forward or back touching the numbers.

We also stand next to our chairs and hop forward or backward while someone does the same on a big number line in front. The hardest part of this concept is to say the starting number before counting on or back. It helps to have a number line on paper so kids can show their 'hops'."

"When I first introduced the number line, I started the whole class. All the kids have a name tag with a number line to 20. I verbally gave directions and we practiced. "Put your finger on 2. Jump forward 2. What do you have? That's  $2 + 2 = 4$ " For backwards I would say 'jump back'. We practiced about five times each day for several days. Most were able to understand and use it well."

"Counting on is the best strategy I've learned with my students who 'just don't get it!' In addition, I tell them to pick the larger number and count on the additional numbers.

For example:  $3 + 4 = ?$  The student would count up five, six, seven and have his answer. The same goes for subtraction. If the example is  $9 - 3 = ?$  The child would start at three and count up to nine. He would be holding up six fingers when he gets to nine.

I give a five minute speed drill every Friday with 64 examples done in four rows of 16. The children compete against the last week's score, not the others."

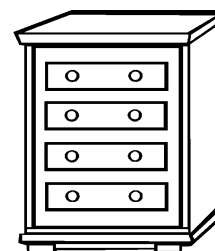
## **Manipulatives**

"I use lima beans all the time for math. We put them on a board and spray painted them green. This way only one side is green and the other side remains white. The children have a film canister with 10 in it and they use it all the time. They can shake them out and write the math sentence for the white and green beans, etc. If you are working on a different number then only put that number in their canisters."

"Spray paint one side of dried lima beans for math manipulatives, or the two sides different colours. In October, I use orange beans (painted) and white ones (white ones have 2 dots for ghost eyes). Call it 'Hallowe'en Math'."

"I use pop bottle tops as counters. You can have an endless supply. These are the screw off kind. I wrote the numbers 1 - 100 on the white tops and the kids put them in order. They really like it. When you have them in all colours the kids can sort them and also use them for patterning."

"My favourite organizational tip that I do in my classroom is my Math Boxes. I purchased a 4-drawer plastic cabinet. I have 4 tables where my students sit, 1 drawer per table. In each drawer I keep my math manipulatives. I always spent so much time getting them out before a certain lesson. This way when I begin Math and need manipulatives I just asked a child at each table to go get a drawer and take it back to their table. They pass out the particular manipulatives.



In each drawer are 6 sets of each manipulatives I use throughout the year. 6 calculators, 6 sets of unifix cubes, 6 zip-lock bags of: two-sided counters, big paper clips, small paper clips, etc., 6 rulers (standard, non-standard), 6 clocks (analog and digital), etc."

"I use lots of different math manipulatives in the classroom. The children especially love bottle caps. I have a large collection of pop bottle caps stored in a large tub. They are all the same size, but, many different colours. Children build with them, sort them, compare groups, use them to show addition facts and subtract with them. We use them as markers for games on boards. Children often contribute to the collection without even being asked. And best of all they are free!"

"All the milk jug caps (skim, 2%, whole, etc.) have different colours. I also include juice caps. Have the children collect them, too. They work well for patterning, counting, addition and subtraction. I have also seen people put pictures on the underside of the caps (such as clip art) to do matching concentration games or numbers for addition and subtraction."

Have manipulatives for the day all ready in small ziplock bags.

# Addition and Subtraction

## Introducing Addition

"My children love to play with beans so I introduce addition sometimes with these red and white plastic beans you can buy at any teacher store. If you want you can spray paint white dry beans on one side any colour you choose and let the other side stay white.

Example of activity: Put the same number of beans in each child's cup. I begin with four. I tell the kids to 'put your hand on the top and hand on the bottom and shake, shake, shake and spill the beans'. This helps with controlling beans all over the floor and the noise factor. We do it together. Then they sort their red beans from their white beans and write the number sentence that they shook. I have small books made up with pictures of the beans and they color the red beans and then write the number sentence. The kids love doing it."

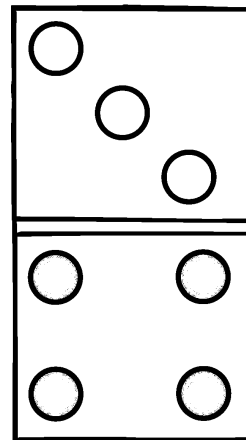
"For beginning adding and subtracting I like to use cereal as the manipulatives - it really grabs my student's interest and they love the snack as well.

"This is something I just started doing this year to get the kids ready for adding and learning what the symbols (+, =) mean. Each day the special helper of the day counts the boys and then the girls ( I record the numbers on a chart) then we make an equation to find out how many altogether. So if we have 13 boys and 9 girls present today we would write  $13 + 9 = 22$ . I started doing this last week: I have patterns for my calendar dates this month. Each day we make an equation to show how many altogether. So if on the calendar we have 10 of one pattern and 5 of another we will make an equation to show this (e.g.,  $10 + 5 = 15$ ). I just do a little bit each day at calendar time to get them familiar with the concepts."

"For teaching counting on as a strategy for addition I use numbered dice as well as regular dice. The students get one of each, throw them and say the number on the dice and count on from that number with the dots on the regular dice. This seems to really help them when we move on to using a number line.

"To practice early addition I start each day with a dice game. In pairs the children take turns to throw two die and write out the sum, adding them together. The winner could be the first one to a specified number, the one with the lowest number, etc., or you can do it for a certain period of time. The children love it."

"I like to use dominoes to help explain the concept of vertical and horizontal equations. You can use black paper with white dots for large dominoes. I am also using beans and counters that have a different colour on each side. They put the beans or counters in a cup and spill them out on their mats. The kids get to visualize with hands on how to write equations to their bean spilling. For example 2 blues plus 3 reds equals 5. They get to see all the possible combinations that total 5. I get them to vocalize what they see when they 'spill the beans!'"



## Adding Doubles

"When I introduce 'doubles' I have cloth bags with the following objects: a car, plastic insect, plastic spider, a picture of a hand, an egg carton, a calendar page, a box of 16 crayons, and a picture of a semi-truck. Students reach into the bag and record a double, for example if they pick a car, they record  $2 + 2 = 4$ , because there are 2 wheels on each side. The insect is  $3 + 3$  and the spider is  $4 + 4$  because of the legs, etc. They love to work with the bags and will record answers over and over."

### 'Doubles Rap

$0 + 0 = 0$  Ohhhhh!

$1 + 1 = 2$  Ooooooo!

$2 + 2 = 4$  More!

$3 + 3 = 6$  Kicks!

$4 + 4 = 8$  That's great!

$5 + 5 = 10$  Again!

Make a doubles book.

$1 + 1$  was 1 eye + 1 eye

$2 + 2$  was 2 shoes plus 2 shoes

$3 + 3$  was 3 bears plus 3 pigs

$4 + 4$  was 2 dogs (4 paws each)

$5 + 5$  was our 2 hands (5 fingers each)

$1 + 1$  is 2 ....Little Bunny Foo Foo (make bunny ears)

$2 + 2$  is 4....Fingers walking out the door (walk fingers)

$3 + 3$  is 6 ....I build a house with sticks

(3 fingers on each side and make a slanted roof)

$4 + 4$  is 8....Spiders crawling on my plate (wrists together, make spider legs)

$5 + 5$  is 10....Tickle my ab-do-men.

$6 + 6$  is 'twelve-is'.....Sing along with 'Elvis!' (This is our favourite! Pretend to hold a microphone)

$7 + 7$  is 14....You be queen and I'll be King

$8 + 8$  is 16...Sweet sixteen and never been kissed!  
(Blow a kiss)

$9 + 9$  is 18...Come with me and go skat-ing.

$10 + 10$  is 20.. That's the end! THAT'S PLENTY!

## The Doubles Chant

As the kids march through the door,  $2 + 2 = 4$

Recess has lots of soccer kicks,  $3 + 3 = 6$

During music time we sing so great!  $4 + 4 = 8$

For lunch I'm having tacos again!  $5 + 5 = 10$

Before we leave the books we shelve,  $6 + 6 = 12$

Home we go with smiles aplenty!  $10 + 10 = 20$



"We use the 2 sided counters and mirrors. Place a counter on the desk, hold the mirror up behind it and record. How many counters on the desk? PLUS How many in the mirror? How many all together?

"We also do this activity backwards when using doubles to subtract. How many all together? MINUS how many in the mirror? (put the mirror down) How many counters do you have now?

"The kids love it and the double facts really stick!"

## Fact Families

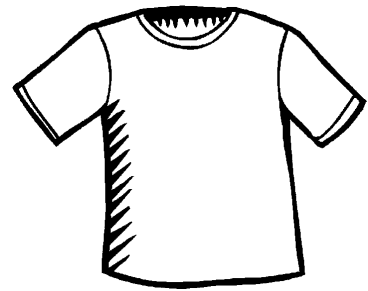
"I use a drawing of a house for fact families. I write the three common numbers in the attic or roof part of the house. I tell students these are a fact family and they live together in the house. In every number sentence we write, all three members are present. If I were using 3, 5, and 8 I would then show how  $3 + 5 = 8$  using either a drawing on the board or manipulatives. Next, I write the number sentence in the lower part of the house. Then I tell them how polite these family members are because

they 'take turns' being first. I would then write  $5 + 3 = 8$ , pointing out through picture or diagram that nothing changed except the order of the addends. I then show them how to arrive at the subtraction sentences by removing one of the groups, emphasizing we are taking away one of the addends. Each number sentence would be recorded in the lower part of the house. After several demonstrations, students work these at their seats. This seems to help most, although some students still have difficulty."

"My favourite is one that I created on my own with fact families. I ran off a family of four for each student (I traced around some cookie cutter shapes of people). I let the children draw and colour or paint a scene for their family (park, jungle, home, farm, to go with the current theme). I gave each child a fact card. He had to label each family member with a different fact from that family. He could then add features and glue them in the scene. The students enjoyed explaining the members of their fact family and displaying the scenes in the hall."

"I draw three stick figures with blank T-shirts. The children write in the three numbers for a fact family on the T-shirts, one number on each shirt. I type up a little story below the people that goes like this example: We are the 5, 6, and 11 fact family. We can do four things together. Watch us!  $5+6=11$   $6+5=11$   $11-5=6$   $11-6=5$

The kids love the idea of creating their own fact family on the people and it really sticks the idea of 'related' families of facts into their minds!"



"One fun activity we do in our class with addition is to put the same number of two different colours of unifix cubes in a small bowl or tub (one for each student). I have them close their eyes or look to the ceiling, then reach in and pull out a certain number (whatever answer I want them to have). They then count how many of one colour, how many of the other and write out the sentence on their paper. I hope this makes sense. For instance 5 blue plus 3 red equals 8 in all. We use a paper with cubes on it at first so they can colour them then write the numbers. They put the cubes back in and draw the same number again and see the different combinations of 8 they can get."



"I have an idea called 'Bear Houses'. You draw a house shape and divide it into fourths. Three bears (or numbers) live in each house - Papa bear, Mama bear, and Baby bear. Put Papa bear's number at the peak of the house, Mama bear's number on left roof edge, and Baby bear's on the right. Papa rules the roost at the top of the house so he goes first. He takes Mama away. So you write (vertically)  $8 - 5 = 3$  on the top left quarter of the house. Then he takes Baby away and you write  $8 - 3 = 5$  on the top right quarter of the house. On the first floor, Mama goes first on the left and you have to add Baby to her to equal Papa. So you write  $5 + 3 = 8$  on the bottom left. And then Baby gets to go first on the right. But of course Baby and Mama have to equal Papa since he's so big. And you write  $3 + 5 = 8$  on the bottom right quarter. Now you have to be very careful not to let Goldilocks (another number) into your house because you know what she can do to a Bear's house! The kids really catch on to this and even start saying 'Goldilocks!' when someone makes a mistake during math time.

"Just another way to approach it!"

"I use dice, playing cards, bottlecaps, M & M's, dominoes and make it 'real' to them. I have them fold paper in 4's (half, then half again) and put 4 math facts on the paper. I usually have them work in pairs. For instance with dominoes: a domino with a 6 and a 3 could make the math sentence  $6+3=?$  I also play a game called 'Around the World': start with addition flashcards. I have kids stand up at their desk. Then I have 2 play at a time. Say 'go', show a flashcard, and the first one with the correct answer advances to the next desk/student. Some kids go halfway around the room, others sit down after the first try. It gives them math fact practice as well."

"I use dominoes for fact families... I made some giant (laminated) ones with paper and attached magnets to them to stick to a magnetic chalkboard...we do one or two fact families every day together orally at calendar time. Pretty soon they can write their own families for each domino...and at that point this makes a good independent learning center. Since I started doing this, the second grade teachers tell me that my kids come to second with a real understanding of fact families; much better than before.

Example...if the domino has five dots on top and four dots on the bottom, we can make these problems together:

$$5 + 4 = 9 \quad 4 + 5 = 9 \quad 9 - 5 = 4 \quad 9 - 4 = 5$$

The dots provide a concrete way for the kids to 'see' the family...can cover up top, bottom, etc. as we create the family of facts."

"Put the numbers on cards. Have a child hold one addend number in each hand, and put on a 'crown' that shows the sum. This is great to show that  $3 + 5 = 8$  then you cross your arms and show  $5 + 3 = 8$ .

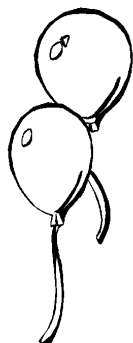
I also have them do the little dance, where two children hold a single numeral, and then they change sides and the sum stays the same. I call this the 'do-si-do'. The kids love it. They remember this all year long."



## Subtraction

"I like to start subtraction with a game called 'Mystery Hands'. I divide the children into pairs and give them 5 small counters. Then one holds the counters in her hand and lets a certain number drop out. The other has to figure out how many are still left in her hand. They enjoy doing this. If you use small counters you can move up to larger numbers as they catch on to it."

"I like to act out subtraction stories using the kids as animals playing somewhere and then some go away. I make the stories as silly as possible! I follow this up (next lesson) with story problems on a felt board. I have made a few felt X shapes to show crossing out. Then they draw similar problems using circles with ears for animal faces. To show subtraction we make a big X on the images. They can just count the ones that are left. We write the subtraction sentence under the picture."



"To teach subtraction - I made a floor number line and had the kids take steps back to act out the problem. I have also taped balloons to my chalkboard and popped them to go along with a given problem."

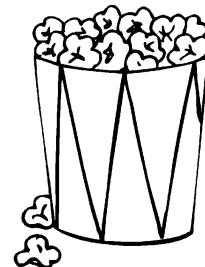


"We went outside one morning, and drew number lines on the sidewalk (each child did his/her own). I had some middle school helpers (couldn't have done it without them) and had the kids start at a number, then walk backwards four steps, etc., and come up with an answer. Then when we went to using number lines at their desks, their fingers did the walking. Now every kid in my room can do subtraction with a number line. The big physical action of walking on the sidewalk number lines helped a lot, I think."

"I do lots of 'stories' about addition and subtraction. Food is fun. I also just use story mats (pictures of scenes I've run off and laminated) and blocks. I tell stories about animals gathering in the forest, astronauts going into space, whatever. I would start, for example, with 2 bears in the forest eating berries. The kids put two blocks on. Then 2 more join them. The kids add 2 more blocks and we say the number sentence orally (2 bears plus 2 bears makes 4 bears. 2 plus 2 equals 4.) I keep adding on bears in the story until we reach 10 (or whatever we're working towards). Then I start sending the bears home and we do subtraction sentences until the bears are all gone. Sometimes I will write the equations on the board after we say them out loud so the kids can see them."

"I have the kids make dot strips. I give them strips of manilla paper and have them lick and stick those coloured dots on them. Then they make a fold somewhere along the strip. For example, they make stick 6 dots on the strip. They make the fold (so that the dots still show, not inwards to hide the dots) between 2 dots and 4 dots. Now they can use it to say 2 number sentences, folding the dots backwards to 'take them away' as they do:  $6 - 2 = 4$ , and  $6 - 4 = 2$ . I hope this is clear - it's really quite simple. I have the kids make 4 or 5 of these on their own, we do them together as a class and then we hand a bunch out to a group and have them write the equations."

"Something easy to do for the beginning of subtraction is to do it with cereal. I begin by writing the first part of the question on the board, they count out that many pieces of cereal (or popcorn, etc.), then I write the next part and they have to take away that many and eat them. This really helps them to visualize that subtraction is taking away something. And they have so much fun eating!"



"Some children also find it easier if they have a cup on their desk for their manipulatives. They first count out how many they need to start with and then when they subtract they put the ones taken away back into the container. For some children 'out of sight' helps them to focus on the ones that are left."

"I have the students use a walk on number line when I first introduce subtraction. They start by standing on the 'big' number. Then they have to walk back by taking the number of steps as the 'little' number shows. Then I ask them where they are now?  $5 - 3 = ?$  Stand on 5, walk back 3 steps, where are you? After we understand this, we let our fingers do the walking on a number line (ruler)."

"Another activity is to have the students draw a very large face (themselves) with a big smiling mouth. Use miniature marshmallows as teeth. Grade One kids understand the concept of losing teeth. After practicing problems such as: Michael had 10 teeth. He lost 4. How many teeth does he have left? (The children 'pull' the teeth to find out how many are left.) Soon, they are making up their own problems with partners."

"Math Their Way has a game called the Whale game. You give each student a blue napkin for the water and Goldfish crackers. The students are the whales. Give each student some crackers and you tell them what to put in the water and what to take away. You then tell little story problems, for example, 5 little fish were swimming and all of a sudden a hungry whale came and ate 2 little fish. The students eat the fish and tell you how many are left. Have them tell you what is happening then show them a number sentence on the board a few times, then as you play have them to give you the number sentences."

## Missing Addends

"If children do not understand the concept of missing addends, they do not truly understand the concept of an equation. At this time of year I usually introduce missing addends, and there are always some children in my class who have difficulty. Then it is time to go back to the beginning, and re-teach the equal sign and the meaning of the equation."

1. Make cards for 'equal' and 'not equal'.

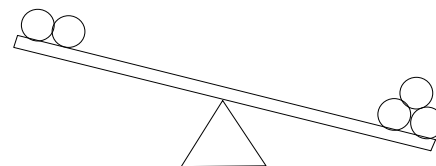


2. Use the balance scale and either unifix cubes or blocks. Place an equal number of blocks on either side of the scale so that it balances and hold the 'equal' card in the centre of the scale. Ask, 'Why am I holding this card? Why am I holding it here?' Remove the card and take one block from one side of the scale. Ask, 'What card must be used now? Where will I hold it?'

3. With an unequal number of blocks on the scale, ask the children how many more will be needed to balance the scale and make it 'equal'. Do this a number of times on both sides of the scale. The 'equal' sign is the point where it balances.

$$2 + \underline{\quad} = 3$$

Write the equations. Ask, 'How many more to make it equal?'



4. Give the children some questions, and leave the scales out for the children who have difficulties 'seeing' the completed equation.

## Learning the Math Facts

"One of the things I have had my students do is find a partner first thing when they come in and sit and practice their flash cards with the partner. (Many times they have time to move to several different partners, while I'm doing lunch, attendance, etc.) Saxon fact cards are in different colours, so I could just tell them which colours to practice. Then we do a math practice sheet first thing for a timed test. I start my stop watch. They do the facts. When they come back to the table to turn the finished sheet in, they look at the watch and record the time. They are trying to beat their own time

so they are not competing against one another. They always seem to enjoy this. I check the sheets and their total would be their total number of seconds + 5 seconds for each error. This way they tried for both accuracy and speed."

"I started doing Mad Math Minutes (10 minutes) in Grade One...strictly drill...rote is a part of learning, whether we like it or not. I started with facts for 0-2 and maybe 10 problems and then just kept adding and adding them over the year. I made sure to do inversions and sideways as well as up and down. The students were given the new fact to focus upon as a homework assignment and by mid year they had papers with 100 problems. They needed that many because about 1/2 the class could finish them all in 10 minutes. For marking, the rows and columns were lettered and numbered. The kids became very familiar with hearing number patterns; I would read one row at a time in clusters of 5 numbers and then repeat it. As soon as a kid was done, he or she began adding up their total finished and then count backwards for their errors. They kept personal goal scores to beat. They ended up with  $x/100$  complete and  $x$  out of the completed correct. I had one or two kids that would need help scoring each time. It took 5-7 minutes to read all the answers and then have them tell me their scores so I could record them. They had red pens and circled the problems with errors. They loved mad math and got very good at sheer focus for 10 minutes. I stressed daily that they were working to improve their scores and we cheered kids that did that, not just those who finished or got 100% so they really learned to admire success gained with effort. Homework was to fix all errors and finish the page and return it the next day. This drill never replaced manipulatives and hands-on experiences, of course."

"I have sheets made up on the computer and colour coded - ie. 5 different sheets for addition facts of five on purple paper, 5 sheets of the six facts on yellow, etc. Each sheet has 25 questions and students get up to five minutes to finish them. They record their time on the sheet. Then I made a class set of these 5 sheets - in my case 5 copies of each sheet = 25 copies, so the likelihood of you and your seatmate (my students sit in 2's) having the same sheet is remote. Finally, take these sheets and put them in plastic sheet protectors. Seal the end with packing tape. Students use dry-erase pens or water soluble pens to answer them, and we record scores - BUT it saves paper and trees! Once a week on Friday, they do a photocopy of one of these sheets and take home the photocopy as well as a summary of their progress that week. I stress accuracy versus speed. As for marking them, my teacher assistant loves them (seriously!) and does a lot of it during the daily story time."

"In December I started 2 minute math. I made my math fact sheets using

<http://www.worksheetfactory.com>

(the math program is a free download). I started with a folder (12x18 sheet of construction paper, folded in half) and placed a score keeping sheet (also from worksheet factory) on the left side. Each child started on sums to 4 and has to master the entire sheet 16/16 before moving to the next sheet. Levels increase after mastering the 2 or 3 sheets in that level (Sum to 4-1, Sum to 4-2, Sum to 4-3). If they don't get 100% on the sheet they must take it again until they do. All of my students have mastered the sheet by the 3rd time. Most of the students are now on Addition to 9 and getting ready to move to subtraction. They absolutely love it. We only do it 3 times a week so the paperwork is not too bad. My parent helpers are able to do it. All of the sheets are placed in a bin with a sheet separating the levels. This may sound very old school, but it works for me and they actually ask when we are going to do it! This is one of the things that they really take seriously."



## Patterns in Addition and Subtraction

Introduce addition and subtraction as patterns.

- Introduce the doubles facts. Students learn all doubles facts  $0+0$  through  $9+9$ .
- Next teach the  $+0$  facts
- Then  $+1$ ,  $-1$ . This is related to counting. Adding one is the same pattern as counting on or counting back.
- Next  $+2$  and  $-2$ . This is related to counting by 2's forward and back. Before this is introduced students have practiced counting even and odd numbers backwards and forwards for quite a while.
- Facts that equal 10.
- Doubles  $+1$ : if both of the numbers in the addition problem are beside each other on the number line then this is a doubles  $+1$  fact. So they think if  $4+4=8$  then  $4+5$ =one more 9.
- Doubles  $-1$ : if both of the numbers in the subtraction problem are beside each other on the number line then this is a doubles  $-1$  fact. So they think if  $4+4=8$ , then  $4-3$  is one less 7.
- Then there are 'oddball' addition facts that don't fit any of these patterns and the students need to memorize these.

"I spend the last couple of months reviewing the addition and subtraction combinations to 10. I make sure the children know these steps.

Addition:

1. Know that  $7 + 2$  and  $2 + 7$  are the same thing.
2. Begin to add with the largest number first:  $7 + 2$
3. Do not count out the largest number - stand on it or say it or go to it on the number line.
4. Practice adding 1, counting on one number from the other larger number.
5. Practice adding 2 (and most of my class can do  $+3$ , too) - counting on from the larger number.

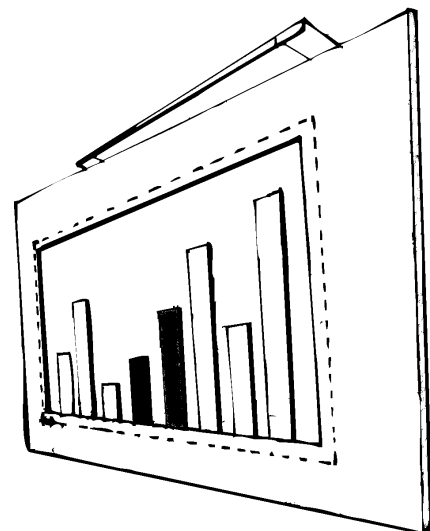
Subtraction:

1. In subtraction the largest number is always first.
2. Practice counting backwards.
3. Do not count out the largest number - stand on it or say it or go to it on the number line.
4. Practice subtracting 1, counting on one number from the other larger number.
5. Practice subtracting 2 (and 3, too) - counting down from the larger number.
6. Practice finding the difference .....  $7 - 5$ , for example, the difference is 2."

## Graphing

### Graphing Questions

1. Which column has less?
2. Which column has the most?
3. Are there more \_\_\_\_ or more \_\_\_\_?
4. Are there less \_\_\_\_ or less \_\_\_\_?
5. How many \_\_\_\_ are there?
6. How many more \_\_\_\_ are there than \_\_\_\_?
7. How many fewer \_\_\_\_ are there than \_\_\_\_?
8. How many are there in \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ columns together?
9. Are any columns the same?
10. What can you tell me about the graph?
11. Make a number sentence (equation) about the graph.



### Daily Graphing

- 1) Flat rectangular oil drip pan - the big ones (for cars) approximately 3 ft. x 5 ft.
- 2) Clear contact paper
- 3) clean frozen juice can lids (one for each student and the teacher) - 2 1/2 inches in diameter
- 4) coloured construction paper (preferably a light colour)
- 5) two rolls of stick on strip magnets or other magnets that have a sticky back.
- 6) sentence strips
- 7) teacher Tac

Cover the oil pan with the clear contact paper.

Draw a simple grid. Six rows going horizontally works great. Leave about three or four inches open at one end to write in the answers to the questions. I left the right end open. This allows 14 votes in any one row.

Clean the juice can lids and cut circles to fit inside the lids.

Prepare the juice lids by attaching the magnets before giving them to the children. Have the children draw their faces (and their name inside the bottom arch) to make it special identification badge, or glue a photo to the lid.

At the beginning of every day, post a graphing question. Write it on a sentence strip or other paper and use teacher tac to attach it on the top of the graph board. Either first thing in the morning or when the children have an extra minute they move their face (juice lid) to place their vote. Take time during math to talk about the choices that everyone made.

### Venn Diagrams

"Here is a Venn Diagram/graphing idea. I use hula hoops on the floor for Venn diagrams. Make one for those who have sisters and one for those who have brothers. Children place their name cards in the correct circle. If they have both, try to have them figure out to make the circles intersect. If they have none, try to have them figure out to put their name tag on the outside of the circle. Estimate which section has more and transform it into a graph to check their guesses.

"Another great Venn diagram is alphabet letters that are straight, curved, or both. I do it twice - once for capitals and once for lower case. This can be transformed to a graph too."

"I do a Venn diagram almost everyday as a warm-up when they come in. I have their names laminated with a magnet on the back. I use the cute patterns you see on note pads that go with my class theme (ocean life, teddy bears, hockey pucks...). I write a question of the day on the board and they put their name either inside or outside the circle (yes/no) to answer the question. This is a spring board for many math ideas and comparisons. My circle is a hoola hoop that I hang over my magnetic chalkboard. As the year goes on I add another hoola hoop for the Venn diagram."

### Making Patterns

"Here is an autumn pattern exercise. We made a big tree on the bulletin board. Then each student had a 'branch' and they were given a bunch of leaf patterns and were able to colour them and create different patterns-- some were basic, ABAB, and others were really complicated. They came out great and we have a big colourful pattern tree in the room."



## Patterns

[http://ejad.best.vwh.net/java/patterns/patterns\\_j.shtml](http://ejad.best.vwh.net/java/patterns/patterns_j.shtml)

Children will love to 'play' on this site, making a variety of patterns or pictures with the shapes.

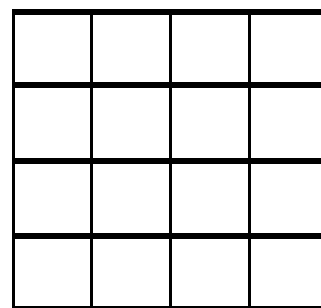
"I always do an activity with symmetry using pattern blocks. We have stickers the same colour and shape as the pattern blocks. After the kids make a symmetrical design on their desks with the blocks I have them repeat it on black paper using the stickers. They look great and the kids love them. If you don't have stickers you could have a volunteer parent cut shapes on the paper cutter using the same colours and shapes as your blocks."

"Patterns are one of my favourite topics. We do a great activity that I've probably been doing for 15 years. It's an old Math Their Way idea, I think. I coloured pasta with large holes (This particular batch was penne) with food colouring and a bit of rubbing alcohol in a Ziploc baggie. Then I prepared pieces of yarn about two feet long for each child. I put a bit of masking tape around each end to prevent fraying. Help them tie the first piece of pasta onto one end to prevent them from all falling off.

We've been doing lots of patterning activities for several weeks. Their favourite is probably people patterns (also from Math Their Way.) We just translate the pattern of the day (something like triangle, triangle, square) into a people pattern (like boy, boy, girl and they stand up.) We also practice naming patterns with AB, ABB, ABC, etc. Sometimes I'll throw a growing pattern in so they get used to them (Like abaabaaab.) I have tons of hands-on pattern centre materials they use with pattern blocks, unifix cubes, rubber stamps, etc. I introduce the necklace project by telling what they're going to be doing and how it will help them to decide on their pattern ahead of time and get it on paper. We brainstorm lots of different ones on the board, they pick one and colour little circles in a row to represent their pasta. I show them the colour options, too. I only have three colour choices. They label their pattern with ABB, etc. Then they use that as a guide while stringing their necklaces. I am always amazed at how much they love the necklaces! I plan to make some out of Froot Loops next week, too."

"Make grids with squares of about one inch each and make them of several dimensions. 3x3, 4x4, etc. The kids either glue paper shapes of some sort or draw or use rubber stamps to create a grid pattern. It's a good learning experience because they try the same pattern on a different grid and it will come out differently. Like red apple, red apple, green apple: keep going along the grid. It will make a different checkerboard kind of look on a different grid setup.

"With the grid, try having them use their names to make a pattern....it turns out really neat and they look at each other's to see lots of different patterns.



ericericer    stephanies  
icericeric    tephaniest

Continue .....They colour the squares appropriate colours."

## Estimation

Dear Parents,

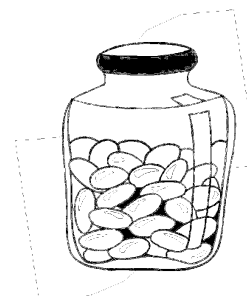
This is our "estimation jar!" Please help your child to make a collection of any items that will fill our jar. All of the items need to be the same. Please keep the number of items under 100. If you choose to send a food item, please make sure that each is individually wrapped. For example, jellybeans do not come wrapped and therefore we are not able to count them and then eat them. After the collection is made, please help your child count and recount the items. Your child is not to tell anyone how many items are in the jar. The class will estimate and count the items together. Please send a note with your child telling the exact amount in the jar.

*Some suggestions are:* peanuts in the shell, sea shells, paper clips, pom-poms, milk bottle tops, crayons, pumpkin shaped candies at Halloween and other holiday theme items, key chains, sidewalk chalk, marbles, erasers, dry noodles, cotton balls, wrapped candy, pretzels, Q-tips, beads, old keys, Barbie shoes, match box cars, pens, safety pins, buttons, spools of thread, toy soldiers or action figures, Styrofoam peanuts, rocks, bread/garbage bag ties, beans, pennies, stones, Legos, or basically anything that will fit inside. Be creative! I will also send home a list of what has been brought in so far. I ask that you please try not to duplicate so we can get a different experience each time.

The jar will come home to you on Friday night. Please return the jar on Monday morning. Please see the monthly calendar to determine when your turn is. This jar helps to make learning estimation skills a little bit more interesting! Thank you so much for your help and support with our estimation adventures. We greatly appreciate your time and assistance."

"I do an estimation jar each day. This really helps the kids with their number sense. They have to write their guesses down on a class chart each day and the student who is closest takes the jar home for the next day. We always discuss the counting strategies they used. I make a guess each day also. I try to model strategies the kids can use such as counting out ten objects and trying to estimate how many groups of ten they see, thinking about when they have seen similar amounts in the jar before, using other things they know (for example, crayons come in boxes of 64, maybe Jane used the entire box or Q-tips come in packages of 300...). There are endless ways you can enrich and reinforce with an estimation jar incorporated into your meeting."

"My students fill the jar. The student whose estimate is the closest gets to take the jar home. I let the kids figure this out. Sometimes it is difficult. Yesterday the answer was 58 and most thought 50 was closer than 62, so we used our 100 number chart to decide. I keep track of who has the jar on a checklist. If someone has had a turn that 'round' he/she chooses someone still eligible to take it home. I keep the guessing chart beside my lunch graph. The boys and girls write their guesses when they arrive in the morning."



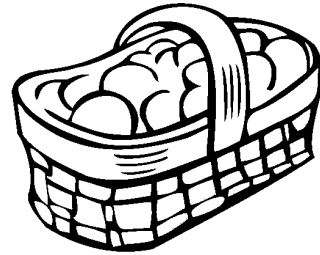
"I use a plastic peanut butter jar. The kids bring in the items...it can be anything that fits. Some popular items are candies, beans, Lego, and cotton balls. Some of the kids and parents get very creative. One girl brought in the jar filled with soybeans. There were over 6,000 of them. Then she and her dad weighed the jar and figured out how many soybeans would be in one truckload. I forget how many million it was, but it was neat to know! The kids always tape the answer to the lid so that it doesn't show. If the answer is showing or 'leaked out', we don't count any of the guesses and I simply choose a new student for the next day. Believe me, they learn quickly to keep that answer a secret!"

"I supplement my math meeting with an estimation jar. The kids get practice in recognizing and writing numbers, plus this really helps improve their sense of number. I just use a big peanut butter jar. On the meeting board I have two rolls of adding machine tape hanging beside a poster with the kids' names. They write their estimates beside their names when they arrive in the morning. We cut the guesses off and pull down fresh paper at the end of each day. The student who has the closest estimate each day gets to take the jar home. (If the winner has already had a turn this round, he/she chooses someone to take it home. If there is a tie, I have the kids involved pick a number between 1 and 100.) At home, the child counts out something to be estimated, puts it in the jar, and tapes the answer written on a piece of paper face down on the bottom of the lid. You would be surprised how accurate the boys and girls become by the end of the year. For the first nine weeks, I ask that the number of objects in the jar be less than 100. After that, any number is fine."

"I'm doing this with my calendar this year: I have a puppy head with the words 'Boning Up On Estimation' above it. Then there are little bones around it with the children's names on them. I'll pin a clear baggie with items in it on the puppy's mouth for the children to estimate each morning. When they come in, they'll write their estimation (with an erasable marker) on the bone. We'll check it during calendar."

#### For Fall:

Estimate how many ... leaves in the basket  
... apples in the basket  
... seeds in the apple  
... pieces of candy corn in the jar  
... seeds in the pumpkin



They copy the sentence on paper provided:

I think there are \_\_\_\_\_. (finish the sentence).

They have to put their name on the paper and put it in the shoebox.

At the end of the week we check guesses. Sometimes we graph the answers. Then we count. Best guess gets a certificate. If it's edible we all share a piece (candy corn, for example) and send the rest home with the winner.

#### **'S.T. Mate'**

Practice estimation on a regular basis in your classroom with a plastic peanut-butter jar named 'S.T. Mate!' Give each student a chance to take S.T. Mate home and fill it with beans, pennies, candy, nails, or other items. During class, have the students write down their estimates of the number of pieces in the jar. Then let the whole class share in their counting. Recognize the student who had the best estimate by posting his or her name with the estimate and the actual count.

#### **Cooperative Estimation**

Put the students into groups of four and give each group a box of Cracker Jacks. Before they open the boxes, have the groups estimate how many peanuts and how many pieces of popcorn there are. Have each group guess what the surprise is, also! Once they have their estimations written down, let them open their boxes and count the peanuts and popcorn. Graph the counts and the estimates as a class and compare them. Have the students draw names to determine who gets the surprise.



### **Take a Good Guess** (Bulletin Board)

Make a paper gumball machine with paper-cut out gumballs and the title of the bulletin board 'Take a Good Guess.' Put a sheet of paper up on the interactive bulletin board that has 'Gumball Guesses' written on it. In the students' free time, they can go to the bulletin board, write their name and estimate of how many gumballs there are in the machine.

### **More Estimation**

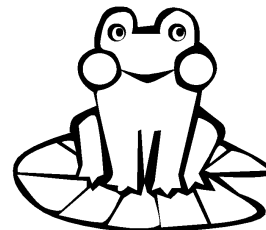
"I do a lot of estimation at class parties. I use the same container so the children can use previous estimates to help them. I write a chart to help them remember how much there were in the jar when we last did the estimation. For example, I might use candy corn, Christmas candy, valentine hearts, etc. Then, we count it by sorting it into tens and ones. If time allows, I let them change their guesses when we are about halfway through.

Another great estimation activity is to fill a cup with water and drop pennies in. The kids have to estimate how many pennies it will take to make the water overflow."

## **Place Value**

"I do a daily activity with straws during calendar time. This could be adapted for lessons as well. I have a pocket chart with only 3 pockets in it. I introduce it as neighbors that live next door to each other. 'People' (straws) start moving into the neighborhood, into the first house (ones). The problem is, there are only 9 beds in the house. When the 10th 'person' arrives, they are all such good friends, instead of kicking him out, they all move to the house next door (tens). The group is bundled with a rubber band and I explain that there are 9 beds in that house too, but when they are bundled, it counts as one."

"Make a poster with lily pads (or anything that suits you). Divide the poster in half, ones and tens. Under the ones side, have 10 lily pads and under the tens side, have 10 larger lily pads. Use lima beans, painted green to look like frogs, and have each frog jump on a lily pad. When all the lily pads are full, that signifies that it's time to move to a bigger pad! Scoop up the 'frogs' in a plastic cup and place the cup on the bigger pad under the tens."



"We have a calendar board that we work on each morning and part of it is keeping track of how many days we have been in school. To do this I use a small French fry cup (ones) and a large French fry cup (tens). A student comes up every day to put a straw in the small cup for today. Then when we get to 10 straws in the ones cup we say that there is only room for 9 to live in that cup so everyone has to move. When we move the straws, we say they bundle up because it is cold outside. (We put an elastic around the 10 straws.) Then they have to move next door into the 10's house. The student places the group of 10 into the 10's cup. Then we talk about how many groups of straws are in the 10's house and how many straws are in the one's cup. After this we write the number. Example: Thursday was our 70th day of school. The students were so excited because we were bundling. They said, 'You can't put that straw in the one's cup, you have to bundle them and move them next door.'"

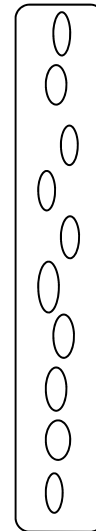
"Every day of school we count the days using many kinds of manipulatives. I have coffee stirrers in ten bundles with a rubber band. 58 was our last day, so I had five bundles of tens and they 'live' in the tens place which is a box stapled to a calendar, labelled Tens, then we have eight loose stirrers in the ones place, and another box labelled Ones. They add one stirrer every day and every time they get

to a ten they get to make a new bundle. We also put dot stickers on a ten grid every day. I copy a ton of these and every day we add one more. When a grid is filled to ten then it goes into the 'Ten's Place'. We physically move that grid from the ones place over to the Tens place. It is just a piece of laminated construction paper stapled to the calendar, labelled 'tens' and 'ones'. I have a hundreds place ready and hanging up so that when we get ten tens we will have them all living in the hundreds place.

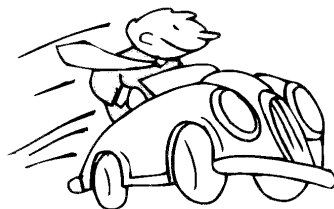
I also put little shapes up above the ceiling line of the room with all the numbers of the days of school. Each group of ten is a different shape, so I have ten apples, ten teeth, ten tennis shoes, etc.... Then we can count the tens and the leftovers everyday. This is also good for counting by 2, 5, and 10's. We put a co-ordinating sticker on each multiple."

"We play a game using a dice and unifix cubes ...and a paper (laminated) that has columns for tens and ones. They roll the dice in turns and take that many counters, then the next child has a turn. When they have more than nine the counters can't stay in the one's place so they have to move it to the tens as a whole stick (ten stick). Children continue to play until the time is up or they reach 100, or 10 ten sticks. They can see the tens as sticks and the ones are the unifix cubes."

"I like using bean sticks. They will take a whole afternoon to make by gluing ten beans onto each craft stick but once they are done you will have them for years. You use the bean sticks with a place value mat (construction paper of one colour for the ten's side taped to another colour for the one's side). They use single beans for the ones. They are so visually clear - the single beans vs. the glued stick of ten - that I think they 'make sense' to the kids. This year I made better mats - put two different coloured felts together instead of construction paper. They have made me so much less stressed when we are coin counting - the sound of all those coins rattling and clinking on 24 little desks was driving me up a tree! Now the rule is that they stay on the mat and things stay fairly quiet - there is still the stray coin that makes noise but nothing like before!"



"We colour in a square on a hundreds chart each day. The 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s are always coloured with blue; the 6s, 7s, 8s, 9s, 0s are always coloured with red. (That way we can count by fives as well as 10s.) The students can easily see how many rows of 10 and how many extras there are."



"I developed an 'odometer' out of construction paper for my kids to use when working with place value. It has a slot for ones, tens and hundreds, with three number strips from 0 to 9. We start with all strips at zero. While counting, we move the number strip through the ones column. When we get to nine, the strip comes out. We ask 'what now?' My kids have learned that they then have to move the tens strip up one number and replace the ones strip starting at zero. They get to see the number ten in the windows (slots) and also learn to carry over at the same time. Then we continue counting at eleven. It seems to be working. We have only been using it for a few weeks. We even learned how it applies to the real world by checking out things at home that might follow the same procedure (clocks, cars, VCR counters, etc.)."

# **Measurement**

## **Teaching Measurement**

### **Length**

- Begin by using non-standard units. Use paper clips, wooden rods, drinking straws, unifix cubes, etc. Make sure the children understand the principle of measurement with these, but don't spend too much time with non-standard units. Do comparisons - 'Find something as long as your pencil', 'Find something the length of your hand', etc.
- Grade One children need to understand the length of the metre and centimetre. With practice, they should be able to estimate lengths reasonably well. Without the ability to estimate, the understanding will be weak.
- Teach the metre. Have the children stretch their arms out to show the length. Check to see who is the closest. Can they estimate the length of the metre with their arms?
- When the children are familiar with the length of the metre stick, have them estimate the length of large objects in metres using their arms and then without. Using metre sticks, measure large things to see how close you have estimated.
- Teach the centimetre. It is about the width of a finger. Have the kids show the size of a centimetre space using the thumb and first finger. When the children are familiar with the centimetre, estimate the lengths of suitable objects in centimetres. See how close the estimates are using a ruler. (The hardest part of measuring an object with the ruler for some children is making sure the end of the object is at zero. Practice this.)

*Instead of using wooden or plastic rulers for measuring length, place a white ruler on the photocopier, cover with a sheet of white paper and print. Laminate and cut out a class set. Grade Ones play with plastic or wooden rulers and some are tempted to tap, tap, tap. Also, with the paper ruler the children can measure curves.*

### **Mass**

- Place a variety of objects on a table. Let the children lift the objects and decide which one they think is the heaviest and lightest. Try to put the objects in order. Are any of the objects similar in weight? Bring in the balance scales, and see which is the heaviest. Place one object, a book, for example, on one side of the balance scales, and see what other objects will combine to make the scale balance (be the same weight).
- Have each child feel the weight of 1 kilogram. Can they guess what objects might be close to this weight? This is difficult! Size changes our perception of weight. Use a weight scale to show the 1 kilogram, and then weigh the items that the children guessed to see how close to this weight the items were.
- The children may know approximately how many pounds they weigh, but they will likely not know how many kilograms. Weigh the children on bathroom scales that are marked in kilograms.



### **Capacity**

- Have a selection of different sized containers and have the children discuss which ones hold more than other ones. Have the children put them in the order that they think they might be.
- Let the children experiment with water or sand. Make sure they have the containers completely filled to the brim. If you can do this outside, it would be less messy!
- Has their order been changed? Show a tall drinking glass and a short broad one. Now which glass

holds more?

- Discuss the litre, and how a litre may take different shapes. Are the containers used more or less than a litre? Can the children estimate a few new containers and be more accurate?
- Discuss what comes in a litre container - milk, canned food, juice, etc.).

"For measurement - we do a lot of measurement around the school using parts of our bodies - the kids love to do this. How many fingers long, how many feet, how many arms, how many hands, etc."

## **Money**

### **The Money Poem**

Penny, penny,  
Easily spent.  
Copper brown  
And worth one cent.

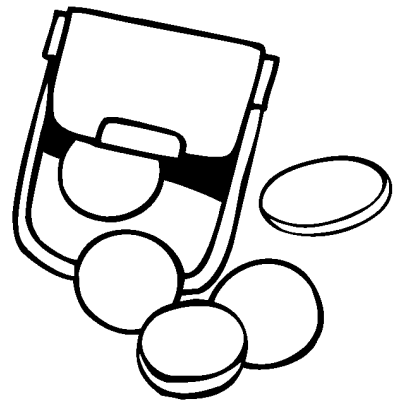
Nickel, nickel,  
Thick and fat.  
You're worth five cents,  
I know that.

Dime, dime,  
Little and thin.  
I remember,  
You're worth ten.

Quarter, quarter,  
Big and bold.  
You're worth twenty-five  
I am told

Loonie, loonie  
That's your nickname  
One dollar with a loon  
Is your fame.

Toonie, toonie  
Silver and gold  
You're worth two dollars  
So I'm told.



### **Money by fives**

"The children see a quarter and put five little marks around it signifying that there are five fives in a quarter. They can do the same for the dimes and nickels. All they need to do at the end is count the tally marks by five."

### **Counting Money**

"One of my students' favourite money centres was an outline of a coin purse. I glued coin pictures in a number of purses and then made slips of paper with the student's names. 'Karen has 16 cents.' 'David has 24 cents.', etc. They just match up the slip with the purse. They are self checking if you put a letter on the back of each.

Another was to play the 50 cent game (or \$1.00) game. Students roll the die and choose that many pennies. When they get 5 pennies they trade up to a nickel. When they get 2 nickels they trade for a dime, etc. We would use whatever coins they had learned and play to whatever amount seems appropriate. I made a game mat out of construction paper (laminated) with columns showing 5 pennies, 2 nickels, 5 dimes (2 dimes and a nickel), etc., to help them remember what the trades were."

## Words Worth

Have the Alphabet listed, A to Z. Under each letter give a value up to 5 then repeat. For example:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	etc.
1¢	2¢	3¢	4¢	5¢	1¢	2¢	3¢	4¢	5¢	1¢	2¢	3¢	4¢	

## Activities

Find words that are worth a nickel 5 cents. List them. *an cap*

Find words that are worth a dime. 10 cents. List them. *milk*

## Counting Money

"If you divide a file folder when opened into four vertical columns.....label the one on the right 'pennies', the one beside it 'nickels', the next 'dimes', the next 'quarters'. Have the children bring a bag of 10 pennies, 5 nickels, 9 dimes, and 3 quarters (\$2.00 total). They roll a cube that you have labeled with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 cents. They must put that amount on their board and then read the amount on the board. The partner with his board and money rolls and counts his board. The first fellow then rolls again and must add the new amount to his board, etc. When he uses all of his pennies he must exchange money. It's practice handling real money that seems to do the trick."

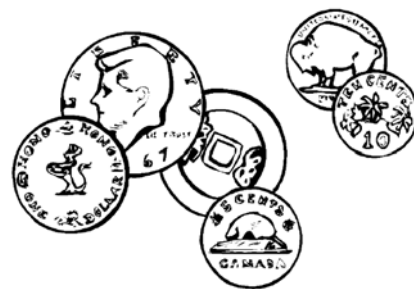
"We teach our kids to count everything by 5. We touch a nickel once, a dime twice (using pointer and middle finger) and a quarter 5 times (using all 5 fingers). Once they learn how many times to touch each coin it gets easy to count any group of mixed coins. We practice counting money every day with our everyday math folders."

"I do a really cute activity the students love. We make CENT-A-PILLARS. I photocopy coins and the students use coins to form a Cent-a-pillar. For example, they might glue in a caterpillar shape 3 dimes, 2 nickels and 5 pennies. On the back side they have to write the total. I put these CENT-A-PILLARS in the math center and the kids love figuring out how much each CENT-A-PILLAR is worth."

Twenty five cents,  
Money that rhymes,  
Take one nickel  
Add two dimes.  
Three fat nickels,  
One thin dime.  
Makes twenty-five cents  
Every time.  
Five fat nickels,  
No thin dime.  
Makes twenty-five cents  
Any time.

5 pennies make a nickel  
2 nickels make a dime  
2 dimes and a nickel  
make a quarter every time.

4 quarters make a dollar  
and that is quite a lot.  
And a dollar in my pocket  
is exactly what I've got.

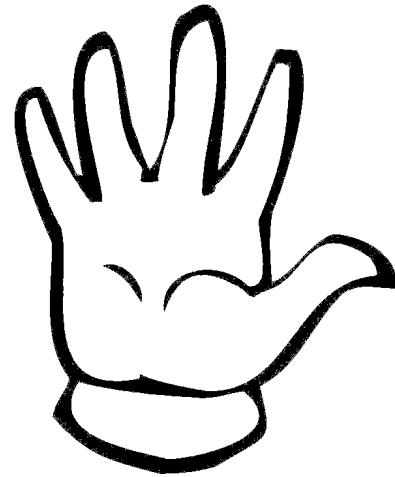


"I teach money all year long instead of as a two or three week unit. It has really helped my kids once I made this change. In September we use only pennies. We make the date with pennies during calendar time. We have a monthly art store with pennies. We might use pennies as counters for an addition game. Then we add dimes. So now we have dimes and pennies (place value). When we get good at this, I add nickels. Phasing in the coins slowly over the year has really helped."

"Another thing that I realized was that often children get hung up because they have difficulty switching from counting by 10's to counting by 5's or 1's. One of our calendar activities each day is to count on our number line. The leader can choose for the group to count by 1's, 2's, 5's, 10's, or backwards. Midyear I also have them count and switch. For example, I might say 'Today let's count by 10's until we get to 50 and then let's switch and count by 5's.' This rote counting has helped to prepare them for counting money.

### **Money Rap**

Well I know a song  
It's really kind of funny  
It's all about coins  
And learning to count money  
Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters  
Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters  
Now a penny means one (hold out 1 finger)  
And a nickel means five (hold out 5 fingers)  
Dimes are worth ten (hold out 10 fingers)  
And quarters twenty five (flash... 10 twice & then 5)  
Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters  
Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters  
Five pennies in a nickel (hold out 1 hand- fingers stretched)  
Two nickels in a dime (hold out 2 fingers)  
Five nickels in a quarter (hold out 1 hand - fingers stretched)  
You'll know it every time! (using both hands do a downward motion)



### **A Money Game**

"You need (real) pennies, nickels (you can adapt this to dimes, quarters, or even dollars), and a regular die.

Child 1 rolls the die...if the die lands on 5 then he takes 5 pennies (always take pennies.) Then he thinks...can I exchange the pennies...Yes....so he says 'exchange' and takes a nickel. (He keeps his nickel separate from the next child.)

Child 2 does the same... and keeps his money separate.

Child 1 goes again. This time he might roll a 6. He counts out 6 pennies and adds it to his nickel. He now has 11 cents. Can he exchange? Yes, so he says 'exchange' and exchanges. Now he has 1 dime and 1 penny. (Some children will need to exchange for the nickel and then to the dime...)

Continue in this manner until a child gets 4 dimes, or any specific amount that you want them to stop at. I start with just pennies and nickels and then when they understand that exchange add dimes...and go from there."

### **Money, Money!**

"With pennies and dimes, create a worksheet that has rows of 10 pennies copied on it and one dime at the end of each row. At the bottom of the page leave a blank space for the total amount of money.. (You can make one for nickels or combinations of coins, too.) Have the children roll one die. If 4 comes up, they put 4 pennies over the copied pictures of the pennies. When they get 10 pennies they exchange the pennies for a dime. When all of the rows are filled have them count by tens and fill in the total. You can demonstrate this on the overhead first or with them on the carpet. Use large dice

and large paper money on the carpet and have the children help you name the amounts. Then have them work either on their own or taking turns with partners. Make sure each sheet has a different amount of pennies and dimes so they have different totals. After a while you can integrate pennies, nickels and dimes and demonstrate how to start with the largest coin and count on (mental math)."

"I give parents the following suggestions regarding money:

1. Each night have your child count the coins in mom's purse or dad's pocket. Begin with just nickels and pennies. Introduce dimes and quarters as time goes on.
2. Play 'Race for a Quarter'. Get some change, a die, and a partner. The first person rolls the die and takes that many cents. The second person does the same. Keep taking turns. As you get enough money to trade for a larger coin, do so. The first person with a quarter is the winner. As you get better and better, play 'Race for Two Quarters' or even 'Race for a Dollar'!
3. Allow your child to make small purchases (e.g., gum, a pencil, etc.) under your supervision."

### A Penny Is One Cent

A penny is one cent (*stamp your foot*)

A nickel is five (*slap your thigh*)

A dime is ten cents (*clap your hands*)

A quarter twenty-five (*snap fingers over your head*).

How many cents have I on this try?

"For example: Snap, stamp, stamp ... would be 27 cents. I always begin with the largest coin and work down. The kids chant and do the actions up through the question. Then, they stop and I make up the amount. They shoot their hands into the air when they think they know. They enjoy this so much. I hear some of them chanting it softly as they are doing their money work independently."

## Time

### Telling Time

"Since telling time is so abstract for grade ones, we work with time every day during our calendar time from the first day of school. I work on time to the hour in the first term and change to half hour in the second term. I have an old analog school clock posted on a bulletin board without the plastic face cover. Children don't usually see the hands moving around a clock. They get to touch and manipulate the hands when it is their turn to be a helper. They move the second hand around while the remainder of the class makes a ticking sound. I always talk to them about the numbers, the lines of five in between the numbers, etc. When the hand reaches the top, I call on a student to declare the time. We also count by fives as we approach each number and we stop on the number 6 as we say 30. I tell them this will be important in January when we start telling time to the half hour. Then the helper writes the time on a digital clock I have beneath the analog clock. It is a construction paper digital clock enclosed in a wipe off plastic pocket. During the second term we move the hand around until it gets to the 6 and repeat above.

The results are interesting. I never really have to formally teach time. I simply do this daily and throughout the year we make clocks and play time telling games. With the exception of one or two students, I generally have all my students telling time to the hour/half hour and the students that are advanced can easily pick up the quarter hour and 5 minute interval times. I assess them with a simple folder game that asks for analog clocks to be matched to digital clocks with both hour and half hour combinations."



"When we teach time, each child has a small Judy clock that they keep on the corner of their desk. I also have a large Judy clock at the front of the room. On the hour and half hour the 'Helper of the Day' announces 'It's 9:00, please change your clocks to 9:00!' Then everyone changes their clock to the time announced. I often forget, so sometimes I set the timer for 30 minutes and when it rings then we all change our clocks."

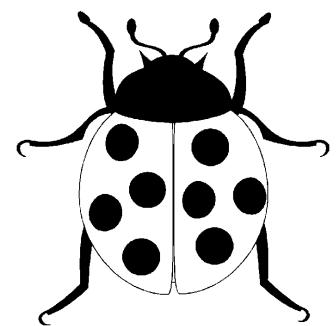
"I have the kids do a 'time-check' on a slip of paper. Throughout the day we'll stop whatever activity we're working on and I'll say 'time-check'. The kids immediately write the time down on that slip of paper. At the end of the day, I review each time with them with my Judy clock then they turn them in. It's great form of assessment!"

### Teaching Time

"It's a neat activity to have a **large** circle on the classroom floor. You can use tape or white/brown shoe polish to draw the circle (whatever your custodians prefer!). Then with the students helping, you can mark off the numbers on the clock, starting with the 12, 6, 3, and 9. Then fill in the other numbers. You can make a long hand for the minutes and another shorter one for the hour. Students can stand/sit on the numbers to be that 'o'clock' time. The students in my class enjoy lying down on the floor to show the time. Of course, they all have their individual clocks to manipulate while we do this and I find the overhead to be a valuable tool to help those having problems. The big clock makes it fun and the little clocks allow for the individual practice. This is done with the usual time activities. My kids like to 'play' with it at indoor lunch recess."

- Use a hula hoop to make a large clock. Students came up and used their arms to make the hands."
- You could have children make clocks from paper plates....Tell a story and have children turn to the correct times. You could make up the story....
- Do the Nursery Rhyme 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock' and change the times...have the children fix the times on their clocks.
- Play 'Sparkle!' Show clock times on flashcards. The children say the times flashed. Insert cards that say 'Sparkle' and the person after the sparkle card sits down. Children love to play that game."

"I have taught a time lesson by reading Eric Carle, *The Very Grouchy Ladybug*. It shows the passage of time by the hour. This could be a teaching lesson or a follow-up lesson. I use the book as an assessment. I read to about half way through the book then we stop and write predictions. The kids write about the next 2 hours and who they think the ladybug will meet. I give them a sheet of paper with a clock face stamped on it and they must draw the hands of the clock to match their writing. Their answer might be "At 3:00 the ladybug met a horse." So they need to show 3:00 on the clock with a minute and hour hand. I also use a large clock with velcro pieces when I am teaching time so the kids can manipulate the pieces."



"This is an activity to reinforce the concepts of time. What I do is have the time (by each hour) written up on a card. As we gather in the morning I hand out an hour card to 6 students.

10:00 11:00 12:00 1:00 2:00 3:00

"Each child's job is to keep track of the time and when the time on the classroom clock matches



the time on the card they glance over at me, hold up their card, and, if correct, I nod. Then they go and place the card on the counter and get a treat from the treat box. They really get good at telling time! Once they are good at time to the hour then I pass out both hour and half-hour cards. It's great to reinforce time!"

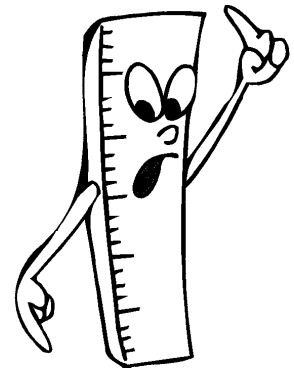
"Each student has a small plastic clock....we keep these in our desks...then the 'student of the day' is like a town crier, and calls out the time each hour: for example, "9:00 and all is well!" on every hour that we happen to be in class. It's really not as disruptive as it sounds...everyone quickly gets out their little clocks and sets them for the correct time, then we put clocks back in desks and go on with whatever we were doing. When we introduce time to the half hour, I have the kids change and call out the time to the half hour, not the hour. (for example, "9:30 and all is well!"

"The teacher next door took a close up picture (head shot) of each of her students with their arms spread out (like a 'T'). When she got the pictures back, she cut the head and arms out individually. She made one arm shorter than the other. Then she pasted the head in the middle of a clock face made out of construction paper and then fastened their arms with a metal fastener in the middle (which represented the arms of a clock). She said that her students just fell in love with it."

## **Math Centres**

"Here is a centre that my students enjoyed. I bought some wooden dowels and had them cut in different lengths. I labelled each one dowel A, B, C, etc. The task was estimating. The students picked a dowel, estimated how long it was, measured it and then looked at the letter and used the answer key to check their answer. The measurement used was centimetres.

Another centre is graphing. When we did it as a class, we used M&Ms, or other edibles. In the centre, you can use different coloured buttons, different kinds of beans or different shaped pasta. The students pick a container, group the items, then use graph paper to draw a graph to represent the items. What I like about this centre is that it can accommodate several students at the same time all drawing their own graphs in their group. The drawing can be checked in a second and problems noted for small group re-teaching later."



### **Computation:**

- Laminated cards with boxes for the answer (they clip these to a dry-erase board)
- Timed addition and subtraction tests (digital timer...they have 1-3 minutes depending on the test. They love to beat their previous time!
- Addition and subtraction dot-to-dot pictures
- Invisible answer computation sheets. I have these laminated and they use a vis-a-vis to mark their answer. Then they take a red cellophane 'wand' and scan over their paper...the answers are hidden in boxes beside each equation and they 'magically appear' when they look through the wand.
- Equation dice toss...roll 2 dice and figure the sum...write the equation above the sum on a number grid. The first player to fill a column is the winner.
- Store (money). They are given a set amount of money and some catalogs...they have to keep a tally as they 'shop'.... grocery store ads, book club order forms, menus, Christmas toy catalogs are all

good for 'Store'.

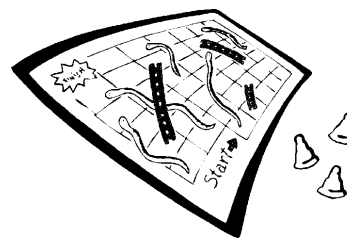
- Valuable words (money). I put up a chart with the alphabet listed. Beside each letter I put coin stickers (pennies, nickels, dimes). They take their list of spelling words for the week and find the value of each word.
- Sometimes I put a dictionary in the center and challenge them to find the most expensive word...they go through MANY trying to find a high value word!
- Taped quizzes...I record myself giving a short quiz. They listen, work the problem, then check. It's fun if you can get other teachers and administrators to tape a couple for you too...the kids love hearing people they know!
- File folder math activities
- Time stories...I tape a story I make up...'I got up at 7 o'clock and read for an hour. What time was it then...?' I provide the children with copies of blank clocks (from a clock stamp...but they could make their own if you are limited on copies). They have to draw the hands on the clocks to show the different times I'm talking about.
- Domino equations. Choose a domino, write the equations using the number of dots on each side, write the sum.

### **Centres Using Manipulatives**

- Pattern blocks...creating pattern block walls, creating symmetrical designs with a partner, creating a design in with blocks and a hinged mirror and then copying the larger reflected design, using templates and finding which blocks have to be used to fill the shape exactly, fraction practice (a trapezoid is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a hexagon...)
- Unifix cubes...pattern trains, probability, concrete bar graphs, greater than/less than games, even/odd games
- Multilink cubes...(many of the same activities as unifix cubes) 3-D shapes (geometry)
- Geoboards...numeral writing, patterning (with unifix cubes on top of the pegs), patterning cards (with rubber bands, geometric shapes, area, perimeter, 'Dots' (the game you play where you try to create boxes by connecting the dots...you can do the same with geoboards and rubber bands, they place a colour tile in the box when they make it...lots of critical thinking, observation, and strategy with that one!)
- Colour tiles...patterning, probability, area, perimeter, symmetry, acting out equations
- Wooden cubes...patterning, probability, 3-D shapes and designs, width/length/height ('build a shape that is 4 blocks wide, 6 blocks long, and 2 blocks high...what shape is it? rectangular prism)
- Junk boxes... I use them to 'act out' an equation, patterning, classification, attributes (I have keys, pom-poms, golf tees, bottle caps, milk jug rings, square bread clasps, marker lids, seashells, beans, pebbles, dog biscuits, buttons, marbles, seed packets, pasta, Christmas lightbulbs, squares of wallpaper, and postage stamps, to name a few)

### **Math Centre Games**

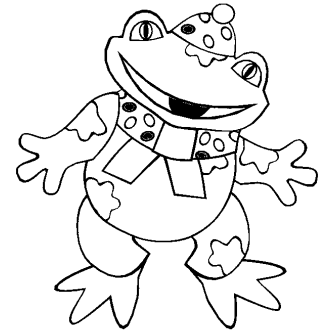
"Kids love this center, of course, because they just think they are playing! I have made several game boards from poster board and file folders. The poster board ones either have paint splotches in a path with little pictures or die cuts to decorate. Many are made from daily calendar pictures. I cut out the pictures and glue them in a path around the board. I add things like 'Jump ahead 2 spaces, go back to start, roll again, lose a turn' and laminated them.



"I went to Toys R Us and bought those little plastic character figurines (Pooh, Simba, Snow White, etc.) that they use for playing pieces and some dice. Often times I just put out the board, playing pieces, die, and a stack of addition/subtraction cards. One child takes a card from the stack, works the problem (mentally) and says the answer. If the other player agrees it is correct, the child gets to roll and move that many spaces. If they get the problem incorrect they don't get to roll. This is a popular game and all I have to do is change the board and the cards. Sometimes I use money cards where they have to say the value of the coin combination. Sometimes I use clock cards where they have to say the time. If you wanted, you could make these self-checking by writing the answers on the front. Instead of the first child picking the card the buddy picks the card and reads the problem FOR the other child. The child answers and the buddy can look at the card to see if they are right."

File folder boards can be made by using stickers to make the path or to decorate with and then laminated. Milk jug caps with stickers on them make great, inexpensive playing pieces.

"Some of the game boards are shower curtains that they spread out on the floor. (I have drawn the path and decorations with markers.) They use Beanie Babies for the playing pieces. I also like to use vinyl table cloths. My game area is close to my whole group area so there is room to spread out big game boards. The games are basically the same but changing the board makes it exciting!"



"Tic-Tac-Toe...They draw this on the dry-erase board. If they answer the problem correctly they get to put their mark. I also die-cut 2 sets of big X's and O's, laminated them and on the back of one set I put a piece of mag-netic tape. I use a big cookie sheet with coloured masking tape on it to make a tic-tac-toe board or they can draw one on the chalkboard that is magnetic and play the same way. You can use metre-sticks to make the tic-tac-toe grid. Variety is good!"

"Addition War...played with 2 decks of cards (Ace through 10 only) Played like regular War except they put 2 cards out at a time and add them together, largest sum gets all 4 cards.

Addition, Subtraction, Time, or Money Concentration: played like regular concentration except they have to match the problem to the answer. (This is a nice QUIET game!)

Dominoes...each player chooses 6 dominoes, they take turns to try to match the ends. If there is no match they have to choose another domino from the 'pool' until they find one that will play. The first one to match all his/her dominoes is the winner.

"Bang!...I made Pringles cans to look like a stick of dynamite. Inside are equation cards and 8 cards that say BANG! Their little hands fit perfectly inside these. They take turns reaching in and pulling out a card. If it is an equation card they read the problem and say the answer. If they are correct they get to keep the card, if they are in-correct it goes back in the can. If they pull out a BANG! card, they have to put ALL their cards back in but leave the BANG! card out (otherwise the game would never end)! They LOVE this game! (It also works well in a reading center, the cards have sight words or spelling words on them that they have to read.)"

"Go Fish...I got this game last year and the kids love it! It's not the regular Go Fish. This is a Fisher Price game. It has 4 little boats, fish cards and a suction cup fishing pole. The object of the game as it is, is to put all the fish cards face down and take turns fishing with the rod. If the bottom of the fish they catch matches the colour of their boat they get to keep it in their boat. If it doesn't match, they have to 'throw it back'. There are 4 fish with pictures on them (rusty can, old boot, anchor, and a tire) If they get one of those, they have to put ALL their fish back! We just added a twist to it. They have to answer a math problem correctly FIRST to be able to fish in the first place. The person that gets 4 fish in their boat first, wins! (I also use this in my reading games center.)

### Dice-Roll Prediction Game

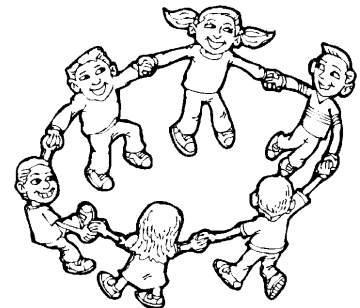
- 2 Players
- 1 die (Use 2 dice for more of a challenge)
- Dice-Roll Game Sheet (Make a sheet using 1 inch graph paper. On the bottom write the number of dots on a die. For 1 die use the numbers 1 - 6. For a pair of dice use the numbers 2 -12) On another piece of paper have children predict which number will come up the most.

Directions:

- Before you begin, predict which number will come up most often.
- Record your predictions on the game sheet by making an X or colouring in a box.
- Players take turns rolling a die. Both players then make tally marks next to the appropriate number on their tally game sheet. (You could also make tally marks on a piece of paper.)
- Play for 20 rounds. (You can play more for more of a challenge)
- When you have finished playing count up the boxes and record the results.
- See if your predictions were right.

## More Math Games

100 Buzz: Children stand in a circle. First person says 10, second says 20, third says 30 etc. until 100. That person says '100 buzz' and sits down. The game continues until there's only one person standing. My class absolutely loves the game and begs to play it each day. We've also been playing 50 Buzz (counting by 5s to 50), 20 Buzz (counting by 2s to 20) and today we did backward buzz (counting back from 20 to 10).



When reviewing 'Partners for 10' I put the children in pairs. Each pair got a deck of cards. They took out all the face cards. Remaining cards were placed face down on the table between the two students. They took turns picking up cards (one at a time). They placed these cards face up in front of them. The object of the game was to find two cards that added up to 10 (the more advanced students were able to find 3 cards). When the pile was empty they added up their paired cards, person with the most was the winner. It also worked well with 'Partners for 9' (just had to remove the face cards and 10 cards).

Another game that worked well with the 'Partners for \_\_\_' was a simple tile game. Again they were all in pairs. If we were working with the number 6 then each pair received 6 tiles. Partner A put all the tiles behind her back and then showed Partner B some of them (e.g., 4 tiles). Partner B then had to figure out how many tiles were hiding behind Partner A's back. This was great practice for them and they really enjoyed the game.

"A game that works for me is to pair up my children. I then give them cubes or beans. Together the students count how many I give them (I start with a small number like 6). Then one closes his eyes while the other hides some under a small cup or tub. He then opens his eyes and tries to guess how many are hidden. They take turns hiding and guessing. Each time we play we add some cubes to the original number. I think the key is in the partners counting how many they start with. Later we write some subtraction sentences: 'We started with 8, my partner hid 4, and there were four still out. So  $8 - 4 = 4$ .'"

### **The Scavenger Hunt**

You need . . . 2 players, pencil and paper

To play . . . 1. Go on a scavenger hunt with your partner. 2. Find things that show up in 6 objects in two groups. 3. Say two addition facts that describe the two groups. 4. Write the facts down and give the sum. Ex.:  $2+4=6$ ,  $4+2=6$  5. When you are done, try it again.

### **Count On 3**

You need . . . 2 players, a ball or something to toss

To play . . . Player 1 picks a number from 1 to 9, then tosses the ball to player two. Player 2 counts on 3, then tosses the ball to Player 1. Player 1 picks another number from 1 to 9 and tosses the ball to Player 2. Player 2 counts on 3. 5. Change roles and try the game again. This time count on 1 or 2.

### **Hide and Peek**

You need . . . 2 or more players, 6 small objects (pennies, paperclips, etc.)

To play . . . 1. One player hides his or her eyes. 2. The other player picks up 6 small objects and puts some in one hand and some in the other. 3. The first player guesses how many are in each hand. 4. If the guess is wrong, try again. 5. If the guess is correct, the players switch roles.

### **Which Box?**

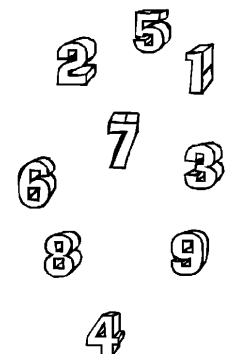
You need . . . 2 players, 2 or 3 small boxes, pencil and paper

To play . . . 1. Player 1 hides his or her eyes. 2. Player 2 traces one side of a box. 3. Player 1 looks at the drawing and tries to guess which box it matches. 4. The players check to see if the guess was right by placing the box on top of the drawing. 5. The players switch roles and begin again.

### **Guess the Number**

You need . . . 2 or more players, pencil and paper

To play . . . 1. Pick a starting number less than 100. 2. Pick an ending number less than 100 but greater than your starting number. 3. One player begins with the starting number. The player can write 1, 2 or 3 numbers in counting order. 4. The next player then writes the next 1, 2 or 3 numbers in order. 5. The player who writes the ending number wins.



### **Bean Toss**

You need . . . 2 players, pencil and paper, 1 counter such as a bean or penny

To play . . . 1. Make a game board. Fold a piece of paper into 16 parts. 2. Write the numbers from 1 through 6 on the game board. You will write the numbers more than once. 3. Player 1 tosses a bean onto the game board paper and tells the doubles fact for the number the bean lands on. 4. Player 2 tells the doubles-plus-one fact. 5. Keep playing, taking turns tossing the bean.

### Guess the Number

You need . . . 2 players, pencil and paper, 10 counters (beans or macaroni will do)

To play . . . 1. Start by drawing ten dots in a pattern like this. o o o o o o o o o o Put a bean on each dot. 2. Player 1 picks a number less than 10. 3. Player 2 takes away that number of beans and says the subtraction fact. 4. Keep playing until you use all the numbers you can subtract from 10. 5. Switch roles and play again. This time subtract from 11.

"Have you heard of '*Box Cars and One-eyed Jacks*'? It is a book of math games for kids using cards and dice. Vol I is for K-4 and Vol II is for Grade 1 - 9. There is another volume called 'Money Matters' for kids and another one called 'On a Roll to Spelling...and More'. These are the ones I have but there are probably more.

ISBN: 0-9695276-0-8 **Vol I** - math games for kids using cards and dice

Box Cars and One-eyed Jacks - Joanne Currah, Jane Felling, Cheryl MacDonald

ISBN: 0-9695276-1-6 **Vol II**

These books are Canadian.

<http://www.planet.eon.net/~boxcars/home.htm>

The books and games and wonderful!"

## Math Ideas

### Touch Math

"Touch Math is a way of teaching numbers, counting, addition, and subtraction. Each number is written with the corresponding number of dots on it. For example, 1 has 1 dot, 2 has 2 dots etc. They are always placed in the same spot. I have used this method as a supplement to my 'regular' math for three years now. The grade two teachers really like that we use it. They say that the kids memorize the location of the dots and therefore do not count on their fingers. For those who say that the students do not internalize the math facts, I believe that for the most part they are wrong. However, there are those kids who continue to count using the dot system instead of memorizing. These are the same kids who would probably be counting on their fingers if they did not know this method. I say whatever works, works for me!"

For more information go to <http://www.touchmath.com/learn.how.php>.

### Odd and Even

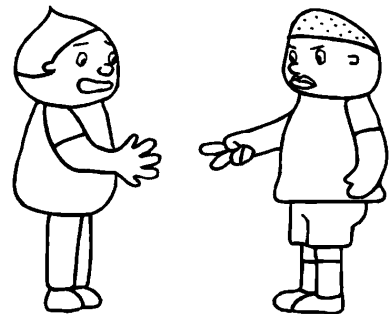
"We've been using this chant.

0, 2, 4, 6, 8 - even numbers are just great!

1, 3, 5, 7, 9 - odd numbers are just fine!

For numbers above 9, I tell them to look at the digit in the ones place and it will be one of the chant numbers (0-9) and that will determine whether it is even or odd. They love it when I start writing really long numbers - in the millions - and we can tell if it is even or odd just by looking at the ones place.

I also do the old Math Their Way thing where they put a unifix cube up for each day of school that month. They make them into pairs and we talk about how when they are all paired up it is even and when there is one left over it is odd."



*(Sung to the tune of B-I-N-G-O)*

There was a farmer who had a pig,  
and Even was his name-o.  
0,2,4,6,8; 0,2,4,6,8; 0,2,4,6,8;  
And Even was his name-o.

There was a farmer who had a cow,  
And Odd was her name-o.  
1,3,5,7,9; 1,3,5,7,9; 1,3,5,7,9;  
and Odd was her name-o.

Even numbers make pairs,  
Odd numbers have one left over.

Each day as you line the children up for recess, discuss how many children are at school. Will they be 'odd' or 'even'? Will everyone have a partner or will there be one person left over?

### Odd and Even

Odd Odd Bees in a hive,  
1 and 3 and then there's 5.  
Even Even Bugs on sticks.  
1 and 4 and then there's 6.



"Have all the children stand and hold hands with a partner. If everyone finds a partner, it's an even number. If someone is left alone, it's an odd number. It an easy visual."

"I do an odd/even count during calendar everyday. Each day we add a new cube matching it with the cube of the day before to make an even number, or starting a new set making it an odd day. We do this for the month and start over with each new month so we are only counting the days we are in school for each month. We use unifix cubes in two colours. Everyday I ask the students if it is an odd or even day. We also count by twos and then start identifying even numbers."

"I have several things I do. I read a book called *Even Steven and Odd Todd* by Kathryn Cristaldi. It is available in paperback or hard cover. The book is hilarious. We go through each item in the book and discuss why it is even/odd."

"Write out the words ODD and EVEN. Pair up the letters in each word: OD D EV EN The letters in ODD have an odd man out without a partner, the letters in EVEN all have partners."

### Talking It Over

"I always thought I was making my kids think until we started a new math series. I complained all last year that what I had been doing worked better ... but now I realize the missing link is talking about what we are doing. The kids need to sit down after they do an exploration of any kind and they need to talk it out. It's amazing how the children think about what they are doing and getting them to explain it to each other helps those that aren't thinking about it, just trying to get through it. Now we sit in a circle after each math class (well, maybe every other) and those who want to talk, tell about how they did whatever they did or what they discovered. I still have those that look like they aren't listening (and maybe aren't) but I've seen a big increase in participation and thought."

### Teaching Ordinals

"My kids always loved playing bus. I would set out several chairs and on the side stick a paper that said 1st - first, 2nd - second, etc. I'd usually start with 5 or 6 chairs and then grow to 10 or 12. Then I would fill the bus by calling on students to sit in the 1st, 2nd, etc., seats. Then I would tell a bus story as the kids would bounce up and down on their seats and lean this way and that according to the story. For example, the bus went down the street and turned left, it crossed a railroad track and stopped to let the passengers in the 2nd and 5th seats get off. One passenger, named Steven, got on and sat in the 5th seat. I would have the bus come to sudden stops so that they would all lean forward and plop back. After awhile I would call on a student to tell what the bus did next and who got off and who got on. They never got tired of this.

"Another thing I would do is call them to line up by ordinals. After I had a few lined up I would call someone and tell them to take the 3rd position in line. This didn't use the words, but gave them practice with position."

"I made large word cards (first, second, etc.) and the children took the top one as they arrived in the morning. We then put them in order as part of our opening. They really seemed to enjoy this and could sequence themselves. No one wanted to be tardy those few weeks."

"I do this with a twist - I do 'Mrs. Ritter says' (instead of Simon) and say things like 'Mrs. Ritter says the fifth person in line will put their hands on their head'... 'The third person in line will touch their nose' ... etc. It's fun and gets them all thinking! I LOVE line-up games!"

### Make Thermometers

"I usually have my kids make a thermometer each year using stiff tagboard. I copy a thermometer scale onto it and then cut slits at the top and bottom to put red and white ribbon through. The red is about 4/3 the size of the thermometer and the white is about 2/3 then when you tape the 2 together they make a continuous loop and they can use it to move the join to the temperature of the day."



"We have the students make a thermometer using an oaktag rectangle that's about 2" x 9" and has the numbers written on it, and a white shoelace. Students punch a hole in the top and bottom of the thermometer to loop the shoelace through and tie in the back so it is circular. The shoelace is half white and they colour the other half red so it can be pulled up and down to show the temperature."

### Numbers About Me

"Numbers About Me' is actually a workbook that comes with our math series (Everyday Math). I believe you could easily make one on the computer that is similar in format. We start out with their self-portrait on the first day. The remainder of the pages gather a lot of the information from their homework. Our math series has what it calls a homelink, that the children complete each night with their parents. The night before we work in our 'Numbers About Me Book', their homework often asks for specific information, so they can simply copy it into their books the next day.

The second page of their book asks for their first name, second name, and last name. It asks how old they are and they draw that number of candles on a cake. They also give their phone number and any emergency numbers they have. (They get these from their homework.)



On page three we measure their height and record it for the beginning of the year. We measure them again around Christmas and again at the end of the year. We measure in inches and centimeters. We calculate their change in height over the course of the year.

On page four they use their homework information to complete the following:

There are \_\_\_\_ people living with me. The tallest is \_\_\_\_\_. The shortest is \_\_\_\_\_. The oldest is \_\_\_\_\_. The youngest is \_\_\_\_\_. There is (are) \_\_\_\_\_ pets living with me. Here is a picture of my family.

Page five has different body parts drawn on it such as a finger, a hand, their foot, a fathom, a hand span, a pace etc. Partners work together with measuring tapes to measure each other's body! It is a sight to see!

Page six they trace their hand with fingers spread apart and they measure their handspan and record it here.

Page seven they trace their foot and measure the length and record it here.

Page eight we calculate together. They tell the year they were born. The year they turned one etc. The page looks like this: 19\_\_\_\_ I was born. 19\_\_\_\_ My 1st birthday 19\_\_\_\_ My 2nd birthday, etc.

Page nine has a diagram of their mouth and each tooth is numbered. They tell the date they lost a tooth, the number of the tooth, and the month the new tooth came in. (This is completed on their homework with mom and dad the night before.)

Page ten has timing activities that partners complete together. They see how far they can count in 15 seconds, how many times they can blink their eyes in 10 seconds, how long they can stand on one foot or hold their breath, etc.

Page eleven they do the night before and copy it into their books the next day. They measure their favourite toy's height and width and draw the toy.

Page twelve we weigh them and record their weight in lbs and kgs. We determine the typical weight for a grade one student and we compare their change from the beginning to the end of the year.

Page thirteen has a mailing envelope drawn on the page and they fill out their first and last name and their complete address."

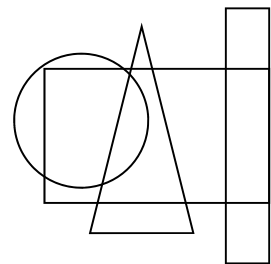
## Shapes

Sandy Square is my name.  
My 4 sides are just the same.  
Turn me around - I don't care!  
I'm always the same.  
I'm Sandy Square.

Tommy Triangle is the name for me.  
Count my sides.... There's 1, 2, 3!

Ricky Rectangle is my name.  
My 4 sides are not the same.  
2 are short and 2 are long,  
Count my sides...come on along!  
1, 2, 3, 4!

I'm Cindy Circle, watch me turn.  
I go round and around - you will learn.  
I'm not straight, and I don't bend.  
My outside edges never end!



## Math Wall

Make a chart for each number you study. On the chart put all the addition and subtraction combinations that total your number.

### **Edible Math**

"The students can review a variety of math skills at this tasty learning center. Place a box of colourful breakfast cereal and a supply of three-ounce paper cups at the center. The student fills one cup with cereal. Then she uses the pieces to complete a variety of tasks. Post the following tasks in the center and a worksheet with the following:

- estimate how many pieces are in the cup and then count them to find the actual amount
- determine if the total is an odd or even number
- count the pieces by twos
- determine which colour has the most number of pieces
- create a colour or shape pattern
- after the sheet is finished and turned in, the student may eat the math!

### **Lesson Closure**

"I usually get my 20 kids back up front for a final few minutes (closure) at the end of every math lesson. Today after we talked a minute about the activity they just did, I told them I would dismiss them by counting down. They were to start with 20, and raise their hand if they knew the next lower number. The first child said '20' and could go back to his seat, then the next one said '19' and could go, etc. When I had a mistake (someone said 16 and the next child said 17 instead of 15) they had to stay there and try again. Of course when they tried again the numbers were lower. It was a quick way to send them back and accomplished something at the same time."



### **Christmas Chain Math**

"We are building a green chain tree in our room. As my kids worked on it yesterday their directions were they had to have 9 dark green and then one bright green ring. As they do one section they continue it with the same pattern. They continued that activity for about 15 minutes. Tomorrow we will take the chains they've worked on and put them together from where each child left off, but we have to continue the pattern. I will take one chain and ask the child how many more dark ones they need to get nine."

### **I Have / Who Has**

"One of my class's favorite games is I Have/Who Has. I started with index cards and wrote on the first one 'I have 3. Who has 7+2?' Then on the next card I wrote 'I have 9. Who has 4+3?' then... 'I have 7. Who has 9+9?' etc..... I pass out a card to all the kids and they can't show them (though at the beginning of the year they can to help each other. The teacher starts with her card. Students read their card if they have my answer. We time the game until it comes back to me. Lots of fun and they really try hard. You could do subtraction or almost anything that requires a question and answer."

### **Problem Solving**

"This time of the year, I've been having the children write a story problem as homework and we complete them in class. This is done twice a week. We go around the room throughout the week until everyone has had a chance to read his problem and to discuss the question in the problem. It gets them writing and doing math. They must have the answer and they get to choose the raised hand that has solved the problem."

"I tell stories that I act out with manipulatives on the overhead. I put the kids in circles, give them manipulatives and they act out the stories I tell. Then we do the problem together so they can see the correct answer. We have math story journals where the kids write their own stories. These are helpful. They draw the picture that goes with the story.

Most importantly, I do not view Grade One as the time that kids will understand math story problems perfectly. It is a time to introduce them to the concept, the terminology and to let them experiment with problem solving."

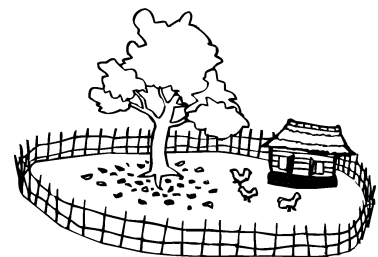
"In the beginning of the year I do more verbal problem solving questions with the kids either using manipulatives or drawing pictures. "If Sue has 5 bears and she gives 2 bears to Mark, how many bears does she have left?" I help the kids to focus on the words 'how many left', 'how many altogether', 'how many more than' so that they begin to learn the language of some problems. Then after Christmas I start to do a problem of the week and slowly increase it to several problems a week. Some I do verbally, some on paper and others on overhead.

I also create a few extra workbooks with problem solving questions that the students work in when we have some extra time on our hands. I sometimes use this book to give the kids a break from whatever other math concepts we are covering. I also do other types of problem solving - how many circles on a page, hidden pictures, word finds, etc. I think it is important to try to expose kids to different forms of word problems including those that are not math related as well as those that are.

I do other types of problem solving in measurement (how many books will cover your desk), estimating and even in science. If I can link other subject areas I do. Right now most of my problems are based on addition and subtraction, although now that we have started shapes I will focus on some new problems for this area. I make extra language arts workbooks for students to work in when they finished all their other work. I make them at the level they are reading, so for my middle-upper group I have included problems within this workbook. For example, they have one page where they have to figure out where someone is living in an apartment. They have a picture to help them. 'Mr. Goose is on the first floor. Mrs. Squirrel lives in room 9', etc. I also have them do problem solving sheets with missing addends.

A good site for word problems is <http://www.mathstories.com/> I have used quite a few from here."

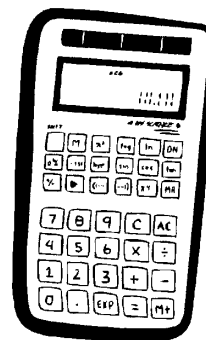
"I just did this one with some children and it was fun. Give each child 20 unifix cubes, and grid paper that matches (about a 2 cm. grid). You may need to tape two pieces of grid paper together to make the grid big enough. The cubes are 'fences'. Each cube goes on one of the squares in the grid. The object is to build an enclosure for your pet 'Mathemals' (take off on 'animals'). The Mathemals each fit on one square of the grid paper too. You have to have the fence touch but it can be vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. You can't leave any openings or your Mathemals will escape. When your fence is built, count the squares inside to find out how many mathemals your fence will hold. You can colour the squares as you remove the cubes and then number the inside squares. The challenge: find a way to make a fence using exactly 20 cubes that will hold the most Mathemals. This worked well with my Grade 1s and 2s. Some got quite involved in redoing the fence. You might want to have extra paper so once they get the idea of how to make it bigger, they can try again."



### Using Calculators

To introduce the children to calculators do simple things like:

- Show them how to turn it on and off.
- put in their age.
- teach them how to clear.
- put in their phone number.
- put in their house number.
- then simple addition - 1 add 1, age add one, 2 add 2, 3 add 3, etc.



### Domino Math

- Teach the children how to play dominoes.
- Make paper dominoes. On successive days, the children could use white crayon on black paper cut to the size of dominoes to make domino patterns to match the real ones. Start with ways to make 0, 1, and 2 on the same day. Make paper dominoes that total 3, continue with 4, etc. and do one number each day. Another idea is to have each child put sticky dots on black paper to make a domino. These could be laminated and used for lots of math activities.
- Pick a domino and make up a number story about the numbers chosen.
- Show that the amount stays the same whether you add them with either number first. Discuss which way the children think is easiest. (Usually that is the largest number first, as you would do the number line.)
- Match number words with total number of dots on the dice.
- Play war with dominoes. The children draw one from a pool of dominoes upside down on the table. Each player has to tell the total number of dots on the domino he/she picked, and the player with the highest number takes the dominoes played in this turn. The player with the most dominoes at the end wins. (You can reverse the game, and the player with the least number of dots wins.) In case of a tie, these players draw another domino and the largest totals wins all of the dominoes that turn.
- Fact family dominoes - each domino has four stories (except doubles). Introduce the activity use the overhead dominoes and do some fact families together as a class. The students can draw houses with roofs and 4 rooms. The roof should have 3 numbers used in number family. The 4 rooms hold the facts.
- Make a booklet. Each child can draw a domino and write the four facts that goes with it.
- Use the dominoes to test for immediate recognition of numbers or math facts.

### More Domino Math

- "We use dominoes to help us practice math facts and to learn about turn around facts. First we sorted dominoes by the number of dots on each.
- We added the dots on each domino together and sorted them by their totals.
- Draw a domino. Roll a die to see how many dots to place on one side of your domino. Roll again to see how many dots to make on the other side.
- Give each group of 4 a calculator, chalkboard, chalk and a domino. Using the numbers on the domino, groups should write the number sentences for the fact family on the chalkboard. Students can take turns writing the sentences and showing them on the calculator. When they are finished, groups can show the teacher their work, then get another domino and start again.
- We looked at the different combinations that can equal the same number.
- We add dots on the dominoes while playing a game. The sum of the dots tells us how many spaces to

move.

- We made paper dominoes to match our wooden dominoes.
- We recorded an addition sentence and the turn around fact for each domino.
- We made dominoes out of graham crackers, marshmallows and frosting.
- Add the two numbers together.
- Subtract the smaller number from the larger number.
- Give each group of 4 one domino, 1 chalk board and 1 piece of chalk. The first person writes down an addition fact that goes with the domino and passes the chalkboard to the right. The next person writes another addition fact and passes it on. The next two children write the two subtraction facts.

### **Assorted Math Ideas**

Plant one or more amaryllis about Nov. 1. Measure it every day and write about it in journals. Estimate how tall it will be and when it will bloom. It should bloom before the Christmas vacation.



Make Christmas stockings. On each sock put a number you wish to review. The children take cards with the problems and put them into the correct stocking. For example, put the card with  $3 + 6$  into the '9' sock.

"We play a really simple game that the children love. It is called 'Could Be'. I choose a number and write a fact for that number on a post-it. I might say, "The number is 8." The children take turns giving me number facts that equal 8. If I wrote down  $6 + 2$  and they said  $7 + 1$ , I would say, "Could be, but it isn't!" They continue to try until someone gets the correct answer."

### **Conservation of Number**

*The following was written by Vici, a US teacher who has belonged to the 'grade\_one' listserve for years. This is used with her permission.*

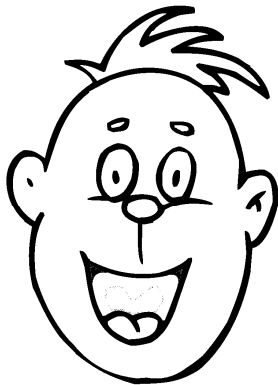
"Conservation of number is demonstrated when children are able to 'count on' as well as recognize that amount is not innately related to size. Conservation can refer to pouring water from a fat low glass to a tall thin one and asking a child if the water in one container is more or less or the same ..... they say there is more and you ask why and the answer is logical to a non conserver....it is taller. They do not comprehend that no water was added or deleted, even though they saw the water conserved or saved.

Take that principle and move it to numbers and you have a child who must count by ones to five each time he adds 5 plus 1, then adds 5 plus 2 and then 5 plus 3. He counts again and again 1,2,3,4,5 ... and then adds 1, or 2, or 3. The child is unable to conserve the 5ness of saying the word 5. Sometimes children are not ready to conserve. They have not had enough number experience, they are not developmentally ready, and sometimes they are stuck and need a bit of a push. You can demonstrate how to conserve, practice "counting on", prove that it works, and then step back and see if the child carries on when you turn your back. Using a calendar to count by ones, then by twos, then have the numbers moveable so that you can move odd numbers in a week to combine with other odd numbers to

make, let's say, a 5 for easier counting by fives, is showing conservation. Then put them back and there you go .... no days were added, none deleted so we still have X days so far this month.

Rearranging numbers or scrambling them without adding or taking away any is commutation or the commutative principal which applies to addition and multiplication and that too can be practiced and demonstrated, but until a child really internalizes conservation or commutation, they are not really comprehending what they are doing. That limits their ability to do creative problem solving. They do not see the potential that numbers really have to be manipulated for that purpose and are formula dependent.

I have done a little messing about with number visualization. Because I do have an unusually poor memory, I have my own bag of tricks that I was fortunate enough to invent as a child. So now that I teach children who at times have great difficulty with number sense, I can try to provide them with some of my own gimmicks. One thing I do is teach them that you can hear and experience amounts. We do lots early on with clapping one, then two, I do it, they listen, again and again, then they do it and listen ... it is very experiential. I got the idea from Roger Rabbit .... the part of the cartoon where they are looking for him and they knock on the wall tap taptap tap tap tap tap. Shave and a haircut two bits Roger could not resist saying two bits. You do something enough times and you can hear it in your brain, so I started establishing number awareness in the auditory sense in hopes it would help one or two real auditory kids.



Then I moved to visual, but not abstract as in dots. It has to be a picture ... eyes .... that is two .... two eyes, look at two eyes ... then look at and draw two dots ... they are two eyes .... close your eyes and see the two dots ... I show them how I can point to them in my brain ... with my finger in the air and my eyes shut .... 3 is two eyes and a nose ... that odd lonely little nose...seeing as how we don't have two noses .... or some can visualize Mickey Mouse ears and nose better than that .... those two big floppy ears. Four are the comers of a box ... they can all close their eyes and touch the comers of the giant box in front of them. Five is the box with the dot in the middle. We talk and do it and count them and then I have them put a Mickey and a Mickey together and count them by ones and they go 1,2,3,4,5,6 just as nice as you please.

Sometimes children are not aware that they have these resources available to them and after you show them how to use them and that they are there, they can add it to their bag of tricks. With the clapping, I use it to force feed conservation. As some are waiting for the bulb to go on, they still have to get some work done so we count objects by ones up to say ... 5 and then I scoop them up, plop them in a clear bucket and say, 'What did you say this was?' They are more likely to say 5 than 1,2,3,4,5; but then I count them again and then slide over, say two more and as fast as I can say it, say, 'Keep going!' We do races - 'You start at one and I will start with 5.' If they have practiced 'claps' they can clap 2,3,4, and even 5 if they draw a picture in the air as they do it, so they say and then clap what they are adding - so it would be 5 clap, clap, clap for plus 3. They count on as they clap. It is a very sensory approach but for those children who hear it, it is like a miracle.

Like me! I am more likely as an adult, especially if I am having problems focusing, to use my visual

math rather than my memorized facts. 5 plus 7 turns into 7 plus 5 (commutation), and then 7 needs 3 to get to ten and that leaves me to make the 5 into three and two so I now have 10 plus 2. It seems convoluted, but that is how learning disabled kids do it. They rely on what they are good at and it is often not the fastest, but certainly as correct mathematically. I took a horrid memory and combined it with real understanding and having a feel for what number sense was and I can still 'reinvent' some of the formulas I used in high school. Had I never understood them, just memorized, they would be like ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

I have kids drop rocks in cans when they count also to make a loud articulate sound to help them count using one to one correspondence.

I like to choose a fixed number of students, starting with a small number and I have them hold hands, run them out into the hall, scramble them, and bring them back and we check to see if the amount changed. They love it .... I act incredibly exasperated that I can't change the amount. The more I scramble them, the more they love it!

We also do touch and add. Take two dice, roll them, touch and say the amount on the first (visual identification of amount because they have dots) then count on. After you do the dots on the dice, then switch to one numbered and one with dots. They say and touch the number and then count on with the dotted one.

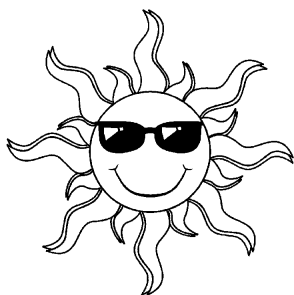
I call out numbers and they count on till you say stop. 21 they count on, 3 they count on ... like a fast drill. You will know who really has counting under their belt with that one as well.

Bless those of you who have good memories, and bless the teachers I had who believed you should understand what you were doing, not just memorize it and do it!"



# Opening Exercises

## Beginning the Day



"I find that setting the stage in the classroom before the children arrive helps to set the tone of the day. I write the lunch choices on the chalkboard with pocket slots beside the choices. Student insert their lunch card beside their lunch choice whenever they arrive.

I have some activity that students can do independently, a puzzle or review sheet or activity that the students can do. This is either on the children's tables or I give the directions to the first children and they direct the others as they arrive. Students are expected to hang up their belongings and begin to work promptly. I quickly do my morning paper work and am ready to begin class about the time that the students finish their incoming work.

My students know that we start the day with calendar and caring circle. I think having a definite routine is beneficial to young children. It provides a framework for them to feel secure."

## Attendance

"I print each child's name (first and last) on a 3x5 recipe card. I try and colour code the names to correspond with a table/group. I have 5 tables with 4 to 6 students at each table. All those sitting at one table are in green, blue, red, etc., or I use different coloured cards. As the students come in they find their name card and put it in an attendance box by the door to show that they are present. I used a large 1 L juice box that I cleaned out and covered. I just tacked it to the wall beside the door. This way I can tell if they know their name in print, which most do. Also those absent are left on the tables/desks until after morning business. I then collect these cards and put them in a separate baggy near the door. In case of an emergency I can grab the cards in the present box and do my attendance or if I want to pick a special helper I can just grab the cards and pick a name at random."

"Magnetic strips are wonderful! I've used them on the back of a snap clothespin. On the front is the student's name. When students come into the classroom in the morning, they move their clothespin from the Home section of the chalk board to their lunch choice for the day. If their choice requires a ticket, they take a ticket out of their individual pocket (library book pocket) from the class pocket chart and put it in the clothespin. After announcements, it's very easy to know who 's there, who's taking which hot lunch choice, who's taking cold lunch with or without milk. Because the students keep their tickets in individual pockets, they become very responsible. It's also much easier for subs."



Flash the name cards and have the children answer. If you mix the cards each day, the children have to watch carefully for their names.



### Greetings!

"Rig a Jig Jig goes something like this: Divide the class in half. One half becomes an inside circle facing out, and the other half forms an outside circle, facing in. The inside circle moves clockwise, the outside circle moves counterclockwise. While moving all chant -

A rig a jig jig and away we go  
Hi ho hi ho hi ho  
As I was walking down the street  
A friend of mine I chanced to meet  
Hi ho hi ho hi ho.....

On the last 'ho' the circles stop and the children greet whomever is in front of them. We keep going until everyone is greeted 2-3 times. It is a little tricky at first to get the circles to move and stop to greet someone new. My class asks for it daily!"

Hello Neighbour, *(make a large sweeping hi with your arm)*  
What do you say? *(bow)*  
It's going to be a hap *(clap)* hap *(clap)* happy day! *(clap clap)*  
So greet your neighbor *(give 1 neighbor a high five)*  
And boogie on down *(repeat 3-4 times as you twist down to the ground - well almost, some of us are getting pretty old for this)*  
Give 'em a bump *(with your hip)*  
And turn around. *(self explanatory)*

"My students love doing this and if I forget, they remind me. It is something new that I started this year and will definitely keep!"

### Morning Meeting Agenda

"My morning meeting agenda is:

1. calendar and date - I try to show a pattern on the calendar dates using differing colours for dates
2. sing the day of the week to *Where is Thumbkin?*  
Today is Tuesday, today is Tuesday,  
All day long, all day long,  
Yesterday was Monday, tomorrow will be Wednesday,  
Oh what fun! Oh what fun!
3. identify the date as odd or even.
4. put a penny out for each day (trade 5 pennies for a nickel, then 2 nickels for a dime, etc.)
5. graphing pocket chart for lunch menu choices (each child places a square in his/her lunch choice column on the graph upon arriving). We add the totals for each choice and the packed lunches on a posted number line to see if our total equals our class total.
6. do the same thing with attendance - add the number present + the number absent = class total.
7. dress the class weather doll and select a word to describe the day's weather.
8. place value - put a straw in for each day - when there are ten straws, bundle them and move into the ten's place .
9. counting to 100 - turn the number over on a hundred's board pocket chart, then count forward and backward.
10. count backwards

Chant: We have our bread, We have our butter, but best of all, We have each other!"



### Best Tips for Opening Exercises:

- Use the date number and make "Incredible Equations" every day.
- Make the date number using coins. Begin with pennies and dimes, and later in the year add nickels and quarters, and the looney on 100 Day.
- Buy self adhesive velcro in varying widths at your local fabric store. Use this on the backs of your calendar pieces, coins, helpers, attendance numbers, etc.
- Use the "Days in School" chart to count forwards and backwards, by 2's, 5's and 10's.
- Practice patterning with your calendar pieces - for example, do a simple apple/leaf/apple/leaf pattern for September, and perhaps a pumpkin/pumpkin/ghost/pumpkin/pumpkin/ghost pattern for October.

### A Pledge

I'm feeling wonderful, *(hands on heart)*  
I'm feeling just fine, *(hands stretched out to side)*  
I'm totally AWESOME, *(hands straight up in air)*  
This day is ALL mine! *(hands hug body)*



### Student of the Week Chart

"Questions on our Student of the Week poster:

I am \_\_\_\_\_  
I have \_\_\_\_\_  
I like \_\_\_\_\_  
I went \_\_\_\_\_  
I am good at \_\_\_\_\_  
People say I \_\_\_\_\_

The answers give rise to lots of questions and discussions."

### A "Tooth Taxi"

"Somewhere I found the idea of making a "tooth taxi" out of a film canister. I have a picture of a tooth with 'tooth taxi' written under it taped on the canister. When someone loses one, it's a cute and handy way to take the tooth home. They keep the canister."

### Calendar Time

- "Below my calendar are the Calendar Bears. The bears have the days of the week on their tummies. We have 3 hats that say YESTERDAY, TODAY and TOMORROW. Each day the Calendar person places the hats on the correct bears.
- I have a small copy of our calendar songs (the days of the week and months of the year songs) in the corner of this bulletin board so subs will know the tunes.
- Down the right side of the calendar I have the 12 months in order, but I leave an empty space for the current month as we post it above the calendar.
- I have a huge 100 chart where we keep track of the days up to the 100th day.
- We have a weather wheel where we place a sticker for the type of weather each day of the month.
- There is a tooth poem as well as a cut out of a tooth with a smiley face where students write their names if they lose a tooth that month. The tooth chart and weather wheel can also be used at the end of the year to graph which months had the most rainy days or who lost the most teeth in a month, etc.
- There is a graph for our birthdays. I use pictures for the months: January is a snowman, February

is a heart, March is a shamrock, etc. I laminate these and place them under the names of the month. I then use a permanent marker and write the child's date of birthday and name. At the end of the year, I just use finger nail polish remover to clean off what I wrote so it is ready to use next year. (Saves time and \$\$ - not buying new decorations every year.) We also use this information at Calendar Time. e.g. Which month has most birthdays/ least/ how many days till Bobby's birthday?

### Calendar Activities

Almost all Grade One teachers do calendar activities each day. You will discuss the date today, yesterday and what it will be tomorrow. You will count the days so far this month and discuss special days. By late spring you can begin to add some higher level questions:

How many days until the 17th?

On what day will the 20th be?

What is the first/second/third/etc. day of the month? What day of the week is the third day? This is a perfect opportunity to bring in to the discussion that the month does not begin on the first Sunday.

How many days until \_\_\_\_\_'s birthday? (If you post holidays and birthdays this heightens the interest.)

How long ago was the 10th?

Count forward and back.

While asking these questions have children demonstrate their answers on the class number line or board.

When you work on the 'days in school' chart,

Count by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s.

Count by 10s beginning at other numbers than 0 ..... begin at 3 or 7, for example.

Count backwards.

Count on or count back from a number - not saying the number where you begin.

How many days until we have been in school 120 days?

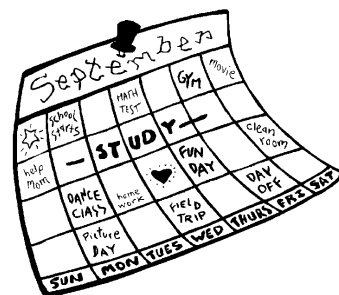
Predict/estimate - how many days do you think we will be in school this year?

Then move on to the temperature chart. Once you have several days worth of data you're ready to go!

How much warmer/colder is it today than yesterday?

What two dates have the same temperature?

What two dates have the widest range of temperature?



"When I do calendar the kids use a pointer to read the morning board. The pointer is a star with batteries that make the star blink. The person who reads the board is called the 'shining star'. They read the date, the activities for the day, and the word of the day. They then move to a calendar that has tons of pictures with a theme and find a picture of the word of the day. After that they go to the room calendar and with the pointer point to the day, month, date and year. The kids love it because they are the shining star of the day."

### Counting the Days in School - Some Variations

"In the beginning of the year I hang plastic links from 2 hooks. Above the hooks are labels: 'tens' and 'ones'. One link (same colour each day) is hung on the ones hook for nine days. The number is placed above the label. So on the 5th day, there is a number 5 above the ones place that has 5 links hanging from it. On day 10, we trade the ones place links for 1 different colour link and hang on the hook under

the tens label. Numbers are 1 ten, zero ones. On day 38, there are 3 links on the tens hook and 8 links on the ones hook. I keep 3 small baggies pinned to bulletin board for coloured links and numbers. Numbers are pinned on each new day. We do the same procedure every day. The math helper (a job) prepares the links/numbers ahead of calendar time so all is ready and that's the child that explains what the links mean and we all count together. When we get to 100, instead of using the hundreds place we start counting backwards to find how many school days are left in Grade One. They love doing it both ways."

"I used half straws when I first did this, but now I use coffee stirrers. I just use students milk cartons (one each for the ones, tens, and hundred) and staple them to the bulletin board. Then I have a pin stuck below each one and number with a hole punched in the top so we can change the number daily. I actually do this two ways now. I have 186 stirrers in a second set of milk cartons below the set I just mentioned, so we take one stirrer out of those cartons and move it to the other cartons. The containers are labeled, 'How many days of school do we have left?' and 'How many days have we been in school?' So we are counting up and down."

*Counting down from the beginning of the year is excellent if you have both Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. If you think this is too difficult for a straight Grade 1 class in the fall, this can begin at Christmas with the number of days left in the school year.*

### **Learning the Names**

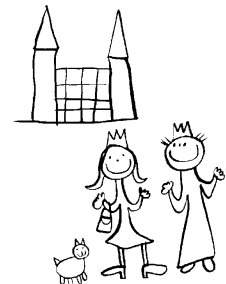
"We learn each other's first and last name because of the way I do Daily News. In the beginning of the year, one student a day (I go in order of the birthday chart) tells us something special. I write it out starting with the child's name: e.g. 'John Martin got a new puppy.' John then goes up to the board and reads the sentence by pointing to each word with a pointer. We all clap when he gets it right (in the beginning of the year I may help some students actually point to each word), then we all read it with him as he points to each word. I require one tap on each word as we read it. Later we read the sentence as it is spoken...faster and with inflection. We do 4 sentences a week, and each day we read the sentences for the previous days this week.

On Friday I have this put on a ditto and we look for things using a yellow crayon, an orange crayon, and a green crayon. Red is good for punctuation at the ends of sentences, and green is good for capital letters at the beginning of sentences. We might look for sight words. Whatever - as long as it is quick, fun, and focused. I let the students come up to the board and use coloured chalk. They love it!"

### **King and Queen for the Day**

"Print the children's names on sentence strips....Each day, choose another name and crown the chosen child "King/Queen for the Day". Have the class interview the day's King or Queen. Record the information on a chart and either make a class book with a different page for each child or display the information with a photograph or self-portrait of the child. I usually do the first interview to give the children an idea of the different kind of questions that they can ask.

"Using the sentence strips - count the letters in the name, repeat the letters in the name and have the children chant the letters with you. Point out the letters that are the same and that the name begins with a capital letter. Print the child's name on a different strip and then cut the strip apart. Give out the letters and then have those children put the name back together."



## Months and Seasons

"This year I put up the names of the months by seasons and underneath each month I put a bear with a balloon for each birthday (name and date on each balloon). I have explained that the first month up there is the month when that season starts, but that it isn't until the 21st or 22nd of the month when the season starts. One of the questions I ask during calendar time (once or twice a week) is how many seasons there are. I like the ideas of the month and season and helping them realize that the season is longer than the month. Some get it...some don't really so they need to hear it a few times!"

**January (February) is the month  
Winter is the season  
Wear hat, coat, boots, and mittens  
The season is the reason!**



On my calendar board we read this statement every day:

This month is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_ (Winter) \_\_\_\_\_ is the season.

I've noticed that the students start to notice that a season lasts longer than a month and it is a nice tie in to the weather.

"We have 4 very distinct seasons.....then on those 'un-seasonal' days you can talk about 'weather' and how it can change day to day...but the majority of time the weather is a certain way. At the end of a season and the beginning of the next, animals, people, stores, etc., are all getting ready for the next season (and/or seasonal holidays). Also if you don't do a weather chart each day, choose a transitional month to do it daily, and there will probably be more of the different kinds of weather and temperature variation to record."

## The Months

January brings the snow;  
Makes our feet and fingers glow.  
February brings the rain;  
Thaws the frozen pond again.  
March brings the wind so cold and chill;  
Drives the cattle from the hill.  
April brings us sun and showers,  
And the pretty wildwood flowers.  
May brings grass and leafy trees,  
Waving in each gentle breeze.  
June brings roses, fresh and fair,  
And the cherries ripe and rare.  
July brings the greatest heat,  
Cloudless skies and dusty street.  
August brings the golden grain;  
Harvest time is here again.  
Mild September brings us more  
Fruit and grain, for winter store.

Brown October brings the last  
Of ripening gifts, from summer past.  
Dull November brings the blast:  
Down from the trees the leaves fall fast.  
Cold December ends the rhyme  
With blazing fires and Christmas time.



## **Sharing Time**

*"I know the kids love it, the parents expect it, and it does help cover some language arts curriculum goals. So I know I will do it, but ....."*

### **Morning Meeting**

"I have a classroom meeting every Friday morning, with chairs arranged in a circle. I have an inflatable microphone that is passed around to each child. Each child is given the opportunity to share any concerns, problems, or praises for the week or he/she may choose to pass to the next child. The only one who speaks is the child with the microphone. I keep the minutes for the meeting. I am amazed at the wonderful ideas and caring and sharing that I hear. I am wondering if next year (I am a first year teacher) if I should do this every morning. It certainly cuts down on the tattling. It takes 15 - 20 minutes to share. Some weeks we do more talking and sharing than others.

I try to limit the conversations to school related issues. Sometimes a story from home tends to creep in. We discuss the feeling and issues and come up with solutions to the problems. I truly enjoy this time to actually sit with all the kids and listen to each one. It is very enlightening. Some children talk about arguments with other students and how they found a way to get along. The children seem to enjoy it. Sometimes it becomes necessary for us to go around again because the children have so much to add once they start hearing others talk. Sometimes I limit it if I think they just want to add things because others are doing so. I also share feelings and concerns about our classroom and ask for help."

### **Sharing Time Ideas**

"At the beginning of the year I assign each child a day. On that day he or she can bring in an object or two to share with us. The child is the special helper, line leader, interview subject (for a class book) etc. Once we finish going through the entire class once (in early October), I assign them to a group (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) and so we'll have four or five students sharing a day, each child getting a turn once a week. I give them guidelines as to what to bring so that I don't get the same old toys week after week. I like them to put a little effort into the decision of what to bring and prepare to talk about it a little. Some assignment ideas could be: favourite books, family photo, favourite food (when we do nutrition), or theme related ideas."



"I assign each child. The child brings in something that is meaningful to him but keeps it hidden until Sharing Time. He tells the class what letter the object's name starts with and gives a clue as to what it is. The class gets three guesses and then another clue is given. When three clues have been given without a correct guess then the child has stumped the class and tells them what it is. The child then talks about the object and the class gets to ask three questions or make three comments to the child. I write up an experience chart using the ideas the children give me about the object. They have to use complete sentences. I help them with the sentences at first. This whole process takes about 20 minutes. The five experience charts for the week get typed up by me, copied and put in a duotang which the children read at the beginning of the next week."

"This year I'm going to do a star student of the week. I found this wonderful display that is All About Me that I'll help my kids fill out the week they are 'the star'. I will also make that week his or

her show and tell week. The child can bring in an item on the first day and the last day of the week to share. This way everyone will eventually get a chance to have show and tell, but it won't take up a tonne of time.

I also do several special show and tell times over the year; often one early in the year so students can share things from their holidays, one after Christmas so they can share their favourite new toys, and after a child's birthday he or she can bring in one or two gifts to show and tell.

I don't exactly hate show and tell, but I just can't seem to find the time to do it on a weekly basis with a number of children. So this I think will be a good compromise, and still allow the kids to share things that are special to them."

"Have you tried 'Me in a Bag' (Or a box)? I use it at the beginning of the year for myself but you could use it to start off your Show and Tell for each child especially if you have good home support. I drew a picture of myself on a brown paper bag and then placed 3-6 items that **fit** in the lunch bag to tell about myself. I used a postcard from Nova Scotia because that is where I was born and raised and I collect postcards. I included a picture of my dog, a tea pot picture cut off a tea bag box because I drink tea, a wedding picture because I had just been married that summer and a small penguin because I collect penguin things. You could start it off the first day and then each day have 3-5 children present until all have done 'Me in a Bag!' (Send home a note with the lunch bag.) If you have a camera and can take pictures of each child with his or her projects it makes a nice bulletin board. You could even do a write-up for each child if you have time or if a volunteer could help out."

"You could wind down show and tell after Christmas/Spring Break to once a week because they are getting ready for the next grade level where Show and Tell will be low key or nothing at all. One day a week have 3-5 children bring in one thing, the following week have 3-5 more. If one forgets then he or she waits until the next turn. As Show and Tell progresses you could add a writing component for the children with their show and tell in which they must write out two or three things about their item before hand (at home) or afterward."

"Here's how I do show and share. I assign four children to each day and we do show and share for 10 minutes at the end of each day. The children are NOT allowed to bring in toys. The child brings in one item, talks about it and then he/she is allowed to take three questions or comments before we move on to the next person. We talk about the difference between questions and comments and I will ask them to try to ask one of the 'wh' questions if they can think of one for our sharing person. As the year rolls along we casually switch from bringing in an item to being allowed to read a part of a favourite book to the class instead. The kids love it and by May almost everyone is choosing to do that rather than bring in an item to show. I love it...it's amazing what they'll bring in to read! Four of my little guys were bringing in Harry Potter and were reading us a paragraph or two with their little chests puffed out like peacocks!....After I picked my jaw up off the floor, I too was grinning from ear to ear!"



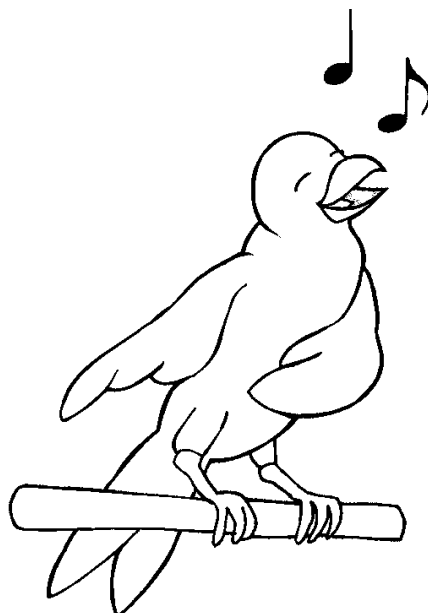
"What about bringing 'something that begins with 'A' week, 'B' week, etc.? That might be interesting. I hate the 'I got this very cool toy' thing as well, so once in a month, I assign Toy week, when they can bring a toy for Show and Tell/Show and Share."

"The birthday person can bring anything he or she wants on the birthday."

"This idea works really well. One child per day does sharing and there is a specific theme: favourite book, favourite toy/game, something the child has made, .... I send a calendar home with each child's name on a separate day and we go from there. If the child forgets, that's too bad, he'll have to wait until next time. I give instructions about what we want to hear (e.g. favourite toy/game - tell us why you like it, where you got it, a little bit about playing with it) and the rest of the children are able to ask two questions about it (NOT 'do you like it?' I explain that if the child didn't like it, he/she wouldn't have brought it). I find it very interesting to see what each one does when it's his or her turn. Most children are happy to share something, especially if it's only one day a month."

"I was at a training session, where they did a thing called 'Just Like Me'. You tailor the questions to your group. The idea is that you gain information about people and get to know them a little better, e.g. some people in this room have ridden on a horse... and anyone in the room who has ridden a horse stands up and says, 'Just Like Me!'"

"I've controlled sharing by not allowing any toys. I've encouraged parents to let their children bring arts and crafts that they did at home, items from nature, or things that are related to our theme. Each child is assigned a specific day that they are allowed to bring things (five groups of kids). Since not everyone brings or has some news to share, this has made sharing time manageable. We do it everyday after calendar. Each child stands up and begins with "Boys and girls...". I've taught them to wait for good audience manners and how to speak so that the audience will listen to you (volume, expression, etc.). After the child is finished sharing, they ask "Are there any questions or comments?" They then get to choose two people who are waiting nicely with their hands up. Sharing time is a great time to practice public speaking, audience manners, and the difference between questions and comments. I love it! It's great to see the kids transfer these skills to other times in their lives."





# Physical Education

## Games

### Squirrel in a Tree

Have the children line up and as they pass count them off - Tree, Tree, Squirrel, and repeat until you have 1 or 2 extra children. These extra children become homeless squirrels looking for a home.

Have each pair of trees join hands and enclose the squirrel in their circle.

When you blow the whistle or give a signal of some kind, the squirrels must all look for a new home. Of course the extra squirrels are also looking for a home so they too run in search of a tree home. Any squirrels left out become homeless and must wait until there is a signal to run and search for a home. The tree pairs are spread out so the children get lots of running space. Warn them to look before they enter a tree so heads do not get bumped. Sounds so silly now that I write it down, but the kids just LOVE it and beg to play it. By the way it is nothing new. I played it as a child, and I am 50! Changing the names of the characters can be fun. We even stretch our imaginations and say barns and oinking pigs. What fun!"

### Man From Mars

"One of our favorite games is Man from Mars. Everyone lines up at one end of the gym. The teacher starts as Man from Mars. Children chant, "Man from Mars, Man from Mars, will you take us to the stars?" Teacher (who is standing in the middle of play area) answers with a specific detail such as, "Only if you have the colour purple on." Those with purple get to run to the other end of the gym. When you say "Go", the rest of the children run and you try to catch them. Those caught help you be the Man from Mars and catch kids in the next round - which really cuts down on the amount of running the teacher has to do!"



### Bean Bag War

"Divide the class in half and each goes to either end of gym. Spread about 30 bean bags on either half of the gym. The object is to keep the bags off of your half of the gym....you may not cross the center line. When the whistle blows all bean bags drop. Count the ones on your side and see who wins. (You can only throw one bean bag at a time)."

### Bean Bag Boogie

"Our favourite game is called Bean Bag Boogie. My class absolutely loves it and so do I! The kids are divided into two teams. They stand in a line, facing one another, about 10 to 12 feet apart. Everybody has one bean bag to start. When I say "go" they start throwing their bags at one another. If you are hit you join the other team. We just play it until we're tired or our time is up. There are no winners or losers (I always play with them and bop back and forth from team to team when one side is down to 4 or 5 players).

Rules: You may only pick up one bag at a time. You cannot hit anyone above the waist. Disagreements are not allowed - if someone says they hit you then over you go. You cannot cross your line when throwing bags."

## Searching for a Lion

*This is similar to the choral speech of "Goin' on a Lion Hunt" but is designed for a warm-up activity.*

Decide where 'home' will be. An area of the gym floor large enough for the whole class without crowding, touching a wall, etc. will be suitable.

This warm-up activity uses a story to help students practice their gross motor movements. The teacher tells the story of movements involved in a lion search and the students follow the teacher's directions. "Sing" the words with an exaggerated rhythm.

'We are going to go on a trip today! We are going to search for a LION! Fill your (*imaginary*) backpack with food, a sleeping bag, and a tent. Put your backpack on your back and off we go!

***Begin marching in unison, in place.***

*Teacher: Going on a lion hunt,*

*Class: Going on a lion hunt,*

*Teacher: Going to catch a big one,*

*Class: Going to catch a big one,*

*Teacher: I'm not scared!*

*Class: I'm not scared!*

*Teacher: Tall trees (class repeats)*

*Green grass (class repeats)*

***And look at those flowers! (class repeats)***

***Oh - oh! (class repeats)***

***A hill! (class repeats)***

*Spend about 30 seconds 'climbing the hill', with the students lifting their feet as they climb. At the end of this exercise say:*

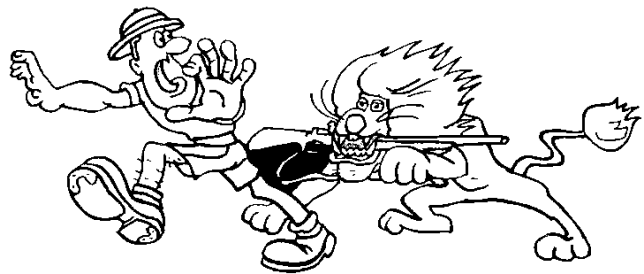
*Teacher: We have come to the top of the hill.....Lion?*

*Class: LION?*

*Teacher: Are you there?*

*Class: Are you there?*

*Teacher: No lion! (class repeats)*



*Continue the search by going back to marching in place, repeating the chant until the last line. The last line can be:*

*A river! (pretend to swim using large arm movements)*

*A tunnel! (crawl or move on the stomach on the floor)*

*A tree! (pretend to climb a tree)*

*Vines! (swing from vines)*

*At the end of any of the exercises the teacher can say:*

*Teacher: We have come to the end of the tunnel (top of the hill) (top of the tree) (other side of the river) .....Lion?*

***Class: Lion?***

***Teacher: ROAR!***

The children race back to 'home' to be safe. The teacher may chase them.

## Gross Motor Exercises with a Beanbag

These beanbag exercises, in order to be effective and make a difference in a child's gross motor skills, must be repeated frequently. If you are especially concerned with a number of your students, have someone video tape them in an early lesson so you can follow their progress later.



1. Have the children sit in their own space. Hand out one beanbag to each child.

2. Practice the rule - 'Stand quietly in your space when I signal'. You can use a whistle, a clap, or other noise as a signal for the children to stop and listen.

3. The exercises: Allow approximately one minute or less for each exercise. Make sure the children are using control. Poor performance does not improve the skills.

- Balance the beanbag on your head, your knee, stomach, hip, shoulder, hand, wrist, elbow, neck, back, and so on. If it is possible, walk away from your space and back to it without dropping the beanbag. What positions will be used to do the balancing? Try the different positions.
- Put the beanbag on your head and jump to shake it off. Catch it when it falls. How far can you walk without dropping the beanbag?
- On your hands and knees, put the beanbag on your back and shake it off.
- Throw the beanbag into the air with two hands and catch with two hands.
- Throw it from one hand to the other.
- Throw with one hand and catch with one hand.
- Throw and catch as you walk, hop, run.
- Put the beanbag on the floor. Step carefully around it. Jump over it forwards and backwards with two feet together. Hop around it on one foot.
- Lie on your back. Grip the beanbag with your feet, raise your legs and drop it on the floor behind your head. Pick up the beanbag with your feet and return it to its original position.
- Put the beanbag on the floor. Find ways of making it move around the room without touching it with your hands.
- Place the beanbag on the floor. Rest one hand on it. Move quickly around the beanbag like a 'coffee grinder', with just that hand and the feet touching the floor. Change hands and direction.
- Crab walk with the beanbag on your stomach.
- Hold the beanbag between your knees and hop like a rabbit.
- Invent a new exercise with your beanbag.

4. Collect the beanbags.

# Gross Motor Activities Without Equipment

One wonderful thing about these gross motor activities is that all students can participate equally, and all are getting suitable exercise. As often happens in games, the children who need improvement most participate the least.

Are you in a hurry, or haven't had time to plan? The following is a simple gross motor lesson without equipment - handy to use when your time is limited.

1. Begin with the children in their personal spaces.
2. Practice the rule - 'when I clap (or whistle, etc.), stop the activity and stand quietly in your space.'
3. The exercises: Allow approximately one minute for each exercise.
  - Directed by the teacher, move various parts of the body in circles - chin, head, shoulders, elbows, wrists, arms, waist, hips, knees.
  - Stretch up high, reaching to the sides, reaching in front and touching the floor. 'Stick your feet to the floor, try to touch the ceiling and all the walls, and the floor.'
  - Walk on the spot, lifting the knees as high as possible.
  - Walk on the gym lines - don't fall off. If you meet someone on a line, turn around and go the other way.
  - Walk, stepping on either side of a line.
  - Jump back and forth over a line. Then angle the jumps so you are moving along the painted line.
  - In your space, stand with feet apart and follow arm motions made by the teacher - big circles, fists at the chest and then out in front, etc.
  - From a crawling position, bring the chin to the floor and back up.
  - From a crawling position stretch first one leg, then the other, straight out behind
  - Lie on your back and pedal a bicycle.
  - Lie on your back and stretch up high with your feet.
  - Move like an animal - try being a frog, a snake, a kangaroo, an elephant, a rabbit, a horse, etc.
  - Jog around the gym (not race) several times. Give the teacher a salute, a high five or a big, big smile as you pass.
  - Rest in your space. Can you relax every muscle? Make your body limp or 'floppy'.



## Simple Floor Exercises

- Walk on a line, hop on a line, run around the gym but do not step on a line, go from one end of the gym to the other on a line, play tag on the lines.
- Jump over the line with two feet together. Jump backwards over the line on two feet.
- In your space, use both arms fully extended to point - 'Touch the ceiling, touch the floor, touch my head, touch the door. Touch my nose, touch my toes, see the windmill and AWAY IT GOES!' (Swing both arms around and around).
- 'Jamie (any student's name) wants an animal, an animal, an animal, Jamie wants an animal, What does he want?' The child says the name of an animal and the class imitates the walk of that animal - a hopping rabbit, a lumbering elephant, a jumping kangaroo, a slithering snake, etc.

## Aerobics or 'Fitness to Music'

This is an excellent activity to improve fitness. The leader should be familiar with the movements. Put on a jazzy tape and do simple aerobics in time to the music. Ten minutes is a suitable length of time. This is fun for students and fun for you, too! You will really see improvements in their ability to keep the beat and do the exercises, and in their endurance. If absolutely necessary, you could do this exercise in your classroom!

## Outdoor Games

"I learned this one from another teacher and my Grade One kids just love it. It's a simplified version of California Kickball. Divide the kids into two teams (I have one team wear pinnies so the kids can tell who's on their team.) Team 1 is 'at bat'. Team 2 goes on in the field, which is like a baseball diamond, with 3 bases. I am the pitcher, because it is just a lot faster and easier that way. I roll a playball to the first person up. They kick it out. I don't have foul lines or anything else. They just have to connect with it. Then they run around the bases, making sure to touch each base. The team in the field has to retrieve the ball and throw it to me. When I catch it, the team in the field yells 'Stone' as loud as they can. The runner has to stop WHEREVER THEY ARE. They are safe wherever they are -- they are never tagged out. They just stop, continuing running the next time, and get a point when they get back home. I actually never count the points and the kids don't care. They're just happy if they get a point getting back to home base. I just play through the line up of kids, then switch the teams. Everyone gets a turn, you don't have to worry about the strategy to where to throw the ball and tag someone else, and everyone has a good time."

"My favourite outdoor game is called Run Squirrel Run. Put 3 children in a group. 2 hold hands and raise their arms to be a tree. The third one is between them....he is the squirrel. It is really fun if you have 'extra squirrels'! When you call 'Run Squirrel Run' The squirrels have to run to a new tree and if there are extra squirrels then some don't get a tree that time. Periodically let the trees become squirrels,



# Music

## Singing

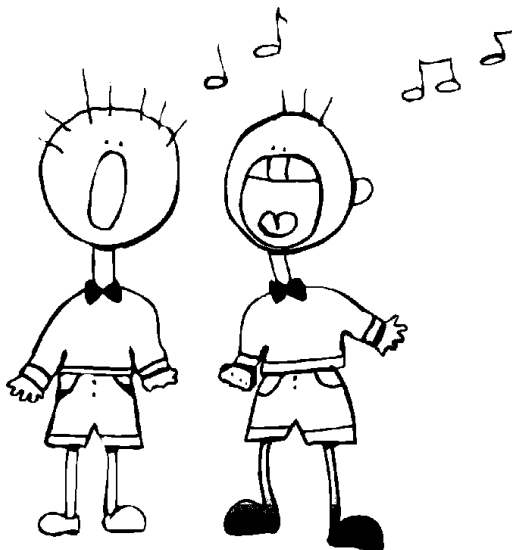
"I play music whenever the children are doing desk work. I have used Beethoven, Yanni, Sounds of Nature, Presence (relaxation music), Blue Jacket (Native American sounds), etc. I have even used one of the built-in sound inserts for Power Point (Gentle Nature). Try many different types of music; you will soon find what works best for your class. The one that works best for my class is the relaxation music."

"We sing a lot in my class and the kids love it. I try to do songs that have motions to them. If there are no motions, I do 'volume control' where I hold up my hand while they sing. They have to watch my hand and if it goes up, they can get louder, and when it goes down they get softer."

"I often use music to reinforce themes, holidays, etc. It's also just to break up the day and get the wiggles out! We have a set music programme in the fall, but I will do my own in the spring. In Grade One, I concentrate on: rhythm, beat, everyone singing along, soft/loud, high/low, fast/slow."

"I can't sing at all, but I use CDs and have the children sing along. I teach the words and let a professional do the singing!"

"I sing just about in every subject. We sing to line up, to get quiet, to celebrate, to learn rhymes, math facts, spelling words. We have a pull-out music special, but I use music to help those who need to awaken this mode of learning."



"We have music first thing each morning for about ten minutes. Usually we just sing along to a CD. Our current favourite is Charlotte Diamond ~ the CD with *I am a Pizza* and *Octopus*."

"You can combine music with a unit on sound. There are lots of great activities in the science books on sound. Talk to the children about the different types of instruments. All of them vibrate in some way to make the sound. The percussion instruments vibrate by hitting them (like a drum). The string instruments vibrate when you rub the bow over the strings or pluck them. Blowing in hollow tubes of various lengths will give the children an idea of how the woodwinds work."

## Classical Music

"I let the kids play classical music on tapes on private headphones. They can borrow the tapes and listen while they write or do math, etc. (Mozart is supposed to help you perform better in math, if any parents question this). Everyone wants their turn at the tapes. Parents are kind of amazed to see their rugged boy children sitting listening to Mozart and Beethoven!"

"I play a variety of music including classical and some opera to give the students exposure to it. If they don't hear it with me, they may never hear it. I do a lot of singing with my kids theme-based during the opening and as well have scheduled a half hour of music every week. During that time we will listen to, sing along with and dance to a variety of tunes. I will bring out instruments, we do follow the leader, play with the music, colour or paint with the music. I also teach patterning with music."

### Can Music Make Children Smarter?

A book called "The Mozart Effect" by Don Campbell has condensed the world's research on all the beneficial effects of certain types of music.

Some of the benefits are:

- Improving test scores
- Cutting learning time
- Reducing errors
- Improving creativity and clarity
- Healing the body faster
- Integrating both sides of the brain for more efficient learning



Now some corporations and Universities use classical music, such as certain Baroque pieces, to cut learning time and increase retention of the new materials. It is said that Mozart (for example) can relieve stress, improve communication and increase efficiency. Creativity scores soar when listening to Mozart.

There is compelling new evidence to show how music has calmed students with such problems as ADHD and even helped autistic children. Studies have found that all students using Mozart and certain Baroque pieces (recorded at about 60 beats per minute) felt calmer, could study longer and had a higher rate of retention as well as earning better grades according to their teachers. Apparently the music activates the right brain and the words the child is reading or saying aloud activates the left brain. This increases the learning potential a minimum of five times according to the research.

### Sounds Perfect!

"I just got a copy of a new book out called *"The I Can't Sing Book for Grownups Who Can't carry a Tune in a Paper Bag...but Want to do Music with Young Children"* by Jackie Silberg, published by Gryphon House Books.

I really like it, and all the ideas. Lots of how to make instruments, how to do music with kids without knowing anything, it's great!"

# Through the Seasons

## Autumn

### Autumn Activities

"We went on a simple nature walk around the school and looked for signs of fall. When we came back we wrote,

I went walking.

I saw a \_\_\_\_\_.

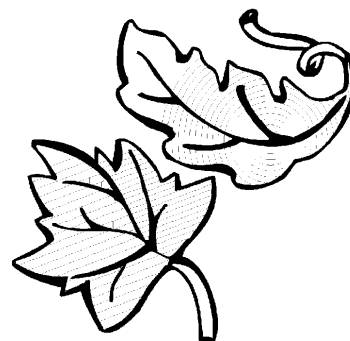
It had to be a sign of fall. Then they illustrated it. The cover was *We Went Walking* and some children decorated the cover for me with fall leaves."

#### Pressed Leaves

Give each child two pieces of waxed paper. Tell children to arrange leaves in any pattern they like on one sheet, the waxy side up, then cover with the second sheet of paper (waxy side down) so that leaves are 'sandwiched' between the two pieces. (To add interest, children may use glitter or crayon shavings in addition to leaves between the two sheets of paper.) Cover this with a soft dishtowel and press with a hot iron (no steam) until the wax melts. When they are cool, cut around the leaf leaving a 2 cm. border. Use these as bookmarks, hang them from the ceiling, or hang them in the windows for suncatchers.

Find beautifully coloured leaves and laminate them (or use clear contact paper). Cut them out with 1/2" border around the leaves and hang them in mobiles or put them on your windows.

"In the fall the class and I go on a search for nature items, for example, leaves, small flowers, flower petals, (we have a garden at school and it proves to be a good time to take the flowers off the stems - which I do before class as I really don't want the kids to think that they can do it) and so on. The kids are encouraged to find colourful things and always do a great job. Then they arrange them on their desk top, sharing, of course. Then I give them a piece of mactac and they redo their arrangement on this. When done we put another piece on top. Then I cut them into round shapes and hang them from the wire in my room. They move in the wind and are really effective and parents always wonder how we have done it!"



The easiest way to press leaves is to place a leaf between two sheets of plain newsprint, then place it beneath a pile of heavy books for several days, until it is dry and hardened. Though easy, these take patience on the part of your students (several DAYS??), and they are fragile and crumble easily.



## Autumn Art

### Fall Trees

- Draw trees with brown crayon (darkly) on pale blue or gray construction paper. Cut 1 inch or 3 cm. squares of yellow and orange tissue paper. Fold the small square over the flat end of a pencil or pencil crayon, and, holding it on the pencil end, dip it lightly into a puddle of liquid glue. Place it on the tree branches for coloured leaves. The more the child puts on, the better the tree will look!"

Draw and colour a tree trunk and branches. Press the finger tip to an orange stamp pad and make fingerprint 'leaves' on the tree.

Make a large tree on the bulletin board. Then have the children cut across apples to show the star. Dip the cut apple into red paint and make prints on white paper. Cut out the apple shapes and glue them to the tree.

"I've had my kids draw a tree trunk, sponge paint leaves (red, yellow, brown), and then glue on cornflakes (when the paint dries) - they turn out cute."

Have the children trace their hands on red, orange and yellow paper. Cut them out and glue them to a large tree for leaves.

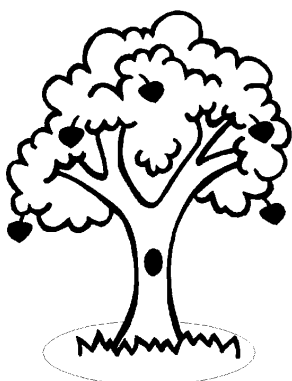
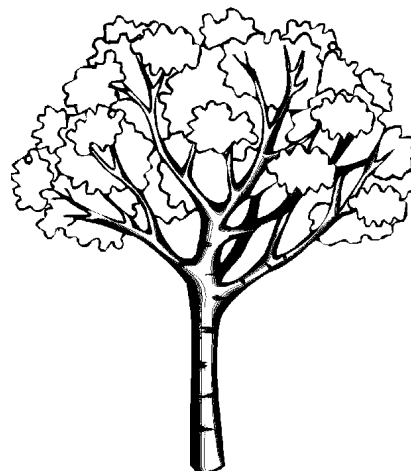
To make the autumn leaves, sponge paint red and orange leaf shapes, or rip tissue paper into pieces and glue them on, or sponge paint green leaves and let dry. Thumb print red 'apples'."

Have the kids trace each other's hand and upper arm on brown paper - fingers splayed - on brown construction paper to make the tree. Cut it out and glue onto pale yellow paper.

Then you can use the eraser tip of a pencil and some tissue paper squares to add leaves.

You can make autumn leaves for a small tree with torn construction paper or thumb prints in tempera paint with the fall colours.

If we make apple trees, then we have the children dip their finger in red paint and press their fingerprint within the leaves to make apples.



Use precut tissue that comes in fall colors. Cut into squares about 15 cm. by 15 cm. I would guess. Demonstrate how to make balls of each tissue...not too loose, not too tight, dip into a glue cup lightly and press onto a plate to cover all the white. Glue a trunk that they trace and cut, or trace and tear for a more natural look.... You could buy green plates and make smaller tissue balls...about 2x2 and have each child 'roll' 10 apples...It's fall...my favourite time of year!

### Falling Leaves

Cut spirals from brown construction paper.

Have the children trace real leaves, colour them and cut them out (or have the children cut leaves from coloured construction paper). Glue or staple the leaves to the spirals and hang them from the ceiling. The leaves will appear to be falling!

### Cornflake Leaves

Have the students draw or paint a brown tree trunk and branches. Paint a small area with glue and sprinkle with cornflakes. Paint the next area and add cornflakes until the branches are covered. Mount the pictures on autumn coloured construction paper and tack them around the poem.



**Cornflake leaves  
Beneath the trees -  
Are they a breakfast  
For the breeze?**

Trace each child's hand on each of the following colours of construction paper and cut out (teacher or child can cut) red, orange, yellow, green and brown. Locate an old round wooden bushel or peck basket (check at grocery store or farms). Cut the basket in half and attach to the bulletin board at an angle (this will give your board a 3-dimensional look). Then place the hands (which are now leaves) inside and around the basket as if the basket is overflowing and pouring out with leaves.

All the leaves  
Are falling down  
Orange  
Yellow  
Red and  
Brown.

Have the children copy the poem. Use gold coloured paper, with handwriting lines and the first letter of each line already written.

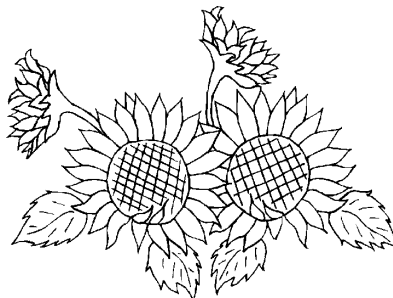
On another piece of 8 x 10 white construction paper colour a large tree, branches and trunk only, and the ground for the tree. Roll up pieces of tissue paper the same colour as in the poem and glued them on the tree, in the air and on the ground. We glued these papers onto a 12 x18 inch blue construction paper.

### Melted Crayon Leaves

"Last year we made leaves using construction paper leaf shapes with the center cut out. Grate yellow, orange, red, and brown crayons like you would grate cheese. Spread the grated crayon out on waxed paper. Cover with another sheet of waxed paper. Lay a kitchen towel over these and iron on a low setting. The colours will run together making beautiful centers that can be glued between two of the construction paper leaf cutouts. These also make wonderful leaf mobiles."

### Sunflowers

Sunflower children  
Nod to the sun.  
Summer is over,  
Fall has begun.



Here's an easy sunflower idea .....

Cut out brown circles and white circles that are slightly smaller.

On the white circles get each of your students to draw a picture of their face.

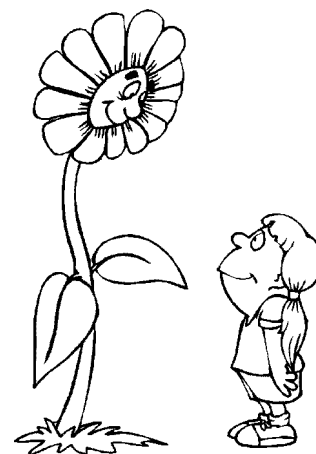
Glue this in the middle of the brown circle.

Cut out petals from yellow paper and glue on the back of the brown circle.

Cut out a stem and some leaves from green paper and glue on.

Then glue real sunflower seeds (with shells of course) on the brown circle, all around the white circle face.

If you want to hang them, you could also get the children to cut out two white circles instead of one, and on the back of the sunflower draw the back of their heads.



"I make sunflowers by having the children trace their hands 3 or 4 times and cut them out. Arrange the hands in a circle. Trace and cut out a brown circle for the flower centre. Add a tall green stem and leaves."

"Make BIG sunflowers! Cut a circle centre from brown. Cut petals of yellow tissue paper, or you can use construction paper. Glue the ends of the petals behind the circle. 'Paint' glue on the brown circle and place sunflower seeds on the glue. Staple the big flowers up at about eye-level. Give the children a piece of green butcher paper about half the width of the roll and 6+ feet long. The children can work in pairs and scrunch the width of the paper, and then gently twist it until they have a rope-like stem. Staple the stems onto the flowers and add leaves."

"I am doing sunflowers on my bulletin board for welcome back to school. I was thinking of saying 'Grade One is a Sunny Place.'"

Or.....'Watch Us Bloom' .....or.....'Sun'sational Place or 'Sun'sational Work.....or.....

'Watch Us Grow in Grade One' ."

### A Mini-Unit on Sunflowers

"The class and I did sunflowers. We talked about what sunflowers were good for (food, appearance), learned a sunflower poem and then learned about Van Gogh. Our activities included finger painting sunflowers and adding a center and putting them into a vase for a bulletin board display. They turned out well! We also did construction paper sunflowers and used real sunflower seeds in the centers. Last year's Kindergarten teacher did a number book from 1 to 5 using seeds.

"Three books I would recommend are:

***Sunflower House*** by Eve Bunting - 1996 Harcourt and Brace ISBN 0152004831.

***Camille and the Sunflower*** by Lawrence Anhold - ISBN 0812064097.

***Van Gogh For Kids*** by Margaret Hyde - ISBN 1888108045



### More Sunflowers!

"I made a bulletin board with a title 'Watch Us Bloom'. It had a blue background with sunflowers (big) out of yellow construction paper, one for each student. I used coffee filters for the middle - coloured brown. Then a child's picture was put in the center of it. Each flower had a green stem with 3 green leaves that the child wrote or filled in. These were staggered heights.



1. (My name is \_\_\_\_.)
2. (I am \_\_\_\_ years old.)
3. (I like \_\_\_\_.)

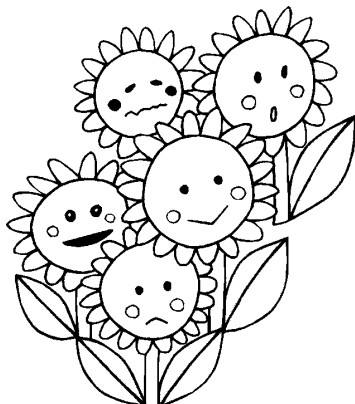
They also made their names with sunflower seeds in small groups. I wrote the name with glue and they put seeds on one at a time (they let the seeds kiss each other tip to tip). It's a great tactile experience and looked good displayed! They counted how many were used in their name.

We made a sunflower graph by tasting them and then deciding whether they liked them or didn't like them. We did these on cute little sunflowers with faces.

We painted a big sunflower on an easel.

We made Picasso sunflowers with yellow hand prints and glued seeds in middle and painted green stems."

"I am developing a Sunflower theme. This is a great early fall theme. In the past I have displayed a print of Vincent Van Gogh's sunflower painting. At the paint easel I use yellow, brown, and green paint with a sunflower arrangement placed nearby. The children are not asked to paint sunflowers, but to use sunflower colors for whatever they wish to paint. I also bring cut sunflowers. We estimate how many cubes long it is and then check. At the science table we remove the seeds (great fine motor). I include magnifying glasses for careful observation. It is not unusual to find a few small worms. When we have removed as many seeds as our fingers can handle, we make sunflower prints. Children work in small groups to apply paint to the stem, leaves, center and petals (great hands-on vocabulary lesson). Next, press a large sheet of paper over the painted sunflower and rub (again, labeling flower parts)... a life size flower print! I have just added a new sunflower book - 'Sunflower Sal'. You may also want to look around for recipes calling for sunflower seeds...I think I have seen breads or muffins."



"This year I'm thinking of using a simple little poem about sunflowers, having the children make sunflower masks, taking a picture of them singing the poem together and swaying. Their faces make the sunflower centers!"

### Corn Cob Flowers

"Buy dried corn cobs from a feed store and cut them into 3 pieces; or buy ears of corn at the store, shuck them, cut them into 2-inch lengths and allow them to dry for a couple of weeks. Place shallow containers of tempera paints at each table. Show children how to dip the end of the corn cob into the paint, then press it onto a paper to create a flower shape. After some practice, give each child a sheet of paper, and ask them to create a garden full of corn flowers. They may use markers or crayons to add stems and centers after flowers have dried."

## Scarecrows for the Fall

I know two crows  
Who spend their day,  
Teasing scarecrows -  
Pulling their hay.  
They're so bold  
They fly right down  
To steal the corn  
Lying on the ground.  
Scarecrow, scarecrow,  
How scary can you be?  
You scared (insert name)  
But you didn't scare me!



### The Scarecrow

Scarecrow standing in the field  
On a bright and sunny day,  
Don't forget to do your job.  
Scare the hungry crows away!

"We make family scarecrow projects - families decorate a pattern I send home with anything they want. I've seen some fantastic examples:

- the ghost scarecrow - cut sheet over the decorated scarecrow
- the real thing - cut from burlap and stuffed with real hay, then dressed
- the clown scarecrow - complete with red nose
- the Easter grass scarecrow - small child's clothes stuffed with Easter grass."

"We make stuffed paper crows and tissue paper corn (with raffia husks). For the corn plant - roll a tube of green bulletin board paper. Cut several 2 inch long cuts in one end. Hold loosely and pull the cut end. It will pull out and form a corn stalk. When the desired length, tape the open end. Tape or glue the tissue corn projects for pole-like/flag corn stalk. For flying crows - tie a length of string to a dowel rod and the other to the crow. Children look like they are fishing for crows. We line up with our Family Projects - those who didn't get theirs turned in carry either corn stalks or crows.... We go through the Kindergarten classrooms and the office on a long. I try to get one award for each one - scariest, most real looking, best use of colour, best use of materials, most unique, etc. The pictures come out great!"

### Class Scarecrows

Have students partner up and give each a long length of butcher paper. Have students take turns tracing each other's body on the paper to make 'scarecrow' bodies. Have students decorate like a scarecrow. You could use 2 patterns of the same body, stuff and add items to make them look like scarecrows (raffia, hay, real old clothes, scraps of material for patches, buttons, yarn, etc.).

### Paper Bag Scarecrows

Use brown paper lunch bags and decorate as scarecrow heads. Use raffia or hay for hair and some felt or material scraps for hat and patches. Stuff with newspaper and gather at the bottom to tie with more raffia or yarn. Insert a tongue depressor if you would like to hold on to them, or hang them by their hats around the room.



Have students construct a 'How To Make a Scarecrow Book'. On the first page, brainstorm a complete list of supplies. Next, students have them help you write a step by step guide on how to create a scarecrow and illustrate. The class can get together and make several scarecrows or one big individual one.

### **'I Am A Scarecrow' Book**

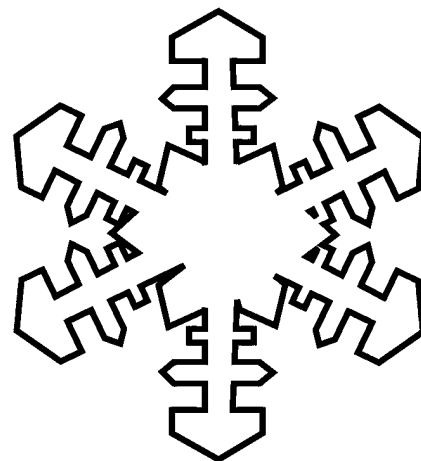
"I publish a cute reproducible blackline book called 'I Am A Scarecrow'. The illustration on each page is the same, and there is one descriptive sentence on each page. We read the sentence and colour only that part of the picture, which keeps the book easy to read for emergent readers. Sample pages: My hat is brown. My shirt is red. My straw is yellow. My overalls are blue. My shoes are brown. The final pages says 'I am a scarecrow', and we colour all of him. Great for teaching colour words! You could easily make a similar book yourself with any available clipart."



# Winter

## Winter Science

"Last year for Science, I had my class make snowflakes using toothpicks and marshmallows. We used three or four small marshmallows per 'arm' and a large marshmallow for the hub in the center. We talked about how snowflakes are formed, how they have six sides, each side identical to the others, how no two snowflakes look alike, etc. The students had to come up with a pattern that included the large marshmallow in the middle (ie. small pink marshmallow, small yellow, small pink, large yellow, small pink, small yellow, small pink). Most of them wanted to make a second one to take home that day. The only difficulty was keeping the arms from drooping."



"We go out with magnifying glasses in the snow on a day that has the larger snowflakes. We have thermometers for each child. We read the temperature indoors and then take them outside, place them in the snow and watch the temperature drop. They love both activities."

"Before we go outside to discover all about snowflakes, I put sheets of black construction paper in the freezer so the flakes don't melt as quickly when they land on their black paper. I also pair my children - one holds the paper while the other one looks through the magnifying lens for a while and then they trade jobs. Don't try it on a windy day, though. The perfect 'snowflake time' is when it comes almost straight down and the flakes are just huge! When we return to the classroom, they draw a snowflake like one that they observed in their learning log. Then we compare them for designs and discover many things that they didn't previously know! It's worth the wait and the experience to do this activity with your children. Last year, I even had some parents join in the action and they learned a lot about snowflakes as well. Of course, I always take pictures during this activity and they bring back many fond memories of our 'snowflake day!'"

"You can have a permanent record of your caught snowflakes if you freeze a piece of glass and hairspray before the next snowfall. (Both may be stored in the freezer until you need them.) When you're ready to collect some snowflakes, spray your chilled glass with the chilled hairspray and go outside and let some snowflakes settle on the glass. When you have enough flakes bring the glass indoors and allow it to thaw at room temperature for about 15 min. Now you have a permanent record of your snowflakes!"

If you live where it is verrrry cold.....Blow bubbles outside. They won't pop when it's -30 to -40 degrees below zero outside.

Make peanut butter cookie cutter treats for the birds. Take old bread slices and cut out shapes with cookie cutters. Let them dry and harden enough to spread with peanut butter. Cover the peanut buttered shapes with black sunflower seeds and hang outdoors on trees or anywhere birds might come! Use a bird book to identify the birds.

"I always do a quick science unit on snow and do the following experiments in groups of 4. Each group goes outside and collects an ice-cream bucket of snow. I make up little booklets with the instructions and the kids write or draw the results of what happened...Or we discuss what happened and why together.

- Make 2 snowballs the size of golf balls. Melt one at room temperature on a plastic lid. Melt the other in a container filled with cold water. Leave them for about 15 minutes. Which one melted fastest? Why?
- Make 2 snowballs the size of golf balls. Put both of them in containers of cold water. Stir one container but not the other. Which one melted the fastest? Why?
- Each person can make a snowball the size of a golf ball. Put it on a plastic lid. Sprinkle some salt on top of your snowball. and wait a few minutes. What happened? Why?
- Which is heavier, snow or water? We put snow in a cup. We put water in a cup. We weighed the cups. What happened?
- Which melts faster, a snowball or an ice cube?
- We put a snowball in a dish. We put an ice cube in a dish. We waited. What happened?
- Can snow be made to melt faster? (a more involved experiment than above) We put snow into 4 dishes. We covered each dish with either paper, cloth, salt or dirt. We waited. What happened?
- Make a snow gauge. Take a clear plastic 2 litre pop bottle and cut off the top half. Mark the outside in centimeters with a permanent marker and place it outside in a place where it can collect the falling snow.
- Measure how much melted snow it takes to make water. Collect some snow in a container and record the level of snow on the container. Let the snow melt. How much water is there? Are you surprised at the difference?



#### **Snowflakes are formed when.....**

.....cloud temperature is at freezing or below and the clouds are moisture filled. The ice crystals form on dust particles as the water vapor condenses and partially melted crystals cling together to form snowflakes. It is said that no two snowflakes are the same, but they can be classified into types of crystals. All snow crystals have six sides. The six-sided shape of the ice crystal is because of the shape and bonding of the water molecules. Basically there are 6 different types of snow crystals: needles, columns, plates, columns capped with plates, dendrites and stars. The type of crystals depends on the amount of humidity and temperature present when they are forming. That's why when it's very cold and snowing, the flakes are small, and when it's closer to 0 C the flakes are larger.



"For science, we go out and collect some snow. I have two clear containers. In one, we pack the snow very solidly. In the other, we just fill it, keeping the snow fluffy. They are both filled to the top. Before doing this, we talk about what will happen if we bring snow into our classroom. Then, once we have the two containers inside, we make some observations about them, predict if one will melt before the other or both at the same rate, how much water will be in the container (I draw a line on the container where they tell me to), etc. The most amazing thing about this activity is how much dirt is in the snow. The snow that we collect is from the top...never touched the ground. This leads to a discussion about where the dirt came from and why we shouldn't eat snow."

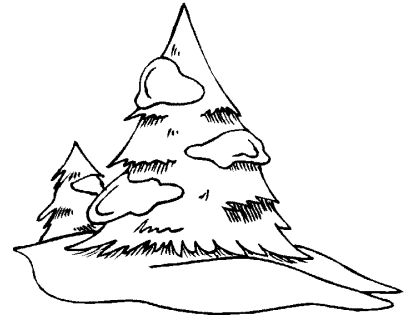
Look for animal tracks in the fresh snow. See if you can find the tracks of dogs, cats, birds, and other wildlife. Check out a book from your library on animals and animal tracks and see how many different animal tracks you can identify.

"Here's the project I do every January:

Materials: Dark blue or black construction paper, paint brush, Epsom salts crystals, HOT water, one quart glass jar with lid, crayons, newspaper

- Pour some Epsom salts on the newspaper to study. Explain that you will be mixing them with hot water, and will be watching for any changes that might occur in the structure of the crystal.
- Fill the glass jar with hot, hot water.
- Pour Epsom salt crystals into the water. Stir until dissolved. Continue adding the salts until they will no longer dissolve. The hotter the water, the more salts you will be able to add.
- Discuss the changes that occurred in the crystals, then set aside.
- Draw an outdoor snow scene on the dark construction paper, then colour it in very solidly with crayons.
- Set the picture on the newspaper.
- Paint the Epsom salt solution over the entire drawing. Make sure every corner of the page is covered. While you are painting, notice again the crystals have turned to liquid.
- Set the picture aside to dry flat. Slowly, the salt mixture will begin to whiten, looking like falling snow. In fact, each day the 'snow' will become whiter and whiter. This is an opportune time to notice that as the water evaporates, crystals form again.
- Look at the crystals through a magnifying glass. Count the sides of the crystals.

I also like to put some dry crystals on a strip of dark paper for the kids to look at under the microscope. We look at strips of the 'crystal paper' under the microscope too."



## **Winter Activities**

### **Snowy Math**

On a snowy day use miniature marshmallows for math manipulatives. Don't worry about them getting 'old', as they would still be usable. Also, you could use cotton balls and the students could pretend to build a snow fort. They roll the dice to see how many pieces they can add to the fort.

You could have snowman mats, dice, and buttons. Also, use fun foam to cut out hats, scarves, and boots. Students would roll the dice to get pieces to complete a number sentence and decorate their snowman.

## Snowball Toss Game



Make snowballs out of crumpled paper and toss onto a paper 'dartboard' on the floor (a circle with numbers from 0 to 9 written on each section). Toss two snowballs and add the numbers on which they land together, or subtract. Or use three or four balls and add three or four numbers together.

Give each child four or five circles of white paper. On each 'snowball' the child will write a 'winter' problem. When they are finished, place all of the snowballs in a large pile and mix them up. Have the children break into small groups (three or four children per group) and give each group a pile of the snowballs. Children take turns reading and answering each problem. If they answer it correctly they keep the snowball. Group takes turns. Winner ends up being the child who has the most snowballs.

## Winter Centres

"My ten winter centres are:

1. A winter worksheet that has little winter scenes depicting something you do in winter. The child has to find the sentence that goes with the picture and glue to the box below the picture.

2. A basket with objects that are found around the home or classroom. In this basket I have placed rhyming objects. They have to match the rhyming objects to each other. I have a bee puppet in the container and they have to lay it by the key. I have a stuffed hen and I have a pen - they have to lay the objects together. shoe-glue jar -star (cookie cutter) house (wooden), mouse (stuffed toy), etc. I also have some objects in there that won't work.

3. Stamp and ink: stamp your 5 word wall words for the week and write them.

4. Paper hot chocolate mugs - have the kids' pictures on them from the computer. They have to pick 6 mugs and spell the names with letter cards.

5. Make a penguin. The patterns are all there, a sample is shown.

6. Making a graph with sorting the mittens by size.

7. Have 5 bags with words in them that make 5 sentences. The child has to unscramble the word cards to make sense and then copy the sentence in a little winter booklet I have run off. All the sentences have to do with winter.

8. Puzzle - This is a center I made with stickers. Put stickers on index cards and then cut them apart. For instance I put 2 snowballs and 1 sled on the top half of the card and they have to find the bottom card with the words.

9. Math center - a paper walrus with one tooth has the problem on it. They have to find the other tusk with the answer and lay it on the walrus. Then I laid out some magnetic numbers to play with to make some problems while they wait for me to check their work.

10. Short vowel cards. I have little plastic snowmen and the children have to put the cards in the correct snowman to match the sound they hear.

As the children do the centers I am roaming around the room as some are at the computers, some at seats doing an art project etc. Some are in the big book and tape recorder area. All of those areas need very little assistance. I am helping the kids at the centers and checking what they do."



### Snow Show

"We decided to do this because of the poems and pies idea at Thanksgiving that we never got around to doing. We called it a SNOW SHOW and invited parents back for hot chocolate and goodies afterwards!

"Here is a list of the songs my class did. I made a program that we gave to the parents. The other 3 teachers had great songs and poems also."

### Oh You Shiver and You Quiver When it Snows

*(to the tune of If You are Happy and You Know it Clap Your Hands)*

Oh you shiver and you quiver when it snows,

Oh you shiver and you quiver when it snows,

Your hands feel just like ice so you rub them once or twice.

Yes, you shiver and you quiver when it snows. BRRRRRR RRRRRR RRRRRRRRRR RRRRRR

*This Penguin March received the most compliments.....I had 1 boy sing it and 6 other following him around the stage echoing him. All were in penguin costumes. I must say I laughed so hard while they were doing it. The Emperor penguin who led the group did an amazing job!*

### Penguin Marching Song

*(to the tune of the Military Marching song)*

I'm a penguin black and white, I can't fly but that's all right!

I've got feathers, that's not fur and I lay eggs like other birds!

Penguins 1, 2 Penguins 3, 4 Penguins 5, 6, 7, 8 They're great!

I just swim to get my meals, but I watch out for Leopard Seals.

I'm from the South as you may know, and now it's time for me to go.

Penguins 1, 2 Penguins 3, 4 Penguins 5, 6, 7, 8 They're great!!



### A Snowman Glyph

Make a Snowman!

Follow these directions to make your own special snowman. You will need a piece of white construction paper, a pencil, and crayons or markers.

1. Ground: - straight black line near the bottom of the paper if you think it will snow in December.

- crooked black line near the bottom of the paper if you do not think it will snow in December.

2. Body: - 2 circles if you like winter.

- 3 circles if you do not like winter.

3. Scarf: - Red going to the right if you always wear mittens when you are playing outside in the winter.

- Green going to the left if you never wear mittens when you are playing outside in the winter.

4. Hat: - Blue if your boots have a zipper.

- Green if your boots have a buckle.

- Purple if you do not know.

5. Eyes, nose, and mouth: Number of dots that show how many times you think it will snow in the month of January. (The highest number of dots you may use is the number that tells how old you are.)

6. Buttons: - 3 black buttons if your favorite way to go down a hill is on a sled.

- 5 green buttons if your favorite way to go down a hill is on a snowmobile.

- 7 red buttons if your favorite way to go down a hill is on a cardboard box.

7. Arms: -Brown straight lines if you've been in a snowball fight.

- Brown crooked lines if you've never been in a snowball fight.

### **Another Snowman Glyph**

Directions:

2 snowballs for girls, 3 for boys

Make the snowman's eyes the same colour as yours.

Carrot nose if you like reading best, celery nose if you like math best.

Give him a black top hat if winter is your favorite season, winter cap (ski cap) if you like another season best.

Give him 1 button if you come to school in a car, 2 buttons if you walk, 3 buttons if you come by bus.

Draw his scarf to the left if you are left handed, to the right if you are right handed.



### **A Window Decoration**

Make six pointed snowflakes by folding a paper circle (or coffee filter) in half and then in thirds so it is a cone shape. Cut pieces from the sides and the top of the cone. Tape it to the window. Dip small pieces of sponge in white paint and dab over the holes in the snowflake. Remove the paper snowflake and see the beautiful results! Add a squirt of dish detergent in the paint so it will wash off.

### **Faux Snow**

"Would you like spotless desktops? Give each child several squirts of shaving cream and pretend it is snow. They can pile it up and make snowmen and all sorts of creations. It is great fun!"

### **A Winter Playday**

"We are planning for ours on Jan. 31st. It does, however, require some snow! Some of these could be adapted, I think."

- tug of war
- dog sled race (with toboggans)
- hockey puck shoot
- snow shoe racing (using shoeboxes on your feet)
- frisbee curling (into hula hoops on the ground)
- snow painting
- mitten scramble (one mitten each in a big pile, run and find yours)
- winter clothing relay (with big extra clothing provided)
- snow bucket filling relay
- ice cube relay (on a spoon, carry back and forth)
- snowman bean bag toss

"We have been working on counting by 2's, 5's, 10's lately. Today we make a giant bulletin board snowman by having each child make a chain of 10 links in length using white paper. Then children attached their section of 10 to make one long chain. As each child joined on we counted the links by 10's so that by the time all 24 had added their part we had 240 links. Using the chain and starting in the middle of the bulletin board we built a snowman by tacking the chain to the board and then coiling it around in larger and larger circles. Tomorrow we will make another chain using 5 link sections and use it to make the snowman's head. Then we will add features such as eyes, nose, mouth, buttons, hat, scarf, etc. This will be the center of our winter bulletin board and we can add others things around it such as winter sports pictures, individual snowmen, paper snowflakes and so on. The kids really liked doing this activity."

"I have a snow game that I like to play in the gym. Explain to the children that snowflakes are created by tiny particles of water freezing and sticking to other particles in the air on their descent to the earth. Ask each child to imagine that they are each one tiny particle floating slowly around the air (slowly move around the gym). As soon as they touch another child, they have to join both their hands and move together. Float around until all the children are joined to create one giant snowflake. (it doesn't have to be in a circle or a line either, after the initial joint, the kids can hang onto any part of the 'snowflake' as long as both their hands are holding on to something, ie: arms, shoulders, hands, waists, etc."

### **A 'Non-Melting' Race**

"The students each get a small milk container (waxed carton type - individual serving size) and an ice cube. They must bring ingredients or materials from home and have a NON-melting race. It brings about great discussion of what melts ice and what doesn't and insulation! The winner is the person with the largest cube at the end of the school day. Students were always very creative although my own personal favourite remains the person who bought in salt. Peeks can be made throughout the day."

### **Pattern Rhymes**

Leader: Who built a snowman in the old school yard? \_\_\_\_\_ built a snowman in the \_\_\_\_\_ school yard.

Student: Who me?

Leader: Yes, you!

Student: Couldn't be!

Leader: Then who?

Student (new leader): \_\_\_\_\_ built a snowman in the \_\_\_\_\_ school yard.

Here is a pocket chart poem you could use for January:

\_\_\_\_\_ skates on the pond,

\_\_\_\_\_ plays in the snow,

\_\_\_\_\_ sleds on the hill,

Till the spring winds blow.

Just insert one child's name in all blanks or use a different child's name in each blank.

### **Some Great Books**

"I always do a theme on Jan Brett's *The Mitten* along with a general winter theme and what we do in the wintertime. I love Jan Brett's webpage:" [www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com)

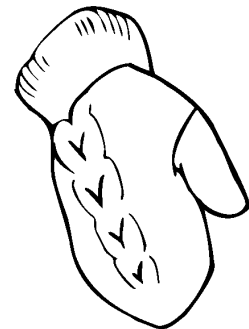
Take an old mitten and estimate how many blocks, cubes, etc. would fit inside. Stuff it full and compare the results with the estimates.

Do your children like to do plays? Read Jan Brett's *The Hat*. Then download masks from her website and set up a 'stage' as it suggests here:

[http://www.janbrett.com/the\\_hat\\_play.htm](http://www.janbrett.com/the_hat_play.htm)

"Here's a great Readers' Theatre for *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats.

<http://lovetoteach.homestead.com/SnowyDayRT.html>



"I also do snowmen during the month of January. We make snowmen and then pretend our snowmen came to life. This is a good writing exercise! We also write the directions for building a snowman."

"Each child wrote an acrostic poem using the word 'winter'. Their final copies were written on 12x18 sheets of paper. They decorated these any way they wanted - lots of blue and silver glitter used!"

### **Winter Bulletin Boards**

"Have the kids cut out snowflakes, put their pictures in the middle with the title, 'Like snowflakes, no two of us are alike.'"

"The snowflakes were put on the top two-thirds of the door or bulletin board. There were snowmen on the bottom and the teacher wrote 'Snowmen come unassembled'."

### **A Family Snowman Project**

"My kids made and decorated snowmen at home and then wrote about them."

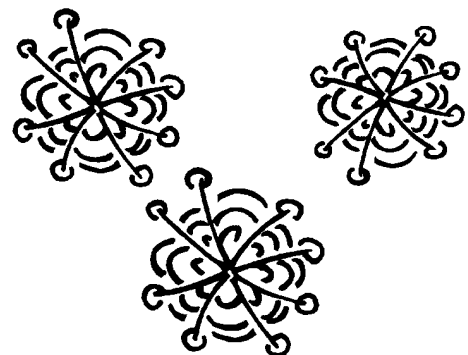
<http://kids-learn.org/frosty/smith.htm>

"My class did the home snowman project last year. They turned out wonderfully! They were allowed to decorate them in any theme possible as long as it was school appropriate...here's some of what I got back: a Mexican snowman made with tortillas, a policeman snowman, a fire-fighter, a doctor, an astronaut, a ballerina. The kids put a lot of effort into them also. No crayons were allowed. The parents really enjoy these types of family projects as well."

"I sent home an outline of a snowman. It was just like a big circle on the bottom and then a smaller one for the head. I copied it onto white heavy construction paper which worked well. They made the arms (if needed for their theme) and anything else they would need to complete the theme. One made a hockey player snowman and he added a hockey stick and helmet. I told the parents that this should be a team effort and I gave them some ideas. They could use any medium to decorate with the theme...noodles, sequins, paint, crayons, markers, glitter, fabric, feathers, etc. They must not just colour the pattern."

## **Winter Art**

"Use coffee filter paper. Have the kids fold it three times, then cut as you usually do when making snowflakes. They ooohh and aahhh when you unfold this. Then to make it even better - dip a corner into food colouring and you see the colour seeping up the flake. They are really pretty. I usually dip another corner into another colour. I have used them to make a huge class snow man, to decorate bulletin boards in between other art. This year I had the kids mount two on a larger piece of paper and then add features to turn it into a snowman - eyes, scarf, etc."



## Art Ideas

- Honeycomb cereal makes great snow flakes.
- Draw an outdoor scene with a black crayon on blue paper. Add white chalk for snow.
- Make a snowman hooked together with brads so he can move his arms and head.
- For a Frosty Winter scene, colour a scene with crayons, press hard, then paint with white paint. The paint won't stick to the crayons. Sprinkle with clear glitter while the paint is still wet.
- Make a snowman with whipped soap. Empty two to three cups of Ivory Soap in a large bowl. Gradually add just enough boiling water to soap to make it thick and creamy. Make a picture using the whipped soap.
- Make a torn paper snowman, a cotton ball snowman, a coconut snowman.
- Splatter paint snowflakes
- Make toothpick snowflakes. Glue three together at the centre to make six points. Glue and arrange on black or dark blue paper. You could paint them white if desired.
- You can use white shoe polish with sponge dispenser for snow in a picture.
- Make a snowflake by gluing three popsicle sticks together in the centre to make a six point star. Glue pasta to each of the points. Paint it white.

"To cut six-pointed snowflakes, begin with a circle. Fold in half and then in thirds. Cut out pieces on all sides."

"After learning how to make snowflakes, I give each student six white paper circles and turn them loose. When they have six completed, they get a paper plate on which I have drawn a spiral and cut on the spiral line. Together we tape the snowflakes to a length of white thread (this part is a challenge) and tape the threads around the edge of the spiral. I hang the spirals by their centers from the ceiling. They look great! I leave them up long after we do our snow activities as we have winter here for a long-g-g-g-g-g time."



"I use two dinner size paper plates to make snowmen. Use one for the body and cut the other one - cut the middle circle out and use for the head. Then cut the rippled rim into two parts for the arms. You can position them in a variety of ways. Glue doesn't hold the weight so I staple them. The kids then add the details-hats, mittens, buttons for the scrap paper box or using wallpaper samples."

## A Snow Picture

"Use 12 x 18 gray paper (or dark blue) Trim 1/2 inch from all sides. Have children make a small hill for the tree...about 3 finger spaces up from bottom. Draw a large capital Y for the trunk and two main branches. Draw a double line next to each part of the Y so it is thick and fill in with black crayon. Continue to add Y's and V's off the main branches to get more and more branches. The further up the tree, the smaller the branches should be. Go over them with black crayon so they stand out.

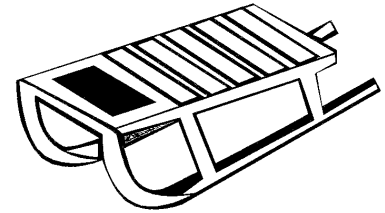
"Demonstrate how snow falls on the top part of the branches, and usually on one side of the tree, never under the branches. Apply thick white paint for snow, using Q-tips or gently dotting with small paint brushes. Be sure to start at the top of the tree. Add snow falling if desired.

"When dry, staple or glue to 12 x 18 black paper for a striking frame. Display in hall, and it looks like a forest of winter trees. All look professional!"

"You can put the snow on the crayoned tree with white chalk. These look better at a distance than close to the eye, so hang them up in a line on a wall matching the hill line so it looks like a snowy forest."

"We're making a cute snow scene for our hall display case. We are making snowmen out of baker's clay, and painting them white. We're also making evergreen snow trees by cutting out two green trees of construction paper, and sandwiching a toilet paper tube between for a stand. Then we add white paint for snow. Put down white batting or white paper for the ground and place snowmen and trees on ground for a cute winter scene. 'Let it snow!'"

"You can also make sleds out of popsicle sticks - 5 across flat - glue edges - 3 middle ones lined up a little higher than the two end ones. Break 1 stick in half and put it across near the top. Optional - add 2 sticks perpendicular for runners. If you want you can tie string or yarn for the rope. Also tin foil or saran wrap can create ice patches or skating rinks. You can also sprinkle glitter on the white paint for sparkles in the snow!"



"I like to make torn paper snowmen. This year I had the kids draw three circles on white construction paper and then tear them. I wasn't sure if the grade 1's could handle this (I've had grade 2's and 3's nearly in tears trying to do this activity so I was a little leary - but of course, went ahead and did it anyway!). I showed them how to tear just a little bit at a time (and demonstrated what would happen - in an exaggerated manner, of course - if they tried to tear too much at once.) They did great! For the snowman's features I put out a variety of margarine tubs that have fun foam shapes, shiny papers, wall paper bits, etc. for the kids to decorate with. With older kids I don't let them use any scissors but I told my 1's they could use scissors for everything else - some did and some didn't but the results were fabulous!"

"We are going to read the book *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert. Each student will get three small white paper plates to take home and decorate with their families (or you can have them do it in class.) These three paper plates make a snowman. We'll put these out in the hallway. I put blue background paper on the bulletin board and then we put white paper on to look like snow. We'll put the snowmen on and then add snowflakes. These are really easy and look great. Take three popsicle sticks and glue them together (an x and then one straight down.) Paint with diluted glue and then lay them glue side down onto a plate of silver glitter. They are very pretty. I have a huge bulletin board so as we write some poems, we'll put those up as well."

"I put up a big snowman with the caption 'Snowbody does it better than us!' Then each child coloured a boy or girl with their name on it. I will display their papers next to their boy/girl."

Also, on my door I put 'Snow joke - we're a great class!' and each kid coloured a snowman to put around the caption."

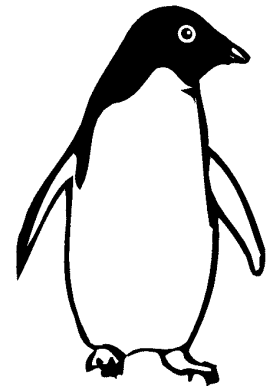
We make 3 circle snowmen and add our own designed hats, buttons, and whatever and hang them in rows from the ceiling.

We make winter trees using gray paper for the background, trees drawn with black crayon using the letter y in different sizes for the branches, and painting white snow on them just as it looks after a snow storm.



We make snowmen out of baker's clay (flour , salt, and water), and display them in case along with evergreen trees that we cut from green paper, dab with "snow" (white paint) and mount on a toilet paper roll tubes. Very cute.

We make big penguins out of black construction paper, reinforcement circles for eyes, yellow beak and feet, and lined white paper tummies. We all pick a different name that starts with P for our penguins and write sentences about penguins on the tummies. We hang these on the banister outside our room to look like a rookery.

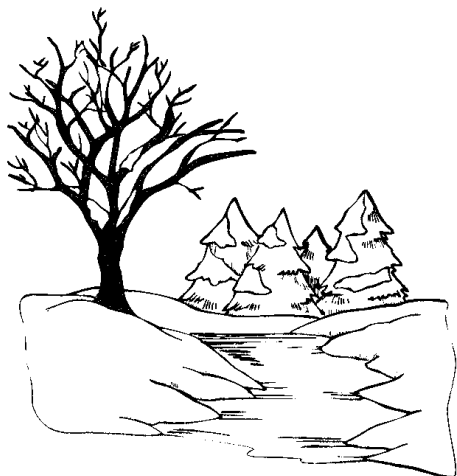


### **Q-Tip Snowflakes**

Put a quarter size dab of glue on wax paper and then give each child 6 Q-tips. They lay one end of each Q-tip in the glue to make a 6-pointed star shape. Drip some glue over the center so the Q-tip ends are well glued. Let dry for a day. Then peel off the wax paper and hang on the window or hang from the ceiling.

"To illustrate their work, each student created a winter scene using watercolours. After the pictures dried, the students went back and painted over their pictures using a heavy solution of Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) and water. (I had to show them how to get their work wet, yet not smear their paint by rubbing back and forth a million times.) When the pictures dried again, the salts made 'snow' crystals all over the paper. They look beautiful!"

### **A Winter Scene**



"On 12 x 18 gray paper placed vertically, have students draw a line for the ground. (Mine was about 5 cm. from the bottom and sort of wavy like a hill.) With a black or dark brown crayon, draw a largish capital Y. Make it of double lines so you can fill in the space between to make a nice sturdy trunk. From the branches of the Y add more Ys and Vs. The farther out from the trunk, of course, the Ys and Vs get smaller and thinner -- just like real branches.

Next you talk about the fact that when snow falls it lands on the tops of things, but not the undersides. When all understand this (I pretended I was a tree and had students come up and show where the snow would or would not land) give them a Q-tip and some thick white paint. They will blob on the snow wherever it would land. They all wanted to add blobs in the air, too, and make beautiful snowfalls. I had them blob on the ground, too.

Trim around the edges of the painting so it will fit on a large sheet of black paper and make a frame. They are beautiful! One mom said they were suitable for framing!"

### A January Bulletin Board

"I had each student cut one snowflake from a coffee filter. I scattered these snowflakes across the top of a bulletin board that had blue paper on the top and a piece of white at the bottom cut wavy at the top of the white paper to look like snow. In the middle of their coffee filter snowflakes that are placed in the sky area, I placed their picture. I took their pictures with my own camera before Christmas and had them developed. Then I cut the picture out in a circle shape and taped them into the middle of the coffee filter snowflakes. We cut pine trees out of green construction paper of various sizes and took a Q-tip and dipped it into white paint and dabbed the Q-Tip over the green trees to look like snow. These trees were placed on both sides of the bulletin board and a big snowman made out of white butcher paper is standing in the middle. His hat, face, buttons and scarf are coloured brightly with crayons. He goes from the bottom the board to the sky area. I wrote with a magic marker:

Just Like a Snowflake

No Two Are Alike

This is written broken apart like this - with the snowman in the middle. I must say it looks great! You can't believe the compliments I've received, even from parents in other rooms."



### Sparkle Snow Paint

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup salt

1/2 cup water

"Mix together and put in a squeeze bottle. Squeeze doughy paint out onto black construction paper. Make anything snowy, snowflakes, snowmen. Let it dry thoroughly and it will sparkle. It may also be painted when dry. It gives a great 3 dimensional effect."



# Spring

## Spring Science

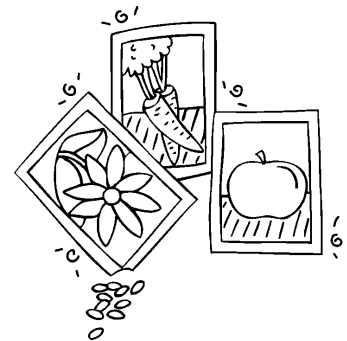
### Planting Seeds

Soak the dry lima beans in water overnight or most of the day before doing this experiment.

- Give each student a bean and a paper towel.
- Demonstrate how to carefully remove the outer layer of skin, or seed coat, from a bean, then have students follow your directions for doing the same to their beans.
- Instruct students to separate the two halves of the bean. Explain that these are called cotyledons and store food for the plant.
- Have students locate the tiny plant sprout, or embryo.
- Do the activity again with corn, if you wish, to show students that corn has only one cotyledon.
- Give each student another bean, a paper towel, and a plastic bag.
- Have the student moisten the paper towel, wrap it around the bean, place it in the bag, and seal the bag.
- Put the bags in a dark place and ask students what they think will happen to the beans.
- Check on the beans over the next few days. Students will find that the beans have begun to sprout.
- Pass out the beans so students can examine them closely and plant them in soil.
- Show the roots and the leaves.
- Ask students to explain why the bean sprouted, even in the dark. Point out that moistening the paper towel and sealing the bean in a plastic bag created an environment similar to that of a greenhouse.

### Starting Seeds

"Place a paper towel inside a baggie. Run a row of staples across the bottom of the baggie about one inch from bottom. Place bean seeds inside the baggie so they are resting on the staples. Carefully pour in water and allow the paper towel to soak it up. Display the baggies in warm place and watch seeds sprout and grow. You can tape these to a sunny window. Keep them watered. The seeds will grow quickly! Carefully take the baggies apart and plant all of the plants in a very large container and add support sticks. The plants will grow, flower and grow beans all within the classroom right before the kiddies eyes. They love it!"



"My kids have always loved 'planting' in a ziplock baggie. We usually tape a couple of seeds to the middle of a folded paper towel, wet the paper towel, place in a ziplock bag (staple the top of the paper towel in position by stapling bag and all so it doesn't sag in the bag and the moisture won't leak out). Tape the bags to the window (bean side facing out) and wait to see the roots grow. It takes a couple of days, but they love to see the roots. I usually can show the seed coat, etc., that we explored in the previous lesson when we dissect a soaked bean to find all the 'working parts'. You can find a tap root pretty easily, too."

"My class makes beanie babies by putting bean seeds in a small Ziploc baggie with damp paper towel. They wear them around their necks with a sign that says 'My Beanie Baby'. My class did this last week and it was really cute."

"Give each child a plastic or paper cup, a piece of paper towel, a sandwich baggie and some seeds that germinate quickly. They dampen the paper towel, gently roll up the seeds in it, place them in the baggie and then into the cup. The paper towel must be damp without being too wet. The children can keep the cup on their desktops and look at them every day to note the progress. Make diagrams to show the plant embryo, the root and the stem."

"I teach the vocabulary that goes with the science activity: seed, plant, root, water, sun, etc."

What does a plant need to grow? What are some things that you need to grow? Water, food, sunlight - be scientists to find the answer to the questions.

Put beans in ziploc bags to test the following conditions:

- no water (no wet paper towel)
- no light (cover in black, put in closet)
- no food (take seed apart--baby plant w/o bean)
- optional: no air (close ziploc bag)

Check bags periodically to see what happens and discuss results.



"Here is an interesting idea that I have tried with an Amaryllis plant. Ask the children how they think a plant grows. Elicit: From the bottom up? The top up? The Middle section enlarges? Have the children use a permanent marker to mark the stem on the soil line and the tip of the stem. Then have them draw two lines in the middle that are 1 cm apart. Each observation day, have the students observe the marks to see if their location has changed. (They can measure the difference.)"

## Insects!

This is a favourite for May and June. There are many interesting activities that you can correlate with this theme and the children's interest level will be high.

1. Introducing the theme. Collect insects from the local environment. Take plastic containers and look on the ground or grass, under rocks or logs, beside the buildings or fences, around trees, and in the air. Make a chart of vocabulary words.

2. Observation - use magnifying glasses to see the shape, colour, structure, number of legs, etc.

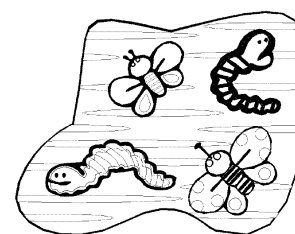
3. Classify the insects in a number of ways - size, number of legs, where they were found, way of moving, etc.

4. Research - From books about insects, find as many names of the insects as possible. Learn about the body structures, where they live and what they eat.

5. How do insects see, hear, feel and move? Use magnifying glasses to investigate. Ask questions to encourage the children to use their thinking and investigative skills.

6. Discuss individual insects:

- Bees - attract bees with different foods outdoors. Study a bee (in a jar). Make bees in an art lesson. Read the first story from *Winnie the Pooh*.



- Ants - collect ants. Study the body, form. Make an ant farm (there are many books to give you ideas on this and enlist an interested parent to help). Discover their social structure.
- Butterflies - Go outdoors looking for them and find out the names. Make butterflies in an art lesson. Discuss symmetry. Discuss the difference between butterflies and moths. Learn the life cycle of the butterfly.
- Beetles - collect and keep in a classroom habitat. Find different beetles. Discuss the body parts.

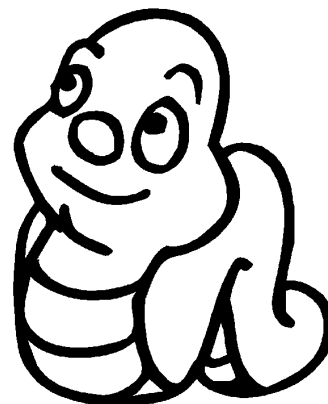


- Spiders - Spiders are not true insects, but fit into the insect study. How are spiders different? Collect and observe. Discuss the body structure. Talk about webs and draw some. Talk about dangerous spiders and how spiders reproduce. Read or watch 'Charlotte's Web'. Talk about fear of spiders.

- Flies and other flying insects. Look at the wings under a magnifying glass. How do they fly?
7. Make an insect booklet.
  8. Draw imaginary insects.
  9. Pretend you are a favourite insect. Write a story about your day.

## **Worms!**

"We did a KWL chart on a large worm (segmented into the sections) - the results/questions/comments on it were mind-boggling. I was so amazed I had to post the worm in our window for a long time. Then the children went on a worm hunt around our field. They took magnifying lenses and were able to dig up quite a few (it had rained recently so there were lots of worms out and about). We put the worms into the Science Center and they explored them some more. Then we read a story called 'Wonderful Worms' which is a great non-fictional story. They copied in their own KWL chart after that."



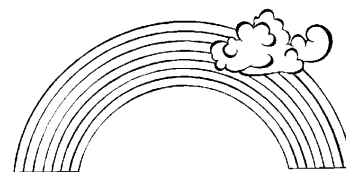
"I did a worm unit last year. The kids loved it. Here is one site I used. <http://www.sci.mus.mn.us/sln/tf/w/worms/worms/worms.html> There is another site about Herman the worm that is excellent. <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/worms/> The kids wrote letters to Herman. He sent us a poster back. Use all the links that Herman offers. They wrote poems about worms. We had a hands on session. They were able to name the parts of a worm and determine if the worm was right side up. We made 'dirt' and ate it. For a treat during the week we had three different kinds of gummy worms. We learned some really cute poems."

"You can make a worm composting bin by using a fish bowl or rubbermaid tub. Fill with potting soil, coffee grounds, vegetable or fruit scraps and small paper scraps and put in some worms. Use red wigglers not night crawlers. I buy the red wigglers at the bait store."

# Science For Spring!

## Syrup Rainbow

"Directions: Take 2 tablespoons of Karo light corn syrup. Add one drop of red, blue, and yellow food coloring in the form of a triangle. Slowly stir to blend the colours."



## Evaporation

"Water is always a good subject for experiments. You could put water in jars and have the children predict what will happen to the water if left out for a few days. If they know it will evaporate, ask how long to they think it will take. After this you could test out other forms of water: coloured, salt, soapy, sugar, ice, hot. Do these also evaporate? Do they evaporate at different rates? What happens when they do evaporate? Ask the children where they think the water has gone. (This is always good for a few laughs!)"

"Will the water evaporate at a faster rate when in the sun light? on a heater? in a cool spot? in a box? etc... Put out a covered jar. Will this water evaporate? Why or Why not? You could also test out other liquids such as juice, paint, soda, vinegar, iced tea, lemonade etc..."

## Plants

Use a celery stalk and put it in water with food colouring...watch the food colouring go up into the plant. You can even put half of the stalk in one colour, and half in another colour while leaving them connected at the top. Grow plants in the closet and compare them to plants grown out in the sunlight. Put the bottom of a turnip in water...it turns into a wonderful plant, and do the same with parts of carrots and sweet potatoes. Have the children grown lima beans in clear plastic cups stuffed with paper toweling....put the soaked bean (not soaked to much) between damp paper toweling and the cup. They can see the whole plant develop.

## Natural Dyes

"Our favorite science project was natural dyes. We made tee shirts with the dyes we made.

Problem/Question: What colour dyes can you get from plant materials such as berries, vegetables, fruits and spices? Then we did the actual experiment with the following items:

onion skin , paprika, tumeric powder, spinach, dill weed, red cabbage, blueberries, beets, tea leaves, coffee, orange peel, avocado skins, goldenrod, cherries, blackberries, sunflower seeds, carrot tops, maple tree bark, etc.

Directions:

- Tie your material in some netting or an old piece of nylon pantyhose. A handful of each item should be enough.
- Put it in a large pot with cold water and bring to a boil. Let it soak for about one hour or so.
- ***\*Important - Add a 'mordant' of 2 teaspoons of alum (get it from a pharmacy) and 1/2 of a teaspoon of cream of tartar to set the colour or it will rinse right out.***
- Put in the cloth, etc. and then let it simmer for another hour or until you get the desired colour.
- cool

We made little test squares for each dye using muslin fabric. We made a display board with these and the children also got to keep their own squares for each dye. We did this over a period of 2 weeks - from beginning to end when we made the shirts. That part was fun! But we talked about a lot of things; how people made clothes long ago, predicting what colour each material would make (graph work), etc.

### A Water Cycle Bracelet

Each child will need a piece of rawhide or string and six beads (light blue for rain, green for grass, dark blue for a puddle, yellow for the sun, clear for evaporation and white for a cloud) placed in that order. Tie to make a circle. They touch each bead as the story is told.

#### ***This is the story:***

One day the rain started to come down from the sky. It landed on the grass. The rain drops made a puddle. The

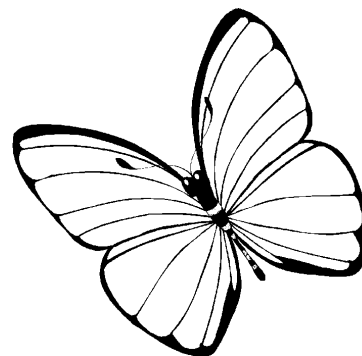
sun came out and warmed up the puddle. The droplets evaporated and went into the sky. So many raindrops got together that they make a cloud. Then the rain fell from the cloud. It landed on the grass.

*Keep repeating the story a few times and you can see the light go on in each child's face. They move the beads as the story is told.*

### The Butterfly Life Cycle

"I do a great butterfly lifecycle project.

"Divide a paper plate in half (fraction lesson) with a line and then half again. You now have fourths. The kids then label number one to four and then label with names; egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly. Then using pasta that I dyed using food colouring and a little bit of rubbing alcohol, we made the life cycle. Actually the egg was supposed to be a piece of rice, but I found this to be too small, so I used puffed rice (the cereal). Then the caterpillar was represented by the long tubular pasta, the chrysalis was a small pasta shell, and the butterfly was the bowtie pasta."



"Last year I did a great art project I got from a book called *Crafts for Kids Who Are Wild About Insects* by Kathy Ross. (Millbrook Press)

1. Cut apart egg cartons so they have 4 squares left together. Paint with blue poster paint.
2. Cut out a small green leaf from construction paper and glue on a popcorn kernel.
3. Paint spiral pasta green and glue gun on two wiggly eyes. Cut up green wool - 3 or 4 small pieces per student.
4. Paint shell pasta brown. Collect small twigs or cut small pieces of brown pipecleaner (1 for each student)
5. Paint bow pasta bright colours (they used their own water paint sets at their desks for this part) When the bows are dry wrap a 3 inch piece of green pipe cleaner around the center to make antennae and glue gun on two wiggly eyes.
6. Punch a hole at one end of the egg carton and put through a loop of wool so you can hang them up.

To finish:

In the first compartment glue the leaf and popcorn kernel.

In the second compartment glue 3 or 4 pieces of green wool and the spiral pasta caterpillar.

In the third compartment glue a small twig or piece of brown pipecleaner and the shell pasta (chrysalis)

In the third compartment glue or wedge in the bow pasta (butterfly).

I glued on the wiggly eyes and the kids did the rest with white glue. They look great hanging up in the room and the kids loved making them."

### Soil Discovery!

"I was visiting in a grade one class today and thought I would pass on this little idea. The teacher gave each child a small cup of soil. She had a large bucket of soil in the classroom. She had obtained all of the soil from the same location. After putting a piece of newspaper on their desk, the students were able to dump their soil onto the desk and explore. They were to make investigations of the soil, and see what they could find in it. The students absolutely loved it! There were squeals of delight (and disgust!) as the students discovered various wood bugs, worms, little slugs, twigs, etc. in their soil. After great exploration and sharing with their friends, the students listed what they found in their Earth and its Soil booklets."

"For our soil unit I always have each student bring in a small bag of soil from their yards. We always get quite a variety. The bugs and worms are the biggest hits!"

"We did this too in my room but used pulled up grass so we could examine the roots, and were VERY delighted to see insects crawling around in there just like a little city."

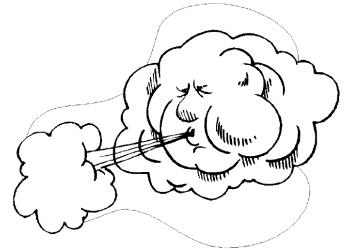
### March is the 'Windy Month'

If you have a parachute at the school, have the children hold the edges and make the parachute show the lion and the lamb weather. The parachute can make winds, and the surface can look like the sea in the different winds.

What is wind? Can we see it? Can we feel it? Can we touch it?

Talk about the wind. Bring in a fan and turn it on at different levels so the children can feel it blowing slowly, medium, and fast. Read stories about the wind while the fan is blowing.

See if items in the classroom will blow in the wind.



## Spring Activities

### Spring Bulletin Boards

**In March the winds begin to blow**

**And it's time for kites, you know!** Display kites the children have made.

You can title it **April Showers Bring May Flowers** and have half the class write their poems on umbrellas and the other half on colourful flower patterns.

"We made a really neat display on our door which would also work well on a bulletin board. The title was **We Welcome Spring with a Rainbow of Colours!** I had traced the outline of a rainbow on blue paper leaving the spaces between the rainbow about 1" wide. They could be a little wider as well. Then my students cut out pictures from catalogues to glue onto each section of the rainbow to make the colours. Red, Orange, Yellow, etc., The rainbow actually turned out really neat and the kids had so much fun putting it together. Then we added some grass below, and the students made a sun, puffy clouds, flowers and butterflies to finish off the whole effect."



"I made a large tree made out of brown butcher paper. It started out bare. Then it had a few nests with eggs on it and then grass was put at the foot of the tree as that happened outdoors. Next week, we will be adding daffodils around the bottom. We are adding something each week."

"Make BIG spring flowers for a bulletin board! Use bright colours and a variety of flower types."

"I have my kids make Spring flowers for our Spring board - they look wonderful. The middle of the circle is a writing form where they write what they like best about Spring. They glue that circle onto a construction paper circle. Then around the outside they make petals. I have them decide on a petal shape and make one petal and use it as a tracer to make the rest. They can use one or more colours. They add a stem and leaves and it looks so bright and colourful."

"I always do an 'April showers bring May flowers' board. Of course, I have the board for 2 months. I have the students trace and cut out the shape of the top part of the umbrella from different wallpaper patterns. With a little bit of folding and some careful stapling you can make the umbrella stand out from the board. We make the handle of the umbrella out of a silver chenille stem (pipe cleaner). At the top corner of the board I put a rain cloud and make large raindrops.



We have done different things to go with the board. Last year they wrote acrostic poems for RAIN or STORM and I put those up under their umbrella. One year we did a weather graph to record the number of rainy days. You could also graph centimetres of rain. You could have them write rainy day stories. I title the board APRIL SHOWERS BRING..... Then in May I take down the umbrellas, add a sun at the other top corner and we make 3 dimensional flowers to go along the bottom of the board and do a writing activity about flowers."

"We focus on reading this time of year (when don't we!) so we make a 'Garden of Good Books'. Kids make stems and grass, clouds, etc. My background fabric is a dark royal blue). The flowers are book shaped. At first kids just colour these shapes and the bulletin board looks nice. As we go along, they write on another smaller piece, a book review: title, author, one sentence telling about the book, another about their favourite part and why. Stick this on the coloured flower. It looks good for a long time!"



"I did a really cute spring bulletin board last year for March winds. My students made hats out of chinnet bowls and plates. Cut out the center of the plate and put the bowl into the opening. Staple around the edges. We painted the hats spring colors (lavender, light blue, pink, etc.) using acrylic paints. Then we decorated the area where the plate and the bowl were joined with purchased silk flowers. I also let them add some spring things like little plastic frogs, butterflies, bugs etc. We made a bow for the back of each with ribbons hanging down. Even the boys made these and enjoyed it!! I put them up on the bulletin board along with a big cloud that was blowing and a poem about blowing wind. It got rave reviews and when the kids took their hats home lots of families used them as part of their home decor - they really did look great!"

"On my Spring bulletin boards I have:

- computer typed goals for spring with a picture done on the computer.
- symmetrical butterflies made by cutting out a butterfly, putting paint on one side and smushing together
- handwritten poems that the children chose from a variety of spring poetry books and then illustrated
- trees with pink blossoms on them using tissue paper."

### **A "Growing" Bulletin Board**

"Put brown butcher paper up for soil, put in seeds, show them starting to germinate, then seedlings, then plants growing, and growing...and growing...into a TALL sunflower!

"The top of the bulletin board will be sun on the far side, clouds on the opposite side with raindrops coming down. You could take a picture of each child and cut a hole in each raindrop and paste/tape their picture behind the raindrop so that their faces would show through the hole."

### **Rain**

Drip, drop, splash.

Drip, drop, splash.

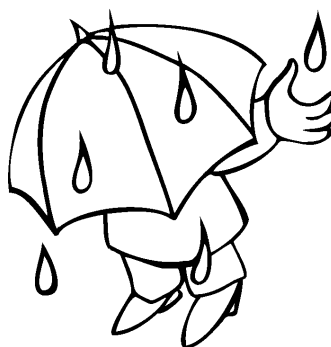
Drip, drop, splash went the rain all day.

It dripped from \_\_\_\_\_,

It dropped from \_\_\_\_\_.

It splashed from \_\_\_\_\_.

Drip, drop, Splash!



### **Spring Poems**

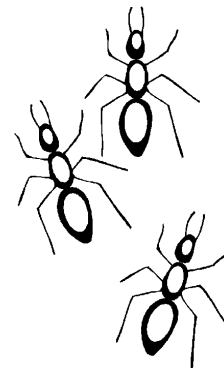
"My kids wrote spring poems - S is for ; P is for ... The paper I used had a flower border that they coloured with felts. At the bottom I used green butcher paper to look like grass and the children made paper daffodils which I stapled coming out of the grass. Around the poems I put some green crepe paper to look like a vine and every six inches a coffee filter flower. They look great and we have had lots of compliments!"

### **Soaring Into Spring**

"Make a 'Soaring Into Spring' bulletin board. Have the students make paper kites and display them on a blue background. Use sponges to paint the blue paper so it looks like clouds. The students can drop thickened tempera paints on butcher paper, then blow the paint with straws, or use sponges, combs, or droppers to decorate the kites. Tie pieces of material to a string and mount to back of kite."

### **Antsy**

"I put up a bulletin board in May that says: 'Ant'sy for summer. I have a pattern of an ant (about the size of copy paper) that the kids colour, and cut out a copied picture (I photocopy their school pictures before they take the packet home) of themselves and glue on to the head. I have a piece of red checked tablecloth and paper picnic basket, and paper plates, I staple on the board, with the ants all heading toward it. BUT... you could put up ants, and use the 'Ant'sy for with anything...like 'Ant'sy for Good Books or for Good Stories."



Are you studying bees? Here are some bulletin board slogans:  
Hive You Heard? Buzzing Around... Here's the Buzz About... Honey Of a Bee Bee a  
Honey Of a Student One Terrific Bee Bee- u - tiful Student Queen Bee Of the Week Super  
Bee Of the Week Notable Bee Someone to BUZZ about.... High five, for the STARS of our  
hive... Look who's been a busy bee...

## Spring Art

### Handprint Tulips

Paint palm and fingers (with or without thumb) any colour. Use finger to paint stem and leaves.



### Coffee Filter Flowers

Have students colour the coffee filter using washable markers in springtime colours. Caution them to not colour too much in one place or they'll make a hole in the filter. (They don't even have to colour the whole filter, cut colours will run when wet.) Place the filters on newspaper and spray gently with water from a spray bottle. The colours run and create a beautiful effect. When dry, pinch from the centre and use a green pipecleaner to form a stem. Fluff open. Make a couple of leaf shapes and place a hole in them with a hole punch. Thread the leaves onto the stem.

### Whirlygig

Make a square and have the students decorate it brightly. Draw diagonal lined from the corners and cut on them almost to the centre. Pull the corners to the centre and stick a pin through it into an eraser of a pencil. The kids can take it outside and watch it turn in the wind, or they can blow on it to make it turn.

### Windsocks

Paint and decorate a paper towel tube. Make a hanger with yarn at the top of the tube. Use bright coloured crepe streamers to hang down.

### Butterflies

This is similar to the project described above for the coffee filter flowers. Gather the dried coloured coffee filter in the centre using an accordion style gathering method. Twist the filter together with a black pipecleaner. Spread the coffee filter out to form the wings. Use the left over pipecleaner to form a body for the butterfly and his antennae.

### Beautiful Butterflies

Have the children trace around one foot and cut it out. Then they trace the left and right hand (some children may need help, so they can work in partners to do this) and cut them out. The foot is the butterfly's body and the hands are the wings. Add a face and antennae. Decorate the wings symmetrically.

Have the children work in partners. They take off their shoes and stand with feet close together touching. The partner traces around both feet. Add a long narrow oval between the feet for the butterfly's body. Add antennae and decorate the feet as wings. Now you have 'butterfeet'!

Have each child colour a coffee filter with water-soluble felt pens. (Put newspaper under as the colour will come through.) Then spray the coloured filter with water. The colours run together. When it is dry, gather the filter through the diameter and wind the middle of a black pipecleaner once around to form a butterfly shape. Curl the ends of the pipecleaner for the antennae.

"I make butterflies with the students handprints. You can also make flowers with one handprint - have the children trace their hands without the thumbs, round the bottoms of the palms and curl the fingers to make tulips."

### **Big Flowers**

Make a big colourful mural for Spring! Give each child a piece of 11 x 17 photocopy paper. Fold up one corner and trim to make the paper 11 inches square. They draw a circle about the size of their palm in the centre of the paper. Then they draw large petals around this flower centre to fill the whole paper. Paint the flowers with bright spring colours. When the flower is dry, cut it out and glue onto a mural. Blue butcher paper (like a blue sky) is a good choice. Then paint the stems and leaves. Add some butterflies or bees on the flowers, too!

Or ..... finger-paint large paper with one flower colour, or two analogous colours (colours next to one another on the colour wheel: red - orange, blue - purple, yellow - orange, etc.) Don't mix the colours too much. When the paper is dry, draw huge flowers on the back of the paper. When you are pleased with the drawings, cut them out. Finger-paint paper in plain green, too, and draw and cut out leaves and stems. This makes a lovely colourful mural! You can use the yellow finger-painted paper to cut out flower centres, too.

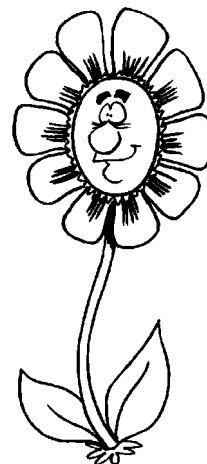
This is another finger-painting project to make big flowers. Use a variety of colours, as above, or one colour only. Have the children use the finger tips to make large spiral swirls on the paper, starting in the centre of the paper. When they are dry, cut out following the largest swirl in a big oval. These look like camellias or roses.

Give each child a 10 cm. circle. Have them draw their faces on the circle, or use a photo. Then they trace 5 or 6 hands from brightly coloured construction paper and cut them out. Glue the hands behind the circle for flower petals. These make a great bulletin board for Spring, or can be sent home as Mother's Day gifts.

### **Daffodils**

"I make daffodils with yellow petals and yellow milk jug caps as the centres. They look really nice and we always get a lot of compliments on them."

"We first observe some real daffodils. I cut strips of yellow paper about 1" by 4" or so. I show the children how to cut one end into a point. Children glue about 5 of these into a star. Then I give them a yellow piece of crepe paper which has already been cut into a circle. I show them how to glue the centre of the circle to the centre of their star. Then we pull them up to form the cup of the daffodil. I have strips of green paper cut to make into stems. They also use strips of green paper to



make the leaves. I show them how to trim one end to a point."

Trace a star shape onto yellow paper and cut it out. Glue a yellow cupcake/muffin holder for the frill.

## **Other Spring Art**

"Cut and glue green leaves and stems on blue paper and then use yellow cupcake papers for the flowers."

"Make bird nests. Use scissors to cut the shapes of birds eggs from construction paper. Glue the eggs onto cardboard. Glue short strands of yarn (or dry grass) under the eggs for a nest and allow them to dry completely. Use markers to draw tree branches around the nest and speckles on the eggs. Draw leaves or use real ones, or felt (whatever) to make leaves on the branches. Talk about the kinds of birds that live in your area. Compare their sizes, shapes, and colours. Take a walk and look for nests in trees. Talk about the materials that birds use to build nests and how high or low the nests are in the trees.

"Make popcorn flowers. Pop popcorn. Put handfuls of popcorn in plastic baggies and add pink powdered tempura paint to each one. Shake well to distribute paint all over the popcorn Cut stems and leaves out of green construction paper and glue them to tag board. Glue on the coloured popcorn to make spring flowers."

"Make coffee filter flowers! Cover the work area with newspapers or other protective covering. Let children draw or colour on 5-7 coffee filters with washable markers. Random markings are just fine as detailed drawings won't show up in this project. They can be made into a flower as they are, or dipped in water to make the colours run and then dried. Place one coffee filter decorative side down on the table. Stack other coffee filters decorative side up on top. Fold coffee filters in half. Scrunch middle of the coffee filters (starting at the bottom coffee filter). Wrap chenille stem tightly around scrunched area to hold in place. Straighten chenille stem to use as flower stem."

Use a Q-tip and white paint to make pussywillows on branches.

## **Wind Art**

1. Drizzle a little paint on a piece of paper.
2. Take the paper outside on a windy day and hold it up in the air.
3. Let the wind blow paint into designs, or have the children blow on the paint with straws.

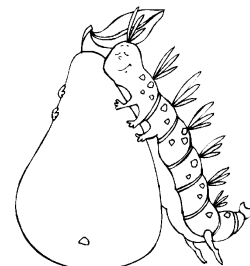
## **Caterpillars**

Make a caterpillar using 4 hand-prints with the fingers going down and a fist for a head. Use a finger to form the antennae.

### **The Fuzzy Caterpillar**

The fuzzy caterpillar  
Crawled upon a leaf.  
Spun her little chrysalis,  
And then fell fast asleep.

While she was sleeping,  
She dreamed that she could fly.  
And later when she woke up,  
She was a butterfly!



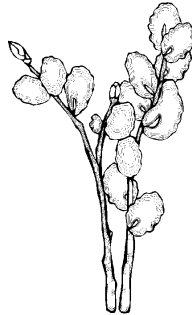
### Japanese Plum Trees

"We either blow drippy black paint with a straw to form a tree trunk, or just paint a trunk and branches. Then we glue on pink popcorn for the blossoms. Instead of buying expensive (and tempting to eat) pink popcorn, I crushed (with a hammer and paper bag) 1 large piece of pink sidewalk chalk until it was all powdery. Then all I did was dump the powder and my popcorn into a plastic bag and shake. Voila! Cheap pink popcorn."

### Pussywillows

#### Riddle

Gray like fur  
but can't purr.  
Soft as silk  
but can't drink milk.  
What am I?



"I have this written in the shape of a pussywillow. The answer is covered with a flap so that they can peek underneath. I then have children observe actual pussywillow branches and we discuss them. Following that, we do an art project. On long pieces (approx. 6"x18") of blue construction paper, children draw a branch using a black crayon. They use chalk to make the pussywillows. As they are working, I bring around 3 actual buds for them. One they can glue onto their paper, one they may tear apart to explore what is inside, and the third one they may take home.

"Happy Spring! It's just around the corner!"

Use a Q-tip and white paint to make pussywillows on the branches.

"When the first pussywillows arrive at school we always make fingerprint pictures of them. We cut tall vases from folded wall paper. Glue them on tall paper (9 x 18). Draw 4-5 stems that reach up high. After we look closely at the real pussywillows we press ONE finger to a black stamp pad. Use fingerprints to make the buds up each stem. They look fuzzy if the ink pad isn't too wet."

"You need real pussywillows, yellow/white chalk/ good quality art paper (watercolour painting paper), gray and brown crayons, black construction paper, an overhead projector and hairspray.

Have the kids examine the pussywillows closely, looking at the shapes of branches, thickness, texture, etc. Have them do a practice sketch on scrap paper. Lay the branch on an overhead projector and project on a screen. Discuss the shape, etc., again. Leave this on for the kids to examine while sketching. On good paper kids sketch the branch using charcoal. Highlight the pussywillows with white or yellow chalk. You can smear in a little brown/gray crayon as well. Spray with hairspray to prevent smudging and mount on black construction paper."

"Draw a few pussywillow stems with brown crayon on deep blue construction paper. With the brown crayon, make little 'cups' on the branches. Then take white chalk and make oval 'pussies' in the brown cups."

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### **Beautiful Spring Flowers**

"Colour two muffin cups various colours (they will be the flower head). You might want to make the centers yellow and the outsides a rainbow of flower colours... be creative! Cut out leaves and a stem from green construction paper. Glue the leaves and the stem onto a piece of white or pastel paper.

Glue the two muffin cups onto the top of the stem (one on top of the other) to form the flower. Flatten out the bottom cup a bit more than the top cup so you can see the petals (you can use more than two cups if you want... the more cups you use, the more petals your flower will have). You can decorate the paper further by colouring in grass, sky and clouds. You could also use balled up pieces of green tissue paper as grass and cotton balls as clouds.

Try colouring the cups with pastels, the stem and leaves with regular crayons and the sky with water colour paints (different mediums are always lots of fun for the kids). Or just put out a variety of mediums and let your kids pick which to use."

### **Cherry Blossoms**

Materials:

- thin black paint or black India ink, straws, pink tissue paper, white paper (8 1/2 x 11 or I used 6 x 9 white art paper - it's a lot of work for the little ones blowing and gluing on the tissue)

What to do:

1. Use a straw or eye dropper and put a drop of ink at the bottom end corner of the paper.
2. Have the child kneel up to the table and blow through the straw to spray the black across the paper like a branch. (If they blow from above you get a big splat). Add another drop and make more branches across the paper.
3. After the ink or paint is dry give the children 1 inch square pieces of pink tissue to crumple and glue all over the branches.

### **Spring Flowers**

"The center is a circle where I have the students print why they like Spring. Then they glue that circle to a construction paper circle (the circles I have pre-traced, so they just cut them out). Then I show them a variety of flower petal styles they can cut out to glue to their 'middle' of the flower. They always look great.

"Another type of Spring flower art I do:

- make several tulip shape tracers,
- students use the tracer to trace the tulip shape onto a bright floral napkin. Heavier paper napkins work better.
- then they cut out the shape and glue just the edges onto paper, leaving the top open.
- then they stuff a small amount of cotton-batten inside the flower shape to make it puff out and finish gluing it down.
- add leaves, stem and either a vase or grass, etc., backdrop and they are done.

Our grade 3 teacher has her class make these as posters. I use them to make Mother's Day cards."



"Paint the palm of child's hand red (not thumb). Paint fingers green. Press on paper. This is the flower pot and stems of flowers. Children add different coloured cut-out flower blooms or draw flowers at the top. Outline with black marker. Add some ribbon or other decorations to the pot and they make a cute bulletin board or border."

### You Can Make a Rainbow

"Make a giant handprint rainbow. Each child dips their hand in paint and adds to one row of colour. When I did it, we just did three rows of colours: red, yellow and blue. It was very effective. We sang the song: 'You can sing a rainbow'."

### A Bird in a Nest

"Here's a fun art project that Grade One kids love.....a bird in a nest.

Nest: Cook spaghetti, drain, pour glue over the whole pan of spaghetti and mix in. Give each child a blob on a piece of cardboard (little smaller than the size of a saucer). They shape it into a nest shape. Dry three days, then paint brown.

Bird: Make baker's clay.....2 cups of flour to 1 cup salt....1 cups water. Mix in large bowl....add more flour or water to get a stiff consistency, yet moldable. (each child gets about 1/2 cup of dough to work with so adjust recipe accordingly)

Make a ball of dough...Put on a piece of foil. The bird will be made out of one ball of dough which is shaped into form of bird. Gently push and squeeze one end into the shape of a head. Gently form a point for the tail end. Should look like a bird sitting. Squeeze the head a little for the beak. Put foil and bird on baking sheet and bake at 250 for 2 hours. The next day paint yellow, blue, or red. When dry add features for beak and wing and tail feathers. Put on nest."

### Spring Trees

1. Water colour 8x12 white construction paper with watered down blue tempera. Let dry completely.
2. Draw a low hill on bottom of paper and colour green.
3. Draw a tree using the letter 'Y' for the trunk and add more 'Y's and 'V's to make more branches with light brown crayon.
4. Using sponges cut into squares or strips, dab on leaves with green tempera. Dry completely.
5. Roll 2" squares of pink tissue paper and glue on to tree for blossoms. These look very impressive if you glue on to larger blue paper for a framed effect.

### It's Raining Cats and Dogs!

We designed one cat and one dog on white constructions paper, coloured both sides, and hung them from the ceiling with raindrops.....it's raining cats and dogs (for April). We made smaller versions of cats and dogs and put them on a circular strip of paper for a mobile to take home and hang up.



### Colourful Butterflies

- open a coffee filter and have the children colour designs using washable markers
  - fold the coffee filter when it is finished and dip the pointed end into water. Turn it over and let the water absorb through the entire filter.
  - open it and lay it on paper to dry.
  - when it is finished it should have a nice tie-dye effect.
  - twist tie in the middle with chenille wire and add another piece of chenille wire to form antennas
- Now you have a beautiful butterfly



### **Paper Plate Shakers**

- take two paper plates (need to be heavier or thicker plates)
- have students decorate the outsides
- place some beads, seeds, popcorn, etc., in the middle when they are finished decorating
- staple them together - add crepe paper streamers if you wish
- use as musical instruments

### **Wind Mobiles**

- In the Spring we make wind-mobiles with paper plates
- students decorate one paper plate
- then they glue thin strips of tissue paper to the outside rim of the plate - usually the bottom half
- we hang up the plates and they move so nicely in the breeze

### **Spring Murals**

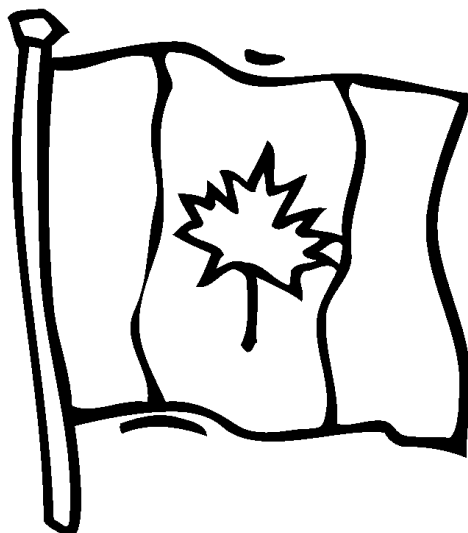
1. Cut a piece of blue butcher paper from the roll as big as you want your mural to be. Have the children paint brown or orange circles at intervals on the paper. Then with yellow (or other colour) paint and a large brush, paint large petals around the circle centers.

2. Have the children cover a large paper with a single colour of finger paint - pink or yellow. Have them use their fingers to make large spiral swirls in an oval shape on the paper. When they are dry, cut out the large ovals. These look like roses or camellias. Put these huge flowers on a mural. The children can also fingerpaint with green and cut out leaf shapes and stems. This makes a lovely colourful bulletin board.

### **Victoria Day**

Make Canadian flags! Cut 9 x 12 paper to 8 x 12 by cutting a strip from the bottom of the paper. (This can be done by one ruler width.) The children trace their hand in the middle and draw a stem for the maple leaf and draw the lines for the red side panels. Colour or paint the flags.

The leaf can be done by getting a real leaf. Put it under a sheet of photocopy paper and colour over it using the side of a red crayon. Hold it tightly! Make sure the edges of the leaf are clear. When a good leaf shape with clear edges is accomplished, cut it out and glue in the centre of the flag.



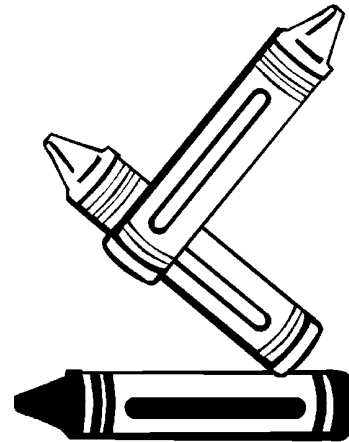
# Themes

## Year Long Themes

There are advantages to having a year-long theme. Your bulletin boards can be adapted through the year, and if your theme has broad connotations it can be expanded to encompass your different subjects. Many schools have year-long themes, too.

### The Crayon Box

Use large crayons as decoration. There are also the large plastic crayons that you can hang from the ceiling. Make a bulletin board - 'Primary Colours' - each child's picture on a balloon shape of red, blue, or yellow. For an art centre - 'Colour My World' with children's art projects. For a reading centre 'Read Under the Rainbow'. This can be expanded to the seasonal colours: orange and black for Hallowe'en, red and green for Christmas, etc., and for themes: The Deep Blue Ocean, Green Thumbs for a plant theme, etc.



### Go on a Safari

"We decorate the entire school, halls, library, cafeteria, and classrooms with the designated theme. This year our theme was a Safari theme! We called it 'The Hunt for Knowledge'. It was a fun to have animal prints, jungle plants, etc. There are animal print fabrics and wrapping paper. Big animals can decorate the halls. The older classes learn about Africa, have penpals from Africa and read stories that fit the theme."

### Changes

'Changes' is a very broad theme. In the beginning of the year it can be the change to a new grade. It can be changes in seasons, people, animals and plants. It can be changes in matter. It can be learning and expanding knowledge.

### Dinosaurs

'Dinosaurs' can give you lots of ideas for bulletin boards and relating themes. "This is Big!" with a brontosaurus type of plant-eater, an alphabet of dinosaurs, a bulletin board with a child's name on each dino pattern, learn about the eras, 'Soaring' or 'Flying High' with the pteranodon, etc.

### Flying to New Heights

This can encompass space, aircraft, birds, hot-air balloons (colourful for a bulletin board) - as well as personal growth in learning and working together.

### Under the Sea

Learn about the oceans and the creatures that inhabit them. Bulletin boards can have seaweed and fish, a 'yellow submarine', creatures that live at the bottom of the sea (crabs, shelled animals, starfish, etc.), class stars can be starfish, etc. With 'Nemo' out this year, this would be a great theme. Try "Catch a Good Book" or "The Catch of the Day".

## A Jellybean Mini-Theme

Give each jellybean colour a value .... red = 2, blue = 5, etc.. Add jellybeans  $R + O =$ ,  $Y + G =$ ,  $P + O + O + W =$ ,  $O </> Y$ ,  $R </> G$ , etc. Have student make up their own problems and solve.

How many groups of 2 can you make? Are there any left over? How many groups of 4 can you make? Are there any left over? How many groups of 5 can you make? Are there any left over?

How many centimetres long is 1 jellybean? 2 jellybeans? 4 jellybeans? How much do your jellybeans weigh?

How many jellybeans in all?

### Counting Jellybeans

One little, two little, three little jellybeans;  
Four little, five little, six little jellybeans;  
Seven little, eight little, nine little jellybeans;  
Ten yummy jelly beans to eat!

### The Jellybean Song (tune: Alouette)

Al and Etta went out to get a  
Basket full of jolly jelly beans.  
Jolly jelly beans of red,  
That's exactly what I said.  
Beans of red, beans of red,  
Ooohhhh, .....  
(beans of green...that's exactly what I mean)  
(beans of pink...that's exactly what I think)  
you can make up verses for the other colours -

**Sorting Jellybeans:** Each child will need an empty egg carton and a handful of jellybeans. Have the children place the jellybeans into individual egg cups according to colour. The children can count how many beans of each colour are in the cups.

**Graphing Jellybeans:** Have the children tell you their favourite jellybeans. Ask them favourite flavour and/or colour. Make a graph on bulletin board paper for all to see. Also have graph paper for students to make a bar graph of the results. You can also try making a line graph and plot the dots to show them 3 different kinds of graphs.

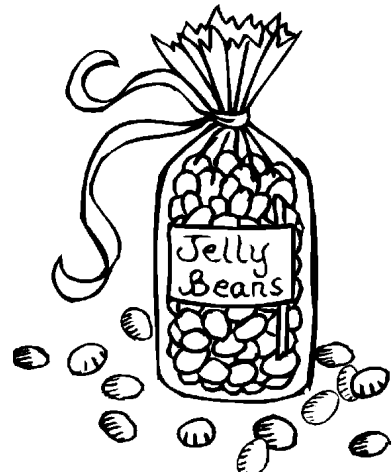
**Making Patterns:** Glue jellybeans or paper jellybeans onto craft sticks following a pattern.

**Jellybean Toss:** Put out cups or lids. They may need to be weighted down. Divide students up into two teams. Have students take turns tossing a jellybean into the cup. Give each colour a number value. Add together the jellybeans that make it into the cup. Some of the colours could have a negative value where the number had to be subtracted.

**Jellybean Writing:** Jelly beans are.... As \_\_\_\_colour\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_object\_\_\_\_. They write one sentence about each colour of jelly bean. For example:

### JELLY BEANS

Jelly beans are.....  
As red as roses.  
As green as grass.  
As pink as carnations.  
As black as night.



## **A Penguin Theme**

Do a KWL chart. Begin the unit by discussing the student's prior knowledge about penguins. Ask the children what they already know about penguins and list what they say (K - what they know). Ask the children what they want to learn about penguins (W - what they want to know).

Read some factual books about the different species of penguins.

Penguins are sea birds of the Southern Hemisphere. They cannot fly. There are 18 species of penguins, found in South Australia, New Zealand, and off the coasts of Peru, Chile, and South Africa. Some species live as far north as the equatorial Galapagos Islands, but they are primarily cold-weather birds. There are seven species of Antarctic penguins: the Adelie, Gentoo, Macaroni, Chinstrap, Rockhopper, King, and Emperor. The Adelie and the Emperor are the two true Antarctic species.

After you read through the books and have completed the study, as a class fill in facts on the 'Learned' part of the chart.

### **Activities**

- Ask the children to put a pin on the map where they live and then to put a pin on the map where they think penguins live.
- How much do the different penguins weigh? Weigh objects until you have a similar weight.
- How tall are the different types of penguins? Make some pictures life-size and label them.
- Describe a penguin and draw it.
- Make a plasticine model of a penguin and make the penguin's habitat.
- What sort of animals are penguins? (mammal, fish, bird etc.) Think of three things all birds have in common.
- Ask the children to waddle, jump, slip, slide and dive like penguins.
- Ask your students to come to school wearing black and white.
- Buy some little plastic penguins and fill a pan with snow and build a penguin habitat. Build nests out of pebbles.
- Create a Venn diagram - how penguins are alike and different from other birds.

[http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/printables/cat\\_penguins.shtml](http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/printables/cat_penguins.shtml)

Here's the template for a penguin book.

<http://dcrafts.com/penguinactivities.htm>

Here are ideas for your unit.

### **Make a penguin book:**

Penguins:

Do not fly, they hop, walk, or toboggan

Are expert divers and swimmers

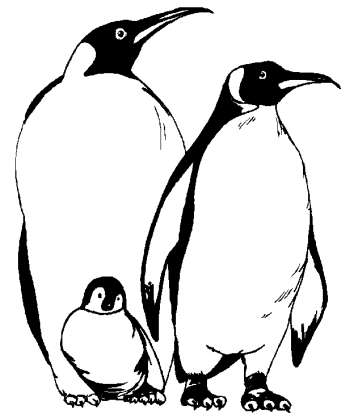
Have thick layer of fat called blubber under skin

Do not build nests.

The female lays egg, males hold egg on the top of their feet, hunches down so skin covers and warms the egg.

Raise their chicks in colonies called rookeries.

There may be thousands of penguins in one rookery.



# Weather

Begin by reading *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett.

Weather Vocabulary - Make a chart with all the weather words that are used in the unit - keep adding to it through the different lessons.

## The Water Cycle

*To She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain*

Water travels in a cycle, yes it does.

Water travels in a cycle, yes it does.

It goes up as evaporation,

Forms clouds of condensation,

Falls down as precipitation,

Yes it does!



## The Water Cycle

More than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water. Some of the water evaporates from the surface of oceans, lakes and rivers, as well as plants because of the warmth of the sun. The water vapour rises and cools, and then condenses back into water to form clouds. The water droplets fall as rain or snow, which runs into the rivers and lakes or soaks into the underground layers of rock. Eventually the water returns to the oceans and completes the cycle.

You can try it! Anything that cools air significantly will cause water vapour to condense. If the warm, moist air comes into contact with a cold surface it will chill the air. You can make water vapour condense and form a cloud by chilling air. Place ice on a metal dish. Let it stand until it is very cold. Place 1 inch (2.5 cm) of warm water into a jar. Place the metal dish over the top of the jar. What is happening inside the jar? A cloud will form near the top as the warm water evaporates, rises and condenses.

## Clouds:

Cirrus Clouds - Cirrus clouds are very high, wispy clouds made of ice. Even in the summer, cirrus clouds are made of ice because it is cold high above Earth.

Cumulus clouds are the large clouds that sometimes look like huge puffs of cotton. Sometimes cumulus clouds get dark gray and rain or hail falls from them. They are then called cumulonimbus clouds. These clouds often produce lightning and thunder. Nimbus always tells us that a cloud brings rain.

Stratus clouds are made up of low layers of clouds that usually cover the whole sky and blot out the sun. These clouds bring gray days. When rain falls from them, they are called nimbostratus clouds.

## Activities:

Keep a weather calendar and have students select the appropriate weather symbol for each day.

Make a weather wheel out of a cardboard circle. Have students draw or paste on umbrella, sun, clouds, kites, snowman. Attach a pointer in the centre of the circle. Observe the weather each day and have students move the pointer to the appropriate section.

Have students decide what clothing is appropriate to wear in different kinds of weather.

Students conduct an experiment where they measure the rainfall for one month, by leaving out tubs, marking off after each rainfall, and recording the information given by the weather man the students figure out how much rain has fallen in this month.

# Urban, Suburban, Rural

"I had the kids sign up where they would like to live when they grow up. Then they got in those groups to create their pick on big paper. When you hang them on the wall they make a nice visual. Label them urban (which will be crowded with tall buildings, etc., that the kids have made), rural (will be wide open spaces, barns, fields) and suburban (houses, etc.)."

"We make a bulletin board showing the 3 areas spread out how they are in reality and connected by roads. The students make buildings, highways, stadiums, cabs, houses, farms, farm animals, dirt roads, suburban roads, malls, restaurants, etc., out of construction paper and other art supplies. We put them up with big labels showing what each area is called. Having the students put this up really makes an impression on them. We leave it up for quite a while and reference it a lot."

"We discussed the urban, suburban and rural areas in class and looked at the pictures I could find of each and then that night, they cut out pictures at home of the different areas. I really thought I would get back maybe one or two pictures from each kid at the most - they brought in over a hundred pictures! Now I have a nice class book for every year with the pictures they brought in."

"I use songs to help me teach these concepts. I also put white paper on a large bulletin board and label 'Urban, Suburban, Rural.' The students then draw the appropriate scenes. Sometimes I fold a 12"x18" paper in half and have them draw Rural and Urban scenes.

## Kinds of Communities

*(to Clementine)*

An Urban area is a city

Lots of people but little land

Little land but lots of people

That's an urban area.

Farmer Johnson has a home

Way out in the country.

There are fields and hills and lakes,

And apples grow on some trees.

Mister Nitty likes his home

Near the city's action.

Also called an urban area,

It gives him satisfaction!

Close to the city is the Suburb

Just outside the city limits

Very close to a big city

That's a suburban area.

Farmer Johnson likes her home

In the country quiet.

Also called a rural area,

She says that you should try it!

Just outside the city limits

There are lots of people living.

This is called the suburb.

It's close to work and shopping.

A Rural area is the country

Few people but lots of land

Lots of land but few people

That's a rural area.

Mister Nitty has a home

In the busy city.

Streets and people all about,

And buildings tall and pretty.

We can choose where we will live,

Rural, suburban, or urban

Jobs and families help make the choice

That's always best in the long run.

"Tear off a large piece of paper for each section you want to represent. Start by drawing a narrow rural road. The road merges onto each new piece and changes in size and lanes as the area changes. The kids then draw the section accordingly and colour. My class did rural farm area, small town, suburb, and city. They brought in props to represent a job in one of these areas and I took their picture. They were cut out and placed in the area they would work. This was such a neat display in the hall and a great culminating activity!"



# Bread and Butter

Do a Readers' Theatre of The Little Red Hen! The following websites have scripts - from very simple to more difficult.

[http://www.thematicunit.com/plant\\_thematic\\_unit\\_lesson\\_plans](http://www.thematicunit.com/plant_thematic_unit_lesson_plans)

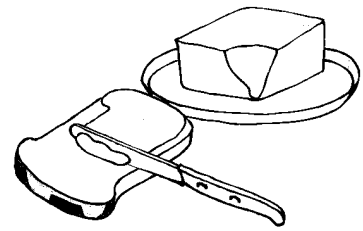
<http://hometown.aol.com/rcswallow/LittleRedHen.html>

<http://raven.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/redhen.htm>

For lots of ideas to use with The Little Red Hen, go to:

<http://www.teachers.net/lessons/posts//1946.html>

Then make bread in class.



## Bread in a Bag

In a gallon size plastic bag combine: 1 cup flour, 1 pkg. Rapidrise yeast, 2 tsp. white sugar, 1 cup hot water. Close bag, knead and work the dough through the bag until well mixed. Let mixture rest for 10 minutes. Add to the bag: 1 cup flour, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tbs. oil

Close bag and work dough until flour is well blended in. Gradually add flour in small amounts and knead until dough begins to pull away from the sides of bag (about 1 cup). Drop dough out onto lightly floured surface and tear in half. Two students can work with one piece of dough. Knead the dough for about 5 minutes, until it is smooth and elastic. Students can create their own loaf of bread either by shaping into an oval or flattening it out and rolling it up while pinching the ends together. Place onto a large cookie sheet. Be sure to label each child's name next to HIS loaf (this part is very important! The cooking parchment sheets work well for this.) Cover with a clean towel and let rise for 30 minutes. (It's usually MUCH faster than this....) Bake in a preheated oven for 25 minutes.

"We made Bread in a Bag last week! It's a no fail activity! The bread was delicious! My little guys popped the zip seals, dropped the bags, over-kneaded them...and they still rose! We will be eating bread tomorrow. So if anyone is hesitating doing it, don't...the kids have so much fun smooshing it all, and they are soooo proud to show their parents what they did with their own hands!"

Then the children can make butter.

"I have always used heavy whipping cream in small jars and it always works well. Don't forget a dash of salt! I stick in a marble so you can hear how hard you need to shake."

"We gave each student a clean baby food jar with a lid. We filled the jars 1/2 full and put the lid on tightly. *The cream should be room temperature.* We noted the time and wrote it on the board. The children were instructed to begin shaking their jars. In about 7-8 minutes the children were noticing a change inside their jar. They kept shaking their jars until there was a visible yellow blob inside with a watery liquid. The watery liquid was then dumped off and the butter inside was rinsed with cold water. Add a dash of salt. We kept each child's butter in their own jar and each student was furnished with a plastic knife and their own home-made bread. They were so anxious to spread the butter that *they* had made on their bread and actually eat it!"

"I bring my bread machine to school and we make a loaf of bread. We also write on a piece of bread shaped paper what we would do to help the Little Red Hen. There is a Wright Group book called The Little Yellow Chicken. He is the grandson of the Little Red Hen. His friends won't help him get ready for a party and he calls grandma for advice. He doesn't listen to her and shares his food. We write on a speech bubble if we would or would not have helped. Then we water-colour little yellow chickens. We usually do this in spring around Easter."

# All About Me

## An 'All About Me' Book

"We learn this poem and then make a book the first week of school:

This is me	I can wiggle my fingers
From head to toes.	Or stomp my feet.
I have two eyes	From my head to my toes
And one little nose.	I'm really neat.



Each child writes: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. and draws their picture on a page. When I put the book together I insert the poem about every five pages. Then we record the book on tape, all saying the title and poem, and each child reading his/her page. They take turns checking out the book and tape to take home. I make one or two books with tapes a week during the first part of the year so more children can take one home."

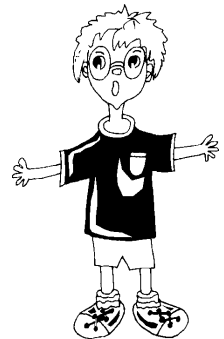
"For the past couple of years I have made a class book at the beginning of the year when doing All About Me. I also get right into a colour unit and this is based on Brown Bear, Brown Bear. On the first day of school I take a picture of each child plus two whole-class pictures. I begin the book with a class picture and the text reads, 'Grade One, Grade One, Who do you see?' Each succeeding page has a child's picture and reads 'I see (child's name), looking at me. -----, -----, who do you see?' The children fill in their names and draw pictures around the photo which tells about their interests or family. The last page has another class picture and reads 'I see Grade One. That's who I see!' They take turns taking it home and they refer to it all year. The parents love it, too."

"One thing I do each year is an 'All About Me' book. The front page has their picture and they write their name as the author and illustrator. Then they do a self portrait, draw their favourite food on a plate, measure how tall they are with string and put it in an envelope, draw and write what they want to be when they grow up, draw their family in a house, trace and glue their footprints, and using paint they make a handprint and tell which hand it is. It is a lot of fun to put together and takes quite a bit of time, but it turns out nicely and the parents love it!"

## 'Me' Math

"As part of our 'All About Me' Unit, for math we do lots of counting, graphing etc. around our body parts, eyes, ears, etc. We do a picture graph for bigger than, smaller than, and same as, and compare our heights in September and again in May."

"We do the graphing of the family members living in your house (as many of the families in our neighbourhood have extended family living with them)."



Do a graph showing the length of student's names. Which is the shortest? Longest? How many children have names with five letters? etc.

Have the children print their names on the computer and experiment with different fonts.

Have students print their names on large white construction paper with tape. Then use poster paint to paint the entire page. When it is dry, pull off the tape and the names appear in white.

Give each child their name printed with fat letters. They paint glue over the letters and sprinkle on glitter.



"I make up a booklet and the kids measure, fill in cloze exercises, copy, get introduced to some basic sight vocabulary and colour. As a group we discuss different answers and record some to be copied.

### Page 1: This is Me

A cutsey picture frame type border at the top 2/3 of the page in which the kids colour a picture of themselves. I call them back to measure how tall they are. We compare heights. At the bottom they fill in the spaces in the sentences for:

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I am \_\_\_\_\_ tall.

I like to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Page 2: My Hand

There is a ruler along the one side of the 'frame'. We discuss what hands can do and have fun trying the ideas. Then I take them in small groups and I paint their hand and press it on the paper carefully so that they get the measurement of how long their hand is.

My hand is \_\_\_\_\_ long.

My hands like to \_\_\_\_\_

### Page 3: My Foot

Do it as the hand only using their foot. I paint the bottom of one of their feet and we press that onto the paper. Some of them are soooo ticklish!

My foot is \_\_\_\_\_ long.

My feet like to \_\_\_\_\_

### Page 4: My family

We discuss and compare/graph number of brothers, sisters, pets. They draw and colour a picture of whole family at the top in the 'frame'.

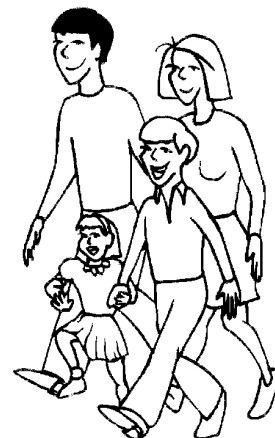
I have \_\_\_\_\_ brother.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ sister.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ pet.

My family likes to \_\_\_\_\_.

We always end up discussing that '3 brother' does not make sense and they end up adding the 's' where needed. Quite a lesson for so earlier in the year.



### Page 5: My Friend

Great discussion about what is a friend, how do you play, etc. Again they draw and colour the picture at the top.

My friend likes to play \_\_\_\_\_.

### Page 6: My Teacher

A chance for me to take in things to share and introduce how we share. They also get to question me - an interesting concept for them. They draw the picture at the top and of course I have to be doing something that we discussed I like to do.

My teacher is \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

She likes to \_\_\_\_\_

### Page 7: My School

Great chance to discuss rules, take a tour, meet office staff, and so on. Draw picture.

I go to \_\_\_\_\_ School

I am in grade \_\_\_\_\_

### Page 8: Grade One

Discuss re what they expect to do and to learn in grade one. Draw the picture.

I would like to learn \_\_\_\_\_ in grade one.

I always find this one fascinating. We begin working on the book the first week and it is great to have out for 'Meet the Teacher' Night.

## Have a Pizza Day!

You could teach all the food groups using a pizza.

You could teach fractions.

You could graph kinds of toppings kids like.

If you are ambitious and have the site room you could grow a garden and make pizza from veggies you grow. You could try making pizzas in different shapes with the class - who says it has to be round -- it could be made on a cookie sheet for square/rectangle/diamond/oval/rhombus, etc., or whatever shape the kids might choose to make their individual pizzas.

You could research what parts of the country the different products to make a pizza come from.

You could go to two or three grocery stores and compare the price of ingredients for the pizza you will bake.

You could take a field trip to Pizza Hut or Dominos and see how they make a pizza. They could interview the manager, write a report about their interview, and 'thank-you' letters.

To tie it in with reading, you could participate in the 'Book It' reading contest Pizza Hut sponsors.

You could make pizza slices (pairs) from tagboard and play memory games with the alike slices.

You could try to invent the best tasting pizza in a writing contest.

You could have kids make a pizza using art materials at home - they get parents to help as a family project.

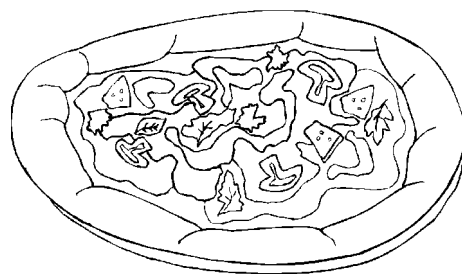
You could make different sizes of pizzas (tagboard ones) and have the kids put them in order (seriation).

How about pizza slices with beginning sounds on them or slices with different numbers of goodies on them and match up with numbers (maybe that is better for Kindergarten).

How about pizza slice for book covers - you cut the slice and make the books and the kids decorate their own pizza for the kind they like and write about things in it daily for a week.

Ask your kids to write down directions for making a pizza (should produce some pretty funny ones) and combine in a book after xeroxing -- give to families as a gift.

How about inventing a new pizza topping? That could be a book, too.



# Bats

Read 'Stellaluna'!

We made a bat shaped book. The back of the book was the bat shape. The front of the book was the same bat shape (on black construction paper), but I cut the front in half so that it looked like the book had wings that you could open up to see the booklet inside. Inside the booklet were pages like: What a bat looks like: How a bat hears: Types of bats: What bats eat: What bats do during the day and how bats sleep: What bats do during the night:

We read books about bats and brainstormed things on chart paper. The children then copied the things that interested them the most into their booklet. I told them that they had to write at least 3 things on each page, but that they could choose which 3 things to write.

We did a comparison between the two types of bats - megabats and microbats. What they looked like - size of eyes, size of head, size of wings, body, what they ate, etc... We looked at many pictures and the children had to classify them. We did a venn diagram on these two types of bats. We also wrote the characteristics of each type.

We made bats and hung them from the ceiling (just out of construction paper). We also made bats using toilet paper rolls - I covered the toilet paper rolls with black paper and a stapler. The kids used a tracer and cut out one wing (it was actually two wings, when the one piece was glued onto the back of the toilet paper roll it covered both sides of the toilet paper roll - making two wings. The kids used another tracer to trace and then cut out the head. On the head they drew eye, mouth, nose, etc.... I hung these bats around a writing activity we did -

"We brainstormed all the different kinds of bats and looked at many pictures! We also used

I Like Bats -  
\_\_\_\_\_ bats  
\_\_\_\_\_ bats  
\_\_\_\_\_ bats

I like bats.  
A bat in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
A bat in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
A bat in the \_\_\_\_\_.



'The Important Book' by Margaret Wise Brown to write the important things about Bats."

"We created a 'bat cave' in our classroom using a large refrigerator box laid on its side. We draped burlap over the top and sides after putting lumpy pieces of newspaper on top to give more of a cave atmosphere. Then the kids painted lumps of newspaper gray to create rocks for the bottom of the cave. They created paper bats which we hung from the top of the cave. They even painted dots of black paint on the bottom to resemble 'bat guano!'"

## Facts About Bats

Bats like to hang upside down because the claws on their feet are much stronger than their hands. Bats have eight fingers and two thumbs like we do. Not all bats use echolocation to find their food. Fruit bats have small ears. They do not need echolocation to find their food. Insect eating bats have large ears. They have to find their meals using echolocation. Bats can see just as well as us. They are nocturnal and diurnal. They can see in both the night and the dark. Bats come in different colours. Bats that live in open areas are usually lighter. All bats have tails. Some bats tails are covered by skin. Bats live all over the world. Some bats are big like the Flying Fox bat. Some bats are small like the Bumble Bee bat. Some bats live in caves. Some bats live in trees. Some bats live in barns and attics. Bats have different coloured eyes. Some bats migrate for the winter. Some bats sleep during the winter months just like bears do.

# **Pumpkins**

I'm a little pumpkin fat and round  
Growing in the cornfield on the ground  
I'll be a jack o'lantern with two big eyes  
Or maybe I'll be baked into some pies.



"I ask the kids to bring in mini-pumpkins, gourds and Indian corn. Then we graph the types of fall decor that has been brought in before assembling it into a very large display. We also estimate the number of seeds in a pumpkin as well as the circumference. Then of course we write and share pumpkin stories and poems."

"Here are a few things that I like to do with pumpkins:

I read *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* and then we make a fold out book of the life cycle of a pumpkin. We guess the circumference of a pumpkin. I give each child a piece of orange yarn and they get to estimate how big the pumpkin is. Then we hang the guesses on the board in order of smallest to biggest and then I hang the real size in black yarn so they get to see how close their guess was. We also weigh pumpkins. I usually like to get a tall one and a round one. We also count the lines on the pumpkin. Estimate the number of seeds. Then i cut open the pumpkins and allow the seeds to dry and then each team gets a few handfuls so they can count them and then we add them all together."

## **Five Senses**

Sight - Look at the outside of the pumpkin carefully. Count the ribs, look at the stem, notice the marks. Inside, look carefully at the seeds, meat, etc.

Smell - Smell the pumpkin before cutting and after. Smell the pumpkin pie, too!

Hearing - Shake the pumpkin. Do you hear anything?

Touch - Feel the outside. Find good words to describe how it feels when you are taking seeds out with your hands!

Taste - Taste the pumpkin meat raw and after it is cooked.

## **Creative Thinking**

Look for new uses for pumpkins. Cinderella's pumpkin was used as a coach. But last year, a creative someone used a giant pumpkin as a motorboat. Challenge your class to brainstorm new and unusual uses for pumpkins!

## **Brainstorming**

1. Name another orange fruit.
2. Name an animal that eats pumpkins.
3. Something bigger than a pumpkin.
4. Something smaller than a pumpkin.
5. Something that would break if you threw a pumpkin at it.
6. Something harder than a pumpkin.
7. Something softer than a pumpkin.
8. Something heavier than a pumpkin.
9. Something lighter than a pumpkin.



# **Jack and the Beanstalk**

This story fits in well with a unit on fairy tales.

## **Science: Planting Beans**

Have the students plant lima beans in a plastic bag with a little bit of soil. Have them keep a daily journal written and illustrate the progress of their 'beanstalk'.

## **Language Arts Activities**

- Have the children write an imaginary story about the beanstalk called \_\_\_\_\_'s Beanstalk or \_\_\_\_\_ and the Beanstalk using his/her name.
- Re-tell the story through pictures. Draw an outline of a leaf on a piece of paper, and photocopy enough for your class. On chart paper ask the class to retell the story, sentence by sentence. Assign one sentence per child, and ask them to draw a corresponding picture inside their leaf outline. (Children who finish early can illustrate any left over sentences.) Display these pictures in order on a beanstalk going up the bulletin board.
- Do 'Jack and the Beanstalk' as part of a folktale unit. After reading and discussing 'Jack and the Beanstalk' each group can pick out and list the fairy tale elements. (giant, magic, all good characters, all bad characters, problems to be solved).
- You could also read Clifford books and write individual stories on what they would do if Clifford was at their house....how their life style would have to change if they had him for a pet, etc.
- Go to: <http://lisablau.com/archives.html> for a Reader's Theatre script of "Jack and the Beanstalk". The children can also make stick puppets and design backdrops.
- Read the children 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and then discuss setting. Create a story map as a graphic organizer. They then can rewrite the story using their own name (i.e. Patrick and the Beanstalk).

## **Math**

- Bring in the tallest person that you can find. Have the students measure the giant's height and label the results on an illustrated picture of the giant who came to your classroom.
- Measure giant things!
- How big is big? Discuss the giant and how big he might be. How big will his castle be and the things he uses every day?

## **Other Activities**

- Make a paper vine that goes from the floor up and over part of the ceiling. Add leaves. At the ceiling, attach cardboard cutouts of boots to look as if the giant was just climbing down.
- Investigate giants! Then you could investigate and learn about the biggest animals, biggest trees, sky scrapers.
- Re-write the story using the information that you found for the Giant's castle and the things he ate. There is a great book out called 'Jim and the Beanstalk'. It is really good to give the kids ideas on how they could re-write the story. Then put on a play. You could have one of the little ones be Jack and one of the grade 6 students as the giant.

"I had the children create a setting using paint and construction paper and used actual photos of them. Next they planted a bean seed in a Ziploc baggie and attached it to the bottom of the picture (the bean will grow right up it within a week)."

And, for your own amusement, this website gives a modern version, discussing the political and cultural consequences of the story.

<http://www.funnyfiction.com/stories/jackandthebeanstalk.shtml>



# Going Camping

Kids love camping, even if they've never gone. Just the thought of sleeping in a tent, going on hikes, catching fish, swimming in a lake or riding in a canoe, and gazing at the starry sky while toasting marshmallows around the campfire ... well, it all sounds like fun to them. Lots and lots of fun. And there's so much to learn about, they can hardly wait to get started!

## A-Camping We Will Go

(tune: *Farmer in the Dell*)

A-camping we will go,  
A-camping we will go,  
Hi-ho and off we go,  
A-camping we will go.

More Verses:

First we pitch our tent  
Next we chop some wood  
We light the campfire now  
We cook our dinner now  
We tell fun stories now  
It's time to go to sleep



## Set the Scene

Make an area of your classroom into a camp site. Pitch a tent (a small 3 man tent is a good size) and put sleeping bags and pillows inside. Make extra tents the old-fashioned way ... put a blanket over chairs or a table. Bring in an inflatable boat with oars, life jackets, fishing vests, hats, fishing poles and tackle boxes. Don't forget a bucket to hold the fish! Make a 'faux' campfire with small logs and paper flames. Make a floor to ceiling mural for a backdrop with trees, a lake or river, rocks, animals, etc.

## Camping Activities

Work together to create camp rules. Name your camp. Make a large banner with the camp name. Each child can make a camp journal. Wear clothing suitable for camping. Teach camp songs to sing around the campfire.

## Math Ideas

Give out Trail Mix and graph the contents.

Other Graphing Ideas - Make a camping graph book from any camping question, or collect all your graphs into one book! What's your favourite forest animal? Have you ever been in a boat? Which do you like better, hamburgers or hotdogs? Have you ever seen the Big Dipper? Have you ever gone fishing? Have you ever gone on a hike? Do you like picnics? What colour is your backpack?

To review money - make a list of things we need to buy for the camping trip. Put a price on each and see how much money we will need.

Use small pebbles, leaves, sticks for math manipulatives.

Teach fractions. Divide snacks into various fractions.

## Integrate Other Themes

The camping theme will go with "Insects", "Worms", "Rocks and Soil", "The Rainforest", etc.

Under the dark is a star,  
Under the star is a tree,  
Under the tree is a blanket  
and under the blanket is me!



### **Language Arts**

Let each of the children who've been camping tell a short story about their camping trip, and allow the other children to ask questions.

The children can write about camp in their journals.

Write postcards to parents from 'camp'. This can include a hike to the post office to mail them.

Read stories about camping.

Learn the words associated with camping, and how to spell them.

Write ghost stories.

'A Camping We Will Go' Class Book - After you've explored the many facets of camping, brainstorm a list of possible destinations and ask your students where they'd like to go on their own camping trip. Would they like to camp in the forest or in the desert? At the beach or by a river or lake? At Grandma's cabin on top of a mountain, or at home in their own backyard? Show children how to cut a tent from a 6 x 6 square of paper, and how to make a lift-the-flap door. They can draw a picture of where they'd like to camp, add the tent, and glue a picture of themselves inside. Make into a Big Book.

### **Science**

Learn the names of trees, wild flowers and other plants in your neighbourhood.

Go into a real wooded area and use the 5 senses. Make a chart of what they heard, saw, smelled, felt and touched. Use interesting vocabulary to describe the sensations.

Learn about soil and rocks. Make a rock collection.

Make collections of interesting things found on a hike.

### **Food**

S'mores - Put a marshmallow and a Hershey kiss on a graham cracker and melt it in a toaster oven.

Ants On A Log - Spread peanut butter or softened cream cheese on celery sticks, and put raisins on top.

Popcorn - Measure it before and after it's popped, and have the kids guess how much it will make. Graph predictions and results.

Happy Camper Fruit Salad - Everyone brings a piece of fruit to share. Talk about fractions as you cut the fruit up. Mix with orange juice or pineapple juice and serve.

Have a real cook-out with the parents invited!

### **Art Activities**

Leaf and bark rubbings

Collect sticks, seeds, leaves, nuts, pine cones, etc., and glue them together to form bugs and animals.

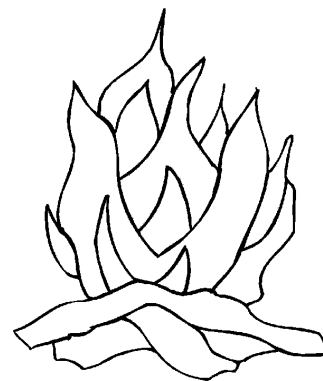
Make Nature Wreaths by gluing found objects to a tagboard circle with a hole in the middle. Add fancy touches like glitter, stars, and gold ribbon.

### **Other Activities**

Go on 'hikes'.

Invite someone to talk to the campers about summertime and outdoor safety. You could do the "Lost in the Woods" program.

Have 'circle time' around the campfire.



# Special Days

## Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day will soon be here.  
It comes around but once a year.  
If I could only have my way,  
We'd have Thanksgiving every day!



### Thanksgiving

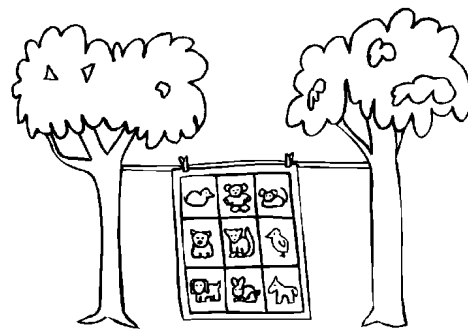
Thanksgiving is a special time  
When we should stop and think  
About the good things in our lives  
Besides the food and the drink.

We're thankful for our homes and friends  
And loving families.  
There's much more to Thanksgiving Day  
Than "pass the turkey, please."

## I Am Thankful

"How about stressing the 'thankful' part? There's a wonderful picture book called *I Am Thankful For* (by Janie Schmidt) and it's so simple that I copy the format and the children make their own books. You could send thank-you notes to the people in the school who do things for the class....the custodian, the secretary, etc. (You cover some curriculum in B.C. if you do this because Grade Ones need to know the roles of people within a school). We also looked at cranberries and made cranberry jelly. The kids could take a small baby food jar of it home to share at their Thanksgiving table."

A time for hoping...  
for the best.  
May all people soon be free.  
A time for sharing...  
what we have.  
That's how it's meant to be.



"I do a Thanksgiving quilt. Each child gets a square with a border around it and a design. On a couple of the rectangles he prints things he is thankful for. The rest of the pattern is coloured brightly. When the squares are put together it is attractive!"



## Thanksgiving Bulletin Boards

Some titles for bulletin boards before Thanksgiving using turkeys: 'Strut On In', 'Stuffed With.....'.

***A Cornucopia of Good Work*** - Hang a cornucopia with fruit on a bulletin board. Hang students work around the board.

***Let's Talk Turkey.....*** - Have students make turkeys out of paper plates. They can cut out coloured feathers from construction paper. Add eyeballs, beaks, and legs.

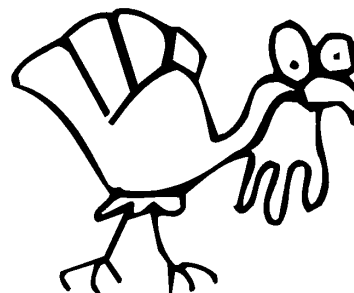
"A really neat bulletin board idea for October is a turkey with the tail made out of old neckties. I asked each child to bring in one of Dad's old ties preferably in fall colours or dark colors, and then I made the head and a round body and cut the ties about in half and fanned them out behind the head and body for the tail. It is a beautiful turkey. The kids loved seeing dad's tie up there.... It will take a large bulletin board or wall. If you don't have this much room, cut the half ties shorter."

"Last year for October I titled my bulletin board 'Gobble Up Some Good Books' and we made turkeys holding books as if they were reading. We made the turkeys out of construction paper and what makes each one unique is that the feathers were made by tracing the children's hands and cutting them out. We used 3 right hands and 3 left hands in all colours. Then with the feet instead of making them lie flat I bent them and glued them so they would be sticking out. To the feet, I then glued a small piece of folded paper that looked like a book. We also wrote the title of each student's favourite book on their book cover. It really turned out cute!"

## All About Turkeys!

Have the children trace their hands - the fingers together for the body and tail and the thumb widespread for the neck. Add a head and legs and you have a turkey!

This isn't just a turkey  
As anyone can see  
I made it with my hand  
Which is a part of me  
It comes with lots of love  
Especially to say  
I hope you have a very  
Happy Thanksgiving Day!



"Paint the child's hand three different colours. Paint brown on the palm, red on the fingers and orange on the thumb. The palm is the body of the turkey, the fingers are the feathers and the thumb is the beak. Print these on yellow construction paper. When they are dry add a beak and feet."

The Albuquerque Turkey's name can be changed if you wish. You can also brainstorm favourite foods to substitute in the last line.

### **Albuquerque Turkey**

*(sung to the tune of "Clementine")*

Albuquerque is a turkey  
And he's feathered and he's fine  
And he wobbles and he gobbles  
And he's absolutely mine.  
He's the best pet that you can get..  
Better than a dog or cat.  
He's my Albuquerque turkey  
And I'm awfully proud of that.

He once told me, very frankly  
He preferred to be my pet,  
Not the main course at my dinner,  
And I told him not to fret.  
And my Albuquerque turkey  
Is so happy in his bed,  
'Cause for our Thanksgiving dinner...  
We had egg foo yong instead.



Do a turkey project for Thanksgiving using coffee filters. Fold the filter in half, then in half again. The children take markers and colour pie-shaped stripes from the point to the outer edge in bright colours (not black or brown). Colour heavily and brightly. Next, dip the folded filter into a shallow pan of water. Leave it in about 5 seconds. Unfold the filter and lay it on newspaper to dry. It will dry quite quickly. Cut one quarter of the filter away. The filter makes the tail, so the missing quarter is downwards and centered.

Make a large peanut shape on tag board for the kids to use as a pattern for the body. Have them trace the pattern onto brown construction paper, cut it out and glue it over the dry coffee filter. They can draw eyes and glue a beak on the top 1/2 of the peanut shape. Add orange or yellow feet at the bottom.

### **Turkey Trouble**

We cooked turkey nice and hot,  
nice and hot, nice and hot.  
We cooked turkey nice and hot,  
on Thanksgiving Day!

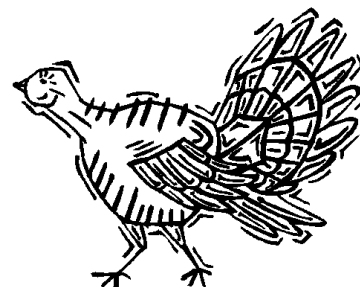
We eat turkey a whole lot,  
a whole lot, a whole lot.  
We eat turkey a whole lot,  
on Thanksgiving Day!

I met a turkey gobbler  
When I went out to play.  
"Mr. Turkey Gobbler,  
How are you today?"  
"Gobble, gobble, gobble,  
Thanks I can not say,  
Don't ask me such a question  
On Thanksgiving Day!"

### **The Turkey Shuffle**     *"To the tune of Turkey in the Straw (sort of!):*

You shuffle to the left, *(2 steps to left)*  
You shuffle to the right, *(2 steps to right)*  
You heel and toe *(stick out right heel, then point right toe)*  
And scratch with all your might. *(scratch like a chicken with right foot)*  
You flap your turkey wings, *(thumbs under armpit, flap bent arms)*  
And your head goes bobble, bobble. *(nod head twice)*  
You turn around and then you say, *(turn around)*  
Gobble, gobble, gobble!

*The teachers enjoyed this one as much as the kids!*



### Turkey

Turkey in the barnyard,  
What does he say?

Gobble,  
Gobble,  
Gobble,  
Gobble all day.

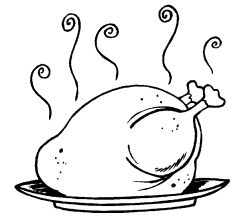
Turkey on the table,  
What do you say?

Yummy,  
Yummy,  
Yummy,  
Yummy all day.

Turkey in my tummy,  
What do I say?  
I

ate  
too  
much  
turkey

ON THANKSGIVING DAY!



### Turkey Tails

"I do this every year! I made the front view of a turkey, about 2 and a half feet tall, and I put it in the middle of a bulletin board. I've laminated this so I can use it year after year. I send home a cut paper feather (I get two out of one piece of 9 x 12 construction paper) with a note telling parents to help their child decorate this feather. Anything goes....colours, markers, paint, fabric, buttons, beans, real feathers, etc. I also tell them they can glue it to a piece of cardboard to make it stronger, if necessary. Then as the kids bring them back, I put them up around my turkey for the tail. It always turns out so interesting and colourful.

"Have the student draw a picture or write something they are very thankful for and put those on the turkey tail. You could trace each child's foot (without the shoe on...but with the sock on...) and the toes become the top of the feather... then decorate or write on these for the tail feather."

Go to

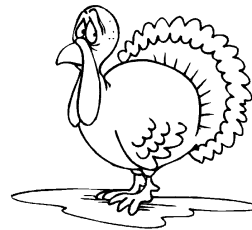
<http://www.first-school.ws/activities/crafts/animals/birds/turkeyhands.htm>

to find turkey templates that you can print to make with handprints for the tails.

Each child can cut a turkey body and then the class can go out and collect autumn leaves, especially ones that are long and narrow, and glue the leaves on for a colourful tail.

### One Fat Turkey

One fat turkey went strutting by  
He shook his feathers and winked his eye,  
He flapped his wings and his head gave a wobble,  
And he looked at me and said, 'Gobble, gobble, gobble!'



"My kids loved this activity. The children coloured a small paper plate brown. Then we traced their hands on a piece of construction paper. This formed the feathers. Then we glued the 'feathers' and a precut turkey shaped head onto the small paper plate. The hand shape formed the tail feathers. (Alternatively, you could use a thumb shape for the head, and four spreading fingers for feathers and no paper plate). Then we discussed what we were thankful for. They came up with some very deep and sincere things to be thankful for. We wrote what they were thankful for on the tail feathers of the turkey."

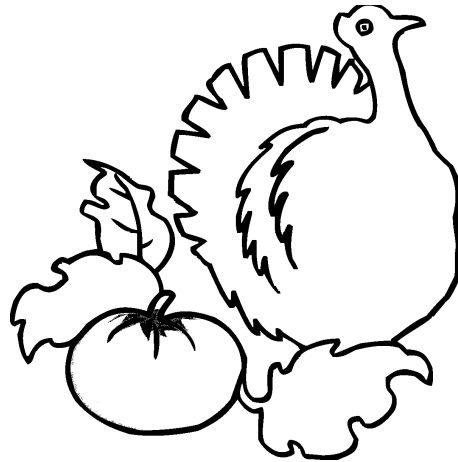
"My favourite writing activity for Thanksgiving is our turkey recipes. I do a lesson on using ordinal numbers for steps and then they write their recipe, using 'first', 'second', 'third', etc. The word map prior to writing includes temperature and time so I get 'cook at 40 degrees for 6 minutes and then add gravy' as an example. I bind them together into a class recipe book!"

"Stuff a brown lunch bag with scrap paper so that it appears full. Lay the bag on its side. Twist tie the bag closed leaving about an inch left to the top of the bag. This becomes the turkey's tail. Fold the opening of the bag back towards the twist tie and glue or staple brightly coloured construction paper tail feathers on this part. The part that is normally the bottom of the bag becomes the chest of the turkey. Fold a piece of red construction paper and place the beak/wattle part of the head on the fold. I added a little extra space at the neck to make tabs. Fold the tabs back and glue to the chest part of the paper bag. Add paper feet to the bottom. These make great centerpieces for the Thanksgiving table!"

## Thanksgiving Activities

### Colours

Pumpkin orange and roast turkey brown  
Are Thanksgiving colours all over town  
With corn pudding yellow, cranberry red,  
Salad green, and golden bread.  
Look out the window and you will see  
Thanksgiving colours upon the trees.  
I wonder how the trees are able  
To have colours like a  
Thanksgiving table!



### Poems and Pies

"Both Grade One classes learned several songs and poems about Thanksgiving. Early in October we started teaching our children some poems and songs for Thanksgiving. Some were funny and some were 'educational'. Our classes learned one song and one poem that were the same so we could recite them as a group. We made hats and decorations. We sent a note home to parents inviting them to come to the celebration. On the bottom of the note was a form to sign and return, telling us how many were planning to attend and if they were interested in bringing a pie, and what kind? The response was overwhelming! We put on a pot of coffee and mixed a bowl of punch. What a success!!!! A large lunch table was set up and covered with chart paper. It was soon COVERED with every kind of pie imaginable. We set up chairs on one side of the room to hold the 60+ parents and grandparents who attended. The students walked in and took turns performing their poems and songs. After the last song they said, "Thank you all for coming, now let's eat PIE!" Each student escorted their parents to the table to get a piece of pie (which they ate standing or sitting all over the room). The parents and grandparents loved it! We plan to do it again this year."

### Stone Soup for Thanksgiving

"Read the book *Stone Soup*. For Thanksgiving, my class brought in vegetables to add to my own homemade version of Stone Soup. It was so popular that my students asked me if we could make it again. It's very simple -- the students bring in some of their favourite vegetables. Begin with a rock, and make a big production of putting it in the pot. I add some boullion cubes secretly and water -- and simmer for several hours. Add some bell peppers to it - it adds lots of flavour."



### Thanksgiving's A Wonderful Thing

*"My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)*

My uncle is eating the drumstick,  
My auntie is chewing the wing,  
My cousin is nibbling the stuffing,  
Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

My daddy loves candied potatoes,  
My mother, the cranberry ring,  
My brother is covered with gravy,  
Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

My grandfather's fav'rite is pickles,  
That grandma preserved in the spring,  
My sister has two plates of turnips,  
Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

And if you should happen to ask me,  
What gives me a zip and a zing,  
For me it's a pie made of pumpkin,  
Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing!



### Thanksgiving Dinner

"As a class we brainstormed a list of foods you have on Thanksgiving. I drew a simple picture of the food and we wrote the word next to it.

"In the computer lab (although you could have them hand write this) each child typed a list of the foods they wanted to put on their plates.

"Back in the classroom we used construction paper and cut out turkey, peas, carrots, stuffing, etc. (we used a crumpled up paper towel to make 3-D mashed potatoes with yellow butter on top). The kids glued all of the foods they made onto a paper plate and then cut and pasted their printed lists to label the foods.

"Each child then made a placemat out of a large piece of construction paper. I glued the paper plate to the placemat and then glued a napkin and a plastic fork to it as well. It looks like they are sitting down to a delicious meal.

"On the top they added a dictated paragraph (which I typed to save time) that told how they would make a turkey dinner. They simply filled in the blanks: I would get a \_\_\_\_ pound turkey from \_\_\_\_\_. I think it would cost \_\_\_\_\_. When I get home I will \_\_\_\_\_ (student tells how they would prepare to cook the turkey and for how long).

"They are adorable and make a great bulletin board!"

### The 12 Hours of Thanksgiving

"On the \_\_\_\_\_ hour of Thanksgiving, my mother made for me:

12 tasty turkeys, 11 luscious lobsters, 10 bags of popcorn, 9 squares of cornbread, 8 bowls of berries, 7 ears of sweet corn, 6 cups of green peas, 5 pumpkin pies, 4 buttered yams, 3 cooked clams, 2 mugs of milk and a scoop of vanilla ice cream!"



# Hallowe'en

## Hallowe'en Pictures

Have the children lie on a table with their heads hanging down off the edge. Take a digital picture of their upside-down face. Once on the computer, crop the pictures and turn them around so that it looks as if their hair is standing on end. It makes a super picture for Halloween! Make a frame for it from black paper and add the date.

"My students make a magnet picture frame to put on the refrigerator. Last year at Halloween time we took Polaroid pictures of them in their costumes and made frames in a station."

## Hallowe'en Art

Have parents or volunteers trace each child's body on butcher paper. Then they can each decorate themselves in a Hallowe'en costume.

## Pumpkins!

"We stuff little lunch bags with paper, tie the end shut. Then we paint the bag orange and make a green construction paper stem, cutting like a spiral. This is our pumpkin patch. We learn a pumpkin poem that we glue on the back. We have added corn stalks."

"Brown lunch bags are painted orange. Eyes, nose, mouth are cut out and yellow tissue is inserted. The children were asked to bring a flashlight from home and we taped these to the bottom of our jack-o-lanterns. We have a hallway without windows where the children took their lantern lights. We turned out the lights and sang our Hallowe'en songs. There were a lot of 'ooo's and ahh's' from the children. We had to do this for several days upon the children's request."

"Give each child a paper plate, a sheet of orange construction paper, brown construction paper to make a stem, and green construction paper for the leaf. Show children how to tear orange paper into tiny pieces, then glue the pieces onto the bottom of the paper plate. Ask them to cover the bottom of the plate completely in orange. After they have finished, they may add the stem and leaf near the top of their pumpkin. They could also use torn pieces of black construction to add facial features."

Have the children paint paper plates orange. When dry, have each child glue on pieces of black construction paper for the facial features. You could try using glue to paint the facial features and sprinkle glitter, or various items (i.e. buttons, beans, noodles, pebbles) on the glue.

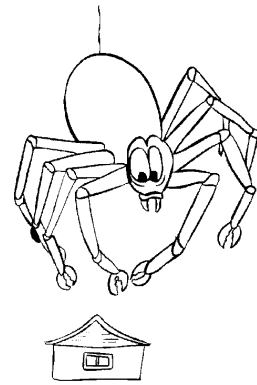
Collect pumpkin seeds from inside a pumpkin. Let them air dry and have the children use the pumpkin seeds to make a collage.



## Spiders!

Make spider hats. All you need is a black band and eight accordion fold legs. Just add the features!

Have many lengths of string or yarn to make a web. The students can dip their string into a mixture of water and white glue and lay the pieces on wax paper, crossing in the centre. You may also want to add some glitter. Gently peel them off the wax paper when they are dry. You can add a dollar store plastic spider!



"I did do a spider art project that turned out great. I had the students paint paper plates black - we had to do it in two parts so each side could dry. Then they added paper construction legs (I let them cut out the length and width they wanted) and they cut out circles for eyes and a mouth as well out of construction paper. I let them choose googly eyes, too, to put on the larger paper circles just for fun. Then we hung them from our ceiling with white yarn so it looked like they were climbing up a spider web."

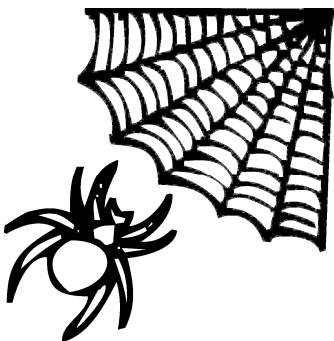
Supply the children with large black gum drops and eight toothpicks per child. Have the children push the toothpicks in the gum drops to represent the spiders legs.

Use a smaller and larger paper plate to make these spiders. Staple the smaller plate onto the larger plate, as if the smaller plate will be the spider's head. Have the child paint both sides black. Then add black streamers for legs and white construction paper for eyes. Hang them from the ceiling.

Have the children use a black non-toxic ink pad to make fingerprints on a piece of paper. Have the children draw on eight legs on their fingerprints to represent spiders.

"We made cute spiders out of handprints. Paint each hand black (exclude thumbs) and press them onto orange paper. Press one palm on top the other palm print. Four fingers stick out on each side and it's a spider! We used paper reinforcer stickers for eyes. We attached them to spider stories written by each student."

"Last Hallowe'en I made spider hats with my kids. They turned out really cute - we took a strip of black paper (a few inches wide) and made it into a band that would fit around the head, used orange and yellow squares (one smaller than the other) for eyes, then we took 8 strips (8" long and 1" wide) for the legs. We folded them accordion style then glued them to the hat band so that the legs stuck out from the top."



"Using a paper plate, I either punch holes around the plate or make slits around the plate - slits are easier for younger children. Then I give them some yarn and they weave back and forth and make a spider web. If you punched holes, it's helpful to put some scotch tape on one end of the yarn - making it easier for them to put the yarn through the holes. Afterwards, I give them each a spider ring to put in their web."

## **Ghosts!**

Thin down white glue with water. Dip sheets of gauze into the glue and let dry over a 2 litre pop bottle. Shape into a ghostly figure. When dry, remove the bottle and add wiggly or black felt eyes. Hang from a string or display on a shelf for a spooky decoration.



## **Handprint Ghosts...**

The children paint their hands white and press onto black construction paper with fingers together. When they dry have the children turn them upside down and add faces.

## **Glue Ghosts...**

Have the child draw a ghost outline on a piece of waxed paper, and then have them fill in the outline with white school glue. Dry overnight, and then have the child add facial features. Place on a string and you have a spooky ghost necklace.

Supply each child with two pieces of tissue paper or kleenex and a piece of string or yarn. Have each child ball up one of the tissues, then place it in the centre of the second tissue. Next, have the children work in pairs to tie the yarn around the second tissue to hold the balled tissue to form the ghost's head. The children may use markers to make eyes.

Put two pieces of wax paper together and cut out a ghost shape. Cut eyes from black construction paper and lay them between the wax paper pieces in the correct position. Place the ghost between two pieces of newspaper and iron with a warm iron. After ironing, you can fringe or rip the bottom of the ghost. Punch a hole and hang with a piece of string. They are very ghostly!

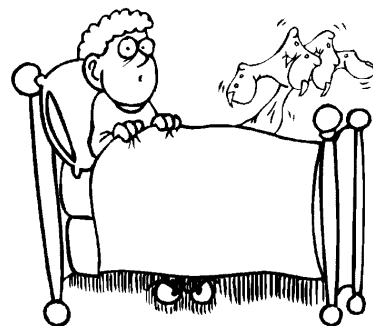
## **Bats**

Paint sections of cardboard tube or other cylinders black. Add bat wings cut from black construction paper to the top of the tube and use sticky dots for eyes. Suspend the bats from the ceiling.

## **Hallowe'en Activities**

Have a chart of Hallowe'en words - with pictures if necessary. Then the children print the following, adding their choice of Hallowe'en words.

There's a \_\_\_\_\_ under my bed,  
There's a \_\_\_\_\_ in the tree.  
There's a \_\_\_\_\_ in the closet,  
But they don't scare me!



Make pumpkin bingo cards. Draw and photocopy a blank card on a pumpkin shape. Print a sheet with a variety of word wall words and/or Hallowe'en words. The children can cut out words they know and glue them into the squares on the pumpkin at random. You call words and the children cover them with candy corn.



**We're going on a Monster Hunt** - a variation on 'Goin' on a Lion Hunt'

We're going on a monster hunt.

Were going to find a big one!

We're not scared, but.....

What if he's under the bed? Better go over it. Squoosh, squoosh, squoosh.

What if he is in the closet. Better close it. Slam, slam, slam.

What if he is behind the curtains? Better open them. Swish, swish, swish.

What if he's in the hallway? better tiptoe down it. Tiptoe, tiptoe.

What if he's in the garage? Better stomp through it. Stomp. stomp, stomp.

Aahh! It's a monster!

What's that you say?

You're big, but you're friendly, and you want to go to bed?

Now we're not afraid of monsters, so.....

Stomp through the garage,

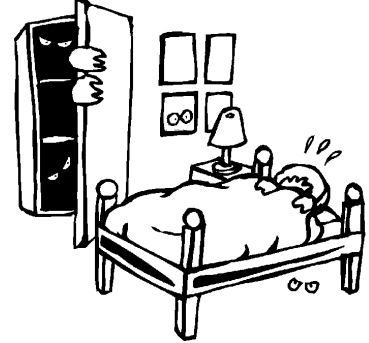
Walk through the hallway,

Close the curtains,

Open the closet,

Jump into bed,

And turn out the lights! Click!



Stack different sized pumpkins with knitting needles between them to stabilize them to make an orange 'snowman' ...or a BOOman...or ..... You can make up a story about how the three jack o'lanterns were scared and came up with a disguise.

Try carving the pumpkin on its side so the stem becomes the nose!

**Countdown**

There are ten ghosts in the basement,

There are nine upon the stairs,

There are eight ghosts in the attic,

There are seven on the chairs.

There are six ghosts in the kitchen,

There are five along the hall,

There are four upon the ceiling,

There are three up on the wall.

There are two ghosts on the carpet,

What **are** we going to do?

There is one ghost right behind you,

Who is so quiet.....

BOO!

I laugh at my Jack O'lantern,  
I think he is fun to see.  
He must be thinking the same thing,  
Because he is laughing at me!

**Hallowe'en Bingo**

"I always play Halloween Bingo. I made a grid for Bingo. I give them a list of Halloween words and a blank Bingo grid and they cut out the words they want and glue them into the grid in whatever order they wish. Toss the rest. I have the words in a bag and pull them out for the Bingo game. I think it's great for word recognition and fun, too. We cover the Bingo board with candy corn!"

### Pumpkin

We bought a fat orange pumpkin  
The plumpest sort they sell.  
We neatly scooped the inside out  
And only left the shell.  
We carved a funny funny-face  
Of silly shape and size,  
A pointy nose, a jagged mouth,  
And two enormous eyes.  
We set it in a window  
And we put a candle in,  
Then lit it up for all to see  
Our jack o'lantern grin!



When black cats walk  
When pumpkins talk  
When witches fly  
When gray owls cry  
When scarecrows toot  
And ghosts salute  
It-is-Hallowe'en!

### Decorate Your Doors!

"Our hall is decorated with these things: They are giant sized and go on the door and around the door.

Spider web  
Haunted house (the door is the door and there are windows on each side)  
Ghost  
A Jack O'Lantern  
A giant black cat with glitter eyes"

Make a haunted house the size of your door. Put numerous doors and windows in it and cut out three sides of each door and window so that they can fold back. Then give each child a piece of paper that would fit behind the doors and windows and have them draw something on it. Tape their drawings behind the doors and windows. You can then leave them 'open' or invite people to open them up to see what's behind them.

### Pumpkin Seeds...

"Roast pumpkin seeds by spreading oil on a pan, spreading out seeds in a single layer, adding a little salt and paprika for colour (I like chili pepper at home, but I don't do that at school), and roast at 400 degrees until brown. It only takes about 10 or 12 minutes. You can also roast them at 200 degrees for 1 hour. I have also drawn the steps for this process which the children colour and assemble into a little book to take home."

### Miss Viola Swamp

"I dress up as Miss Viola Swamp from the story *Miss Nelson is Missing*. In the morning I hide in the office and the children are told by the principal that I am ill and while she is finding a substitute a parent or teacher aide will read them a story. The secretary and I are listening in on the P.A. system to see when she finishes the story and then the principal ushers me, as Miss Viola Swamp, to the room. I can be a fairly funny but strict teacher (really helps keep them settled down in the a.m.). For the party I just put on a witch's hat and look great. I have done this for years and so the older children see me and all say, "Hi, Miss Swamp!" and it really is interesting to watch the Grade One students because they are not really sure if it is me. All the teachers go along with this, too. If any of the students are frightened of me I do whisper to them that it is really me."

### Scare Me!

#### **Scare me with witches in tall black HATS**

*Start with hands to side and use the entire line of the verse to swing arms out and up to make a pointy hat over head...clap them together on the word hats.*

#### **Scare me with goblins and scare me with BATS**

*Now turn palms out and slowly and menacingly arch arms up and down like bat wings and freeze them arched on 'bats', a hunched back is a nice touch, too.*

#### **See how I shiver, BOO HOO, BOO HOO**

*They love this part...grab your ribcage like hugging yourself and wiggle really fast back and forth...it makes your lungs wiggle and your voice shake.....you can explain what is really happening and show them!!*

#### **It's Halloween night and.....**

*For this, they scan their friends faces while wagging a menacing pointer warning finger and then freeze with you on 'and'.....they need to be able to see you out of the corner or their eye ...while they are frozen and, they are looking someone straight in the eye and do a whole body freeze...they try not to crack a smile and you hold and are doing it to a student too...freeze for a long time once they get good at it.*

#### **NONE OF IT IS TRUE!**

*You speed up for this, they finish wagging their finger and it is done sort of in a staccato...very articulated!*

Next verse...

#### **Grin jack o'lanterns and make me shake**

*I just make my hands look like claws and hold them on either side of my face and make a grimacing face for this so that it reminds me of the jagged teeth on a jack o'lantern...then suck in your breath after shake as if you suddenly heard a horrid noise.*

#### **Creak rusty hinges, I'm ready to quake.**

*Put the finger in front of lips in the shhhhhhhhhhh form and sing it very hushed,.....they love this too....they have to watch you and stay right with you after you say or sing that quietly, don't say another thing and reach out and pretend to grasp a door knob. When all hands are on the knob, do a quick turn and cluck your tongue...they all will learn to do it right with you as the hand snaps to turn the knob. Then slowly, ever so slowly, open the door and do that 'creaking' sound with your voice where you pull in air at the back of a restricted throat...I pull the door into myself so that when I am finally near my body, I just grab my sides again and .....)*

#### **See how I shiver , BOO HOO, BOO HOO**

#### **It's Halloween night, and.....**

#### **NONE OF IT IS TRUE!**

*Repeat motions for those two lines as above.*



That's it....great for any parents who come in to help with a party as a thank you performance!

### Pumpkin Activities

*Some teachers have a "Pumpkin Day" instead of Hallowe'en.*

Sort the pumpkins as many ways as you can. Weigh the pumpkins and put them in order. Use interesting words to describe the different pumpkins (bumpy, smooth, wrinkled, etc.) Measure the pumpkins with a piece of string and compare. Use your 5 senses. Cut two pumpkins - a big one and a smaller one. Guess which will have the most seeds. Estimate how many seeds each will have. Count the seeds by putting them into groups of ten on squared paper. Cook the seeds. Make pumpkin pie, cookies or bread. Make a collage with the dried seeds.

### A Witch's Brew

"I get one of those caldrons and put in spooky things. Each child gets a handful and the kids graph how many they have of each.

1. vampire teeth (candy corn)
2. polar bear toes (marshmallows)
3. fried bat wings (cornflakes)
4. lizard eyes (m&ms)
5. rat brains (nuts - only if no one is allergic!)
6. worms (gummy worms)

"You can say the following as the kids add to the brew . . .

Choppity, choppity, choppity chop. (*pantomime all parts*)

Cut off the bottom (*I do scissors for the cutting*)

Cut off the top

Choppity, choppity, choppity chop.

Cut it into pieces

And throw it in the pot.



Children think of what they would throw in the pot. 'I'd throw BAT'S EYES'... 'lizard's tails', etc. Occasionally let someone stir the brew...."

### Hallowe'en Math

Play bingo with candy corn as markers.

"Do all your activities with your pumpkin and then after all the seeds are out and dried, make miniature paper pumpkins. Glue 10 seeds to each mini-pumpkin. Then take all the mini pumpkins and glue or tape them on in tens to a giant paper pumpkin. Circle each group of 100's and write the exact amount on the bottom in big numbers. Display it for parents and everyone to see. Before you do this, have the kids estimate and write down their estimates. Give a prize to the person who was closest. Happy Halloween planning!"

### Hallowe'en Day

"We will have a costume party, trick or treating and bobbing for apples along with the haunted house and games in the afternoon. This week we will do a pumpkin activity where we predict the size of seeds in ratio to the size of the pumpkin and other math activities, and then we will carve them."

"Our school does a 'Wacky Day' on Halloween. The children don't wear costumes, but they can wear their clothes inside out, backwards, with different coloured socks or shoes, funny hair styles, etc. It is a lot of fun and the kids do not even mind not wearing costumes."

"We are having a Halloween party. We make masks earlier in the week. We're carving pumpkins and counting the number of seeds which we've estimated and graphing the results. We're also having a grossology touch station with worms (spaghetti), eyeballs (peeled grapes), etc. We play 'pin the stalk on the pumpkin'. There is a visit from the 'Great Pumpkin' with goody bags, and some dancing and treats."

"This year my class will make jello jigglers with the molds found with jello at the store. We will also decorate ghost and pumpkin cookies."



## **October Celebrations**

"Our grade ones have a Fall Festival the last hour of the day on October 31st. Each class is responsible for a game booth and the kids rotate through the games during that time. The booths include cookie decorating, face painting, musical chairs to win a cupcake, basketball throw, and pumpkin toss. Everyone wins a prize or piece of candy and each class supplies what it needs for their booth. Only students are invited to attend and they leave their costumes at home. The kids have great fun. The parents run the booths and the teachers get a chance to mingle and have fun with the kids."

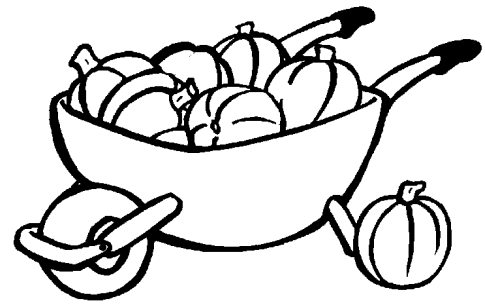
"I stopped doing any activities about Hallowe'en when I had children who couldn't participate due to religious beliefs. It caused so many problems sending them elsewhere in the school that I decided to skip over it all together in following years. I now do bats, owls, and spiders throughout the month of October which I integrate into guided reading, shared reading, read-alouds, and writing as well. The kids always love all the non-fiction and never even ask why we don't read any Halloween stories or do any activities. I love this unit and the excitement level it produces in the classroom. It's a great learning experience."



"One year a local grocery store donated small pumpkins for my class. Then we had the children bring in vegetables - carrots, celery, mushrooms, red, yellow and green peppers, cucumbers, etc. Then the moms helped by slicing the vegetable (if necessary) and using wooden skewers to attach the vegetables to the pumpkins to decorate them. For example, cucumbers make great ears or eyes with another small vegetable being the eyeball. The children had great fun! We put the pumpkins on display for that night and next day. Then the children took the pumpkins home on Friday. Prior to decorating the pumpkins, the students estimated the circumference of their pumpkins and measured them. They set them in order of size, weight and height. One pumpkin was used to estimate the number of seeds inside, and then it was cut open to count them. The pumpkin seeds were roasted in a toaster oven."

"If your class is unable to go to a pumpkin farm, there are websites on the internet that show pumpkin farms. You can take a virtual trip. It may not be the same, but it is interesting, too."

"My school did storybook character day. Some kids liked it better than Hallowe'en because it wasn't scary. The first year is the hardest to get going. We found that if we read some books and talked about how you could make a simple costume that really helped. We also pointed out that it was often easier to be a character that was a person (e.g. Mike Mulligan) than a character that was an animal (e.g. Arthur). We had them bring the book to school for the day."



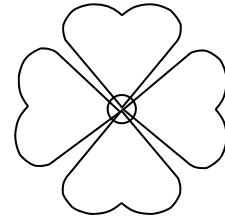
"At my school, we have a Harvest Festival. From 9:00 to 11:30, the children travel as a whole class, to 4 different teachers, then back to their own teachers. There are 5 different activities in which they will participate. For example, in one room they will make a scarecrow, as a class, to decorate the halls. In my room they will learn about the life cycle of a pumpkin - I love the project that I'm doing with them. You cut out a pumpkin shape book so that all of the pages are connected - like paper dolls. On the cover you write 'The Life of a Pumpkin'. On the first page, the child colours soil and then glues on a pumpkin seed. Then he draws a green vine through all of the pages, coming out of the seed. On the next page, he glues on a 2 x 2 inch piece of yellow tissue paper to represent the pumpkin flower. Next page...he sponge paints a small green circle. Last page...he sponge paints a larger orange circle. After lunch, I do centres. Other teachers do Harvest Bingo, graphing Dem Bones, doing a pumpkin seed toss where they have to get a seed into a pumpkin, and others."



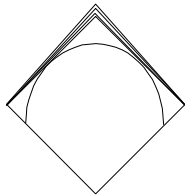
# Remembrance Day

## Art for Remembrance Day

Cut hearts out of red construction paper. Four small hearts joined at the tips will make an easy poppy. Put all the poppies made onto a wreath for the Remembrance Day ceremony.



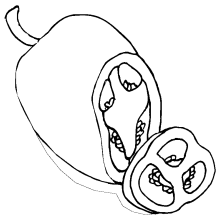
The children can use the poppies as card decorations. Simply create a card by folding a piece of paper in two. Glue one or more poppies to the front of the card. Send the cards to the Legion or a veterans hospital with a thank-you inside.



Fold red paper twice. Put it on the table as shown - four points upwards. Draw the petal shape and cut it out. This may take some practice on scrap paper first.  
Add yellow and black spots in the centre of the poppy.  
Glue the poppies onto a wreath.

"I have my kids colour 2-3 poppies each which they cut out and we make into a wreath to lay at our Remembrance Day ceremony."

"I have them copy a short poem onto a patterned sheet (wreath with poppies) that we put up on our wall."



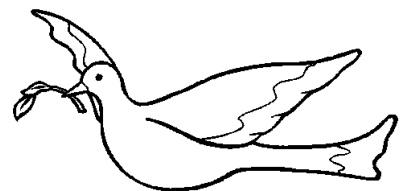
"Try cutting a large green pepper in half and taking out the seeds and the remainder makes a great stamp for a poppy design."

Cut poppies from red paper. Colour yellow and black stamens in the flower centers. Curl the petals and glue the flower centers onto a wreath shape.

"There are art projects - you can make a wreath, or a cross with a wreath. Col. John McCrae who wrote 'In Flanders Field' is from Guelph where I live so all Guelph children learn a bit about him. There's even a school named for him. I also focus on peace and the freedom we have in Canada."

## Teaching the Meaning of Remembrance day

Teach 'Peace'. Make doves of peace. Enlarge them to the size you need. Copy them onto white tag. Cut them out. They can be coloured with felt pens, paint or glue on glitter or sequins. Add the eye. Attach string or thread and hang the doves so they fly in the breeze.



Discuss what war is, and then the opposite - peace. How does peace make you feel? Have the children brainstorm things that are peaceful. Make a list of the ideas.

Each child can choose one favourite peaceful thing and fill in the sentence....

Peace is \_\_\_\_\_.

and illustrate the sentence. These can be put on a bulletin board around the poppy wreath.

Peace is:

- a sleeping baby
- sitting by a fire
- looking at the stars
- night time
- having a bath
- a forest
- a gentle rain

- snowflakes falling
- hugging someone
- a beautiful bird
- my bedroom
- a rainbow
- looking at a pond
- someone sleeping

Little poppy  
Given to me,  
Help me keep Canada  
Safe and free.

## The Remembrance Day Ceremony

The Legion in your community can help you get a guest speaker or a video of Remembrance Day.

Use Bryan Adams and *We are the World* for mood music as classes walk into gym. Get flags, sing *O Canada*, recite *In Flanders Field*.

Have one minute of silence at 11:00 o'clock - make sure all the children know the significance.

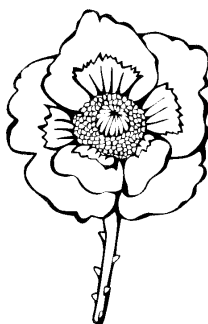
Each class can make a wreath, and bring them up one at a time to place at the front.

A Grade One class can recite this poem, with each child holding up a giant paper poppy with a drawing in the centre of what they think peace is.

### Poppy

Poppy, we are but children small,  
We are too little to do it all.

Children you may do your part.  
Loving each other is how you start.  
Play without fighting.  
Share your games and toys.  
Be kind and thoughtful,  
To all girls and boys.



### Remembrance Day

We wear a poppy  
On Remembrance Day,  
And at eleven  
We stand and pray.  
Wreaths are put  
Upon a grave.  
As we remember  
Our soldiers brave.

"In the past I've taught my kids the song 'There's a new world coming'. Sharon, Lois and Bram have it on their A to Z album (it's W for world). This year I've dug out the song 'I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony'. Depending on your age, you (or some people you know) might remember it as a Coke commercial many years ago. (I'm sure I was an infant - ha!) We sing at the assembly. I've often teamed up the grade 5 or 6's. That way the youngest and oldest kids in the school are singing a song about peace together."



## Remembrance Day

by Teresa Williams

On Remembrance Day

We wear our poppies *(children point to their poppies)*

On Remembrance Day

We see the old soldiers proudly marching in the parade  
*(veterans march or stand and salute)*

On Remembrance Day

We see people laying wreaths at the cenotaph *(child places wreath at podium)*

On Remembrance Day

We think of the soldiers who died *(heads down)*

On Remembrance Day

We think of the mothers who cried *(girls weep)*

On Remembrance Day

We think of the people who were fighting to make the world a better place to live *(globe and dove)*

On Remembrance Day

We stand in silence *(heads down)*

On Remembrance Day

We remember.



"We do a great Remembrance Day ceremony every year. Last year my grade one class sang 'This Little Light of Mine' (by Raffi I believe) and at one point during the song we turned the lights out in the gym and the grade ones all had flashlights and swirled them out into the dark while continuing their song. It was a hit! We do emphasize world peace and our part in it, though, more than the memory of the killing and losses. This year we are going to make a Maze (more like a path) in the gym and all of the students will do a peace walk while listening to music of the war years and other songs reminding us why peace is so important to us. Along the path we will have pictures of different cultures, landscapes of our wonderful earth, and pictures of families doing things together in a happy world. Some songs I've found are 'Let there be Peace on Earth' by Vince Gill, 'From a Distance' by Bette Middler, 'Peace Train' by Cat Stevens, 'Danny Boy' by John Gary, 'White Cliffs of Dover' by Kate Smith and Pachalbel Canon. As you can see, I'm quite passionate about instilling in the kids the importance of this day of remembrance, and in charge of the program at the school. Oh yes, last year we wrote prayers for peace on cards, attached them to a string on a helium balloon and let them go in the schoolyard. We used red balloons for remembrance of the blood shed, and white ones to signify peace. They were environmentally friendly and so I didn't feel too bad about letting them soar up into the air. The kids loved it!"

"With my class, we focus on peace. I post a Shel Silverstein poem called 'Hug O' War'. We read it in our chart reading for the week and I post it with a dove shape on which the children have written their versions of 'Peace Is \_\_\_\_'. Before they do their writing, I read Peace Begins With Me and we discuss what peace means to each of us. We also have a Remembrance Day assembly in our school.

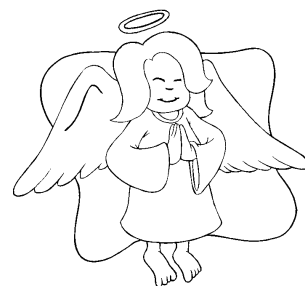
"Another book that I love for Remembrance Day is Sadako and the Thousand Cranes. There is a picture book version of it available."



# Christmas

## Bulletin Boards for Christmas

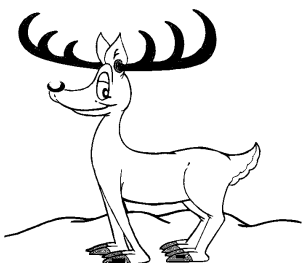
The title says: 'The Angels in Room \_\_\_\_ wish you a Merry Christmas!' You can put music notes in glitter above the angels. Trace each child's foot with shoes off so the toes make the bumps on the bottom (the skirt). The heel becomes the head of the angel. Then have the students trace the two hands with the fingers together - these will become the wings of the angel. Glue the hands behind the body of the angel. Use a gold pipe cleaner halo. The children then put glue on the 'skirt' and wings and put on glitter.



For December, decorate the classroom door. Paint a chimney to look like bricks with red bulletin board paper for the backing. The children then decorate small stockings and print their names large in the middle. Tack them to the chimney. 'Grade One stockings were hung by the chimney with care.'

## Art for Christmas

### Reindeer



Have had the children trace their hands on brown construction paper. Then they glue their paper hands onto a sentence strip or a strip of paper. Then make it into a headband - instant reindeer!

Make a simple Rudolph by tracing each child's foot (with shoe on) for the head, tracing the hands with the fingers spread for the antlers, a red pom-pom or button for the nose and add wiggle eyes.

Make Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer masks. You will need paper plates (one per child); brown, black, and red construction paper; scissors; glue; markers or crayons; single whole punch; rubber bands (two per child). Cut reindeer nose, and antlers out of construction paper. Glue onto plate. Draw a mouth. Cut holes out for eyes. Punch hole on both sides of plate and attach rubber bands. Let children wear reindeer masks while singing 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'.

### Tree Ornaments

Re-cycle old Christmas cards! Trace a jar lid over the focal part of the card. Cut out the circle. Simply press the circle into the jar lid. Glue another circle to the other side of the jar lid. Glue a ribbon around the edge with a loop at the top, and you have a quick and fun craft. They could also pop their own photo into the jar lid.

"We made pine cone ornaments one year. I bought several colours of glitter. Blue and pink turned out the prettiest. We poured glue into a plastic disposable plate and rolled the pinecone in it to coat tips with glue. Do your best not to get glue on the flat bottom. We then sprinkled them with the glitter. It took quite a bit of glitter. It was messy but lots of fun. We set the pinecones on their flat bottoms on wax paper to dry. Once dry we shook off the extra glitter and I hot glued a piece of ribbon that was a complementary colour to the bottom in a loop."

## **Snowmen Ornaments**

### **Blue Ball Snowmen**

"I found very nice blue shiny non-breakable tree balls. I used white acrylic paint and painted the child's fingers up to the tips and entire palm. I placed the fingers and hand around the ball with the fingers apart, so the white fingers were up around the sides of the ball and the palm was the bottom. You can see this if you hold your hand out with the fingers and thumb curved upwards, ready to receive the ball. Each finger is a 'snowman'! I sprinkled the fine white glitter while paint was wet, let kids decorate the 'snowmen' with paint markers when done. They were beautiful, and about the easiest parent Christmas gift I ever made. I bought some sparkly pipe cleaners to use as hooks, and typed up the poem on paper and had the kids decorate it."

These aren't just five snowmen  
As anyone can see.  
I made them with my hand  
Which is a part of me.  
For many years to come  
You'll look back and recall  
The Christmas of 200\_  
When my hand was this small!

"I use acrylic white paint and the children washed right away and it came off fine. I used glass balls. I found that when I placed their fingers it was much better then when they 'squeezed' the ball. I attached the poem to the ribbon and had the children sign his/her name to the poem."

"The kids wrote their names and year with gold marker. I bought beautiful gold bows with ties and attached the poem to that. The bow really makes it perfect. I asked the kids to bring in a shoebox (or any box that would fit something ornament-sized). I'm putting the ornaments in Christmas lunch bags, putting them in the boxes, and surrounding them with shredded newspaper."

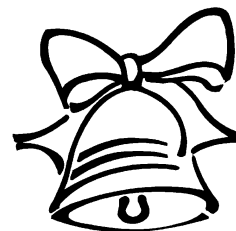


"I embellished mine a little more with a small black hat cut from foam board for each 'finger' snowman, black eyes and mouth with toothpick dipped in black finger paint."

"Use a lot of paint on their hand, make sure their fingers are really spread apart (especially kids with chubby hands!). I used acrylic paint and gave each hand a squirt of liquid-type soap to 'work in' on the way to the bathroom. It comes off easily if you wash it right away."

### **Clay Pot Bell**

Make an ornament out of small clay flower pots. Turn them upside down and have the kids paint them green to resemble a bell or a Christmas tree. They were decorated with glitter pens. Add a ribbon hanger with a large bead under the pot and a small bow. Add a small bell inside the bell.



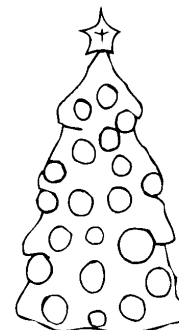
### **Gingerbread Ornaments**

Gingerbread ornaments can be made by mixing applesauce and cinnamon (about half and half) until it is thick enough to pat out on wax paper or plastic wrap. (Some teachers add some liquid glue to the mixture to help it harden.) Use a small gingerbread cookie cutter and use a straw to make a hole at the top. Let dry for at least a week and it will harden. These will smell wonderful on your tree!

"Make great smelling gingerbread men for your tree! I had a gingerbread man pattern about 3 or 4 inches long and traced it to the back of coarse (really rough) sandpaper. The students cut them out (this also helps to sharpen their scissors). Then I gave each student a cinnamon stick to rub on the sandpaper side of the gingerbread man. It smells great. Then I gave them fabric paints to decorate the fronts. When they are dry I tape string loops to the back for them to hang up. They are adorable!"

### Christmas Trees

Make a 'Froot Loops' (and/or other cereal) tree. Fold a standard size piece of green construction paper in half lengthways, draw a triangle with base (1/2 of a Xmas tree) then cut out with zigzag edged scissors (pinking shears). Cut a star shape from the yellow construction paper for the top of the tree. Have the children put the names on the back before adding the cereal. Give each child a puddle of glue on a separate paper. They gently dip each Froot Loop bit into the glue and place it on the tree. Glue the star on the top of the tree. Lay flat to dry.



"I love making a Christmas tree out of the student's footprints. They dip their feet into green paint (that's always interesting) and then they walk across a page. We cut out their feet and use them to make a tree. First tape a row of feet for the bottom of the tree with toes pointing down (just tape the heel and leave the toes loose) Then start building a pyramid by adding another shorter row on top just overlapping a bit. Keep going up until you have a tree. It's fun and it looks great!"

### Snowflakes

"My favourite Christmas ornaments are the snowflakes made out of Popsicle sticks. Glue three in the middle to make the six-pointed snowflake shape. Glue suitable pasta symmetrically on the six points and paint with white paint and before the paint dries sprinkle on clear glitter. Students who don't celebrate Christmas can still make them to hang in a window at home."

### Wreaths

"Provide paper plates with the centers cut out. Children can decorate them using macaroni dyed green and red, yarn, and small cut out berries."

Cut a circle out of the middle of the paper plate. Trace enough green hands to go around the plate and make a full wreath. Glue the hands on the plate, all fingers pointing away from the middle. Cut out red circles and add as 'berries'. Poke a hole in the top and run the ribbon through to hang.



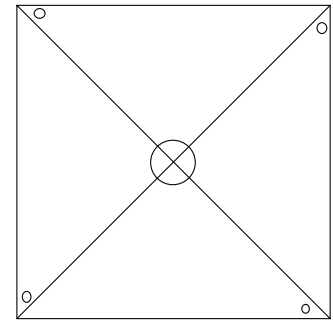
"Work together to make a hand-print wreath for your bulletin board. Cut a doughnut shape for the backing. The children trace their hands on green butcher paper and cut out the tracings. Glue the palms of the hands on the wreath shape, and curl the fingers to make the wreath three-dimensional. Cut out red circles for berries. You can use the green hands to make a lovely Christmas tree, too. Make a triangular tree shape. Put the first row of hands along the bottom of the triangle with the curled fingers pointing down. Add another row above until the tree is filled. Don't make it too large, though, as it takes a lot of hands to fill it!"

## **Other Christmas Art ....**

### **Pinwheel Poinsettias**

Begin with a square of red paper. Draw lines between opposite corners. Trace a penny-sized circle in the center where the lines cross. Cut down the lines to the center circle. Bring the circle side of the top point to the center and glue, turn so another corner is at the top, bring the left side to the center and glue, turn, and so on. Gently bend each corner, not fold!

A poinsettia has a yellow center, so glue a yellow paper circle in the middle of the pinwheel. Add green leaves around the flower. These make a wonderful bulletin board display - very showy if they are made quite large!



### **A Centerpiece**

"In my class one activity will be to decorate an empty tuna can with tissue paper, fill it with playdough and then stick in 2 candy canes, some fake pine stems, maybe some fake poinsettia stems and some pipe cleaners. You could also use a candle and real pine or fir branches. This makes a spectacular centerpiece."

### **Candy Canes**

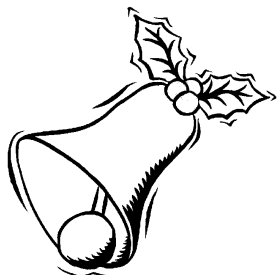
"I give the children a regular size (8 1/2 x 11) piece of black paper. They draw the shape of a candy cane on it to the full size of the paper. Then they take one inch squares of white and red construction paper and using patterns glue them down on the candy cane. It is simple and they love it. It is amazing how different each one turns out. Some overlap some don't...some can follow a line...some can't. They are cute and very easy. Cut the squares on a paper cutter and it won't take anytime at all for preparation. I usually give them a white label in the lower corner to print their name since it doesn't show up well on black paper."

### **Santa**

"Make Santa - with fingers pointing downwards, paint top of palm and entire thumb red (Santa's cap), paint middle of palm pink (face - add features with a marker), and paint fingers white (Santa's beard). Make a white thumbprint at the end of Santa's cap, or glue on a cotton ball."



"I do this activity every year except I do not paint the middle pink, I leave it white and I have the children dip their two fingers (from the other dry hand) in blue paint for the eyes. I then add a small picture of them on the back of Santa and I have them write Merry Christmas, the year and their name. I have them laminated, then I punch a hole at the top, hang a string and I have the kids wrap it as a gift to the parents. They love doing it!"

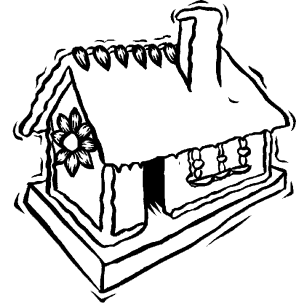


### **Bells**

Cover styrofoam cups with tin foil. Attach pipe cleaner. Insert the pipe cleaner up through the center of the bell. Bend the pipe cleaner to make a hanger.

## Gingerbread Houses

"Here is how I make gingerbread houses with my Grade Ones. The children each bring in a small, empty milk container (the little personal size one) and I wash them out and tape the end closed. Now 'glue' the bottom of this to a piece of cardboard that has been wrapped in tinfoil (royal icing is the glue). The milk container becomes the house and the children glue graham wafers on to the walls and roof with royal icing. Then the children decorate their houses with candies etc. and we make a village of gingerbread houses in our room with cotton batting between the bases. It's loads of fun!"



"The graham cracker houses are quite simple to make. You do need the good brand of graham crackers as the less expensive brands tend to crumble. You need a piece of cardboard covered with tinfoil for the base. Then you need five squares of graham crackers for the house. Four of them make the four walls and the fifth is cut diagonally in half to make the roof. We melt sugar in an electric frying pan (any type of frying pan will work, but we don't have a stove at school so we use the electric one). You dip the edges of the crackers into the melted sugar and put the houses together that way. The sugar actually hardens quickly and the houses are very strong which is great when the kids start to decorate them."

## Gifts

### Classroom Gift Giving

"My class has 10 boys and 10 girls and the boys are bringing 10 gifts, one for each boy, and the girls are bringing 10 girls' gifts, all the same. On party day we take turns passing our gifts out....great fun to all be the same and not worry about comparison."

Try these other gift exchange ideas:

- Have each child bring a wrapped book for the classroom! Each child can open one. Then everyone can enjoy 20 gifts instead of one, and your classroom library benefits. Have each child write their name and the date on a special label and glue in the book they bring.

- Bring other gifts for the classroom. You could send a letter home giving suggestions of things you need in your classroom. The children can pick one each from a basket and open it.

- "For the past 3 years we have also done away with our class gift exchange. We have 8 sections of Grade One. Each room pairs up with another and the children bring in non-perishable foods, small toys, toiletries, mittens, socks, gloves, etc. We make gift boxes for needy families in our community. Our school social worker distributes them. We send a list home with the kids. Last year we were able to help 15 families. It makes the kids feel great."

"I give one gift to the class. I wrap it in as many layers as there are children and put a candy in each layer. Each child unwraps one layer and finally there is a nice book, puzzle or other gift for the classroom."

"We play hot potato with a HUGE present. When the music stops, the person holding the present has to unwrap it. Then they discover another present so we do it all over again. This keeps going until they've unwrapped about eight presents. The final gift is a box of candy canes for everyone in the class. They love this!"

"Instead of having students exchange one present with each other, I ask them bring small things to put in stockings for all. I bought them all stockings from the Dollar Store. Each child brings enough small wrapped presents for each person in the class. I told parents they were welcome to furnish whatever SMALL thing they wanted to share. These might be cars from the dollar store, bookmarks, packages of candy, fun character straws, pencils, small toys, etc. The children have so much fun opening all the tiny presents! Everyone gets the same, too, so no one will be disappointed."



"Last year I wrote a letter to my class parents talking about the season of giving (we had Christmas and Ramadan almost together) and that rather than them giving me personal gifts or trading gifts between the students, I would prefer that the class receive the gifts. Most kids brought in things nicely wrapped to put under the tree. We then had an opening party. We got new puzzles, books, playing cards, a paper maker, white board markers, etc. It was very nice and the children were just as excited as they would be if there were personal gifts. I brought a few extra parcels, so every child had a gift to open. The children actually received all the gifts, doing it this way!"

### **Gifts to the Parents**

"We usually do a snapshot picture gift because not many of our parents order school pictures. We take a picture of each child wearing an elf hat and collar. We have the kids make a Christmas card and the picture gets glued inside. It is signed 'From your little elf, \_\_\_\_\_'."



The favourite gift you and the children can give to their parents is a photo keepsake. Take special pictures of the children - just head and shoulders, with a plain background. Give yourself time to do re-takes, if necessary, so every child has a pleasing picture. Use a modeling dough recipe and form a flat star, bell or plain rectangle and insert a paper clip for the hanger. When it is dry, glue on the child's picture. Glue glitter or ribbon around the edges. The parents will love these tree ornaments and admire them every Christmas after!

"I have made ceramic tile gifts for Mom and Dad. I take a picture of each member of the class in a Santa hat and glue the picture in the middle of the tile. The children decorate with glitter glue, write their name and the date on with indelible marker, and spray with varnish - spray lightly as the printing tends to run otherwise."

"We do a handprint ornament. We paint the child's hand green and put the print on white paper. Then we put a star sticker at the top, have the child decorate it with a pencil eraser with red and white paint, cut it out and laminate it. Then we add ribbon so it becomes an ornament to hang on the tree. Sometimes we add the child's picture at the base."

"We make shredded wheat wreaths and then put their picture in the middle. Break up a large biscuit of wheat until it is quite fine. Then pour glue and green food colouring into the container with the wheat. After it is all mixed up you can let the children put it on a piece of waxed paper and shape it into a wreath. When it is dry glue it onto a piece of round green (a little bigger than the wreath) construction paper that has their picture on it. You glue a little red ribbon bow on it and it is pretty cute. Their hands end up green but it will come off after a few washings."

"Last year I made a mitten shape ornament and put the children's pictures on it with a poem on the back of the mitten. This is how I made the mitten. I cut out mittens from brown mailing paper with pinking shears. The children cut a smaller mitten shape from red or green paper after tracing around their hand. The smaller shape was glued onto the larger one. The picture was added to the center of the red or green mitten. I punched a hole at the top of the mitten on either side and attached a pipe cleaner as a hanger. Then the children added cotton across the top of the mitten and a little ribbon bow and some silvery beads or tiny holly leaves. The poem went on the back of the mitten. They really came out cute."

Hang this on your  
Christmas tree,  
To remember how  
I used to be.  
To remind you of me  
Now and then,  
And bring fond memories  
Back again.  
Grade One - 200\_

"Give each child a doughnut shape outline for a wreath. Then the child dips the flat hand into the paint, and presses it onto a scrap piece first to get rid of excess paint. Then the hand is pressed onto the wreath several times. This is repeated until the wreath is quite green. Then the child makes red thumbprints for berries. Make the berries in groups."

*Green handprints with the red thumbprint berries also can be used to decorate wrapping paper.*

With my hands I made this wreath  
With my thumb each berry  
I am sending you this special wish  
For a Christmas that is Merry!



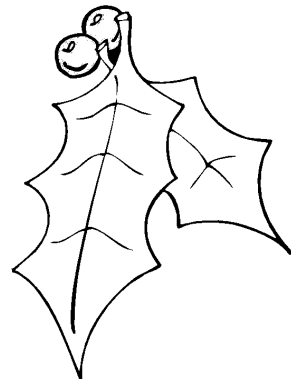
### **Bean Candle Holder**

Mix together dried red, white and green beans. Add some watered down Elmer's glue and some glitter. Scoop it into a small styrofoam cup. Push a small red, white or green candle down into the center of it. Let it dry over night. The next day, peel off the paper cup and add a bow.

### **A Card With Love**

"We made Christmas cards for our parents. The children made the front by tracing holly leaves and then gluing them onto a green or red card with red holly berries. On the inside I had them write or copy a cute little poem."

The Nicest Gift  
The present you give another  
Need not be a costly thing  
If you have tucked some love inside  
Before you tie the string.



### **Handprints**

"Last year my kids made their handprints in a dough. It hardened as it dried and looked almost like plaster. We poked two holes in the top and when they were dry they painted them with gold tempera paint. I sprayed them with an acrylic spray after they were painted. The finishing touch was a ribbon pulled through the holes and tied in a bow to make a hanger. I also wrote their names and the year with a paper clip before the dough dried. I used a recipe from Mudworks by MaryAnn Kohl.



**Play Clay** - pure white - hardens quickly.

1 cup baking soda

1/2 cup cornstarch,

2/3 cup warm water

Mix baking soda and cornstarch in a saucepan, add water and stir until smooth. Over medium heat, boil and stir until the consistency of mashed potatoes, then pour onto board to cool. When cool, knead. Makes 1 1/2 cups. I made several batches."

### **A Special Book**

"The cover of the book can be wrapping paper with a crisscross of ribbon or a stick-on bow to look like a gift. You can even add a gift tag the says to 'Mom and Dad from \_\_\_\_'.

Include the following text on the inside pages:

Some gifts are large.

Some gifts are small.

Some gifts are round.

Some gifts are tall.

But a gift from the heart is the best gift of all!

Kids can do each page using scraps of wrapping paper and yarn or ribbon. My students write the words themselves. We do one page per day until it's done. The last page should have a large heart with a picture of the child inside. These turn out really cute and are great keepsakes for moms and dads!"



"We have made picture frames from popsicle sticks - paint 8 sticks, one side at a time so it doesn't stick to the newspaper, any colour you want. Let the children choose if you are brave, or limit it to red and green. After the sticks are painted, have them glue them together log cabin style: lay 2 sticks down, put small dots of glue about 1/2 inch from the top and bottom of each stick, then lay 2 more sticks down perpendicular to the first two, and over the glue dots. Lay the last 4 sticks down the same way - dots of glue, sticks, dots of glue sticks. Glue a picture of the student to the back ( I always take a 35mm 'portrait' photograph of my students on school picture day - most of the students don't order pictures.) Decorate the front of the frame. One year I used some small wood stars from Wal-Mart, painted gold, on one of the lower corners. Another year I used some small glue-on 'jewels' that my neighbor was getting rid of. Any small decorations would work. Glue a small ribbon loop to the top center for hanging."

"Last year a parent donated bunches of baby food jars....so we made pretty candle holders. Each child cut up tiny bits of different coloured tissue paper and glued them onto his/her baby food jar, collage style, with a glue stick. This was something they got to work on in their spare time in the week or so before Christmas, and they really enjoyed it. After the teeny bits of colored tissue were glued onto the jar, overlapping each other, etc. ....the kids got to 'paint' their jar with Modge Podge (decoupage finishing glue....available in a craft store.) Of course, I looked at these before the child was allowed to paint on the Modge Podge...had some put on more pieces if glass was showing, etc. The Modge Podge gave a pretty, shiny finish to the jars...and made even the 'messy' gluers' jars look attractive! I bought tiny candles. The candles fit inside the baby food jars. Then we glued a pretty ribbon around the top, threaded part of the jar and glued on a bow. This was really the nicest Christmas gifts I've ever had my kids make...when the candle is lit, the light shines through the colored tissue pieces, making the candle holder look like stained glass. The parents really loved them, and the kids were proud of their creations."

"This year I have saved tons of old CD's. You take a picture of each child, trim, and glue to the shiny side of the CD. On the other side you cut Christmas wrapping paper the size of the CD and glue it on...then attach a ribbon hanger and shimmery holiday stickers to the side with the picture...and you have a Christmas tree ornament."

"I use a blank calendar page and run 12 for each student. We then fill out the calendars month by month. We discuss holidays (capital letters, abbreviations, etc. - all good review), how many days in each month and how the months 'look'. We take white paper to make a cover with construction paper cut out decorations and laminate the covers (front and back). Then put the whole thing together. I actually go through with them month by month putting on the numbers. Then they decorate the back of the previous month so when you turn the page you have a new month calendar and decorations on the top to go with that month (suggestion - use coloured pencils so you do not have crayon smudge). You have a wonderful keepsake with the child's writing and drawing for that year."

"I tried making calendars last year and they came out really great. We started with a photo copy of a calendar for each month with a sentence starter on the top of each one. Ex. 'January is for ....' We did two or three pages (months) each day for about a week. Each day we brainstormed a list of things that went with each month and then each child completed their sentence starters. We also created an art project for each month which became the page facing the actual calendar page. Ex. - Jan. we made a snow scene, Feb. a Valentine with doilies, March a windy scene with cut-out kites and strings, April a collage type umbrella cut-out with raincoat and boots showing and a fingerpaint puddle, May flowers, June a checkerboard picnic cloth (patterning!) with tiny plastic ants glued on, etc.. Some months were very simple by using a corresponding Ellison cut-out like a turkey. When they were finished I laminated each child's cover and put them together by binding them at the top."

#### Cover page:

left and right hand-print with photo of child

*Here are my handprints*

*For everyone to view.*

*One a month I made one*

*Especially for you.*

#### January

on blue paper using white hand-print around in circle (palm in same spot), add glitter

*Here's a snowflake*

*Dancing down,*

*Dancing, dancing*

*All around.*

#### February

make heart by pointing fingers down and towards each other.

*Here's a heart*

*To say 'I love you!'*

*I hope you'll say*

*You love me, too!*

#### March

shamrocks (fingerprint stems and thumb print leaves)

*I have a little shamrock.*

*It's green as green can be.*

*Watch me count the leaves,*

*One, two, three.*

#### April

on blue paper, white handprint - no thumb. Separate 2nd and 3rd finger for ears rest of hand makes rabbit's face.

*I'm an Easter Bunny, Watch me hop*

*Here are my ears, See how they flop!*

#### May

caterpillar 4 handprints pointing down, fist for head and finger antennae

*The fuzzy caterpillar*

*Crawled upon a leaf.*

*Spun her little chrysalis,*

*And then fell fast asleep.*

### June

butterfly (arm - body, wings - hands two on each side, one up and one down)

*Pretty little butterfly,  
What do you do all day?  
I fly around the flowerpots,  
nothing to do but play.*

### July

flag - red hand print for leaf, red stripes on sides.

*The Canadian flag  
Is red and white  
It is such a  
Beautiful sight!*

### August

octopus no thumbs 2 hands palms touching (on blue paper)

*In the pool so quiet and deep  
Small fish swim and small crabs  
creep  
The octopus with arms so wide  
Sways from side to side.*

### September

fall tree (arm tree trunk & fingerprints fall leaves)

*Autumn leaves are falling  
Red and yellow and brown.  
Autumn leaves are falling.  
See them tumbling down.*

### October

spider 2 hands no thumbs palms overlapping fingers to side (4 on each to make 8 legs)

*The very silly spider  
Crawled up on \_\_\_\_\_'s head!  
It crawled all around  
Then made a nice soft bed.*

### November

bare tree - arm and hand with outstretched fingers

*No shade, no shine,  
No butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers,  
No leaves, no birds,  
November.*

### December

Rudolph - foot - face, hands - antlers

*Here is Rudolph  
A funny reindeer!  
He takes us up to  
The end of the year.*



## Christmas Activities

"My current favourite Christmas book is Jan Brett's *Gingerbread Baby*. She has some neat stuff on her website about the book, and I want to make cookies to go with it, of course!" [www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com)

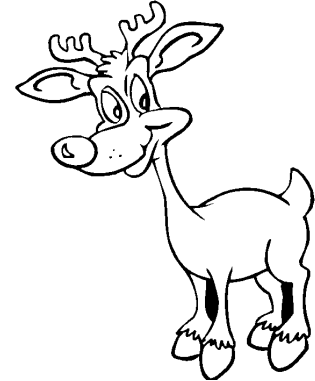
"We make a big yellow star and loops of red, white and green in a pattern to countdown. We glue this poem to the star: Each evening when goodnight is said, Tear off one ring and jump into bed. When only the star is left to shine, Then you will know it's Santa time!"

"A Rudolph snack: cut a piece of bread in triangles (I give the children plastic knives to do their own work) spread each half with peanut butter use pretzels for the antlers, a maraschino cherry for nose, and raisins for the eyes. Some assembly is required!"

"Read *The Night Before Christmas*. Write the reindeer names on cards. Give a name to each of 8 children. Have the rest of the class help to put them the order they came in the story. Write the ordinal words first, second, etc. vertically on chart paper and tack the reindeer name next to each ordinal place word. Then the children make a small booklet of 'Santa's Reindeer' with a reindeer on each page with the ordinals: First came \_\_\_\_\_. Second came \_\_\_\_\_, etc., Last came \_\_\_\_\_."

"Have your students make Magic Reindeer Food. Place the following in a baggie: 1/2 cup oatmeal, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup red or green sugar crystals (for cake decorating). NOTE: do not use glitter - it's not biodegradable and it would make birds ill. Tell your class: This will help Santa find his way to your house! On Christmas Eve, make sure you leave out some magical reindeer food for the reindeer. That way you can be sure they will stop at your house. Attach the following note to the baggie:

Just before you go to bed on Christmas Eve,  
Sprinkle this Magic Reindeer Food outside.  
Santa's reindeer will smell the oats,  
Santa will see the sparkle and be guided to your door!"



Make class books for the holiday.....try these!

1. Do a pattern book following the 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear' pattern. "Rudolph, Rudolph, what do you see?" "I see a \_\_\_\_\_ looking at me."
2. Make a book with Christmas vocabulary. Put one or two of the children's names on each page with one special vocabulary word - for example, "Marie and Darren like to sit by the Christmas tree." "Gordon has a big Christmas stocking."
3. Make a "12 days of Christmas" book. The children can put in their own words for the gifts.
4. Make a 'I like Christmas!' book. Put 'I like \_\_\_\_\_.' on each page. This is a good way to teach the new vocabulary.

### Santa, Santa Books

Make little student books with the following text:

Santa, Santa, what do you see? I see the lights on my Christmas Tree!

*(Add foil stars or glitter to a picture of a Christmas Tree)*

Santa, Santa, what do you hear? I hear the bells on my reindeer!

*(Glue tiny bells to a picture of a reindeer.)*

Santa, Santa, what do you feel? I feel my beard, so soft and real!

*(Glue cotton to a picture of Santa)*

Santa, Santa, what do you eat? I eat a candy cane, so nice and sweet!

*(Tape a real candy cane to this page.)*

Santa, Santa, what do you smell? Something's in the oven, but I won't tell!

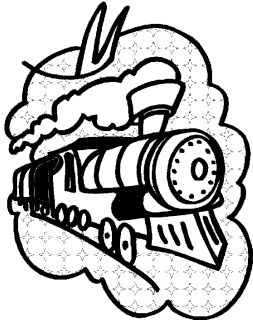
*(Add cinnamon to a picture of a gingerbread man.)*



### The Polar Express

"I love doing this the day before we get out for the holidays. I send a note home telling the kids to bring a robe or PJ's and slippers to school. It must be something that can be slipped on over clothes - maybe mom's big nightgown. I don't tell them why, though. When they get to school, their chairs are arranged like train seats in front of the TV. I tell them to put on their PJ's and 'meet me at the reading

corner.' There, I read the Polar Express to them after doing a web on it beforehand to see what they know about trains."



"I read the story (they always love it). Then I serve them hot chocolate with a peppermint stick in it for the spoon and marshmallows while they are in their train seat. I also serve them cookies. We have the very short video of someone reading *The Polar Express* and I show it to them. Afterwards, I give them a big jingle bell on a red ribbon to remind them of the most special gift.

For a writing activity later that day, we write what would be our most special gift and it can't be something store-bought. I love doing this every year with my class."

### Quiet Games

"I usually play winter bingo with my class. I give them a blank bingo card with a marked free space and then they fill in the blank spaces with winter/holiday words we have brainstormed and written on the board. We even trade cards around the teams so they get a new card each game. I use M&Ms as bingo chips. They always have fun with it, and ask to play over and over."

"We play Santa's Bell. Santa sits in a chair with his back to the class and eyes closed, or blindfolded. One student tip-toes up and picks up Santa's Bells from under the chair and rings them all the way back to his seat (a listening clue) where he hides them out of sight. Then the whole class chants 'Santa Santa where's your bell? One of the elves (or reindeer) took it home.' Santa then tries to guess which student took his bells. You may allow as many or as few guesses as you like. I always let the student become the new Santa regardless of how correct Santa's guess was."

"Near the beginning of December we have the children make paper chains with enough links to make one for each day leading up to Christmas. We attach the chains to a paper bell to which we attach the following:

How many days till Christmas?  
It's mighty hard to tell!  
Take off a link every night  
When the Sandman casts his spell  
And Christmas Eve will be here  
By the time you reach the bell.

The children take the chains home and are told to take off one link every night to count down the days until Christmas."



"This year at school I'm doing a mini theme on reindeer. I've collected some red Christmas light bulbs and will glue on eyes and a red pompom nose, as well as twisting a brown pipe cleaner around the top for antlers. One of the children's parents will come in to glue (with a glue gun) a ribbon on top to hang it on the tree. We have a small artificial tree in our class that has other reindeer decorations on it. We also learn about elk, caribou, moose and deer. This week we will be having a reindeer lunch. I'll cover the tables with paper for them to draw on and decorate (with deer) for our lunch, and we'll make reindeer sandwiches and eat cut up vegetables."

### **Rudolph Rhyme Book**

Make a page for each pair of lines with a picture of Rudolph without his famous nose. Laminate the pages and place Velcro where the nose should be. Cut out coloured circles (blue, yellow, green, black, pink and red.) and laminate them for the noses. Put Velcro on these, as well. Read the text and choose the correct nose to apply.

Rudolph! Rudolph! What will you do?  
You can't guide Santa if your nose is blue!  
Rudolph! Rudolph! You're such a funny fellow.  
Who will know it's you if your nose is yellow?  
Rudolph! Rudolph! Your way cannot be seen  
Through the wintry winter weather if your nose is green!  
Rudolph! Rudolph! Santa has his sack.  
But you're not ready if your nose is black!  
Rudolph! Rudolph! Santa gave a wink.  
But what will Santa think if your nose is pink?  
Rudolph! Rudolph! The children are in bed.  
And now we know you're ready, 'cause your nose is red!



### **Reindeer Booklets**

Fold a 9" square of brown construction paper in half diagonally. Trace children's hands and cut out. Glue at the fold to make antlers. Draw eyes with a black crayon and use red glitter for the nose. Staple triangle-shaped paper inside to form a booklet. Have children draw pictures of reindeer facts.

### **Decorate Your Classroom**

"Make huge candy canes using bulletin board paper and place them equally down the hall. Then make paper chains out of red, green and loop them across the hall (up towards the ceiling). You could turn each classroom into a candy cane house. Use red paper plates for the roof and red and white striped plates (children make them) for the sides of the 'house'. Cover the door with paper."

"You could take red butcher paper and white butcher paper and twist long strips of it and then wrap the strips together to make candy canes. You could staple these on each side of every door."

"Sticking with a red and white theme, you could also make lots of red and white chains to drape around doors, along walls, etc. You could cut cane shapes from white paper and have kids paint the stripes on. A bulletin board idea might be to use red and white pipe cleaners twisted together and bent over to form candy canes. Then put two together with the hooks at the top and touching at the bottom to form a heart shape. Glue these to a backing and put each child's picture inside (Hey, this would make a great family Christmas present! I think I'll do this - we just got strips of pictures for the kids last week!) You could also put Christmas stickers in the middle, or have kids draw pictures.

"For a bulletin board I covered 8 inch squares of poster board with gift wrap of various types. Then I added a Christmas bow and in the middle placed a picture of the child. In each of the four corners we placed an ornament cut from the Ellison machine with a talent that each child has - example - 'I can read really well' or 'I can draw really great rockets' written on each one. In the middle of the board, I attached an empty wrapped box to make it have a 3D component - Caption - 'We All Have Wonderful Gifts To Share'"

### **Christmas Fund Raising**

"During our BIG Christmas fund raiser....we have baskets from each class that are bid on during a silent auction. They bring in a lot of dollars! Each class has a theme.....then parents send in items for the baskets, (classrooms with 100% participation get an ice cream party). Everyone donates because you can send a little item or large ones). The baskets are donated also (other containers work too...big plastic storage bins, etc.) They are then displayed beautifully, covered with cellophane, etc. We just had our auction with a carnival, the baskets and other silent auction items were displayed in the auditorium. Some ideas for themes.....Candle Basket, Gardening (these were in plastic wheelbarrows), gifts for Mom (gift certificate, lotion etc.), stationary (lots of stickers, stamps), kitchen, baking, arts and crafts, (these are big sellers), chocolate lovers, bath and beauty, Italian (pasta, oils, etc.), automotive...(this one went for over \$200!). I think the least went for around \$65. And it was all from donations for the school."



### **Carols and Cookies**

"We have changed the Poetry and Pies celebration that many of you do at Thanksgiving to a 'Carols and Cookies' celebration for the Christmas season. The parents are invited, and the children sing carols and Christmas songs, recite poetry, etc. Then the children serve cookies and juice to the visitors. This year we will be doing this program on the day before vacation in our room. Then we'll be able to take down the decorations and have them ready for the kids to take home on our last day."

### **Count-Down to Christmas**

"We will make our countdown chains. The top of the chain has the following printed on a red bell:

This is the longest  
Time of the year  
Seems as though old Santa  
Will never appear.  
How many days till Christmas?  
It's mighty hard to count.  
So this little chain will tell you  
The exact amount.

How many days 'til Christmas?  
Here's a way to tell.  
Take off one link each night  
Before the sandman works his spell.  
And Christmas Eve will be here  
By the time you reach the bell!  
Ho! Ho! Ho!



"The children will make chains out of green and white construction paper strips (6 in. long by 1 inch wide). They put their chain together as a pattern (AB or ABB or AABB). Each chain must have 24 links. I staple the chain to the bell and the children take it home that day. We also have one that we keep in the classroom."

### **A Christmas Reading Incentive**

Make a bulletin board with the North Pole at the top. Have train tracks winding back and forth across the board and ending up at Santa's workshop. Move an engine up the track with each book (or 10 books) read. See if the children can get to the top before the holiday. (Of course, you will see that they do!) Have a special treat when the train engine reaches the top of the hill.



## Read About Christmas

Your school library will have dozens of stories about the Christmas season. Make a chart of the titles as you read them to the class, and see how many you read in the month. Discuss favourites and graph favourite stories. Have each child draw a poster to advertise his/her favourite story, and write a sentence or two about it (if they are capable - otherwise dictate sentences to an adult to write.)

### Little Elf, Little Elf

*A Christmas book about the 5 senses.*

*Illustrated by \_\_\_\_\_*

Little Elf, Little Elf,  
What do you see?  
I see shimmering lights  
on the Christmas tree.

Little Elf, Little Elf,  
What do you hear?  
I hear sleigh bells ringing  
on Santa's reindeer.



Little Elf, Little Elf,  
What do you feel?  
I feel Santa's soft beard, it feels so real.

Little Elf, Little Elf,  
What do you smell?  
I smell something in the oven, but I won't  
tell!

Little Elf, Little Elf,  
What do you eat?  
I eat candy canes so crunchy and sweet!

Merry Christmas from Little Elf

### "I Can Sense Christmas Is Coming"

Teach the 5 senses and make individual books:

#### **I can smell Christmas.**

Cut a gingerbread boy from fine sandpaper. Rub it with a cinnamon stick and glue it to the page. Or - cut a gingerbread boy from brown paper and spray with cinnamon room freshener.

#### **I can touch Christmas.**

Have a picture of Santa's face and cover the beard with cottonballs or cotton batting.

#### **I can hear Christmas.**

Have a picture of a bell. Tie thin ribbon through a tiny bell and glue the ribbon behind the bell so the little one is the clangor for the pictured bell.

#### **I can see Christmas.**

Make a tree light and edge it with glitter. Or - make a candle and have glitter on the flame.

#### **I can taste Christmas.**

Glue in a small candycane.

Staple garland around your bulletin boards for a beautiful Christmas effect!

### Make a Reindeer Snack

Cut a slice of whole wheat bread diagonally and use half. Spread it with peanut butter. Add 2 raisin eyes, a red candy nose (M&M) and pretzel antlers. Enjoy!



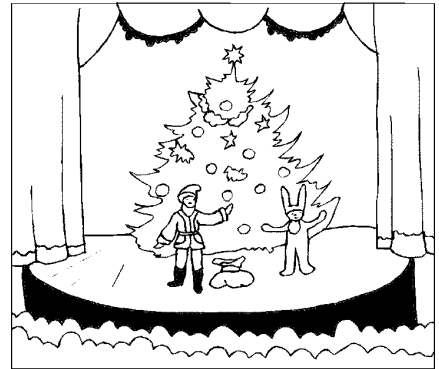


# Christmas Concerts

## Opening the Concert

Merry Christmas and how do you do! (1)  
We are all so glad to see you. (2)  
We have songs to sing, and poems to say (3)  
So wait 'til we're through, don't go away! (all)  
The others said I was too small to welcome you today. (4)  
They said I would forget the words and not know what to say. (5)  
But teacher said that she was sure though I was very small (6)  
My welcome would be big as big (7)  
So welcome to you all. (all)  
My mother thinks I'm pretty good (8)  
And Grandpa thinks I'm bright (9)  
Grandma thinks I'm perfect (10)  
And dad thinks I'm just right. (11)  
Auntie thinks I'm special. (12)  
Big brother thinks I'm grand (13)  
So just to please my family, won't you give me a good hand? (all)

*Laurie Benjamin*

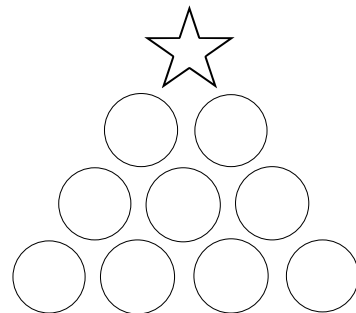


*Last year the kids made reindeer antlers on head bands and wore them while they chanted:*

8 little reindeer pulling Santa's sled  
One fell down and bumped his head  
The elves called Santa and Santa said  
'7 little reindeer can pull my sled!' (*one class member was Santa and said this line*)  
7 little reindeer pulling Santa's sled, etc.....  
1 little reindeer pulling Santa's sled  
One fell down and bumped his head  
The elves called Santa and Santa said  
'WHERE'S RUDOLPH?'

## **The Christmas Tree**

"The children come onto the stage and form a tree shape, with the front row sitting on the floor, the next row sitting on a bench or chairs, the third row standing, and one child standing on a chair, the highest at the top of the tree. It is important that each child knows exactly where to sit or stand to form the tree shape. Each child holds a large attractive stiff cardboard tree ornament, such as a ball or a bell. The child at the top has a star. Each of these decorations has a circle or shape cut out of the centre, and cellophane of different colours is placed behind the shape. The children hold their decorations in front of them as they sing a song. When they are finished, the lights go off and every child shines a flashlight through the cellophane. The audience loves it!"



### Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Give each child a set of brown paper antlers on a headband, decorated with glitter. Sing 'Rudolph'. This can stand on its own, or you can add some acting with Santa, a Rudolph, eight reindeer and elves.

### Reindeer Rap

We fly through the night, like we know that we should,  
To bring you presents and make Santa look good.  
We want you to know that we just don't get it,  
We do all the work, while Santa gets the credit.

Chorus: Without us ... Santa's can't come ...(three times)

There's Dasher, and Dancer, and Prancer, and Vixen,  
Comet, and Cupid, and Donner, and Blitzen.  
We even have a stand-by who everyone knows,  
My name is Rudolph, with the bright red nose.

Chorus: Without us ... Santa's can't come ...(three times)

Do you know what it's like, pullin' the Claus?  
Every year he gets bigger and bigger.  
You really would think  
He might watch his figure.  
Now don't get us wrong, he's a really nice guy  
And we all do enjoy flying through the sky.  
It's just that we want the praise we deserve  
And ignoring us really takes a lot of nerve.  
So this Christmas Eve when you close your eyes tight,  
Please remember we've been flying all night.  
It isn't easy on this special date,  
We work so hard makin' Santa look great!

Chorus: Without us ... Santa's can't come ...(three times)  
... BUT WITH US ... Santa's SOMETHIN'!



### Christmas Lights

On Christmas Eve, just after dark,  
We hurry to our little park  
And join a happy crowd, to see  
The lights come on the Christmas tree.

The tree is proud and very high.  
It points a finger to the sky.  
It waits all year for this one night  
When it is dressed in jewels of light.

And now it's time to light the tree.  
The crowd is quiet as can be,  
And then the lights begin to shine.  
Red ones, blue ones, gold ones twine.

And at the top a Christmas star!  
It can be seen from near to far.  
The star that once on Christmas night  
Guided the shepherds with its light.



"In years past, when we could do a Christmas show, I always had my class memorize *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Then we added hand motions to it. It was always a big hit, a real crowd pleaser. We were the only class every year to get a standing ovation."

"We performed this last year for the PTA. We had a Frosty stand in the middle of the floor while six other kids pretended to build him while the music played in the background. They placed his black hat on and he began to dance around. Then they marched around a big area and we had a traffic cop hold up a stop sign and yell out stop. They all stopped. The kids pretty much did just what the words said. A mother made us an awesome custom. Frosty melted at the end of the story and just folded up. The kids wore scarves and hats and shed them when the song said it something about the sun being hot that day. They all waved good by when it said they waved good bye. It was a huge success. We used eight kids. One Frosty, one traffic cop and six kids dancing around and building and acting out the song. Our Frosty just wore a white choir robe and we fastened a hoola hoop in the bottom of the gown. We used velcro and put on black buttons."



#### An Opening.....

We brought you all a present  
It's not one you can keep  
You'll never find it in a store  
Or hanging from a tree  
It's not made for keeping  
You must give it right away  
So, here's a special homemade gift  
For a happy Christmas Day!

*and the kids blow a great big kiss to the audience aahhh*



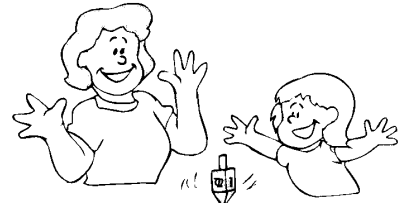
#### An Acrostic

C is for Christmas I wait for all year.  
H is for holly that brings so much cheer.  
R is for reindeer that pull Santa's sleigh.  
I is for icicles dripping all day.  
S is for Santa who seldom is seen.  
T is for tree that is lovely and green.  
M is for mistletoe, hugs, and a kiss.  
A is for angel who looks just like this.  
S is for stockings all loaded with toys, from all of the  
elves to the girls and the boys.

*We hold large letters up and perform spelling the word.*

## A Christmas Alphabet

Here I am, just to say, I hope you like our Holiday play!  
Alphabet is its name, So listen closely to our alphabet game.  
A is for angels we like to make in the snow.  
B is for burning candles that shine throughout the holiday season.  
C is for the Christmas and Chanukkah holidays we share.  
D is for dreidels that spin and spin and spin



Sing: Dreidel Song See <http://www.clayz.com/dreidel.html> for the words and music.

F is for Frosty, the snowman, a friend to all.

Sing: "Frosty the Snowman"

G is for the gifts that we receive and give to family and friends.  
H is for Hanukkah the "Festival of Lights"  
I is for ice that we slip and slide on.  
J is for the jingle bells that ring in the holidays.



Sing: "Jingle Bells"

K is for kindness we spread especially throughout the holiday cheer.  
L is for the love that we give to one another.  
M is for the menorah that's lit for eight days.  
N is for the night when Santa comes down the chimney!  
O is for the ornaments used to decorate the Christmas trees.  
P is for peace that is felt throughout the world.  
Q is for warm quilts on frosty nights.  
R is for Rudolph, the most famous reindeer of all!

Sing: Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer

S is for Santa, the man with all the toys.  
T is for the toys  
U is for under the mistletoe.  
V is for that very special day when we visit family and friends.  
W is for the white winter we all like to see.

Sing: WINTER WONDERLAND

X is for the extra special holiday season and extra good girls and boys.  
Y is for the Year 2001 - a new year!  
Z is for zippers on warm winter coats.



# **Chinese New Year**

Gung Hay Fat Choy! This is the Chinese greeting for the New Year celebrated in the beginning of the year. Chinese New Year is the second New Moon after the winter solstice. From ancient times to the present, Chinese people have been welcoming in the New Year and chasing away the evil spirits by setting off firecrackers. Large crowds gather in the streets all around the world where Chinese have settled. A huge cloth dragon sways back and forth around the street corners, chasing a red sunball or a white pearl-ball. Following the dragon are people playing drums and gongs, and lion dancers with paper lion heads on sticks. As they dance, store and business owners come outside to give them money.

Chinese New Year is a very old celebration, a time for repaying debts, enjoying feasts, giving 'red envelopes' of lucky money to friends and relatives, and remembering ancestors. There are many old and delightful ancient superstitions surrounding this holiday.

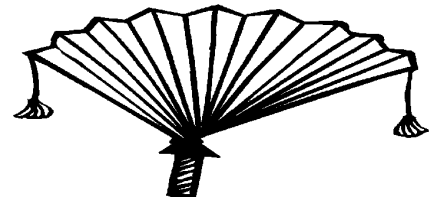
Celebrated on the first day of the Chinese Lunar Calendar, this is the most important annual festival for the Chinese community. Each year is named after one of the 12 animals according to the Chinese Zodiac. Houses are cleaned and decorated to prepare for the big day. Debts are settled, prayers and offerings are made. New clothes are bought and foods are prepared.

Family members from far come back for the gathering. New Year cards are sent between family and friends. A reunion dinner for the family is held on the eve of the New Year. Bad language and unpleasant topics are discouraged.

There are lion dances and small fire works. Red paper showing Chinese characters of prosperity and wealth are pasted either in front or inside the house. Red packets containing money are given out to children and the elderly. The New Year celebration lasts for fifteen days with the concentration on the first three days.

## **Make a Chinese fan:**

Take a piece of legal photocopy paper. Draw a picture of a dragon - the Chinese dragon does not have wings or breather smoke or fire. He has five toes on each foot. When the picture and the entire paper has been coloured (both sides preferably), show the children how to do the fan fold: fold over 1 - 2 cm., then back 1 - 2 cm., over 1 - 2 cm., back 1 - 2 cm. until you reach the other end. Secure the bottom of the fan with a rubber band or staple it.



## **Good luck envelopes**

The Chinese people have a tradition of giving good luck envelopes at the New Year. The envelopes are red, for this is the colour of good luck. Put red slips of paper with Chinese characters wishing good luck, and as money is usually put in these envelopes, you could add chocolate covered coins.

## **Other Chinese New Year activities**

- Cook a Chinese meal and eat it with chopsticks.
- Read 'Ping' or other Chinese stories.
- Make paper lanterns.
- Make fortune cookies.
- Make a big dragon. Make the head from a box and the children can paint it. Use butcher paper and crepe paper strips for the tail. Parade around the classroom and the school. Other children can play drums as the dragon parades.

### Chinese New Year

The dragon roars,  
He stamps his feet!  
He thunders up  
And down my street!  
But I won't worry  
Or shake with fear ...  
Because I know  
It's Chinese New Year!

So, instead -  
I'll shout with joy,  
"Happy New Year!  
Gung Hay Fat Choy!"  
*Patti Rita*

### Lion Dance Song (sung to *Mary Had a Little Lamb*)

See the lion dance and prance,  
Dance and prance, dance and prance.  
See the lion dance and prance  
On Chinese New Year's Day.

Hear the firecrackers pop,  
Pop, pop, pop; pop, pop, pop,  
Hear the firecrackers pop,  
On Chinese New Year's Day.

### Chinese Hello Song (sung to *The Farmer in the Dell*)

Let's wave and say 'Ni hao (nee how),'  
Let's wave and say 'Ni hao.'  
Let's say 'hello' to all our friends,  
Let's wave and say 'ni hao.'

"We will have guest speakers and martial arts demonstrations. We will have a parade with our lanterns and lion dancers and eat Chinese food.

We write poems to go in our yearbook:

Chinese New Year is ..... Kids write 5 -ing phrases that tell about Chinese New Year then end with Gung Hay Fat Choy!"

### The Chinese New Year Song

(sung to *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*)

The Chinese New Year's coming soon,  
Sing 'Gung Hay Fat Choy!'  
And one of the years  
Is the year of the Rat, E-I-E-I-O  
With a squeak, squeak here,  
And a squeak, squeak there,  
Here a squeak, there a squeak,  
Everywhere a squeak, squeak.  
The Chinese New Year's coming soon,  
Sing 'Gung Hay Fat Choy!'

*Sing a verse of the song for each Chinese zodiac animal:*

Year of the Cow - moo, moo

Tiger - grr,grrr

Rabbit - sniff, sniff

Dragon - roar, roar

Snake - hiss, hiss

Horse - neigh, neigh

Sheep - baa, baa

Monkey - chee, chee

Rooster - cock-a-doodle

Dog - bow, wow

Pig - oink, oink

Long ago, in Han times, there was a monster whose name was Nian. This monster came once each year to a little village and scared everyone! One day, just by luck, the villagers discovered that Nian had several fears of his own. He was afraid of the colour red and even more afraid of scary loud noises!

Which explains why people in China believe the colour red signifies joy and luck, and why noise makers are rattled on Chinese New Year. At midnight, firecrackers, paper dragons, noise makers, the waving of red ribbons and banners all help to drive away any lingering evil spirits from the old year (in case Nian is still lurking about somewhere)!

Sweeping *during* Chinese New Year is very unlucky as you might sweep the new year luck right out of your house!

### Chinese Lanterns

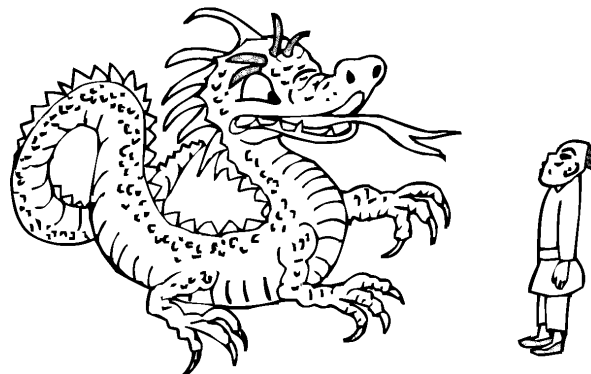
Use your ruler to measure and cut 1" off the short end of your paper. Set aside to use as the handle. Fold your paper in half lengthwise. Draw a line 1" from the end of the long edge of the paper opposite the folded edge. This will be the line where you **stop** cutting. Measure and mark lines 1" apart starting at the folded edge and moving towards the "stop cutting" line.

Cut on the marked lines up to the "stop cutting" line. Unfold the paper. Re-crease the paper in the opposite direction. This will hide any pencil marks. Match the long edges together on the lantern and use tape to hold it in place. Staple the handle to the top of the lantern. (see photo) Make as many lanterns as you wish and display them around your home. If you wish, add glue, glitter, sequins or other things to decorate your lanterns.

### A Dragon Head

"Last year we made the most wonderful dragon head out of paper mache. Then we had the body of the dragon. Our musical instruments were decorated. We had a parade through the school in the afternoon and then returned to the room for a Chinese lunch. We had fried rice, chow mein noodles and fortune cookies. The kids each got a red envelope containing play money for luck. They cleaned their desks to day to start the new year fresh. They learned to count to ten and to make the symbols. They did addition and subtraction facts using the symbols. We did a venn diagram comparing Little Red Riding Hood and the Chinese version of a similar story. They made masks and head pieces. They have written about what they wish for and they wrote facts about China."

1	one	yee
2	two	uhr
3	three	sahn
4	four	suh
5	five	woo
6	six	lyo
7	seven	chee
8	eight	bah
9	nine	jo
10	ten	shur



### A Chinese Dragon

"For Chinese New Year we make a New Years Dragon by taking a medium size cardboard box (as the head) and cover it with red paper, then take a small box and cover it (snout of the dragon) attach to the medium box and decorate with eyes (coloured paper plate), mouth (small bowl paper plate) with red streamer hanging down for fire, then add a long piece of red construction paper for the tail. Place it on the floor and let the children colour and decorate with glue and place glitter, feathers, yarn, streamers and etc. all over the tail. After it has dried hang on wall or ceiling."

### The Lion Dance

"I made a big dragon/lion to do the lion dance with the kids. We didn't put sides on it, we used ribbons so they could see where they were going. The head was a big box all papermached up - really gaudy! We took the thing into the down town and visited the merchants along the main street. We yelled "Gung Hey Fat Choy!" and blew football stadium horns and twirled New Years noisemakers.....It is suppose to bring prosperity so the merchants really enjoyed it. So did the kids."

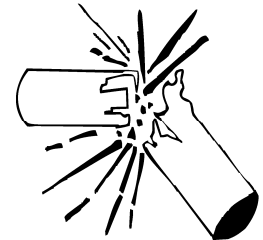
### **The Dragon for the Dragon Parade**

"Take a cardboard box about the size of a liquor box. Have the children paint all sides of it using a lot of red paint, and some other bright colours like yellow and gold paint. After it has dried begin using foils, feathers, streamers, etc., to make the dragon's face. In most of the pictures you will notice that his eyes are huge and that he is almost smiling, so he doesn't frighten the children. I used big styrofoam balls for the eyes. Every child is going to need to be in this parade. If you have plenty of boxes then each child can decorate their own box or large pieces of poster board works just as well. I had the children decorate their poster boards with gay colours and we hung streamers around the sides. During the parade, one child holds the dragon's face over his head, while the other children hold their poster boards over their heads and act like the tail. I found that with young children, that everyone wanted to be the head, so we took turns being heads and tails. Announce to your other classes that there will be a parade and turn on some Chinese music or make your own and you have a celebration! We followed this parade by having a simple rice and chicken dish complete with chop sticks and fortune cookies for snack. The children adapted to the chop sticks faster than most adults.

"Other art projects can include making the Chinese lanterns out of red construction paper and lots of foil stars, to be hung around the classroom. Scrolls are made with construction paper as well. Have the children draw a picture of what they like doing with their families. A teacher can write the words to go with the illustrations. I used left over chop sticks to help roll the scrolls up. I taped the pictures , to the chop stick at the top of the page and rolled it down and tied it with a piece of yarn.

### **Firecrackers and the Chinese New Year**

Happy New Year! In China as well as in Chinese communities in the west, the Chinese New Year is always associated with fire crackers. Chinatowns in Canada are no exception. Legend has it that by setting off fire crackers, 'evil energy' will be driven away, and peace and good fortune can be attained. Below is a version of a story about how the fire cracker started being used as a New Year's tradition:



Once upon a time, a long, long time ago in ancient China, there lived a monster who lived in the mountains of a bamboo forest. This monster had the shape of a human, but only had one leg. Even though it only had one leg, it was stronger, faster, and more agile than any of the villagers. It stayed in the deep forest during the year. Towards the end of the year and the beginning of the new year, it would come out for food. When it did, it destroyed the villages, injured the villagers, and took away the live stock and grain stored for the winter. This left the villagers insufficient food for the winter and caused many hardships. The villagers, on numerous occasions, attempted to capture the monster but were unsuccessful. Just as everyone was beginning to give up hope, a strange event happened.

One year, shortly after the New Year, the monster did not attack. The villagers were happy and thought that the monster might have left the area. They began to prepare for a New Year celebration. Because there was an abundance of bamboo sticks in the mountains, the villagers used them as the primary source of fuel for cooking and for keeping warm. As everyone was putting more bamboo sticks in the fire for the celebration, the monster seemingly jumped out of the night from nowhere. As everyone was scared and shocked by the sudden appearance of the monster, the bamboo sticks began to crackle. The expansion of air in between the bamboo joints made a series of loud crackling sounds along with the blazing fire. When the monster saw this strange occurrence, it was scared senseless and ran back to the forest. From that time forward, during the New Year, the villagers always burned bamboo sticks to make the crackling sound to keep the monster away and to ask for a peaceful year. Today, burning bamboo sticks has been replaced by fire crackers made in the shape of bamboo sticks. However, the Chinese term *baozhu*, meaning exploding bamboo stick, is still used to refer to fire crackers.



"I used the following books:

Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year - Kate Waters

The Five Chinese Brothers - Bishop

Lon PoPo - Ed Young (good for comparing this version of Little Red Riding Hood to the traditional one)

Tikki Tikki Tembo - Arlene Mosel

Two of Everything - Lily Toy Hong (I love this book!)

"I had a timeline with the year numbers and which animal they were. The kids loved seeing which animal year they were born in. We learned what each animal meant.

Since the festivities begin with housecleaning - 'sweeping out the old and welcoming in the new' - this was a good time to clean up the room.

Since the Chinese believe that red (especially) and orange are colours of joy and that apples mean good luck, you could have a treat of apples and oranges.

We attached 3 foot crepe paper streamers to pencils and practiced Chinese ribbon dancing (big circles, little circles, figure 8's).

We made Chinese lanterns: The Lantern Festival is the finale of the 15-day celebration. Take a 9 x 12" piece of red construction paper. Fold it in half, the hotdog way. Cut slits through the folded edge, stopping one inch from the top. Unfold paper and glue edges so that slits hang vertically. Attach a paper handle. We took our lanterns and streamers outside and paraded. For 30 seconds they were allowed to make as much noise as possible - chasing away the bad spirits."

Have Chinese food and try eating with chopsticks. Have fortune cookies.

Make a dragon head with eye holes from a cardboard box. Decorate it with bright coloured paper and attach a length of butcher paper behind, strengthened by lengths of clear packing tape. Attach streamers of crepe paper. Some children go under the dragon (taking turns being the head) and move up and down so his body goes in humps. Beat sticks together or make drums and play a rhythm for the dragon dance. The rest of the class can do a ribbon dance with the streamers on the end of the pencils.



# Groundhog Day



## Activities:

- Use a lamp and paper and trace shadows or go out in the sunshine.
- Make groundhogs out of brown play dough.
- Make a groundhog puppet using a lunch-size paper bag.
- Use a paper plate to make a groundhog mask.
- Do you know what happens on Groundhog Day?
- Go outside and run around and stomp your feet to try to wake up the groundhog.
- Starting today, make a weather graph to see what really happens.
- On a calendar, count how many days there are until the first day of Spring.
- Learn more about groundhogs and their habitat.
- Try playing Shadow Tag with a group of friends.

There's only one day the whole long year,  
That I hope and pray the sun won't appear.  
The second of February, you all know,  
The ground hog goes searching for his shadow.  
If he should find it, the story is told,  
We'll have six more weeks of winter's cold.  
But if it's cloudy, his shadow's not there.  
There'll soon be warm weather and days will be fair.  
So please, Mr. Sun, for just this one day,  
Find a big dark cloud - and stay away!

## Groundhog, Groundhog

Groundhog, Groundhog, popping up today.  
Groundhog, Groundhog, can you play?  
If you see your shadow, hide away.  
If there is no shadow, you can stay.  
Groundhog, Groundhog, popping up today.  
Groundhog, Groundhog, can you play?

## Do a 'Groundhog Daze' Theme

- Your students can research the groundhog and find out what it eats, where it lives, what type of animal group it belongs to, etc., and write a 'Big Book' with what they have discovered.
- Research the legend and discuss why the legend makes sense.
- Learn about Wiarton Willie. Go to: [www.wiarton-willie.org/](http://www.wiarton-willie.org/)
- Learn about weather patterns at this time of year.
- Discuss protecting animal environments.
- Make a class chart of predictions whether or not the groundhog will see his shadow.
- How big is a groundhog? Find out and then draw him full size. Use measurement skills.
- Do a science unit on shadows. Measure and record shadow length. Have children go outside several times each day to measure their shadows. Record and discuss why they are longer or shorter at certain times.
- Why are shadows from the sun long at this time of year?
- Research and present reports on other animals that hibernate during the winter.
- Brainstorm words to describe the groundhog and the weather on Feb. 2.
- Write about how the groundhog feels on February 2.
- Write an imaginary interview with Wiarton Willie.
- Write a class story about what the groundhog might be doing in that hole all winter long if he is not hibernating.
- Memorize and do choral speaking of groundhog day poems.

- Learn the vocabulary in the research.
- Create a winter scene, with sky, trees, snow and the groundhog's den below ground.
- Construct a model groundhog den.
- Play shadow tag.
- Discuss other weather legends and how you think they might have started.
- Go to [www.angelfire.com/ma/1stGrade/groundhog.html](http://www.angelfire.com/ma/1stGrade/groundhog.html) for a list of other legends.



### **Predicting**

Divide a bulletin board in half. Decorate one side with a winter scene, and the other side with a spring scene. Ask students to predict whether there will be six more weeks of winter or whether spring will come early. Have each student cut out either a snowflake if winter will stay or a spring flower if spring will come. Put his/her name on and then staple this prediction to the appropriate side of the bulletin board. Have students watch the national news on Groundhog Day to find out what happens when Wiarton Willie makes his annual appearance. Did their predictions match the groundhog's? Then ask a different student each day to record the weather in a class weather log for the next six weeks to see if the groundhog was right.

Make a large mural of an underground area including such details as tree roots, rocks, and animal burrows and tunnels. Study the illustrations in the book, *Under Your Feet*, by Joanna Ryder, for ideas. Make a small groundhog to place on the mural. Label all the items found in the mural."

Discuss what hibernation means. Talk about animals that hibernate during the winter.

Write a 'Dear Mr. Groundhog' letter. Tell the groundhog why you do or do not want him to see his shadow. Ask him questions about himself, such as how he became groundhog for groundhog day.

Make a chart listing good things and not so things about having six more weeks of winter.

### **Groundhog Puppets**

"Have each child make a paper or cardboard groundhog stick puppet with a popsicle stick, or for larger ones use a ruler. Attach a cardboard picture of the groundhog to the stick or ruler. First thing in the morning, carefully stick the stick into the ground so that the groundhog is standing up. Then measure the shadows at 1 hour intervals throughout the day. Chart shadow lengths. Then at the end of the day, discuss why the lengths and directions of shadows varied."



"Using brown construction paper, cut groundhog faces about 1 1/2 inch across. Spread glue on face and attach thin whisps of cotton to represent fur. Glue on paper eyes, nose and mouth. Attach to a popsicle stick. Cut a slit in the bottom of a small paper cup and have the children push the bottom of the stick into it. Show the children how to make the groundhog appear and disappear.

### Will the Groundhog See His Shadow?

"You will need a paper plate, groundhog, popsicle stick, and crayons.

"Have the children colour the bottom of the paper plate brown. Cut a slit into the plate. Photocopy a groundhog picture to the appropriate size. Colour the ground hog and attach him to the stick and let him pop up out from the bottom of the plate. Take these outside on Feb. 2 and let the kids see if their groundhog sees his shadow."

### Here's a Little Groundhog

Here's a little groundhog furry and brown

He's coming up to look around.

If he sees his shadow, down he'll go

Then six more weeks of winter, OH NO!



### Other Groundhog Activities

1. Pop-up groundhog. Wrap a paper cup in green construction paper. Add fake grass or moss to the edge of the cup. Have each student make a small groundhog and glue him to a popsicle stick. Punch a hole in the bottom of the cup. The children can move the groundhog up and down in and out of his hole.
2. Write a class story about what the groundhog might be doing in that hole all winter long if he is not hibernating.
3. Have children go outside several times each day to measure their shadows. Record and discuss why it is longer or shorter at certain times.
4. Make a class chart of predictions whether or not the groundhog will see his shadow.
5. Research and present reports on other animals that hibernate during the winter.
6. Make a Groundhog Day mobile. You will need a hanger and string. Have each child draw a picture of a groundhog, something they like to do in the winter, something they like to do in the spring, a sun and a cloud. This makes a cute mobile.
7. Learn about Wiarton Willie. Go to: <http://www.wiarton-willie.org/>

### If I Were A Groundhog

Have half the children write a story and draw pictures of what they would do if they were groundhogs and saw their shadows. The other half of the class writes and draws of what they would do if they were groundhogs and didn't see their shadows. Share the stories.

### Shadows



#### **Shadow Hunt:**

Go outside and look for shadows. Find shadows of buildings, play structures, trees, etc.

#### **Shadow Trace:**

Trace your own shadow with sidewalk chalk. Trace other objects. Trace on paper at different times of the day. Why are the shadows different lengths?

#### **Finger Shadows:**

Inside, make shadow puppets with hands. What happens as the hands are closer to the wall or closer to the light? Cut out animal and people shapes from light weight cardboard and glue them to a popsicle stick. Shine a flashlight on them in a dark room to make a shadow puppet story on the wall.

### Light Shadows or Dark Shadows:

To do this experiment, you will need a darkened room, a bright flashlight and things to test, such as: a ball, glass measuring cup, a clear plastic cup, a block, and a glass babyfood jar. You might also want to test an animal toy, pencil, a book and various kinds of paper and cloth. Choose an object such as a ball. Predict whether it will make a light shadow or a dark shadow. Make the classroom dark and shine a flashlight on the object. Have a chart to record your observations by drawing a picture of the object under the word Light or Dark. Why do some objects give us a dark shadow and some a light shadow?



### Shadow Tag:

"When it is very sunny and there are clear shadows we often go outdoors and play 'Shadow Tag'. One person is it, of course, and he/she tries to tag someone by stepping on their shadow. The others try to protect their shadow. (If they run into a shady place they can only stay there a little while.) There is lots of laughter as they try to catch shadows."

After explaining and discussing shadows, use a projector to create a child's silhouette on a piece of black paper. Trace it with a white crayon or chalk. Cut out and mount on contrasting paper. This makes a nice keepsake for parents. Children love to see what they look like in profile!

Have each child make a paper or cardboard groundhog stick puppet with a Popsicle stick. First thing in the morning, carefully place the stick into the ground (or the snow) so that the groundhog is standing up. Then measure the shadows at one hour intervals throughout the day. Chart shadow lengths. At the end of the day, discuss why the lengths and directions of shadows varied.

Let the children play shadow tag on a sunny **day**. Choose a child to be 'it'. Have 'it' try to step on another child's shadow. When 'it' steps on someone's shadow, that child becomes the next 'it'.

### Sidewalk Shadows

"f the sun is shining on Groundhog Day (and there is no snow on the ground) take the children outdoors to a large paved area (we use the end of our parking lot where there is no traffic during the day). Children work with partners. One child 'poses' while the partner traces his shadow on the pavement with a piece of sidewalk chalk; then they reverse roles. Some children have trouble with the concept that the line they are following is the edge of the shadow, but once you point this out to them, they do well. Some children also have trouble standing still long enough but they usually will when they see that they will not have a picture if they keep moving. It helps to allow them to experiment with what their shadow can do before you do the drawing activity. If time and interest allow, the children like to colour in the outline of their shadow, draw facial features, clothes, etc. Be sure to have each child write his name by his picture. Remember to have someone trace your shadow, too!"

### Learn About Shadows

A shadow is an image cast by an object blocking light. A shadow forms when light hits an opaque object. An opaque object is anything that doesn't let light through, like a groundhog, a brick wall, a tree, a dog or even you. The most familiar shadow is your own shadow, since it follows you everywhere you go. The most useful use of shadows are sundials.

A perfect shadow will produce a silhouette. This is where the outline of the shadow matches perfectly the outline of the object. A silhouette is generally described as a drawing or picture of the outline of something filled in with a dark colour. The person who started this form of portrait was named Silhouette.

Project #1: Brainstorm things that are transparent and things that are opaque.

Project #2: Make animal shadows with your hand between a lamp and a white wall. Try making different type of animals using one or both hands. You could make a shadow puppet show with friends or play a game making your friends attempt to name your shadow animal. You will be able to observe that the shadows you make grow bigger the closer your hand is to the light. Another thing to observe is the type of shadows you make depends on your source of light. If your source of light is a frosted light bulb, then the shadow will be grey and blurred. If your source of light is a clear light bulb, then the shadow will be black and sharp. If your source of light is coloured, then the shadow will be coloured also.

Project #3:

Try watching the shadow formed by a tall object (such as a pole or tree) outside. You will be able to determine not only the time of day but also the time of year. In the morning the sun is in the east, you will find the shadow on the west side of the object. The shadow is at its shortest midway between sunrise and sunset, when the sun is shining down from almost overhead of the object. In the afternoon the sun is in the west, you will find the shadow on the east side of the object. Shadows also vary at different times of the year. At midday in winter the sun is lower in the sky than at midday in summer, and forms a longer shadow.

Hint: Sometimes it is difficult to remember where east or west is. Try this: draw a cross '+' then place a N on top for North and a S on the bottom for south. Then place the word 'WE', the W on the left side of the cross for west and the E on the right side of the cross for east. Just remember that in direction there is the word "WE".

### Groundhog Day

It's the second of February  
The air's very cold.  
When something unusual  
Happens, I'm told.

Deep in his burrow  
Down under the ground  
The groundhog is waking.  
He looks all around.

It's dark in his burrow  
Down under the snow.  
"Is winter over?"  
He wants to know.

He follows his tunnel  
Up to the light.  
He digs through the snow  
Soft, fluffy and white.



He pokes his nose out  
Near the roots of a tree.  
He looks all about -  
What will he see?

If the sun is shining  
When he looks around  
He'll see his shadow  
In front, on the ground.

His shadow will give him  
A horrible scare!  
He'll dash back down  
To his deep dark lair.

He'll be so frightened  
He'll scare spring away  
For six long, long weeks  
It will stay cold, they say.

But, if on this day  
There are clouds in the sky  
And the sun is hidden  
From his brown eye,

There will be no shadow  
To scare him away.  
He'll think it is spring  
And it's time to play.

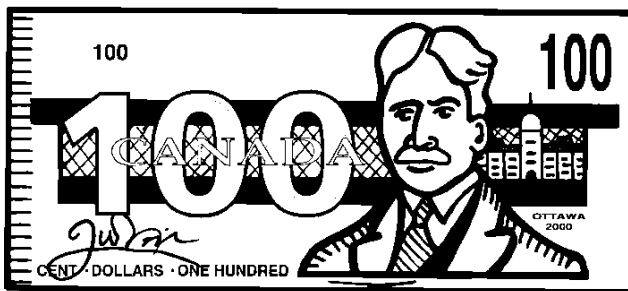
What people say  
Is that spring is now here!  
The groundhog is up  
And he's full of good cheer.

So on February second  
We look skyward a lot.  
Will the groundhog see  
His shadow or not?

*Jean Roberts*

# 100 Day

Can you believe it?  
Aren't you amazed  
We've been in school  
100 days!



## 100 Objects

"I ask the children to bring in 100 items on a theme. The objects are all on one subject, but not all the same. They might be hair scrunchies, rocks, or writing tools. I have a little worksheet they do to compare and answer questions about the different collections. We also go into the multipurpose room and line up all of the collections to see whose is the longest, shortest, etc. One teacher gives a prize for the 'most unusual' and the kids vote. We have had 100 guppies, 100 bars of soap, one child had 100 braids and bows in her hair."

## 100 Day Math

- Estimate 100. Fill three clear plastic jars with the same item - such as M & M's, popcorn, small marshmallows, etc. One jar should have less than 100, one more than 100 and one exactly 100. Label the jars A, B, and C. Have the children make an estimate of which jar has 100. Graph the answers using the children's names.
- How long is 100 minutes? How long is 100 seconds? Set a timer or stop-watch so the children can see. Predict what you can do in 100 seconds and then see if it can be done.
- Discuss 100 hours. We know how long 100 days is!

"I took a very large piece of butcher paper and taped it to the wall. I wrote, 'What is the length of 100 centimetres?' on the paper. We looked at our rulers to see what one centimetre was. I showed them that a button on a shirt and a fingernail were about the same size. Then, they came up to the butcher paper, without their ruler, and using their fingers, 'measured up to what they believed was 100 centimetres. This was a good activity to use their powers of concentration with counting!"

- We filled in a 100's chart and coloured blocks by # so when they finished it read '100'.
- We had each child bring in 100 snacks in a Ziplock bag. We counted and sorted 10 rows of 10. 'Eat 10... how many are left', etc...
- We counted 100 footsteps in the hallway and marked the length.
- Probability - Partner up the kids and give each pair a penny. They flip the coin 100 times and tally how many times it lands on head and how many on tails.

"I had 100 helium balloons delivered to the classroom. They were in 10 different colours. We sorted them by colour and counted by 10's to make sure it really totalled 100. They made the classroom feel festive and the children got to take a balloon (or two) home. I have done this for a few years so now parents actually volunteer to pay for the balloons and sometimes even do the delivery as well."



"I have a 100 scavenger hunt which is a huge success every year. I write numbers 1-100 on round coloured stickers (red, green, yellow, and blue) and hide them all around the room. Each child takes crayons in the colours above and fills in a 100 grid with the appropriate colour as they found the number. They leave the numbers where they find them for the other children. You can do this activity in pairs or groups."

Each child can 'measure' how far 100 steps would take them, and then taped a footprint with the name and 100 on it.

"Make a 100 chart, blocks big enough for a Kiss to fit in it, and number each block up to 100. Take 100 Hershey Kisses, the red and silver ones, and stick dots the bottoms of them, numbering them from 1 to 100. Red ones are the even numbers, silver ones are the odd numbers. Hide the Kisses around the room. Send the kids on a hunt around the room to find them and as they do have them match the number on the bottom of the kiss to the number on the chart. As the kids complete the chart they will start seeing that the reds are the even numbers and silver are odd. They can see the colour pattern of the chart. We counted to 100 by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's as the kids moved the kisses to count. After all that was done, we discussed how many kisses each member of the class would get if we divided the kisses up evenly. We did and then had a heavenly time eating them. I always do this activity and the kids have a great time too."

## **100 Day Language Arts**

- Try writing your name 100 times.
- Brainstorm 100 ways to be a good friend, 100 nice things to say. Write them on a chart.
- Can you think of 100 animals?
- Can you think of 100 things to eat?
- Make posters for each child entitled 100 Words \_\_\_\_ can read. The children cut out words they could read from newspapers and magazines. They have to read them you before gluing them on the poster.
- We read 100 stories. Each child had to read 4 and put their name of the board in a large heart when they finished.

## **100 Day Ideas**

- Place an oval over a 100 bill and photocopied it - one for each child. Then place a head photo of each child on a bill.
- Be absolutely quiet for 100 seconds.
- Make a panel for a quilt with 100 items stamped or drawn on each person's panel. Then they are put up on a bulletin board together like a quilt.
- My principal makes a speech with exactly 100 words.
- Make a 'living 100' on the playground. Take a picture.
- Have 2 little chocolate covered donuts ('zeros') from the grocery store (small, 3-4" diameter)
- In the afternoon, for Math we play the Counting game 5-10-15....100. Each child that says 100 gets a Life Saver ('Zero') and sits down - until everyone gets one.
- Make the yarn and 100 bead necklaces - we wear them all day.
- Colour a worksheet with 100 and little items in the numbers that added up to 100.





# 100

"We did an activity I call *The 100 Doodleloop*. It is easier for you to see what we did than to explain, so check out the website.

<http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/100day>

Discuss possible pictures that can be made from 100. Draw for 10 minutes. Write for 10 minutes - 5 minutes to finish up. Share."

"On our 100th day, Grade One and Two teachers combined to have a full day of learning. We moved our classes around every thirty minutes, as we taught the same lesson seven times! (Much less personal planning!) Next year we have decided we will break it up and do it for two mornings. It was a wonderful day, and our teachers did the following:

- I had three poems on poster size, one which was about counting to 100 in different ways (we choral read the poems). Then we made a 100 hat by stamping 100 times on a cut out 100 that we glued on a headband strip.
- One teacher took seven different stories (like *The Wolf's Chicken Stew*) and read one to each class, then the class made a huge 100 mural of the story (for the stew story, she had a wolf drawn on a paper, and the kids drew 100 chicks to glue onto the mural).
- One teacher worked on a book about money and the class drew a 100 dollar bill (after looking at one she brought!)
- One teacher had the class work on a list of 100 words that they could (as a class) spell.
- One teacher worked on 100 puzzle groups, incorporating time by seeing how many pieces they could put together in 100 seconds.

At the end of the day, we took cookies, individually iced them, put one Hot Tamale and two Gummi Life Savers on the top, took them outside to eat with a bottle of juice, and had a great recess during an unusually warm day in February."

- "As 100 Day falls near Valentine's Day, we work together on a chart titled '100 Things We Love'.
- "I make a big 100 on two sheets of bulletin board paper taped together to make it taller. I cut out the centre on the zero in the middle and decorate the number with 100 stickers or 100 sponge paint stamps. Then I hang it in front of my door. We get to walk through the 100 for a couple of days."
- "We collected 100 cans of non-perishable food and donated them to the local food bank. We brainstormed 100 reasons why we LOVE school!"

On 100 Day we have centers:

1. make a necklace with 100 cheerios and frootloops (9 cheerios and one frootloop, repeat until they get to 100).
2. put together a 100 piece puzzle
3. on a blank 100 grid, print name over and over again, count how many times printed name
4. make a structure or design with 100 blocks, lego, etc.
5. with paper coins, find different ways to make 100 cents, paste onto paper
6. dot to dot (goes to 100)
7. have cards numbered 1 to 100, kids put them in order
8. with playdough, make 100 cookies



- Using a Lite Brite, create a design with 100 lights.
- Students write a 'googol'. That is the number 1 followed by 100 zeroes. (This is a real number.) Use adding machine paper for this.
- Students work a 100 piece puzzle.
- Have a number scavenger hunt. Teacher writes numbers 1 to 100 on coloured circle stickers. Place them randomly throughout the room, or on a poster board at a center. Each child uses a hundred chart and colours each number the corresponding colour of the sticker.
- Use rubber stamps and ink pads to stamp 10 groups of 10 different stamps.
- Use a 100 grid to 'write the room' - write 100 words.
- Take a 100 footstep walk in the building, then write what they saw along the way. Do a 100 mini olympics, 100 jumping jacks, sit ups, bouncing a ball. Build something with 100 blocks, tiles.

"I have used Tulip brand fabric paints. Last year I had the kids bring in clean white tee shirts and they painted 100 different coloured dots on their shirts for day 100! The night before, I wrote on each shirt 'DAY 100'. The shirts came out great and the kids really liked them. I had 12 or 15 different colours, and the kids could choose 10 colours to make 10 dots. Instead of a paint brush, we used little sponge stampers."

"100 day is so much fun. We do things all day that represent 100. Children bring 100 collections -anything they want to show and share.

- We collect 100 kids in the hallway to see how long the line is!
- We do art projects using 100 beans.
- Of course we practice writing numbers 1-100 on graph paper, or cash register tapes or any fun paper we have around.
- For writing, we write a story, If I had a hundred dollars, I would.....
- How many times can you write your name in 100 seconds?
- How many stars can you make in 100 seconds?
- How many times can you write the alphabet in 100 seconds?
- How many crackers can you eat in 100 seconds?

Play 'Race to 100'. Children get a grid numbered to 100. They play with a partner and roll a die....they colour in numbers as they go along. The first one to get to 100 is the winner."



"Have the children bring in a baggie full of 100 of something - marshmallows, M&M's, buttons, pennies, etc., that they first had to count at home with someone, then we would count it again with them during class. Whatever was edible was shared at our 100 day party. We also made crowns that they decorated and glittered a 100 on the front, then for printing we practiced making lines and circles that day."

"I will have balloons hanging from the ceiling with 100 written on them. I have ordered cupcakes for the day. We make 100 day hats the day before for the kids to wear on 100 day.

"We went outside (yes, in Feb.) and did 10 sets of different calisthenics exercises. It was fun, and the children were very tired out, too!"

"Every day I do an exercise that we start with day 10, and add a set with each 10 completed. We do a different exercise for each ten, to a music tape. I have devised the exercise until 100. After that, with each new ten we decide as a class what to add. For one of the sets we touch elbow to opposite knee. This is a developmental skill, to see who can cross over the midline. Your 'younger' kids who have trouble with this usually are slower to learn to read, etc. This is a great way to observe kids. Who can keep the beat, count out the tens, remember the sequence. And it is fun!"

How many jumping jacks can you do in 100 seconds?

### **Teachers Celebrate, too!**

- Sew 100 buttons on a big white shirt.
- Put 100 safety pins pinned in 10 rows of 10 down the front of a sweatshirt.
- Hot glue 100 googly eyes (like you use for crafts) to a hat to wear on the day.
- Paint 10 sets of 10 different things on a sweatshirt with fabric paint.
- Wear a necklace made of 100 paper clips.
- Take fabric paint and make 100 dots on a T-shirt.
- "I made myself a sweatshirt to wear on day 100. I took 100 gold safety pins and pinned them on the front, making the number '100'.

### **100 Day Poem**

We've come to school for 100 days,  
The time has just flown by,  
Five months, two seasons, and we're halfway done,  
When another surprise does arrive.  
It's the 100th day of school today,  
Let's start the day with a grin,  
For tomorrow will be 101,  
So let the celebration begin!

100th day is here. Come on - give a cheer!  
100th day is here. Hooray, hooray!  
100th day is here. Come on - join the fun!  
100th day is here. Hooray!

### **A 100th Day Song**

*(sung to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad")*

We've been working in our classroom  
For 100 days.  
We've been working in our classroom  
Working hard each day.  
Rising early in the morning.  
Bring our books and pencils, too.  
Every day we come to (school name),  
We learn something new!

### **Happy 100 Days To Us!**

*(sung while admiring cake!)*

Happy 100 days to us,  
Happy 100 days to us,  
Happy 100 days at \_\_\_\_\_ School  
Happy 100 days to us!

# 100 Day!

# Valentine's Day

## Valentine Language Arts

Now St. Valentine is here.  
We greet his birthday with a cheer.



Brainstorm the attributes of a good friend.

Print the name of everyone you love on a separate heart. Decorate each one. Make a Valentine bulletin board with all the hearts.

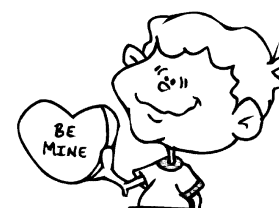
Have a mini-theme on the Post Office that ends on Valentine's Day when all the letters are delivered.

"I do a Valentine page on Valentine's Day with elbow macaroni to represent Quotation Marks. It's fun and the kids even have enough macaroni on their desk to eat it even though it is raw. Examples of sentences: Amy asked, "Will you be mine?" and they use the macaroni to put in quotation marks. It would be cute to use with contractions, too."

"I had the students record themselves reading the book 'Guess How Much I Love You'. I typed the book up leaving space for the students to illustrate. *(Note: this isn't legal, of course!)* They then each illustrated the book pages and cover and listed themselves as the illustrator. I taped a library pocket in the front for the tape and gave it to the mothers as a gift. They absolutely loved it! I heard so many compliments about it. It is just a nice thing for parents to listen to year after year and helps bring back fond memories of when the child was that age. We had practiced the reading for a week or two before I actually did the recording. I read the book to them, they read it independently and used the book for buddy reading."

## Valentine Math

"I give each child a box of conversation hearts to graph. We will also be estimating how many can fit on a paper heart and compared to how many actually do fit. We have a sheet with one hundred hearts to colour or write numbers in. You can make a graph showing the different colours of hearts, too."



"On Valentine's Day I give each child a box of the candy hearts. They have sheet with hearts drawn on it, each one labeled with a colour of the candies (pink, yellow, green, orange, etc.). They sort their candy by colour, then write how many they have of each colour on the appropriate heart. Then they have a sheet on which they graph the colours. They then have to write at least three sentences about the graph.

They pull out twenty of their hearts; colours don't matter here. They have to group them into groups of two, three, four, and five. They write how many of each group they can make and whether there are any leftovers (remainders). Then they have to add colours: (# of ) yellow + (# of ) white = \_\_\_\_\_, (# of ) pink + (# of ) yellow = \_\_\_\_\_ and so forth.

The kids really love doing Valentine Day math! Of course, they get to eat the candies when they have finished. This can be done with any type of candy. I have taken M&M's, divided a big bag into small baggies."

## **Valentine Centres**

Here are some centres for the big day:

- Decorating heart cookies (This will be our treat later in the day.)
  - Dipping pretzel rods into chocolate and coating with sprinkles
  - Doing candy heart math
  - Playing number fact bingo (on a heart bingo board using candy hearts as markers)
  - Making some sort of creature out of heart shapes. The hearts could be any size, but the creature had to be made completely out of hearts. Good examples are butterflies, people, etc.
  - Making a heart magnet. They make a frame from popsicle sticks (on which they draw little hearts). Inside the frame they paste a white piece of paper (pre-cut) and then glue red pompoms onto the paper in a heart shape. Put a little piece of magnetic tape on the back.
  - A painting center Paint a picture onto a heart shaped piece of paper.
  - Searching the newspaper for words to create a Valentine's message and pasting the words onto a heart shape.
  - A literacy center, where they read Valentine's stories and poems. Put the poems up on the wall and had a basket full of stories for them to choose from.
  - Writing Valentine's messages and completing a Valentine's wordsearch.
  - Valentine's cookie icing station.

## **Valentine Art**

Spend a few days practicing cutting hearts - some children can't seem to visualize that they are folding the centre of the heart - and either end up with two pieces or are astonished when the heart appears! To make Valentine animals they must be able to cut hearts in a variety of sizes and shapes.



"We only use white, pink, and red paper and make hearts of all sizes and the kids make 'creatures' or critters. A big heart becomes the body, smaller heart the head, smaller still hearts for the ears, eyes, etc. They even make the tails out of lots of little hearts or one long heart or one 'fluffy' heart, for the bunny. I usually don't have a sample made, but do make all sorts of sized hearts as well as 'cloud-shaped' hearts, etc. to show for examples. Kids have fun with this one."

### **Blurred Painting**

"One of my favourites is to let kids paint with watercolours any Valentine designs they like, but use REALLY LARGE white paper, and let them dampen the paper first with a wet sponge or a wet paintbrush. That way, the designs blur as they paint. When dry, they can take a permanent marker and outline some of the designs to highlight them. This makes a beautiful painting, which can be a special Valentine for someone like a Mom or Grandma or a neighbor who is housebound, etc."

### **Tissue Hearts**

"Cut out pink, red and white tissue hearts. Place on clear plastic wrap and paint tissue hearts with liquid starch or thinned Elmer's glue. Encourage kids to let the hearts overlap to make new colours. Let them cut other shapes and designs too. They dry clear and crisp. Paint tissue hearts and designs onto glass jars, wood scraps, Styrofoam grocery trays, glass in empty picture frames, milk jugs, paper or matte board, waxed paper, etc."

"Cut out large hearts from pink or white paper or draw the hearts for the kids and have them cut them out. Cutting with pinking shears adds a neat effect. Put out red, white, purple and pink paint and let the kids design their own hearts. Some just paint blobs all over, others paint a variety of hearts, others make a pattern or design, etc., etc. Then, once they are finished painting they can sprinkle glitter on the heart for a glittery look. The children can make these into valentines for someone special, too. I always demonstrate a few ideas but find the kids come up with great ones on their own. Another extension of this is to give them 8 x 11 sheets of white paper and let them paint on them and glitter, too. Then out of a coloured piece of construction paper cut a heart as large as you can and make the outlined remainder of the coloured paper the frame for the white sheet. Then use the large cut out heart for another activity."

### Valentine Quilts

This can be kept up through February.

1. Give each student a 12" x 12" (30 cm. x 30 cm.) square of white construction paper.
2. Cut a 6" x 6" (15 cm. x 15 cm.) square of red paper for each child.
3. Cut a 6" x 6" square of blue paper for each child.
4. Glue the red square onto white square in the upper right corner of white paper.
5. Glue the blue square onto lower left corner of white paper.
6. Now you have two white squares and two coloured squares on your quilt.
7. Cut a snowflake and glue to blue square.
8. Cut a heart and glue to red square.
9. In one white square demonstrate how to make a plaid design using 3 or 4 colours of student's choice.
10. In the other white square, write your initials, or draw a picture of your choice.
11. Make stitch marks with crayon around each square.
12. Put together on a wall for a lovely winter quilt.

"One year the kids made pigs from hearts and put them up with Hershey Kisses that I made from aluminum foil and labelled 'Hogs and Kisses'. For other bulletin board ideas, you could also do a sea of fish made from hearts or a zoo filled with animals made from hearts."



"I put up the words, 'Plant Some Love', and then we make plant pictures. I give the kids a brown or tan piece of paper for them to make a vase or flower pot (4 1/2 in. by 6 in.). They put this on a 9 x 12 piece of paper (whatever colour) and we use green yarn for some stems, from 3 to 6 stems. Then they cut out pink or red hearts from 2 x 2 inch paper. I have patterns for this, but I show them how to make their own hearts, too. They put these as the flowers. Then I give them a candy conversation heart to glue on as the centre for each flower. We eat some, too! You have to let the candies set for the glue to dry, but they stay on. Sometimes I cut around the plant pictures instead of leaving them a 9 x 12 piece since some are small, and to get them all to fit on the bulletin board."

"Valentine Candy Necklaces - You take a long piece of saran wrap (about 24 inches) and the kids lay out hard candy along it lengthwise. Then all they do is roll it up and then tie ribbon between each candy. The necklace is so pretty for them to wear."

### Make a "Love Mouse"

Cut out a valentine and then cut it in half along the fold line. The folded edge of a heart is the bottom of your animal. The pointed end of the heart is your mouse's nose. Take little hearts for the ears. Use wiggly eyes and add yarn for a tail.



### A Valentine Tree

Paint a black or dark brown tree trunk and then place a large blob of paint at the top of the trunk. Take a straw and blow the paint out in all directions to make the branches. Cut a large pink valentine for the base of the tree, and lots of tiny red and pink hearts to put on the branches as leaves or blossoms.

### Tissue Stain Hearts

"Paint with plain water on hearts cut from art tissue in ANY colours on white paper, and then peel them off again. The tissue will leave a blurred design when the pieces are lifted. You can also use pieces of crepe paper, as crepe paper is filled with colour, too.

### Heart People

Provide each student with a large heart shape to cut out, as well as one medium heart, and four small hearts. The large heart is the body, the medium heart the head, and the small hearts are the hands and feet. Glue the head onto the back of the large heart with the point side down. Add facial features with markers or crayons, and/or wiggly eyes."

### Cupid's Arrow

"I wanted to share a quick and easy Valentine craft that we made. We have Grade 4 book buddies for our little ones and I wanted to make cards for them to go with a candy treat. We had the kids trace and cut out a paper heart (about 5 inches wide). Then I cut two small slits in each heart. The kids wrote **Happy Valentines Day Love** \_\_\_\_\_. Then they put a long popsicle stick through the two slits. We glued a feather to one end and a small (1 1/2 inch) heart to the other end so the bottom of the little heart was the tip of Cupid's arrow. It was so cute, the arrow went right through the heart. The Grade 4's loved the candy and my kids felt like they did something for these special friends. It was a lot of fun."

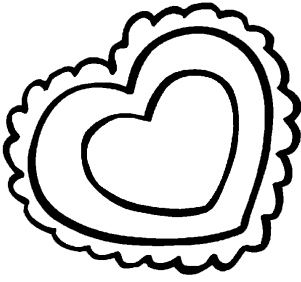
## Trading Valentines

### Valentine Boxes

"I have every child bring in a shoebox and 4 margarine lids. We cover our boxes and decorate them (with a slot in the top) and then we put the margarine lids on the boxes for wheels. When this is done we put the boxes end to end to make 'The Valentine Train'. I make the engine and caboose and fill them with treats and goodies for the kids."

"I have the kids bring in cereal boxes. I cover them with butcher paper leaving one end open, and the children decorate them with cut-out hearts, etc."

"I go to a restaurant supply store and purchase the large takeout containers....the students decorate them with their names, fun foam hearts, markers, stickers, etc."



Old file folders stapled or sewn up the sides make good Valentine holders.

"I cut out large heart shapes in blue, red, pink and purple (from construction paper). The kids each choose two colours. I staple them together (leaving the top open for a pocket) and they decorate both sides with felts, paper doilies and paper hearts. They're attached to the chalkboard ledge with tape."

"I sent home a big piece of white paper with each child, along with 3 pieces of construction paper (pink, red, and black), and told them to fashion an envelope for the valentines out of it. The family can work to create a pocket and decorate it any way they wish."

"I always use the small white sacks and decorate with pink/red construction paper hearts. If you want to really dress them up, use doilies, glitter, ribbon. Put the children's names on them and tape them to the front of their desks. I let my students bring valentines a couple of days early so they can have time to 'play' postman. Gives my grade ones a chance to match names on the cards with the names on the bags."

## **After Trading the Valentines**

"I made books for my class out of construction paper. The kids just taped the Valentines they received into the book. They just put one piece of tape either at the top or along the side so that the Valentine could still be opened and read. They really enjoyed this. I also had a few Valentine activity sheets that went in the book. Each child had also written a valentine acrostic poem about LOVE and that went in there too."

"We make Valentine scrapbooks. I staple five or six blank pages together. The kids decorate the cover. On the big day we pass out the cards. Then the kids tape them into their books. We now have a reading activity and I can tell you from past years, the kids hang on to these."

"I did the albums (scrapbooks) last year - and they were great! It has always bothered me to see them open their cards, and then just toss them aside for the next new one. This way, they taped, read, turned over, reread, talked to the sender - it was wonderful! The atmosphere in the room was calm, but fun. A mom who stopped in made a comment that between sorting and graphing heart candies and doing albums, it seemed like a lot of school work for a party! Fortunately, the kids didn't hear her, and her son had a huge smile on his face at the time!"

"I made little books, bound with those plastic binders, with 30 pages of white paper between two pink sheets. The kids spent their valentine's day party pasting their valentines into their books and writing who it was from below each. Then they have another 'book' to take home and read!"

"The Kindergarten teacher at my school told me of her own variation, which is to take the cards she is given by the children and to create a classroom "Thanks" book. She tapes the cards in a blank book and then under each one, writes, "Thanks, (name)!" She says that the children really love reading this book and finding their own names in it."



## The Valentine Party

"At our Valentine Party we will play this game. Write 'Happy Valentine's Day' twice, each one on a different colour. Cut the letters apart, and hide them around the room, always with part in plain sight. Divide into two teams. Choose a captain for each team who becomes the speller. Players find their colour of letters and bring them to the captain who spells the words. First team to spell the entire phrase is the winner. (You can have more colours for more teams, if desired.)"



"I have had the best parties this year! We have gone with healthy foods as opposed to sweets! For Valentines we're having red foods. Strawberries, red grapes, apple slices, cherry tomatoes, etc. We're also having cookies with red sprinkles, but that is the only sweet. The kids have loved our parties and we hardly ever have anything left to throw away! I'll never go back to cake and chips parties again."

"For my Valentine's refreshments, I have each child bring two pieces of fruit cut up and prepared to go into a fruit salad. After we enjoy our Valentines, we share our Friendship Fruit Salad. It's easy, healthy, and the kids love it!"

"I always do a Make Your Own Sundae party for Valentine's Day. I ask each child to bring in a topping and I provide the ice cream. They have more fun creating it than eating it! Since the bowls are small I don't have to worry about them overindulging. If a child forgets their topping it isn't critical since there are so many to choose from. I make sure to give the critical ones like chocolate syrup and Cool Whip to my most reliable children. I only have to buy 3 half-gallons of ice cream to do the whole room. I always get 1 chocolate, 1 vanilla, and 1 half chocolate-half vanilla. It works like a charm!"

## Other Ideas for the day

"I make a chart of the valentines the children give to me. We read each and I tape them to the chart for the children to re-read in the next week."

"I do gingerbread houses on Valentine's Day ..... they are decorated with red hot cinnamon hearts, conversation hearts and pink, red, white jelly beans. They look great!"

"Do a friendship theme! Valentine's Day can be a special day without purpose, but if you make it the culmination of a friendship unit your children will have a learning experience. Brainstorm all the nice things that friends do. Have your students state qualities of a good friend. List the qualities as your students give them."

Do the 'Wrinkled Heart' exercise from the Behaviour Management section.

"Do you want to feel like you are inside a bag of Valentine conversation hearts? Cut out 100 hearts of different colours. I cut 10 of each colour, but you can do what you want and use it for a graph later. Write sight words or math problems you are learning on the hearts. Attach a strip of

construction paper onto each heart for hanging. Hang them from the ceiling all around the room. Kids love the colour and cheerfulness, and you can use these for a heart graph of colours, or have children write as many words as they can find for a word center activity. And you can leave it up all February if you like!"

Make a big heart out of a posterboard and then glue on all the cards you receive.

### Games for Valentines Day

"We are getting ready for Valentines day and here are a few of the games we will do. One is taking a balloon and rubbing it on the student's head. The winner is the one who can then pick up the most tissue paper hearts on the balloon. Cute - good lead into static electricity, too. We will also do a bulls-eye tossing game. Put red cinnamon hearts in a plastic baggie and tie with ribbon. The children pitch these little bags onto a heart shaped bulls-eye. The person closest to the white heart, which is in the very center, wins.

The third game we are playing is a game where you tie a string in a ring with a toy ring on the string (say that 5 times fast). Anyway, the children pick one person to be in the middle and you pass the ring from person to person and when the music is over, the person in the middle guesses who has the ring."

### Clifford for Valentines Day

"Clifford comes alive in our classroom in the month of February. We love our big red dog. To decorate my classroom I have enlarged huge Cliffords. We bone up on new words, and have lots of fun. We graph/discuss their favorite kind of dog, and also their pets. We talk about their birthdays, and graph their birthdays when we read Clifford's Birthday. We make big books, writing our own Clifford story, Clifford's Valentine... We sing Clifford songs. For class treats - make bone shaped cookies with sugar cookie dough."

### A Valentine Bulletin Board

"Title it "Mrs. XXX's Little Sweeties" and make a large valentine shaped candy box covering most of the board. Put large cupcake papers in the box (looks like candy papers) and a picture of each child in each paper. The valentine box can be lined with doilies to really fancy it up. I also take empty real valentine boxes and staple around the edges. It's just too cute! *Carol*

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
I made some valentines ,  
I cut and glued!  
One for father,  
One for mother,  
One for grandma, too.  
One for sister,  
One for brother,  
And here is one for you!

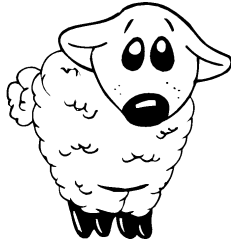


Do you love me or do you not?  
You told me once,  
But I forgot ...  
I LOVE YOU!

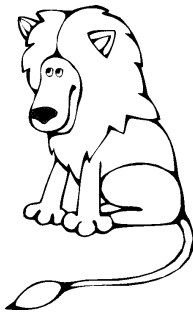
Will you "bee" my valentine,  
And bumble away with me?  
I'd love to be your valentine,  
Because you're my honey bee!  
Bzzzzzzzzzz!

# Lion or Lamb?

When March comes in gently,  
With soft skies of blue  
And warm happy breezes,  
And crocus buds, too,  
March begins like a lamb,  
Sweet, gentle and kind.  
But you'd better beware,  
For you'll surely find  
That the end of the month,  
Will be stormy and cold.  
Like a lion it'll roar,  
Rough, growly and bold.



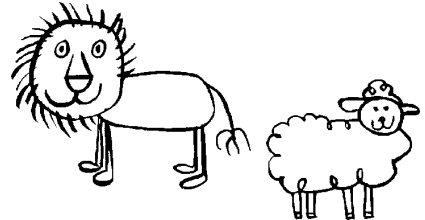
If March begins windy,  
And stormy and gray,  
If it's too cold outside,  
To happily play,  
The lion's here first,  
And he's not so nice.  
You should be indoors,  
Take my advice.  
But wonderful weather,  
Is coming, they say,  
By the end of the month,  
The lamb's here to stay!



*Sung to : "Mary Had a Little Lamb"*  
March comes in like a lion,  
Like a lion, like a lion.  
March comes in like a lion,  
And goes out like a lamb.  
March comes in with a great big wind,  
Great big wind, great big wind.  
March comes in with a great big wind,  
And goes out with a breeze.

When March comes in like a lion  
A lamb trots out, we hear.  
But when the lamb comes first, my friend,  
It's the roar going out that we fear!

So each and every boy and girl  
Should watch as March comes in;  
We'll know the way the month might end  
If we know the way it begins.



- Is the March Proverb true? 'If March comes in like a lion, it goes out like a lamb' or 'If March comes in like a lamb it goes out like a lion'.
- Discuss the proverb with the class on March 1.
- Describe your definition for lamb or lion weather. How can we call weather like a lion or a lamb?
- Each day discuss weather, temperature etc. and decide whether today is a lion or a lamb day - record on a chart.
- Predict the number of lion and lamb days and whether the proverb is true.
- Count the number of lion/lamb days and make a graph.
- Discuss the conclusions. Is the proverb true this year?

Make door hangers with the saying, 'March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb' with a picture of the head of a lion: a circle is the face, then children wrap strips of paper around a crayon to make them curl, then glue the curls around the lion face.

The other side of the hanger is 'March comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion' with the lamb: glue cotton balls to a black circle for the head and add black rectangles for legs. The children take

their hangers home and hang them on a door. Have one in the classroom to change as the weather changes.

"Using a lion and a lamb pattern, we predicted what we thought the weather would be on March 1st - a lion kind of day or a lamb day. We made a graph with the two pictures and the children discussed their graph in their math journal. I made one of the bulletin boards into a March calendar and each day of the month we will put up either a lion or a lamb. On the 1st the children will predict what they think most of the days in March will be like. At the end of the month we will be able to check out their predictions."

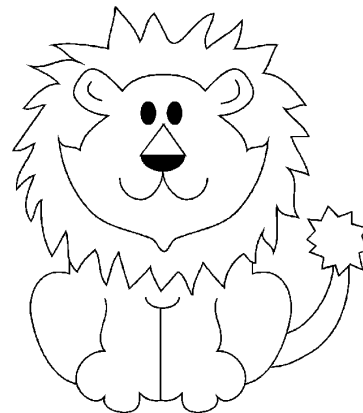
"Plan a weather activity into your March lessons just to test the March saying. Brainstorm with students what aspects of weather determine its ferocity or calmness.

We graph weather by deciding if it is a lion or a lamb day. We make a weather necklace, using the round tins from the ends of juice cans. On one side we make a lion with yellow ribbon pieces and on the other a lamb with cotton balls. These stay in the lockers all month. Each day they come they put their necklace on showing the side that they think represents the day's weather. We discuss any discrepancies."

### **Make Lions**

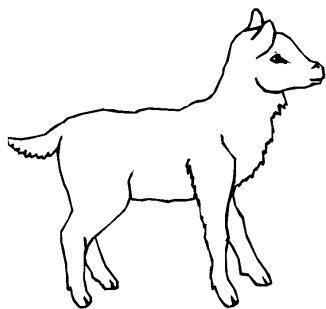
To make lions, give the children paper plates, glue, 2-inch pieces of yellow yarn, and felt-tip markers. Have them make lion manes by gluing yarn pieces around the rims of their paper plates. Then let them draw lion faces on the centers of their plates with felt-tip markers. Attach popsicle stick handles to the backs of their plates to make lion puppets.

Or, just do the head. On 1 paper plate, they draw the eyes, nose, whiskers (or they can cut out and glue on shapes from construction paper), then using yellow construction paper they cut out strips and fold them around their pencil (to make them curly) and glue them to the back along the edge of the plate to form a mane.



### **Make Lambs**

To make lambs, set out paper plates, cotton balls, glue, and felt-tip markers. Have the children glue cotton ball 'wool' around the rims of the paper plates. When they have finished, let them draw lamb faces on the centers of their plates with felt-tip markers. Attach popsicle stick handles to the backs of the plates to make lamb puppets.



Have students draw a lamb or find a picture for them to cut out. The students glue on cotton batting for the body.

# Dr. Seuss Day

Dr. Seuss' birthday is March 2nd. He would have been 100 years old on March 2, 2004. Here are ideas to help you celebrate!



"We do one Dr. Seuss book each day for a week. You could even do it for a month if you wanted to! Read the first book he had published - *To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*, One day could be *Green Eggs and Ham* Day, another could be *Cat in the Hat* day. *The Foot Book* leads to math questions: My foot is \_ cm long. My foot is \_\_\_\_ blocks long. My foot is bigger than \_\_\_\_\_'s foot. My foot is smaller than \_\_\_\_\_'s foot. My feet can \_\_\_\_\_."

"We discuss the favourite Dr. Seuss books and graph the favourites. I like to read the more difficult ones this week - *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*, *The King's Stilts*, etc."

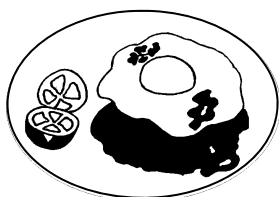
"We had a Dr. Seuss Day. Four classes participated. Each classroom had one Dr. Seuss art activity in it. Parents from each class stayed in their child's classroom and ran the activity and the students rotated between the classrooms with their teacher. It was planned so we ended in our own classroom.

In one classroom, the children made Oobleck. In the next, they coloured a picture of Fox from *Fox in Socks* and cut out socks for his feet from wallpaper scraps and put a background behind him. In the next, they coloured the Cat in the Hat and decorated a hat for him using different textured papers that we have. In the last class, they coloured Maisy and glittered the daisy that pops up and down from her head (we cut a slit in the top of her head and the daisy slides up and down).

We had a great afternoon. We bought some small containers with lids from the food service department and the children were able to take a little bit of Oobleck home with them in the containers. We had previously read all of the books to the children."

## Green Eggs and Ham

"Did you know that *Green Eggs and Ham* has a total vocabulary of 50 words repeated over and over? It goes back to Bennett Cerf betting Dr. Seuss that he couldn't write a book with only 50 different words. We take index cards and after I have read the story once, then they must tell me as many different words as they can remember. I alphabetize them on a pocket chart, then re-read the story and add the missing words. It is great fun. By this time of the year most of my kids can read most of the words, so we learn the more difficult ones and re-read the book - then they read it to each other in partners. I have had my class match up with their intermediate class buddies and the Grade Ones read it to their buddies - both groups enjoyed that!"



"Bring in an electric frypan. Ask a parent volunteer to bring in one also. Buy a few thin hamsteaks. They aren't too expensive. Let each child break two eggs into a hard plastic cup. Add some milk and some green food colouring. I usually add some cheddar cheese too. The kids love it!"

"We made green deviled eggs with ham on top...first the kids each wrote down their own 'recipe' for green eggs and ham. Their recipes were priceless! They also used paper plates to do a spur of the moment *Green*

**Eggs and Ham** craft project...they coloured the plates the colour of their choice, cut out their own 'green eggs and ham' out of construction paper and glued it on the plate...and then glued a plastic fork onto the plate, too....These look very cute on display in our room!

"In a story about prejudging, 'Sam I Am' tries to get his friend to eat green eggs and ham. Ask students to predict what a drink will taste like before they try it. You will need water, sugar, salt, lemon juice, orange juice, food colouring, plastic cups, straws, paper, and pencils. Mix one batch of each drink: clear (water and sugar), green (orange juice and blue colouring), red (salty water and red), blue (lemon juice, blue, and water), and orange (water and orange). Give students a straw, a paper with *Before* and *After* columns, and a pencil. Have kids write down what they think each drink will taste like under *Before*. Next, they can taste each drink and note it in the *After* column. Discuss the results. On what did they base their assumptions?"

To *She'll be coming round the mountain.*

Oh - We'll eat green eggs and ham with Sam-I-am

Oh - We'll eat green eggs and ham with Sam-I-am

Oh - We'll eat green eggs and ham

Oh - We'll eat green eggs and ham

Oh - We'll eat green eggs and ham with Sam-I-am

'Would you eat them with a mouse?'  
asked Sam-I-am

'Would you eat them in a house?' asked  
Sam-I-am

'I would not eat them with a mouse

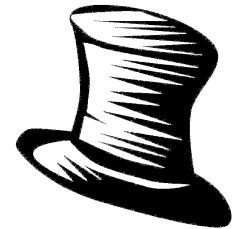
I would not eat them in a house

I do not like green eggs and ha-am Sam-I-am!  
*Keep adding verses as per the book!"*

### The Cat in the Hat

"To make Cat Hats we took a large sheet of white construction paper and drew off lines and labelled three 'red'...top, middle and bottom...the children have to colour (dark) the three red stripes and cut a circle for the brim.....we will tape the two pieces together to fit each child's head."

See [http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/dr\\_\\_seuss.html](http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/dr__seuss.html)  
for different Cat hats.



"We spent one day doing **Cat in the Hat** activities.. We listed all the ...at...words we could think of...did a word search.....read **Cat in the Hat**... and listed things we do on a rainy day. We made red and white hats."

"I make the hats with construction paper and paper plates. Each child gets a sheet of 12 by 18 white construction paper and colours red stripes on it. They turn out very interesting, fat and thin stripes. Take a white 9 inch paper plate and cut the middle out. Roll up the construction paper and staple inside the paper plate. Punch two holes in the plate and tie string. The hats are then tied under the chin."

"The hats can be made with large brown paper bags. We did this as a whole-school project last year. The bags need to have the brim rolled several times (not too precisely - they will fit young heads better). We had the kids paint them with white tempera paint and dried, then paint red stripes. Some classes painted the bags before the shaping and rolling - easier to paint, but the paint flaked when the brim was rolled. We then took a picture of the entire school population spelling out READ on the playground. We had tons of individual class projects all day long and the kids still talk about it."

"Here is what I did - I begged a store that uses white paper bags to donate bags for the class. Check with a bakery or specialty store, they usually have white. I wrote each kid's name in the inside, then holding it around the child's head stapled it to fit. The kids used red paint to paint the top of the hat and add stripes. I never could have done it without help from a parent (stuff the bags with paper and then you can stand them up to paint them)."

**Themes:** using your imagination for play, house rules, dealing with strangers, telling parents about problems

**Pre-reading activities:** brainstorm a list of things to do, including games to play on a rainy day (make a class book: 'Things to do on a Rainy Day'). Discuss what you should do if your mother is out and a stranger comes to the door.

**Read the story,** noting that the children have 'nothing to do' and do not know what to say to the cat. Discuss whether you would enjoy the cat's tricks. How did the fish feel about the cat's tricks? What would you tell your mother? What good thing did the cat do before he left? (cleaned up all his playthings) What did the children do to solve their problem? (spoke assertively to the cat).

**Follow-up:** as a class or in cooperative groups, make lists of rhyming words for: cat/mat/hat/that jump/bump/thump day/away/say/play fish/dish/wish cake/rake not/pot/ball/all/fall/wall/hall/tall fan/man net/bet/yet it/hit/bit tame/game/shame up/cup  
Make a flip book of things the cat can hold up.

The Cat in the Hat can hold up \_\_\_\_\_ (words and picture)

Write a list of rules for the Cat in the Hat (in case he comes back).

Draw the Cat in the Hat balancing some things he might find in your house and label your picture or draw and label the things he balanced in the story.

Draw another animal and give it a rhyming name: The Frog in the Bog, the Pig in the Wig, the Toad in the Road, etc.

Design a machine to clean your room and label its special features.

Learn and write personal information: whole name, phone number and address.

### Books...

You can read them in your house

You can read them with a mouse

You can read them here or there

You can read them ANYWHERE.



### Horton Hatches the Egg

Themes: seasons, faithfulness, fact and fantasy

Pre-reading discussion: difference between fact and fantasy (when do birds sit on their nests? when do they usually fly south? do elephants sit on eggs?)

Practice Horton's famous credo:

I meant what I said, And I said what I meant, An elephant's faithful One hundred percent!

Discuss the meaning of being faithful or keeping a promise.

Read story and note all the challenges that Horton had to face. Compare Horton's character with the bird, Mayzie. Ask the children if they thought the ending was fair.

**Follow-up:** Make a story map of all the places Horton went -children can draw one picture each for a class story map.

### To Think I Saw It On Mulberry Street

Read the book *To Think I Saw It On Mulberry Street*. After reading the first two pages, stop and discuss what Marco must usually do when he gets home. Talk about what it means when the dad says he usually turns 'minnows into whales'. Talk about imagination. At the end of the story, have the students think what they might see on their way home from school. What could look almost like that item in their imaginations?

Have each child write several sentences, ending with 'And to think that I saw it on \_\_\_\_\_ Street!' Make into a class book.

Do a map of the streets around the school. Have the children make street signs by writing their name or a street names on a piece of paper and then cut the paper to look like a street sign. Glue the sign to the top of a possible stick. Stick the bottom end of the stick into a small clump of clay so it stands up.

"I have the kids write "And To Think That I Saw It on \_\_\_\_\_ (their street)". They follow a simplified pattern of the book - turning a simple thing they saw into a wildly interesting thing. Some completed stories are very simple and some really get lost in their ideas! For the bulletin board, like the book cover, the background paper is blue and I staple the kids stories to bright yellow paper."

### Happy Birthday to You!

Have the kids make and decorate birthday-cake hats to wear for Dr. Seuss's birthday! You will need scissors, tag board, tape, yellow and orange pipe cleaners, yellow construction paper, glue, and markers. Cut out a cake top, 8" diameter, with pencil-point holes punched through for the candles; the side of the cake from a sheet 26" x 4"; and 4 tabs, 2" x 1/2", bent into L's.



Join the top and side of the cake together by taping the tabs to the inside of the hat.

Cut the pipe cleaners into 3" pieces and twist the colours together. Cut flame tips from construction paper, and glue or tape them to the pipe cleaners to make candles. Push candles through the cake top and bend the ends to hold them in place. To adjust the hat size, cut two slits on the cake "band," overlap, and tape. Then, decorate!

### McElligot's Pool

"Have a large drawing or cut-out of Marco fishing. Place it above the door with the fishing line (drawn) becoming 3-D as yarn on the door. Put blue paper on the door and the sides of the door shaped to look like a pond (wavy edges) with one side extending down the hall several feet (for the secret underground brook). The children can create their own amazing fish and colour them brilliant colours. Glue the fish in the 'pond' and the 'brook'."

### And More .....

"We did *I can Read With My Eyes Shut*. I took a picture of the children wearing the Seuss hat and holding the book, reading it with their eyes shut."

"Make Dr. Seuss treat hats -- Vanilla wafers, Gummy Lifesavers (various colours), white canned frosting. With a possible stick dap a bit of frosting on the top of the wafer. Add a Gummy Lifesaver, then frost another lifesaver and add to the stack. Three Lifesavers is about right. You can make them multi-colours, or red and white - cherry and peppermint in layers."



"I have invited 'guest readers' in to read a Dr. Seuss book, or a book of their choice. Before that day we will be making 'Cat in the Hat' hats to wear that day. We will have one for each of our guests as well as a certificate of thanks for coming in and reading to us. We will have a Dr. Seuss birthday cake as well as green eggs and ham for snack. We will walk backwards to lunch that day."



### **Centres for Dr. Seuss Day**

"These are the Seuss Centres running next week and culminating with a birthday party on Friday:

**Reading:** Children will read a Dr. Seuss book of their choice to one of the classroom bears and complete a page in the classroom journal to document their work.

**Games/Reading:** The children will match four dialogue cards with each of five Dr. Seuss books: Green Eggs and Ham, the Lorax, Hop on Pop, Fox in Socks, and The Cat in the Hat.

**Science/Art:** Children will experiment with colours using test tubes and coloured water to make shades of the colour green. This will correlate with our study of Green Eggs and Ham.

**Big Books:** Horton Hears A Who and the Lorax.

**Listening/Reading:** Children will listen to The Cat in the Hat Returns.

**Mini Page/Reading for Meaning:** Children will circle the sentence whose content matches what is seen in six Dr. Seuss illustrations.

**Math:** The children will solve an addition and a subtraction problem using a Cat-in-the-Hat worksheet. The problem must be read, illustrated and solved with a number sentence. The children will write a sentence describing their strategy.

**Keyboarding/Language Arts:** Children will type their first name and the following sentence: "I like it here. Oh, I like it a lot!" Said the Cat in the Hat to the fish in the pot.'

**Overhead/Problem Solving:** Children will find pairs of Dr. Seuss rhyming words in a word search."

"Read 'Bartholomew and the Oobleck' and then make oobleck for your class. I would recommend making about a quart for 25-30 students, but the amount really doesn't matter.

1/2 quart water

about 2 boxes cornstarch (about 4 parts cornstarch to 1 part water)

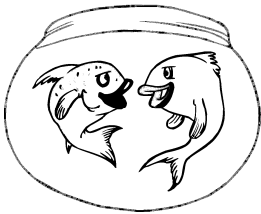
food colouring

Put the water and food colouring in a large bowl and begin adding the corn starch and mixing. Eventually the mixture will get thicker; keep adding and stirring. You will know when you have Oobleck!"

"We do lots of reading things that day! Parents and other adults are invited in to read to their child's class. High school students are scheduled to read to classes throughout the day. I use the Dr. Seuss book, *The Sneetches*, and I have the kids who want to be star-bellied Sneetches bring in a t-shirt (I ask for old ones, and I turn them inside out if they have writing on) ahead of time. I use 'wonder-under' (available at fabric stores - for attaching appliques) and iron on a green fabric star for them to wear that day. In the evening, we have guest readers from the community...police officer, firefighter, radio dj, librarian from the public library, known dramatic readers (I live in a small community). The evening ends with cake and milk in the cafeteria. One note..... the first two years we did bring in a published author, then a storyteller the next year. We dropped this because of the expense, and the kids liked to listen to the people they had seen around town just as much as these professionals."

"We had a fabulous day today! Earlier in the week we read the books we based today's activities on. *The Cat In The Hat*, *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, *The Foot Book*, and *Yertle the Turtle*. Today we started our celebration with a breakfast of green eggs prepared and served by the grade one parents. Then we started half-hour center rotations. Each class got to participate in three different experiences. Each teacher chose a project and we rotated our classes. One was making and experimenting with Oobleck. The next was measuring with 'feet', sorting shoes, and various other 'feet' activities. And the last was making a turtle out of two paper plates. This afternoon our mayor (who is too funny for words) came to read to them. He read *Oh The Places You'll Go*. He wore his Dr. Seuss hat and earmuffs. The kids loved it. We purchased one balloon for each child so the library was filled with balloons. The kids loved it! We are all exhausted, but it was a day that they'll remember."

"On Friday, all the grade one classes wore pajamas to school and brought Dr. Seuss books, pillows, and blankets for a special 'Reading Slumber Party'. After lunch, my kids got to lie on the floor with blankets and pillows and I read *The Sleep Book* (with most of the lights out - two of my youngest really fell asleep."



"We had an exciting Seuss day too! After reading 'One Fish, Two Fish' ... we made beautiful collage pictures of fish. Two kids drew 'The Cat in The Hat' swimming with the fish. After *The Foot Book* we made the baby powder footprints. We also made paper hats and bow ties - they looked adorable! They drew pictures of their favourite book and one girl read her book to another child. We joined the other classes Seuss videos. What a blast!"

"For the cutest snack, a mom last year made large sugar cookies. She then made cupcakes in ice cream cones. Then she used frosting to 'glue' the upside down cone to the cookie. They were then frosted with white frosting all over, and then she took thin strips of fruit roll ups and put them around the cone like stripes on a Dr. Seuss hat."

"On Dr. Seuss's birthday I made a cake mix cake - white and AFTER it had finished baking I poked holes in it with a fork. Then I took a lime jello and using only the hot water mixed it - I did not add the cold water - and poured it on top of the cake. The jello ran down and made 'cool' fingers of green in the cake. I also iced the cake green.

Then I had the children bring in all their Dr. Seuss books and we graphed them for most copies or least. We also really enjoyed reading Dr. Seuss books throughout the month and on March 17th had green eggs (scrambled) and regular ham. Surprisingly (to me) everybody ate it!

My favourite stories were the Sneetches and The Pale Green Pants. We loved the Pale Green Pants (it's a short story in the Sneetches book and hilarious).

This year I got an inflatable helium balloon from Clown Alley that is the Cat in the Hat, plus the suit. For whiskers, I am using broomstraws coloured black with marker and attached via rubber cement."



# St. Patrick's Day

"The children make leprechaun traps at home. On the day before St. Patrick's Day they write how their trap will work. Their creations are amazing! We also leave a treat or tiny clothes for them in their traps on the next day - as 'bait'."

"We write what would happen if we caught the leprechaun. Will he take us to his pot of gold? Where might the pot of gold be hidden?"



"We always make 'Magic Pudding'. I use the pistachio pudding mix, take it out of the box and put it in a sandwich bag. I hang it on the blackboard with a note in green chalk telling that the leprechaun left them a magic surprise...just to add milk and stir.

I use green paint on a plate and put footprints from the window to the blackboard using the side of my closed fist and toeprints made from the tips of my fingers. I make sure I am not in the classroom when they arrive...then I ask them WHAT they have been doing..."

"One of my students told me that when he was in Kindergarten the leprechaun took every green crayon and the class couldn't use green all day."

"My teaching partner and I think it's a great time to spring clean our room, so while our students are out for P.E. or library, one of us completely trashes the room---and I mean trash it! We pull everything out of our manipulatives tubs, turn tables, pull everything out of their cubby holes, etc.... We always leave the window open, to give the hint how the leprechaun got away. We then spend the rest of the afternoon cleaning our room!"

"We have a green snack - green vegetables with a green dip, granny smith apples and kiwi fruit."

"I have parents sneak in when we are out and leave notes from the Leprechaun. The notes are clues to the pot of gold."

"I love when St. Patrick's Day is on a Monday....I have the children make leprechaun traps at home the previous week. On Monday, they come into the room and find their traps with a piece of gold (gold wrapped chocolate coins) and a note from the leprechaun (the notes are written by their 6th grade buddies). There is also a pot that contains a white powder -- with a note saying that this is magical leprechaun food that they would like to share with us, just add milk and see the magic appear (it is pistachio pudding that when you add milk it turns....green). We then share our letters and our magical treat."

"The little green men knock over chairs and generally mess up the room. They leave behind St. Patrick's Day pencils and sprinkle shamrock confetti on each desk. When they come into class on the 17th, I have Irish music playing! It's a nice tradition."

"We will take a tour of our school and write down everything we find that is green. We turn those into a class book titled *A Wee Bit O'Green at \_\_\_\_\_ School.*"

### The Leprechauns are Marching

The Leprechauns are marching,  
They're marching down the hall,  
They're marching on the ceiling,  
They're marching on the wall.  
They're marching two by two,  
And now it's four by four,  
You say you still can't see them?  
Move back! Here come some more!

The leprechauns are marching,  
I think it's three by three.  
Just close your eyes and try now  
To visualize with me.  
Their merry little feet  
Will never miss a beat.  
They're very tricky fellows.  
Look out! They're under the sheet!

"The students will each have a ziplock baggie with Lucky Charms cereal inside. Each will graph the different shapes found. We will use those to make a class graph."

"Talk about the Irish lore of the mischievous Leprechaun. Find a leprechaun doll in a toy store or card shop. Have your class name the Leprechaun and keep him in the room as your lucky mascot during the month of March. It's especially fun if the Leprechaun plays harmless pranks during the night, such as hiding the reading books or leaving a small little treat on the desks (with a little help from the teacher, of course!). Cut out little footsteps and tape them to the floor."

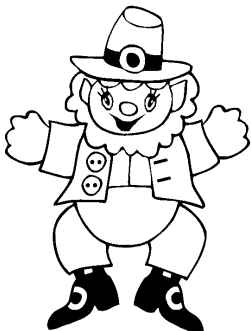
"In your math centre, put out a jar filled with pennies or candy coins to resemble gold coins. Estimate how many coins are in the 'pot of gold'. Place the pot at the end of a large laminated rainbow. If you laminate the rainbow, the estimates can be written on the rainbow using a wipe-off pen. Group the pennies or candy coins by tens, and count to check your estimates."

"For 'homework', I have the families work together to make leprechaun traps. The children bring them to school, and on St. Patrick's Day, they set their traps before lunch hour. When the kids are all out playing, the leprechaun springs the traps, leaves notes, footprints, etc. The children are always so excited when they come back indoors!"

Four leaf clovers - cut 4 heart shapes as you would cut valentines and glue the points together. For shamrocks, you can use just three hearts. Put a stem on the clover.

Supply the children with pasta noodles that have been dyed green, or use many different colours for a rainbow necklace, and yarn. Have the children thread the noodles onto the yarn to make a necklace.

If you have snow - go outdoors and paint green pictures on the snow.



### Leprechaun Pudding

one 1-ounce box of sugar free instant pistachio pudding for every five children

1/2 cup of milk per child

1 small ziplock bag per child

Put tablespoon of pudding mix in sandwich bag and milk, then close the baggy and have kids shake and squeeze, then eat.

### Potatoes from Ireland

Cut a large potato in half. You will need a cookie cutter that will fit on the potato half. Press the cookie cutter into the flat side of the potato. Then, using a knife, cut the potato around the outside of the cookie cutter, leaving a shaped potato stamp. Supply the children with the potato stamps, different coloured paints, and paper. Have the children dip the potatoes in the paint and press them firmly onto the paper. If the potatoes are not cut evenly the shapes will not appear clearly.



### Potato Soup

9 potatoes, peeled and diced, 6 stalks of celery, sliced, 2 small onions, chopped, 3 cups water, 2 teaspoons salt, 3 chicken bullion cubes, dissolved in 1/2 cup boiling water, 6 cups milk, 1/2 cup flour, 1 stick margarine or butter

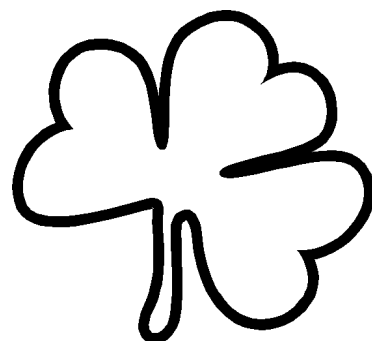
Directions: Combine the potatoes, celery, onion, water, and seasonings in a large pan. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook until tender, about 30 minutes. Combine a small amount of milk and flour until smooth. Add this mixture and the rest of milk to the potato mixture. Stir in the butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until the soup thickens. This recipe will make about 3 quarts of soup or 24 1/2 cup servings. Serve the soup in styrofoam cups.

"We will make a leprechaun trap. I ask them for ideas on a trap - last year we made a giant hat. I made the hat out of black butcher paper and they decorated it with shamrocks. While I made the hat, they wrote letters to the leprechaun saying what their wishes were going to be when we caught him. We suspended the hat over a chair and the leprechaun was supposed to stand on the chair and pull the string to make the hat fall over him and the chair (it was a REALLY big hat). On St. Patrick's day last year, the children came in and were crushed to find the trap not sprung but when we came back from assembly, the trap was sprung!! Because they had seen me all the time at the assembly, they KNEW it wasn't me. It was the secretary who also messed up the room a bit and left some cupcakes with a note that said "Good try, you almost caught me!" My ESL children were completely mystified....."

"I write for them all their first and last name and put O' before the last name regardless of what it is, for example, Mrs. O'Belmont, Dana O'Obrian, Max O'Schmitz. They get the biggest kick out of the simplest things - aren't they great?! We also do green graphs of our pieces of clothing, wear as much green as possible and have a little contest with that."

Cut a shamrock shape out of the middle of a black square of construction paper. This will be your frame. Children glue green squares of tissue paper onto a piece of waxed paper. Glue the frame over the waxed paper when it is completely covered with green tissue paper. Trim off excess. Hang in a sunny window.

"I put up a rainbow in the classroom (at noon if I don't have a prep period) and a "pot of gold" - (an ice cream bucket covered with black paper) with a note from "the leprechaun" saying he has been looking for his gold. I have also previously hidden a bag of the gold-covered chocolate coins. The kids then look for the leprechaun's gold and share it. Lots of fun."



"For St. Patrick's Day, we make a Leprechaun Finder! We make 2 outlines of a magnifying glass kind of thing (like a hand held mirror) out of oak tag or green construction paper, and cut them out. Then, before we glue the two pieces together, we place a piece of green cellophane between the two pieces of paper. Then, we recite the poem:

Leprechaun little,  
Leprechaun green,  
C'mon out,  
Where you can be seen!"

### Make a Leprechaun Trap at Home!

1. Gather together all kinds of materials to make the perfect leprechaun trap, such as small boxes, bags, spools, anything shiny, straws, yarn, string, paper cups, plastic spoons, pieces of wood, cardboard.
2. Design the trap. Sketch out your plan. Decide how to attract a leprechaun and eventually catch him! Be clever, smart and tricky!
3. Build the trap. Use nails, glue, or string to make your trap 'leprechaun tight!' Don't make it too big - remember you're catching a leprechaun, not a giant.
4. Be ready to explain how your trap works. You will use your trap to demonstrate.
5. Bring your trap to school.

Hint: Leprechauns are tricky fellows - they like shiny things. They are also naughty and often disobey signs.

Read the following examples to the children. Then have them name three green things to complete each poem. They may illustrate some of the poems.

*Green is a picnic in the grass,  
Pickles, green apples, and artichoke hearts.*

*Green is a flower bed,  
Leaves, stems, and buds.*

*Green is a vegetable stew,  
Peas, cabbage, and spinach.*

Green is a misty day,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Green is in my back pocket,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Green is my favorite toys,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.



I'm a little leprechaun  
Dressed in green,  
The tiniest man  
That you have ever seen.  
If you ever catch me, so it's told,  
I'll have to give you my pot of gold.

# Easter

## Eggs, Eggs, Eggs!



"Send an egg pattern photocopied onto tag or white construction paper home with each student. The student and their family work together to decorate the egg using whatever materials they have on hand.

Once the eggs are returned back to school, they can be used to decorate a bulletin board or displayed in the hallway. Every time I've ever sent home a project like this, I'm amazed at the creativity that is used in decorating the item.

**Easter Bulletin Board:** To use the decorated eggs from above for a bulletin board, you could display them as being hidden in 3D grass. Cover the lower part of a bulletin board in green paper (grass), the top half in light blue (sky). Add sprigs of 3D grass by cutting strips or clumps of grass from more green bulletin board paper and stapling it to the "grass" already on the bulletin board. Add a big Easter bunny, flowers, a sun and maybe some butterflies, along with the students' eggs hidden in the grass. Possible caption: **Hippity, Hoppity, Easter's On It's Way!**

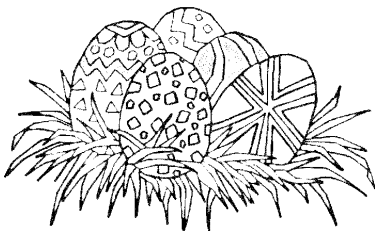
You could also display their eggs in a HUGE basket on a bulletin board. Pile the eggs in the basket with some scattered around the bottom of the basket. You could use Easter basket grass to glue around the top of the basket as if it is stuffed and falling out."

In Germany and Austria, it's customary to celebrate Easter by hanging hollow eggs from the branches of trees - you can blow real eggs and decorate, or hang paper eggs. Photocopy a plain egg template, cut it out, and the children draw a design on both sides and colour brightly. Use paints or pastels if you wish. Cut out a brown tree shape for your bulletin board. Glue the entire tree to a decorated background (blue construction paper, with green tissue paper for grass and white cotton balls for clouds), or bring in a branch that will fit in a vase and hang the finished eggs with thread.

Blow out eggs, poking holes in top and bottom of egg. make sure you wash them out. Let them dry. Then take small squares of tissue paper and glue and let the children glue them on.

Have the kids paint a sheet with fingerprint in bright colours. Sprinkle it with glitter. Give the children large egg tracers. They trace the egg shape on the back and cut it out. These are beautiful and a great classroom decoration.

**Make sun catcher Easter eggs.** To do so all you need is contact paper and tissue paper squares. First, peel the paper off the contact paper. Then place one sticky side up in front of each child. They then cover the sticky side with tissue squares. When they are all finished trim the edges to an egg shape and hang in the window or from the ceiling lights.



Allow the children to paint on white paper using spring colours. They can finger-paint, paint with rolling marbles or tennis balls, spatter paint, etc. You choose! When dry, cut into large egg shapes and place around your room for great colour and no two alike!



For decorating Easter eggs with a glossy finish try mixing sweet and condensed milk with food colouring and paint.

Use different coloured paper and cut out egg shapes, then take egg shells that have been coloured and crumble them. Then have the children decorate the egg shape with egg shells.

Precut egg shapes from coffee filters. Mix water and yellow food colouring and place mixture in a baby food jar. Do the same for blue. The children use eyedroppers or straws to drip colours on the filter shape. The colours will run together and make beautiful eggs.

Cut the cardboard toilet paper rolls into little stands to dry your eggs after dyeing.

"The children trace an egg shape and cut it out so that one side is on the fold and is not cut. Then they take glue that has been colored with food colouring and decorate their eggs. When they dry they look like stained glass. They always turn out great!"

### **Co-operative Eggs**

"I have an egg shape master on a piece of 8 1/2 by 11 paper. The egg is divided into 4 parts by 3 wavy lines going across. Each part is numbered 1, 2, 3, or 4, going down from the top (just a tiny number). I have the kids decorate the egg with pencil crayons, any way they want. I encourage designs, not pictures, and in bright colours. When they are done, they cut out the egg and cut it into 4 parts, on the wavy lines. They keep their own top piece (number 1). The others go into bags corresponding with the number....you need 3 bags in front of the room. They each pick a new part that someone else made from each bag. Then they glue the egg back together on another piece of paper, with their piece on the top, and each piece below coming from some one else. We cut these out and put them on a bulletin board for Easter.

I have also done this with one LARGE egg, dividing it into strips of paper, so each student gets one piece. They decorate their strip, and then I glue them back together, in order, onto another large piece of paper. This makes one big, colourful egg. Be sure to number them though or you will have quite the puzzle to solve! And make sure they decorate the numbered side...backwards pieces just don't fit."

### **Making Natural Dyes**

Dyeing eggs with vegetable material takes more time than using commercial egg dyes, but it is truly amazing to see the colours hidden in the plants around us.

Boil the eggs.

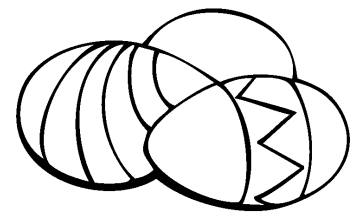
Boil the plant material until you have a good rich colour. Strain the dye, discard the plant material, return the dye to the pot. Add a teaspoon of vinegar. Use an enamel or teflon-coated pot for dyeing.

After your eggs dry, use a vegetable oil and soft cloth to polish them.

### **The colours:**

A soft blue is obtained by boiling red cabbage. Slice the cabbage. Cover with water and boil for 30 minutes. This dye will look purple, but will dye the eggs blue. Cabbage dye will only dye the eggs when it cools.

Orange and a rich, reddish brown are obtained from onion skins. Gather the dry outer skins of





onions. It takes several cups of skins. Cover with water and boil for about 30 minutes. Add the eggs. Watch the colour. You can dye various hues of orange to brown depending on length of time in the dye.

A clear, bright yellow is obtained from the inner bark of apple branches.

**Pale Red:** Fresh beets or cranberries, frozen raspberries

**Light yellow:** Orange or lemon peels, carrot tops, celery seed or ground cumin    **Yellow:** Ground turmeric

**Pale green:** Spinach leaves    **Green-gold:** Yellow Delicious apple peels

**Blue:** Canned blueberries or red cabbage leaves    **Beige to brown:** Strong brewed coffee

### Dye Eggs!

"You may be surprised how many of your children don't dye eggs at home, so it is an important school project for Easter. About 2 days before I want the eggs, I send a request home for each child to bring in 2 hard boiled eggs. If they bring in more, we use the extras to share because someone's eggs always crack. I also cook several just in case someone forgets.

I let them write their name and draw a picture or design in crayon first. Then I have 2 kids come to a table with me (or another adult helper) as they do the egg dye. I use food colouring but you can also use the tablets that are meant for colouring eggs. I like to lay coffee filters on the table surface (on top of plain paper). All the drips get on the filters and these can be used as butterflies or flowers later on or even after Easter."

You can 'dye' them by wrapping the cooked eggs in tissue paper and wetting it, just make sure its the kind that bleeds. Let the paper dry and it flakes off. It is a little messy! If you cut squares of different colours and over lap them the colours will blend and make a pretty 'tie-dye' effect."

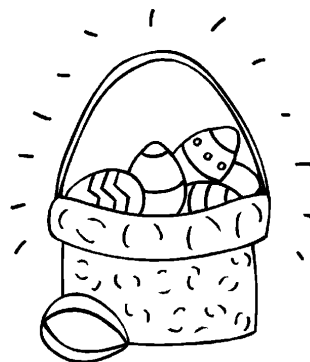
### Learn About Eggs

"I had the kids explore an egg by cracking it open into a bowl. That was fun for them to begin with. Then we looked closely at the eggshell and noticed the air sac at one end of the egg. We felt the inside membrane attached to the shell. We tried to look through the shell to notice how porous it is for the air to pass through for the developing chick. We examined the yolk and the white and looked for the white stringy chalaza, that holds the yolk in place. We looked for the white spot on the yolk which if fertilized will develop into a chick. We touched each part of the egg. The kids love it. On another day, we label and colour a large diagram of an egg.

I usually take about 6 kids at a time to do this activity during centre time so the other kids are occupied. Then I can help them with the cracking and supervise them so the egg stays in the bowl!"

### Dying Eggs

"I usually do it as a center during art and I have another activity such as a cut and paste or a colouring page that doesn't require my time. I also always try to have one more adult in the room with me. If the children are drawing designs, I have them do that at their desk and then I call up groups at a time to dye their eggs. I also buy a few sets of dye so that I have at least 2 of each colour. For drying eggs I collect empty egg cartons so that each student has a half of one. These are great for having the kids carry them home. I let each child do up to 4 eggs, but only one at a time. So once everyone has one egg done, then they start on egg 2. Some of them choose to colour with markers on one of the eggs."



### **An Egg Book**

"One Easter idea that my students enjoyed was to make an Egg book. We created an egg shape book with four pages in it. They decorated the cover to look like an Easter egg. Inside they wrote: An egg can \_\_\_\_\_. An egg can \_\_\_\_\_. An egg can \_\_\_\_\_. But an egg can't \_\_\_\_\_. Each sentence was on a different page. We brainstormed ideas and wrote them on the board first, and then the students went to it, writing their sentences and illustrating each page. The books were really cute and the kids enjoyed making them (although, when they got to 'An egg can't' they got rather silly with their answers!"

### **Talking Eggs**

"Make construction paper eggs and decorate with lace, sequins, etc. On a speech bubble write what the egg is saying. A great bulletin board display!"

### **Easter Egg Cut-Outs**

"I got this idea from a convention and I'm envisioning doing "Easter egg cut outs" with it. The instructor had us tape a piece of paper to the table on all 4 sides with masking tape (like a frame). Then we did a wash over the paper with a paintbrush dipped in water. Then we took dried up markers, dipped them in water and made designs on the wet paper. The colors ran together beautifully and when it dried it was very effective. I think I'll cut out egg shapes and try this for Easter. Always was wondering if there was something I could do with all their dried up markers....."

## **Other Easter Ideas**

### **A Stuffed Bunny**

"Fill a brown lunch bag with 5 plastic bags (grocery size.) Tape the top of bag shut. Squeeze the bag about 3 or 4 inches from the top to form the bunny's head. Tie with yarn or ribbon.

"Draw eyes, nose, teeth and whiskers with a marker.

"Use brown construction paper to make

8 inch legs (with feet) to glue onto bottom of bag.

5 inch arms to glue to sides of bag.

5 inch ears to staple to head.

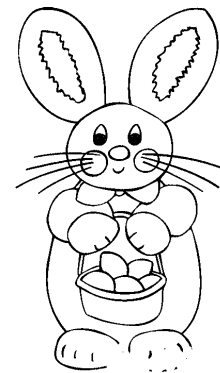
This bunny looks cute sitting with bottom legs draped over the edge of table or shelf."

### **Bunnies in the Grass**

Students paint long, large strokes of green paint to create "grass". Let dry. Glue on cotton batting in the shape of bunnies.

### **Somebunny Loves You**

Have children cut out a rabbit pattern Add features like face and a cottontail. Cover with cotton batting spread thinly. Write 'Somebunny loves you' on it and have student give it to their parents.



### **Footy Bird**

Paint (giggling allowed!) the bottom of the child's foot with yellow washable liquid paint. Have him press his foot onto a sheet of construction paper. When the child's foot is clean and the paint is dry, have him use crayons to add an eye, beak, and legs to his chick. Finally have him spread glue along the bottom of the paper, then sprinkle the glue with cornmeal.

### **Spring Bunny/Duck**

Cut out a pattern of a silhouette bunny out of white construction paper so on one side it looks like a bunny and the other side looks like a duck. Then, colour the ears pink for the bunny side. Add eyes and a nose. Put white cotton balls on it. Flip it over. Colour the duck's bill orange, add an eye, and put yellow cotton balls on it.

Cards to print for Bunny Bingo. <http://www.kidsdomain.com/craft/bingo-bunny.html>

### **Growing Easter Baskets**

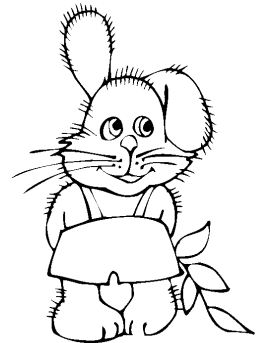
You will need 1 litre milk cartons, potting soil, grass seed. Take empty milk cartons, cut down to 4-5" high. These can be covered with contact paper, construction paper or finger-painted paper and decorated. Fill 2/3 full with potting soil, then generously cover with grass seed. Have children water daily; grass should grow in about 4-7 days. With remaining carton, cut a handle to staple to the basket. Fill with decorated eggs.

### **Fluffy Lambs**

Have the child trace their hands on black construction paper. Cut these out, placing the 'hands' upside down so that the four fingers are the legs and the thumb is the head. Have the kids glue cotton balls to the 'body'. Use chalk or construction paper to make the eyes.

### **Bunnies**

"Take 2 paper plates...the white cheap ones. Cut one in half. Staple the halves to the top of the back of the whole plate. Have them spaced apart...these are the ears of the rabbit. Have the students colour the rabbit whatever colour they one...drawing eyes, nose, mouth, whiskers. The boys put a bow tie on theirs and the girls put a bow at the bottom of each ear. (These were made from construction paper.)"



### **Bottom Bunnies!**

"These are called 'Bottom Bunnies'! You have the child sit on a piece of poster paper (or butcher paper) and you trace around his legs and bottom. The bottom is the bunny's face and the legs are the ears. Be sure to pose the ears. The bent knee ones make cute lop eared bunnies. Then they decorate with markers, construction paper and wallpaper samples with hats, bows, ties, etc. "

### **Easter Baskets**

"Take white, cheap paper plates, soak them in a bucket of water for about 30 seconds, and form them over a one pound empty coffee can by centering the plate. Place a rubber band half way down the part of the plate that hangs over the can, then turn upward the lip of this part that hangs over. If you let this dry you can paint the basket and be sure to add modge podge after painting so it shines. When you take the paper plates off the can and add a pipe cleaner handle, it makes a really cute basket."

Take a paper plate and cut half the inside out - it should look like a basket. Staple or glue it onto another paper plate - glue them



together around the outside edge of the plates, leaving the 'basket' top open. Put Easter grass inside so it sticks out of the basket. The children can decorate their baskets. Then make small rabbit ears from construction paper and glue unto a white plastic spoon and stick it into the basket. Draw a face on the spoon with a fine tip marker. The children can put one or more bunnies into the basket among the Easter grass.

**Make Bunny Baskets:** Use the bottom 1/3 of a 1 pint narrow milk carton. Staple (adult do this) a strip across the top for a handle. Show the children how to make 'bunny' shapes - a sitting up bunny - ears on top, round head and fat body the width of the milk carton (a bit like the traditional cat drawing). Give him a face and whiskers. Glue a strip of green construction paper around the milk carton - if they cut it wider than the height of the milk carton basket, they can leave some sticking up over the top edge and fringe it for grass. Make another circle the same size as the body circle and glue it to the opposite side of the basket and have the children glue a cotton ball on it for the tail.

Put cotton balls, paper shavings or grass in the basket as a nest for the eggs. Put one boiled egg dyed by the child and add one chocolate one when the children are outside for play.

Make baskets out of paper soup bowls by covering them with tissue paper and decoupage.

Make baskets from the brown lunch bags. Cut the bag off at the desired height and then make a handle and staple on. The children love to make their own 'grass' - bring in a paper shredder and give each child a piece of green photocopy paper or tissue paper and run it through the shredder. Decorate the basket with drawings or glue on decorated eggs, rabbits, etc.

Have children cut strips of coloured paper and weave them in and out of tomato or strawberry baskets (the small, green ones). Fill with Easter grass and put in candy or a couple of dyed boiled eggs. Use pipe cleaners for the handle and decorate with ribbons.

**Real grass in a basket:** Use the strawberry baskets and weave paper or ribbon through to decorate. Line the inside with saran wrap and put about 4 cm. of soil in the bottom. Plant grass seed. If you do this about 2/3 weeks before Easter you can put your eggs in a basket filled with real grass!

### **Easter Chicks**

**Cute Chick:** Photocopy a big egg onto yellow construction paper. Trace each student's hands (both of them). Have the students cut out the egg (which becomes the chick's body) and their hands and glue one hand to each side of the egg to form wings for the chick. Add wiggly eyes and an orange triangle shaped beak.



To make these Easter chicks, you need one egg cup (cut from a styrofoam egg carton) and two cotton balls for each child, powdered tempera paint, a large Zip-Loc bag, a hole punch, scraps of blue and orange construction paper, blue, scissors and markers.

1. Cut individual egg cups from an egg carton. Make V-shaped notches the top of each to resemble half of a cracked eggshell.

2. With markers, have child write their names on the bottom of the cup and an Easter message on the front if you so choose.

3. Put 2 teaspoons of powdered paint in a Zip-Loc bag with two cotton balls. Seal carefully and shake vigorously. Shake off any excess paint. (You can substitute yellow cotton balls.)

4. Cover the inside bottom of the cup with glue.
5. Place 1 cotton ball in the cup for the chicks body. Place a drop of glue on top and add another cotton ball for the head.
6. Punch out two blue dots and glue on for eyes.
7. Cut a small diamond shape from orange paper and fold in half. Glue on for beak.

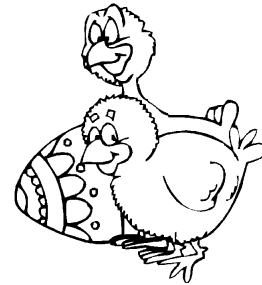
### **Basket Bonus**

"This is one of my favorite ideas!

Prepare a basket full of bonus-time activities to use as fillers! Write several short activities (see my suggestions below) on separate slips of paper. Fold each slip and place it inside a plastic egg. Place all the eggs in a basket filled with Easter grass. When you have a few spare minutes, open an egg and read aloud the activity for the students to complete!

- Make as many words as you can using only the letters in the words 'bunny rabbit'.
- Name as many animals that you can think of that have a white fur coat.
- Name as many words that you can think of that begin with the letter h, like hop.
- Name things you may find in an Easter basket.
- Name things that would fit into a plastic egg.
- Name all the animals that lay eggs.
- Name movies or TV shows that have bunnies in them.
- Name all the words that rhyme with bunny.

A good idea is to reward a small prize to each winner!!!



### **An Easter Bulletin Board**

"A very simple bulletin board that I did was with iridescent blue paper for the sky, bottom 1/3 of the board was green grass. Then I got a really cute graphic of an Easter Bunny and copied it on white construction paper. She is sitting in the middle of the board with the words on either side 'Hoppy Spring' in deep pink letters. The students made large eggs with repeating patterns on them and they had to be symmetrical (top matching the bottom). We did that for a math lesson yesterday- (abb/aab type patterns). I stapled their eggs all over the grass. It's an easy bulletin board to replace by leaving the background up for the next few months (ladybug - good deeds - tulip stories...)"

### **Chick and Egg**

"We take old wallpaper books and find a stripe or flower that would make a pretty Easter egg. We trace a tag board egg shape and cut it out. Then we make a zig zag cut across the egg to make it look like it has cracked in half. Next we paste the egg on construction paper with the zig zag cut towards the top. We make the shape of a chick (one large circle with a smaller circle placed on top but a little to the side and of course a triangle for a beak) coming out of the top of the egg.

The last part is time consuming but worth the effort. I have yellow tissue paper cut into small 1 to 1 1/4 inch squares. The children place a little liquid glue on a piece of scratch paper. Then they take a pencil with a good eraser. They place the eraser in the middle of one of the yellow tissue pieces, gently squeeze the tissue around the pencil and tip it in the Elmer's glue and carefully place it on the chick shape. The more they place on the chick the fluffier the chick appears. We have a few dark colored tissue papers so they can give the chick an eye. They use markers to color the beak orange. They really are quite pleased with their pictures."

# Earth Day

Earth Day is April 22. Earth Day is every day! Plan some interesting activities for this special day.

- Read the books The Lorax or The Wump World.
- Make recycled paper. Tear up egg cartons. Put the pieces in a pot with detergent, cook on low for 2-3 hours. Put in food processor, until smooth consistency. Add water to mixture before and after cooking. You can add a touch of food colouring to enhance your paper. Strain through screen until desired thickness - flip over onto newspaper, put more newspaper and towels on top. Cover with heavy books, etc., for 24 hours. Peel off paper and let dry for 24 more hours. You can also use old newspaper and other scrap paper.
- Make bird houses or feeders. You can use milk cartons or plastic milk jugs.
- Propagate house plants to sell as a fund-raiser or to use in your classroom as air fresheners.
- Do a garbage study from cafeteria waste cans at the end of a typical school day. Identify aluminum, plastic, paper, food, glass, etc. Discuss doing this at home and what the children can do to help.
- Plant a native tree and/or wildflower seeds.
- Clean the area close to the school.
- Visit a recycling centre.
- Begin recycling programs in your school or analyze the ones already in place and suggest improvements.
- Visit a nature centre.



Download cute Earth Day charts: <http://www.planetpals.com/pprecycle.html>

"Earth Day activities are actually the culmination of about 3 weeks to one month of projects. I begin by introducing the classroom globe, discussing the Earth as our home which we share with many other living things. We talk about what people can do to hurt and help the earth (introducing the concepts of pollution, conservation). I read Whose Forest Is It? in which forest animals and a human all claim, 'This is my forest' until a wise owl points out that it is everyone's forest. This leads us to a discussion about sharing natural resources with earth's creatures, and our responsibility to be 'earth protectors'.

Each child receives a mini-globe keychain. The key chains remain in the children's cubbies until Earth Day. Die cut paper key shapes are sent home. Each time the child or family performs an 'earth saving act' (cleaning up litter, conserving water, paper, etc.), the parent helps to write on a 'key' what the act was, then sends it to school to be discussed during Circle Time then placed on the child's key ring.

During this period we learn about ways to conserve: shut off water while brushing teeth, use only three cranks of paper towel for hand drying ('One, two, three, Save a Tree!'), recycling materials into crafts, reducing trash (we collect and stomp on empty plastic milk jugs - with caps on to discover the air pressure that forces the cap off when we reduce the jugs), re-using things like plastic spoons, etc.

We also learn about the dangers that trash can pose for animals, and collect plastic six-pack rings to cut up so that they cannot choke an animal.

We learn songs related to the theme: 'Happy Earth Day To You!!' (tune of 'Happy Birthday', just substitute the words 'happy earth day' for 'happy birthday'), 'We've Got the Whole World In Our Hands' (while passing an inflatable globe around the circle), and 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' (To the tune of 'The More We Get Together':

Reduce, reuse, recycle, recycle, recycle.

Reduce, reuse, recycle, it's easy to do.

'Cause your world is my world and my world is your world,

Reduce, reuse, recycle, it's easy to do!

On Earth Day, we invite parents, have a playground cleanup, the children perform songs and a play from the book, **Whose Forest Is it?** Children are presented their keychains to take home with the reminder that earth saving must be a life long project. Then we enjoy a healthful (our bodies are a natural resource that we must take care of) picnic prepared by the families."

"This is a great Earth Day Project that I use. It is one of my favourites and looks great on my door and bulletin board. Read a lot of Earth Day Books before starting.

"First, soak a coffee filter. Put it on a half sheet of white construction paper. The child paints the coffee filter with blue and green water colours to make it look like the Earth. Cover and colour the entire filter. The colours seep through to the white paper. Let it dry and then remove the filter. Cut a circle (the Earth) from the white paper. Mount on top of one piece of black construction paper going the long way. The children write about Earth Day and how they can help save the Earth on white lined paper and mount this under the Earth circle on the black paper. Trace kids hands out of blue and green paper and cut out. Mount these in a circle around an larger earth that you have water coloured and mounted on a sheet of black poster board or a tackboard with a sign that says 'THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH IS IN OUR HANDS'. Let the kids use white crayon to draw stars around the Earth on the black paper. This looks really great as a bulletin board or on the door."

### **We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands**

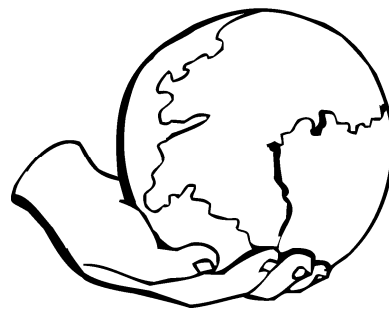
verse 1 - We've got the whole world in our hands

verse 2 - We've got clean water for the fish

verse 3 - We've got clean air in our hands

verse 4 - We've got no garbage on the ground

verse 5 - We've got the whole world in our hands



Your kids can go on a 'pollution patrol' scavenger hunt to look for different types of pollution and signs of potential pollution right in their own community.

Begin the activity by asking the group what kinds of things come to mind when they think of pollution. List their ideas on a chart.

Briefly explain pollution. Don't forget to add water, air, and noise pollution as well as land pollution! After explaining pollution, ask children if they want to add anything or delete anything from their list. Tell the group that they will be going outside to look for some of the types of pollution that you talked about.

Before taking the children outside, show the kids some examples of pollution 'evidence' they might find on their hunt. You might bring in things such as an empty beverage can, some litter from a fast-food restaurant, an empty container of household cleaner and other trash, or you could show pictures of cars, smokestacks and so on.

Once you are outside, tell the kids that they should rely on their senses to help them locate and identify pollution. For example, they might smell exhaust, see oil spots on the road or hear a noisy plane.

Note: You could have the children work in teams, with each team focusing on just one form of pollution. Different teams could search for pollution they can see, hear, or smell. Or they could look for pollution on land, in water, or in the air. Each time someone comes across some pollution, discuss where it came from and what effects it might have on wildlife and the environment.

"I heard about worm recycling years ago and purchased a kit. The kit contained bedding for the worms, a container, and worms. I make vermicomposters with my class every year for earth week. The children bring in ice cream containers. We fill the containers 1/3 full of peat moss, 1/3 full of worm droppings, and then add worms. I usually limit the kids to 15 worms. They reproduce if they are well fed. The children take them home, and feed them for at least a while. I encourage parents to add the compost to their gardens; scraps, worms and all. The worms are "red wigglers" which can sometimes be purchased from bait shops.

The bedding has to be changed about once a term, more often if lots of fruit and vegetable scraps have been added. I use peat moss. It is easier to find and use than shredded paper, and the worms like it."

What happens to buried garbage? Do an experiment. Bury part of a plastic bag and a lettuce leaf in wet soil. Wait a week and use a fork to dig them up. What do you see?

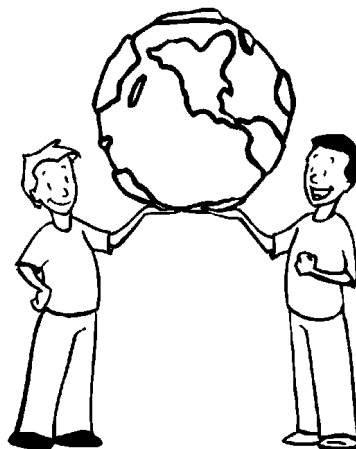
How much garbage is in our lunch?

1. Put your lunch out on your desk.
2. Count the number of boxes, bags and bottles. Remember to count your lunch bag or box.
3. Count the number of boxes, bags and bottles that you will keep and reuse.
4. Count the number of boxes, bags and bottles that you will throw away.

How can we reuse things that we used to think of as trash? Brainstorm ways we can re-use pop bottles, tin cans, boxes, paper, plastic containers, etc.

### Our Earth

The Earth is ours to enjoy  
For every little girl and boy.  
But we must always be aware  
That all its beauty we must share.  
With all the children yet to come,  
Who want to laugh and play and run  
Around the trees and in the fields.  
So we must keep our planet free  
From messy trash and debris  
With air that's clean and fresh and clear  
For all to breathe from year to year.  
We must never ever abuse  
Our sweet Earth that's ours to use.





"We have a wonderful Earth Day every year. We get as many volunteers as we can to do mini-lessons on various topics throughout the day. A schedule is set up and then teachers sign up for x number of lessons depending on the number of volunteers we have. Our teachers who do not have a full-time classroom choose a topic to present, too. (Since we do this every year, the teacher only has to develop one lesson and/or experiment and use it every year.) Our local technical school, TV weathermen, some high school classes, local forestry people, college professors, game and wildlife officers, hobbyists, businesses, etc., come and share with our children. The cafeteria even grills hamburgers outside and we all eat outside. Because we are such a large school, 1200 students, we have many, many exhibits and mini-lessons. Our science teacher coordinates the project."

"You might want to read book *Recycling* by Gail Gibbons. Then I actually bring in things from my recycling box and we talk about things that can be recycled at home. I send home directions put out by my town too. It's amazing how many children tell me that they don't recycle at home."

"Watch *The Lorax* on video. Have kids write in journal as many forms of pollution as they can spot. Encourage them to give opinion on what happened."

"Our entire Grade One unit brings handtowels from home to use at the restroom instead of paper towels. We pin them to our pants. We make quite an impression. When asked, 'Why do you have a towel?' We answer, 'We're saving trees.' You could also save the paper towels used the next day to show just how much paper was saved the day before. "

"We are having a 'no waste day' where each student is asked to have a packed lunch with nothing that will be thrown away (no small juice boxes, no little yogurt containers, no plastic spoons, etc...) Also one day we will count how many juice boxes are thrown away during the lunch period and multiply that by the amount of school days to see how much of that waste we generate every year. We are also having an aluminum can drive. The students will be working on building an art project solely with recycling materials. (My students are building a whole city with boxes and cans and plastic containers and bottle caps, etc...)"

"I'm making posters. I took the digital camera, and we all went outside and took pictures. Then I enlarged them on the computer and printed them. We entitled it **Save Our Earth**. Pictures are: someone picking up litter, title: **Cassie says "Don't Litter, put trash in it's place"**. Someone looking up at the sky: **Jeremy says "Keep our air clean"**. **Matthew says "Plant a tree"**. **Ashley says "Plant flowers"**. **Kyle picks up cans and says "Recycle cans"**. (keep our rivers and lakes clean, recycle plastic bottles, recycle newspapers, etc.)"



# Mother's and Father's Day

"We make flower pens, using cheap bic pens. We clip a blossom from a bunch of silk flowers and first tape the flower to the pen. The next step is to wrap, wrap, wrap, wrap the pen with green floral tape, working in a leaf clipping halfway down. They are adorable.

"For volunteers, you could use a clay flowerpot, stuffed with a piece of florist's foam. Put a dab of spanish moss on the top. Poke the pens in and it serves as a great holder. Decorate the outside of the pot with paint pens, adding a cute saying 'Thanks for helping us blossom'. The kids could also sign the pot with the pens."

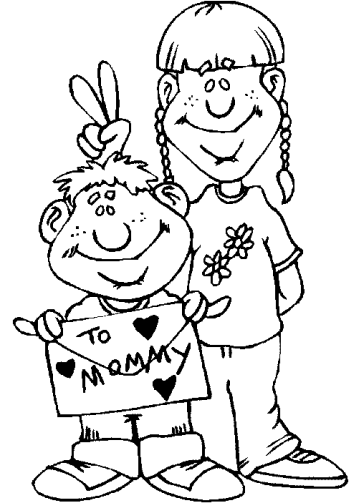
## A Book For Mother

"This could be for mother or father. Turn 8 1/2 x 11 paper sideways. I type and put the starting words on each page. The kids complete a rough version and then copy onto the good booklet.

The pages are:

1. My mom's favourite colour is \_\_\_\_\_
2. My mom's favourite television show is \_\_\_\_\_
3. My mom's favourite food is \_\_\_\_\_
4. I like my mom to cook \_\_\_\_\_
5. My mom's pet name for me is \_\_\_\_\_
6. My mom looked really beautiful the day she \_\_\_\_\_
7. My mom looked really funny the day she \_\_\_\_\_
8. I would like my mom to know \_\_\_\_\_

Usually for the last one the kids put 'that I love her'. Kids have said their moms get teary by the time they are done and I know they keep them."



## A Plant For Mom

"I buy clear plastic party cups...the kind that are small and wide. The children paint a coffee filter with water paint (like tie-dye) and I put it in between two cups. I punch a hole in each side and lace ribbon through it. It's a lot cheaper, and the parents don't have to contribute money. We plant marigolds in biodegradable pots and I put those in."

## A Special Morning

"I teach the children how to make breakfast for their moms. We make placemats, cards, those tea bag cups, a flower pot light switch cover, a place card that says 'World's Greatest Mom' and then I teach them how to make cinnamon toast. With juice it's kid friendly."

"The message is: 'Mom, my love for you just grows and grows!' We fold a 12 x 18 inch white or pastel paper in half lengthwise (like a hotdog bun). Match the ends and fold again. (There would be 4 equal pieces if opened.) Match the ends and fold again. (There are 8 equal pieces if opened.) Open and cut down the middle on that original fold. You now have two strips that are 6 x 18 inches. Tape these two pieces end to end. You now have a card that is 6 inches wide and 36 inches long!

"Re-bend the folds to make the card fold 'accordion' style. (Some children will need help with this part.) On the top section, the child will draw a blossom and write the first word of the message: **Mom** From the blossom, draw a stem that goes down one side of all the sections of the folded card.

Add leaves randomly. Space the words of the message (*my love for you grows and grows*) on each section, to be read as the card unfolds and 'grows'. The card will 'grow' as it unfolds. The children can give Mom a plant or bulbs, etc., with the card."

"I read the story called *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch. The children copied 'Dear Mom, I'll love you forever. I like you because.....' and then wrote a sentence or more. (signed) Love, Child's Name. (Since this was a 'published' piece, spelling had to be accurate.) They did this on lined 8 1/2" by 11" paper. I mounted the writing onto pink or lavender construction paper and laminated it. Then, I used the hole punch to punch around the 'frame'. The children used narrow white ribbon to weave around frame. I made little bows and hot glued a small button to it and hot glued the bow in the top corner. They turned out great for everyone to see at the spring program and moms got an early Mother's Day present."

"I've had the kids plant marigolds in little clay plant pots for Mother's Day. One year I had the students decorate clay pots with acrylic paint using q-tips. We used yellow for the flowers and green for the stems and leaves. You could also use some red. They did a very simple plain pattern. They turned out very pretty."

"We sponge paint 2-3 flower shapes around the sides of the pot and then I glue gun a button in the center of each flower. It's very easy and looks cute. Just be sure you get the right kind of paint. I think I used one made for ceramics from a local craft/nursery store."

Our class made flower pots using small yogurt containers. We covered them with small squares of coloured tissue paper and painted over the squares with clear acrylic paint. It's very easy and satisfying for the kids. (and cheap to make) Then we planted marigold seeds in them. We're hoping they will almost be budding by Mother's Day.

### Silhouettes for Mother's Day

#### I Have a Little Shadow

I have a little shadow  
that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of it  
is more than I can see.  
So I put it on the wall  
and the teacher drew around it,

I cut it out and pasted it -  
and that is how you found it.  
I put it in an envelope  
and gave it to you today,  
To tell you that 'I love you'  
and a 'Happy Mother's Day'!



"I make a Mother's Day card with a teapot like this... Take a heavier piece of construction paper (8x11) and fold in half vertically. On the front the kids print Happy Mother's Day and make a construction paper flower, etc. Then on the inside on the top half they print the following poem on white lined paper first and then glue it on....or if I have really low kids they just glue on a photocopy of the poem. On the bottom half they use a teapot tracer and cut out a teapot. I use old wallpaper pages for the teapot. They glue it on the card on the bottom and the two sides leaving the top open. Use lots of glue. I then securely (learned that lesson) tuck in a teabag. Then of course they write to and from. It's very cute and well received."

This is a gift for Mother's Day  
I try my best everyday  
But, if you need a rest from me  
Relax and have a cup of tea.



### **A Recipe Book**

"Each mother receives a book with the recipes the children have written. Of course there are many different ways to use this idea. The students signed their names on the cover and dated it. I titled it 'How my mother cooks my favourite food'. Here is just one example of a recipe that appeared in last year's book: Macaroni and Cheese...whole lot of cheese, a little bit of butter, noodles. Noodles are soft when they come out of the box. Put it in a pot on top of the stove. Cooks for 10 minutes. Put it in a bowl, sometimes with ketchup."

### **A Mother's Day Project**

"I did this last year and it was a really cute project.

1. Paper weaving - I bought the pre-cut weaving mats then cut strips out of various colours of construction paper. I did not give the kids the colour choice of the mats but they could choose any colour(s) for the strips and weave them in any pattern they chose.

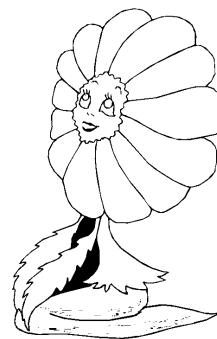
2. The following four projects were then completed and glued onto the paper weaving and laminated.

(a) 6" x 6" white paper - children drew a picture of themselves and their mother doing something they like to do together. I then gave them a fine tipped black marker to trace over their drawing. When the tracing was complete I erased their pencil lines. They also used the black pen to write a sentence to go with the picture. These pictures ARE NOT coloured...they're left black and white. When done, I glued the picture to a piece of black construction paper and trimmed the black paper to about a one-quarter inch border.

(b) Using black paint I had each child do a handprint. When it was dry I trimmed around it and then printed their name and May 2000 along one edge.

(c) Using some shiny metallic art paper I had each child cut out a heart (I let them choose the colour). Using a permanent overhead marker I had them print 'love' and then their name (e.g. Love David).

(d) I had 'mug shot' style photos that I had taken of each child at the beginning of the year. I cut around their heads in a circle. They glued their photo onto a piece of yellow construction paper then cut around the picture leaving a small border. This is the center of a flower. They then chose a colour to make their flower. They glued the photo onto the center of the coloured paper, drew petals around it and cut out the flower. I gave each a strip of green paper left over from the paper weaving to make a stem and leaves.



"I glued the drawing in the top left corner of the weaving, the flower in the top right, the heart in the bottom left and the handprint in the bottom right - but I did not glue them all lined up but rather at angles and in some cases, overlapping each other. Then the project is laminated."

"Someone at my school just purchased plastic light switch covers for 24¢ each at Walmart. She gave the children permanent markers and let them have at it. Many made a flower garden. They were very cute and definitely cheap and easy."

### Books for Mom

"Last year we had a very successful author's tea for Mother's Day! The students were all seated in a row on chairs with a microphone in the middle. The moms were seated in a large semi-circle facing the students. One by one, the students went up to the microphone, introduced themselves and read the title of their books. Then, after that, they walked over to their mom and stood behind her. When everyone was finished, the teacher told the kids to sit with their moms and read their books to them. It was so nice. I'm going to do this in May. We will sing a song or recite a poem at the beginning and the end of the session."

### A Living Gift

"The children make a little planter for mother's day. They paint a coffee filter with water paint, and I put it between two clear plastic cups. I make a hole through the cups and filter and tie a ribbon through it. Then, they put their plants in it."

### I Love You When....

"My partner always does a copy and paste lesson on the computer for this. The children type 'I love you when ', and then they highlight it and copy it. They make an addition to the original sentence, make several returns, and then paste the sentence starter again.

"He usually expects 3 or 4 per child which are printed and then pictures added. Some are real tear jerkers! The children mount them on construction paper cards addressed to moms."

### Father's Day

"I am going to bring in one of my husband's dress shirts, a tie and a pair of his dress shoes. I will have a mom helper take a picture of each child wearing this oversized outfit. Then, the kids will decorate a frame to put the picture in and write 'Dad, no one can fill your shoes.'"

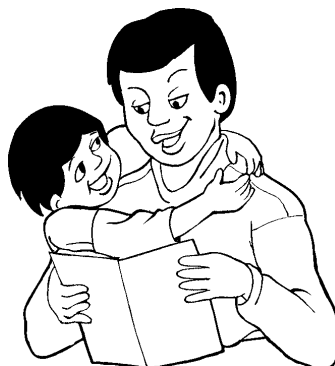
"This is a Father's Day Poem I do with my children. I have them put a footprint on the page with the poem and a picture of themselves. They turn out neat! For those children who don't have a Dad, I usually substitute Mom, or Grandpa or Grandma depending on the situation.

'Walk a little slower, Daddy'  
Said a little child so small.  
'I'm following in your footsteps,  
And I don't want to fall.

Sometimes your steps are very fast  
Sometimes they're hard to see;  
So walk a little slower, Daddy,  
For you are leading me.

Someday when I'm all grown up,  
You're what I want to be;  
Then I will have a little child  
Who'll want to follow me.

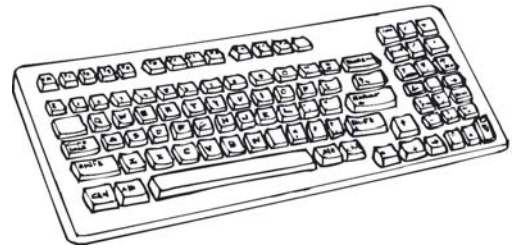
And I would want to lead just right,  
And know that I was true;  
So walk a little slower, Daddy,  
For I must follow you.'



# Technology

## Keyboarding

"I had a mom draw a computer keyboard on a shower curtain. The kids can walk the shower curtain and spell their names and other words. Then they go to the computer and do it. I am trying to get them to know where the letters are. After Christmas they can begin to write simple sentences on the computer. Have the children use a large font with the correct primary letter formation."



"Photocopy your computer keyboard by laying it gently on the glass (it comes out pretty well). You can laminate the copies if you desire. Then have the children practice right at their desks or tables on their "keyboard". Show them how to put their fingers on the home keys. You might want to color them or mark them in some way before laminating. Then have them find the letters for their names. Teach them where the return key is, where the "delete" key is, and how to make a capital letter, and a space between words."

One teacher puts houses on the "home row", and worms on the lower row and birds on the upper row.

"I have seen large (shower curtain sized) keyboards created where the kids become the keys, or jump from key to key to be the fingers. Then have them find the letters for their names."

"I found a pattern of a keyboard and photocopied it so each of my students have one. We practice how to put hands on it and first they learn to 'type' their names. Then we do other words (it is a good practice for vocabulary words) and then they get turns on the computer to try it.

I also teach my children the basics of word processing - one skill at a time. I demonstrate and model the skill and then they take turns trying it. They learn the 'enter' key, the space bar, the 'backspace' key, the 'shift' key to make capital letters, the punctuation, etc. They love to type!"

"This year I have focused on teaching my students to keyboard. We have a computer lab with 25 Apple LC580 computers. I use the program Davidson's Kid Keys - The Magical Typing Tutor. My children go to the lab for 5 - 10 minutes every day to keyboard in addition to the two days assigned as our regular computer time when we can work on special projects or activities. I realize some people feel Grade One students are too little to keyboard because their hands are so small. Since we work just five to 10 minutes, I do not feel this is a problem. By the second term they are all comfortable with keyboarding."

"The computer lab at my school has a shower liner with a huge keyboard drawn on it. The idea was that the little students would be able to actually walk on it to find keys and learn where they were. It especially helped when it was necessary to do keys in a certain order. I have trouble when my students making capital letters. They want to try and push the shift key and the letter at the same time. We practice holding the shift key down and pushing the letter. This large chart is very handy!"

## Computers and Your Students

"I am very fortunate in that our computer lab is right across the hall. We have had many changes to the lab in the past few years to make it 'student' friendly. Each of our students has to type in their first name and the first letter of their last name and then we have a class secret password. When they get to Grade 3 and up they then choose their own private password.



To start the year, I am happy just teaching them to log off and on. I usually would take 4-5 students at a time, and the others would be at centers. This of course only works because of my location. The other grade one teacher uses her aide to help out. Sometimes I have parent volunteers as well.

Once they can log on and off, then I use living books for the first month or so. We also have a phonics program and other programs that have the icons on the main windows screen. Now most of my students can find the program they want and some can even go into the internet.

After Christmas I will introduce them to the paint program and writing programs and allow them to do things that they can save and print."

"This may help with the children asking questions. I bring bright yellow cups to the computer lab and when they have a question they put them on top of their computer. Then they do not have their hand up and can continue to try to fix the problem. They are also not yelling your name and trying to get your attention."

"I begin by introducing the children to the parts of the computer. Each child has a computer keyboard made out of tag which I use to help them learn the keys. We call them lap tops! We discuss the rules of the computer which includes holding disks correctly.. We also establish the importance of having clean hands when they work on a computer. I bring a small group around one computer and I show them what I want them to learn. Then I immediately put them on the computers and hold my hands behind my back while I orally guide them through what they are to do. The hands-on approach seems to work much better than showing them after the first time.

My kids play educational games, but I also teach them simple word processing. I have files set up for each child - they learn how to find it, they click on their file and it is ready to go. I have it set with a large primary font. I teach the children how to make capital letters, the space bar, backspace and the 'enter' key. They know how to 'save' their work. They just love being able to write stories on the computer!

A number of my students have computers at home, and these children usually are more competent. I often teach these kids first and then they can be helpers when they understand what needs to be done."

"My first priority is word processing on the computer. In the beginning of the year we are writing right away. After journal time we gather around the computer for about 10 minutes. Each day I add a skill or two and start asking kids to come tell me and then show me how to turn it on, get to the word processing page, etc. They want a turn so they pay attention. Then when it is journal time, I can have some children on the computers if they follow these rules, two hands, no banging, no food ever, etc. It is a bit of extra work, but pays off."

*The following was written by Cathy-Dee Brand, of Fort Vermilion, Alberta. She has been an active user of the internet and e-mail listserves for years, and has crafted the excellent website for her school.*  
<http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/>

In Alberta a technology outcomes curriculum was implemented in the year 2000. Since then we have worked at trying to meet these outcomes in a variety of situations within our school division. This fall a committee has been set up to address these outcomes. I will be one of the facilitators within my school helping to move technology into our curriculum.

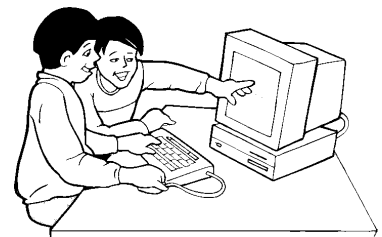
In Division 1 we spend more time on the basics, learning proper technology etiquette, language, keyboarding skills, etc., so for the first two months of school we will do a lot of practicing. We will learn how to log on to the computer, open a program, use the mouse and use the keyboard. For many of our students, school is their first experience with a computer but they catch on quickly. Then they also should experience different programs, the internet, using e-mail, printing, writing a story, using clip art and other basics.

In the past I have done more of the 'technology' side of things with projects. So with e-mail pals, my students would write the letters on paper and then I would type them and send them as emails. This year I hope to have them doing some of the work and thus meet more of the outcomes. Since our school goes to grade 4 it will be quite easy for us to find ways to incorporate technology into our lessons. These are some of the ideas I'm kicking around in my head right now and hopefully we'll be able to do some of them next year and progress from there.

- e-mail pals - with our younger students we may have the older students assist them with the typing and sending of e-mails - especially for the first few times.
  - using paint to create a drawing to be used for a story they have written
  - typing a story in a word document and using clip art to illustrate it
  - researching for science fair
  - exploring specific websites for information. I think I will do this in conjunction with the science fair and have my students do reports on an animal. I will have this very controlled, but I'm hoping it will work. I may use their reading buddies to help with this project.
  - doing a webquest
  - using the internet to find information on the author we will be studying
  - using various programs, living books, storybook weaver, Kids Pix to learn from or create from.
  - learning how to use the VCR and TV set-up - the student of the week will have this honour
- using other technologies such as the listening center, overhead projector, CD Player to enhance their learning
- doing author studies
  - using the web to find specific information on other places, weather, personal interest items.

Other ways I see us using technology (especially the computer lab)

- solving math problems via websites
- using the internet to find information to create graphs
- learning about other communities
- researching projects for science fair
- finding a poem for public speaking
- typing a story or poem
- drawing a picture
- saving these to a disk to be submitted for publication on our webpage
- recording their story on a audio-cassette
- using items like an overhead to create a display, use in a presentation, doing webquests,

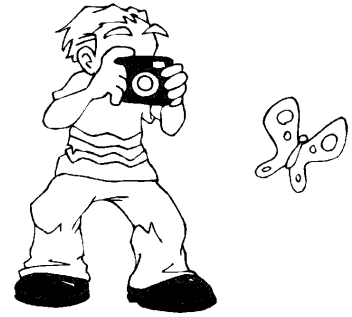




## Digital Cameras

"After watching my pre-school grandchildren having such fun taking pictures, I would like to share this!

The digital camera is a piece of technology that your students can easily learn to use around the school. Just attach a ribbon or cord to the camera so the student will be able to hang it around his or her neck. This will lessen your worries that the student may drop it. Teach the whole class how to take pictures with the camera and then let each student practice with an adult. Pick a relatively inexpensive point-and-shoot - the fewer dials and settings, the better. If they make mistakes and take pictures of the sky or their own feet, the pictures can simply be deleted and the students can start again. This is the great part of digital cameras! There is no cost after the initial camera cost. If the students get to practice fairly often they will remember what to do and be quite proud of taking pictures. This may be their first experience handling a camera, but you have opened a new horizon to them. They will always remember this experience in your classroom.



Keep in mind that these pictures could be used in PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, or most other word processing programs and also programs such as Print Shop. You can make little books with the photos and simple print below. The children love these! You can manipulate the pictures, by cropping them and changing colours. Pictures can be inexpensively printed on copy paper, if you wish.

Display the children's photos outside your room, and do include your projects on your web page and class weekly newsletter. Use them to inspire creative writing, too.

1. As you are studying colours, have the students walk around the classroom, school or outside taking pictures of the colour that you are studying. These pictures may be inserted into a PowerPoint Booklet, called for example, 'Things That Are Blue', or made into a hard copy book.
2. As you are studying numbers, assign each student a number and they are to find things that correspond with that number and take a picture of them. For example, if a student is assigned the number 3, he would look around the classroom, school, or outside for things that are gathered in 3's. He may find three books together in the library, or three apples in the cafeteria. Then he takes a picture of the books or apples. It may be necessary to create their own things on a table and take a picture after they arrange the correct number. Example: I have the number 12. So I lay 12 crayons on the table and take a picture. You can then make a Number Book in Microsoft Word, with each number being a different page. You would have the student word process the word for the number; the figure for the number, and then insert the picture. The student should be able to type his/her name on the page.
3. As you study shapes, have the students take pictures of various shapes. If they can find something that includes more than one shape in its object, give them extra points. Example: In a birdhouse, the student may find a circle, a triangle, and a rectangle. His perception is excellent and should be recognized.
4. You are studying the letters of the alphabet. Don't wait until the very end to create an alphabet book. Begin with each letter and have the students take pictures that begin with that letter. Gather them into some type of publication.
5. Make a classification book, in which the students include pictures that are alike in some way. On the next page, tell how they are similar; or different.
6. When studying rhyming words, see if the students can take two pictures of things that rhyme. Place the pictures in a Rhyming Book.
7. The students should be able to create thank-you cards and include digital pictures in the cards,

either of themselves or something of their choice.

8. The students would love to take a picture of their choice and then write a few sentences or create a storybook using pictures and their creative story.

9. Your students are learning the names of the days of the week, or calendar months, create a slide presentation demonstrating what they do on particular days. For the months, take pictures of things that could happen during that month.

10. Create a body part book for science: head, arms, shoulder, legs, knees, trunk, toes, fingers, etc. Students would love to photograph one another.

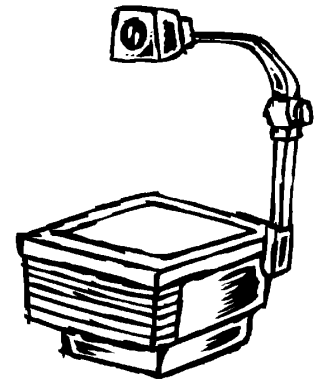
11. Students studying science would be able to create a publication of Things That are Hot; Things That are Cold; Local Trees; Wildflowers; or Simple Machines. Students can create any type of publication using these ideas.

There are lots more - limited only by your imagination!

"I take individual pictures the first week of school (basically head shots) and then make lots of black and white copies (all sizes) on our copier. We use these for a variety of projects: We make books and create an author page to add; we correspond with elderly people in the community and include our photos; penpal exchanges; we incorporate them into many art projects...collages, Mother's Day placemats, Christmas ornaments, etc. I do class pictures, too and make black and white copies and each child writes about some school experience (we did this at the end of the year). There are so many things to use photographs with! I haven't been able to find the time to organize all of my candid shots into albums, so I usually just arrange a few pertaining to a unit or whatever, tape to a poster board, add a few interesting comments, and display outside our classroom. We get many compliments."

## Using Your Overhead Projector

"I use mine ALL the time. I put a lot of board work on transparencies, then store them by subject in folders to reuse each year. I do something with the reading vocabulary (scrambled words, fill in the blanks, find an antonym (or synonym) for \_\_\_\_\_, write in alphabetical order, etc.) And skills (write 5 sentences in the correct sequence, copy the sentences and highlight on your paper the \_\_\_\_\_ (compound words, contractions, verbs, etc) In math it's great for showing a skill and then letting volunteers work with overhead manipulative.....they have them for every conceivable math skill. The kids love their chance to work at the overhead and stay involved better than with board drill."



"I use my projector often. One thing the kids love is what I call -'Write Together'. I choose something to write about. For example: a silly sentence, factual information, a short poem, etc. I begin to write it on the overhead and as I do we talk about spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., and they copy what I write. They call out the correct spelling and punctuation. They love to do this, especially on a cloudy day when I can make the room dark. I also use the overhead for math. I have coins and shapes to use for the overhead. It's something different. You can purchase overhead coins and clocks to use with money and time skills."

"I use an overhead extensively. I hung a white sheet over my chalkboard to be the screen."

# Parent Communication

## A Parent Handbook

Most schools have handbooks, but it is useful for each classroom teacher to have a handbook, too. If you put it on the computer, it is easily modified each year to meet the changes in your curriculum, in the district's policy, updates, etc. The elements of the handbook remain the same each year.

A parent information guide for a classroom can have these sections:

A cover page with a picture that is representative of your theme for the year (if you have one), your name, grade and room number, and an index of what the handbook contains.

A welcome page with the names of the teacher, principal, assistant principal, librarian and other important people. Put the school's phone number.

A page that contains your philosophy of education, and/or the school's philosophy.

A list of supplies that the student may need along with a 'wish list' of things parents could provide.

A page devoted to the discipline plan adopted by your district, the school, and/or your classroom.

Information about the curriculum. Include expectations and procedures regarding homework. Include a copy of the homework assignment paper that parents should look for each week, if applicable.

Information about parent/teacher conferences, progress reports, and report cards.

Schedules for the gym, library days, etc.

Information for the parents about volunteering in the classroom.



## Parent - Teacher Conferences

Before the parent-teacher conference, one teacher sends this home for the parent to complete.

### Homework for Parents!

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Child: \_\_\_\_\_

To help prepare for the upcoming conferences, please answer any or all of the questions below. Return this form to school no later than \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for your comments and questions!

1. How does your child currently feel about school?
2. How often do you and your child discuss school, and what do you discuss?
3. What school subject does your child enjoy the most?
4. What are your feelings about your child's homework assignments?
5. Where and when does your child usually do his/her homework? What kind of homework assistance do you give?
6. About what, if any, schoolwork has your child expressed concern?
7. What concerns, if any, do you have about your child's interactions with the teacher and/or other students?
8. In what ways can I help you and your child?
9. What questions would you like to have answered at our conference?

## Student-Led Conferences

"I do student led conferences. They are wonderful and parents LOVE them!! I make up a booklet that lists one or two activities from each subject area and the students lead their parents around the room and do what the booklet says. The booklet also tells the parents what to look for. For example:

1. Read a story from your creative writing book to your parent.

Parent look for: capitals, periods, good sentences, does it have a beginning, middle and end.

2. Take your parent over to the clock and demonstrate the following times: 12:00, 2:30, 4:00

Parent: Do they use the proper hand position?

3. Complete the following math questions in front of your parent.

Parent: Are they memorized? Are there reversals?

4. Show your mom or dad the word wall. Read 10 words from it. ....etc

Parents say they have a real understanding of what their child needs to work on when they leave - more so than the traditional interview. I am always in the room to answer any questions and if they want a follow-up traditional interview afterwards I offer to make myself available for one - it's never happened! Making the booklet takes some time, but I believe it's well worth it. You have to pump up the kids and explain what to do before the big day. Mine really look forward to it!"

## Home Reading

"I glued 24 library pockets onto a piece of poster board. After laminating, I slit the pockets open. I put each child's name on a pocket. When the kids check out my books, I can easily see at a glance who has or has not returned their books."

"I feel my home reading program plays a major role in my class' reading development. They get more practice one on one with an adult. And their parents can see their reading progress - something that was difficult before I started the home reading program. At those early stages of reading, it is VERY difficult for parents to find books that their children can actually read. Since I'm sending home appropriate books, parents aren't asking their children to read texts that are too hard.



"I've tried a number of different management systems and this is what's worked best for me. Parents are to read to their children EVERY night and children are to read to their parents EVERY night. This is usually our only homework in grade one. This demonstrates to parents how important we think the reading is and doesn't allow some other paper/pencil assignment to push reading aside because it has to be 'turned in'.

"Each night children take home 2 books. I don't know which 2 books because keeping track of titles drove me crazy. I just figure they left with 2 books and they need to return with 2 books. I just assume they are the same 2 books. If a child loses a book, I tell them to look really hard or bring me \$6. Generally, they find the book. All in all, I probably lose 2 or 3 books each year. The benefits of all the reading far outweigh the loss. If a child forgets to return their book the next day, I make them call home during recess. They either need to talk to their parent or leave a message on the answering machine. That usually cures the forgetfulness and shows that I mean it. It's the rare child who can't get into the routine of bringing the books back.

### Things to Say to Your Child While Reading at Home

If your child says a word that doesn't make sense, say:

You said ..... Does that make sense?

Read it again. What word would make sense?

Read on. What's happening?

How does the picture help?

If your child says a word that doesn't sound grammatically correct, say:

You said .....Does that sound right?

Can we say it that way?

Read it again. What would sound right?

If your child says a word that doesn't match the sounds of the letters in the word, say:

Does that look right?

If it was..... what would it begin with?

If it was .....what would it end with?

What does the word begin with?

What does the word end with?

Can you make the word you are saying match the sounds in the word you see?



## Newsletters and Notices

"I send my vocabulary word sheets home on one colour of neon paper and class newsletters home on a different colour. The parents always know what to expect on these colours - they are easy to see in a backpack!"

"I have always done my newsletter in MS Publisher. They have lots of pre-made templates that I find really easy to manipulate, although this year I am debating trying to design my own template so that parents will find certain things in the same place each time. I find Publisher easy to manipulate for clip art, text boxes, word art, etc.

Regular features in my newsletters include: student birthdays, special events, articles of relevance (usually articles directed to a few parents but don't want to be confrontational about sending it out so send to all parents), a school or family related cartoon, special thanks, etc. I have always called my newsletter the 'Division \_\_\_\_ Gazette' but this year I think it will be 'Chalk Talk'."

"I included these headings at different times last year: Noteworthy News (student teacher coming, Drug Awareness Week, etc.), Praise Corner (who made good scores on a spelling test, who was a quiet worker, etc.), Tips for Parents ((homework tips, cold weather tips, etc.), Recommended Internet Sites, Books, Videos, etc., Funnies (funny remarks by the children), Theme of the Week or Month, Help Needed, Your Opinion Counts (survey-type questions for parents to give their input, like "How do you feel about the amount of homework that I give?"

"I do my newsletter weekly. It goes home in the student folders on Monday. I list our reading vocabulary and spelling words for the current week and the coming week. I talk about our current topics of study and also mention upcoming topics. I list special days. I ask for volunteers for various activities and projects if needed. I try to share tips with parents about how to help their children study at home. Sometimes I share a paragraph from an interesting article about learning or education. The contents vary. About the only thing I do absolutely the same every week is the Spelling and Vocabulary."

"I send home a weekly newsletter and try to get it out on Fridays for the coming week. I use a desktop publishing program and generally keep the same graphics and just fill in each 'space' with updated materials, so usually I have 3-4 spaces to fill."

"I, too, do a weekly newsletter. I know it builds better communication. In my newsletter I include what concepts we have been learning this week, our theme, and what we did in Learning Stations. At the end of that section I say 'Looking ahead...' This is where I tell them what concepts we will be working on in the days to come. I also have a section that I call Parent Info and Special Dates. Here, I include things such as 'Picture Day', 'Fall Festival', 'Grade One Field Trip', etc. I also include a 'Tip of the Week' as well, such as: "Allow your child to work through an unfamiliar word by encouraging them to use their reading strategies". I also include the next week's spelling words, vocabulary words and word wall words in the newsletter. I send mine home on Fridays in the Friday Folders. I also have comment sheets in their Friday Folders that I fill out weekly. Sometimes it's just 'Johnny had a good week'...or 'Phil is having trouble focusing this week. Perhaps you have some suggestions to help him focus'. I have found these weekly comment sheets to be truly beneficial."

## Open House

"I have used the 'Treasure Hunt' idea the past two years very successfully. I printed a list of things the children were to show or do with their parents that involved different parts of the room.

This puts the burden of entertainment on my children. They became the teacher..... my assistant and I just had to stand and watch.

A few ideas:

- Show your parents the math centre and show them how to use one item in the centre.
- Show your parents the computer keyboarding program and type a sentence for them.
- Show your parents your writing journal.

After the time limit for the visitation was over, I simply flashed the lights and closed the door!"



"I have the children bring in a top of clothing and then we make our faces out of paper plates. These are attached to a clothes hanger and taped to the desk chair. We arrange the shirt or blouse on the chair and it looks like the kids are sitting in their desks when the parents come in. The bows and hair on the face are as close as we can make them to the children and it is a riot to see what they come up with. It's fun. We leave a folder of work on the desk that they have done, readers to show, listening centre they can listen to stories, programs on the computer that they can do with their children, and also the language master to show what words we are practicing."

"I always have a PARENT WANT-ADS table set up with lots of different jobs that I need help with.....so that parents can choose how they'd like to help. I try to come up with some jobs that they can do at home, as well as giving specific times and duties for parents that come during the day (I need a Listener for small groups of readers or individual readers from 9:00-9:30 on Mondays). That way parents know exactly what is needed...my parent volunteers seem to be very dependable and I think it's because they make the choice of what job they want to do, when they want to come...It's worth a try!"

Be professional and greet everyone, but don't get into individual 'conferences'. Make an appointment with anyone who needs more than a little time - some folks don't realize that there are many families for you to talk to that night."

### **A Reading Night**

"We have hosted one a couple of times and I thought it was great. We had a variety of activities going on in different classrooms - such as Celebrity Readers (invite local famous personalities such as the Mayor, High School teachers, authors, firefighters, police officers, etc.) to read to the children at 15-30 minute intervals. Another classroom had a Book Walk, instead of a Cake walk with books as the prize! There can be a movie room (movies shown are take offs on good books), a 'make it take it' room (we read the Hungry Caterpillar and then made caterpillars, that sort of thing). You can have a room where parents simply sit and read with their child with soft music in the background, or maybe have parents make flannel boards to take home and use with books read at home- endless possibilities for a fun evening."

## **Volunteers**

### **How can parents help in the classroom?**

"If parents want to help, they can listen to kids read - especially the children who do not always have support at home.

If you have a computer available, many parents are great helping kids to write on computer.

Parents can drill vocabulary words.

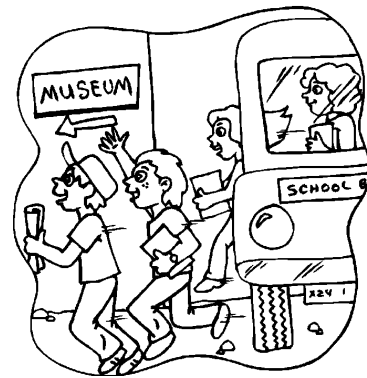
They could check kids on word wall words.

Use volunteers to drill math facts.

Let them do the 'cutty, cutty, paste, paste, print, print, print' that takes so much time in our lives - as long as the parent can do primary print neatly.

Some parents can do bulletin boards for you.

They can do filing or (here's a great idea!) tidying and cleaning cupboards or bookcases!"



### **The 'Class Parent'**

Many teachers have a 'Class Mom'. This parent is a volunteer who will call other parents when this is necessary. She will find other volunteers for field trips or special occasions. She can be given a list if there will be a class party and she will phone other parents to help and rotate helpers on each occasion. It saves the teacher a lot of work!

### **Parents in the classroom**

"Our parents HAVE to attend a class for all school volunteers where they are instructed in the use of copy machines, laminators, etc., as well as privacy issues."

"I have parents come in to help, using their special skills. This year I had a parent volunteer to make bread with my students, and we had a 'bread day'. Literature about bread was read, measurement lessons were experienced when mixing the bread dough as well as science when learning about the yeast. I have a grandmother that comes once a week and reads with each child in my class. I have parents who go with my class to a elderly day care center. We visit them once a month, and some of

them visit and read to us monthly."

### A "Helping Apple Tree"

*There are often things you need in the classroom that you buy out of your own pocket. Most parents wouldn't mind donating small items - they just have to know what you want and need. Make an apple tree bulletin board. On each apple write one thing that a parent could donate. The parent 'picks' an apple and then puts their name on a list beside the item.*

Ask for:

- small and large size zip lock bags (with the 'zipper') - several apples can have this on them
- paper plates, cotton balls, baby wipes
- art supplies, flash card sets

You can even ask for older computers! Books! Games!  
Here is a further list of things parents can donate to the classroom.

If you pick an apple from our tree,  
How very happy we will be!  
If you want to do some more,  
You could pick two, or three, or four!  
The items on the list are small,  
But they would really help us all.  
If we each will do a part,  
We'll have lots of learning, fun, and art!

yarn  
tin coffee cans  
used holiday cards  
stickers  
buttons  
bottle caps  
cloth scraps  
styrofoam peanuts  
puzzle pieces  
playing cards  
dice  
felt scraps  
wrapping paper  
wallpaper scraps  
ice cream buckets with lids  
all kinds of paper  
envelopes for the writing center  
magazines  
games or puzzles for "inside days"  
yogurt containers  
cottage cheese containers  
elastic bands  
string  
toilet paper rolls  
paper towel rolls  
post-it notes  
aluminum foil  
clothes pegs  
old t-shirts  
reward stickers  
drinking straws

pipe cleaners  
post it notes  
white pillowcases  
calendars  
sequins  
stickers  
sandpaper  
Tiddly Winks  
doilies  
magnetic letters  
small cookie sheets  
disposable cameras  
felt  
magazine subscriptions  
coffee stirrers  
scotch tape  
glue sticks  
Christmas wrapping paper  
markers  
plastic grocery bags.  
paper or plastic cups glitter  
a bag of cotton balls  
35 mm film  
blank video tapes  
books  
baby wipes  
styrofoam cups  
lids of various sizes  
popsicle sticks  
empty liquid soap containers  
Dad's shirts for painting

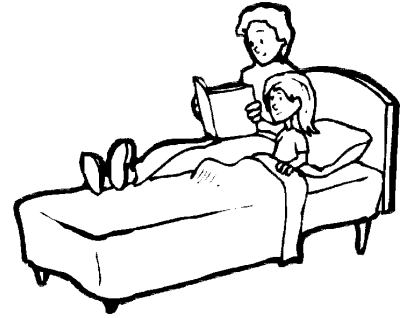
plastic spoons  
coloured tissue paper  
decks of cards  
tape measures  
provincial road maps  
beans (dried, kidney)  
baby food jars  
paper plates of various sizes  
pom-poms of various colors/sizes  
pipe cleaners of various colours  
educational games  
puzzles  
shaving cream  
math or other practice books  
sticky notes  
noodles of various shapes and sizes  
fabric scraps  
boxes of Kleenex  
rolls of paper towels  
bottle of liquid soap  
lunch bags (brown bags)  
roll aluminum foil  
roll waxed paper  
audio tapes - blank  
ribbon  
sponges  
plastic measuring cups  
plastic measuring spoons  
egg containers  
shoe boxes



# Letters for the Parents

The **single most important activity** you can do to help your child succeed in reading is reading aloud to your child and listening to your child read. Read with and to your child every day!

You are helping your child improve his/her reading skills when you do the following:



- **Read yourself!** If reading is seen to be an interesting important activity in your home, your children will want to follow your example. Read newspapers, books, ads, lists, etc., and talk about what you are reading so the child becomes interested.
- **Make sure your children read every day!** Reading - like swimming and playing the piano - is a skill. Like other skills, it gets better with practice. Children who read more become better readers.
- **Go to the library regularly.** Sit and discuss the book choices with your child. While you are there, check out a book yourself! Talk about fiction and non-fiction, and choose story books and books about the child's interests. There are also children's magazines in most libraries, and these have activities and puzzles for children to do.
- **Read aloud to your children.** Research shows that this is the one most important thing parents can do to help their children become better readers. Set aside some time each day for reading aloud. Even 10 minutes a day can have a big impact. Bedtime is a natural reading aloud time. Other busy families read aloud at breakfast or just after dinner. Start reading to your children when they are young. This improves their listening and speaking vocabulary, as there will be words in books that are not often used in daily life. Read books that you enjoy - your pleasure will show as you read.
- **Show words and read in lots of places.** Read things that come on TV, on your computer, your grocery lists, on letters and mail, when you are driving and at the mall. Words are everywhere!



- **Give books as gifts to your children.** Then keep books in a special place.

- **Make reading a privilege.** Say, 'You can stay up 15 minutes later tonight if you read in bed.' Or you might say, 'Because you helped with the dishes, I have time to read you an extra story.'

•

**If you are not a good reader, you can still encourage your children.** As your children learn to read, ask them to read to you. Many parents improve their own reading skills as they read simple books to their children!

## Top Ten Ways That Parents Can Help Improve Reading Skills

1) Set aside a regular time to read to your children every day. Studies show that regularly reading out loud to children will produce significant gains in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and the decoding of words. Whether your children are pre-schoolers or preteens, it will increase their desire to read independently.

2) Surround your children with reading material. Children with a large array of reading materials in their homes are better readers. Tempt your kids to read by having a large supply of appealing books and magazines at their reading level. Put the reading materials in cars, bathrooms, bedrooms, family rooms, and even by the TV.



3) Have a family reading time. Establish a daily 15 to 30 minute time when everyone in the family reads together silently. Seeing you read will inspire your children to read. Just 15 minutes of daily practice is sufficient to increase their ability to read fluency.

4) Have your child read orally to you each day for 10 minutes.

5) Encourage a wide variety of reading activities. Make reading an integral part of your children's lives. Have them read menus, roadside signs, game directions, weather reports, movie time listings, and other practical everyday information. Also, make sure they always have something to read in their spare time when they could be waiting for appointments or riding in a car.

6) Develop the library habit. Entice your children to read more by taking them to the library every few weeks to get new reading materials. The library also offers reading programs for children of all ages that may appeal to your children and further increase their interest in reading.

7) Be knowledgeable about your children's progress. Find out what reading skills they are expected to have at each grade level. The school's curriculum will give you this information.

8) Look for reading problems. Find out if your children can sound out words, know sight words, use context to identify unknown words, and clearly understand what they read.

9) Use a variety of aids to help your children. To help your children improve their reading, use textbooks, computer programs, books-on-tape, and other materials available in stores. Games are especially good choices because they let children have fun as they work on their skills.

10) Show enthusiasm for your children's reading. Your reaction has a great influence on how hard they will try to become good readers. Be sure to give them genuine praise for their efforts.

### **For Your Parents**

If daily reading begins in infancy, by the time the child is five years old, he or she has been fed roughly 900 hours of brain food! Reduce that experience to just 30 minutes a week and the child's hungry mind loses 770 hours of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and stories.

A kindergarten student who has not been read aloud to could enter school with less than 60 hours of literacy nutrition. No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours of mental nourishment.

Therefore...

30 minutes daily: 900 hours

30 minutes weekly: 130 hours

Less than 30 minutes weekly: 60 hours

The Answer to the Question:

### **Why Can't I Skip My Twenty Minutes of Reading Tonight?**

Let's figure it out - mathematically!

Student A reads 20 minutes five nights of every week;

Student B reads only 4 minutes a night...or not at all!

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night  $\times$  5 times each week.

Student A reads 20 min.  $\times$  5 times a week = 100 minutes/week

Student B reads 4 minutes  $\times$  5 times a week = 20 minutes

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week  $\times$  4 weeks each month.

Student A reads 400 minutes a month.

Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month  $\times$  9 months/school year

Student A reads 3600 min. in a school year.

Student B reads 720 min. in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of ten whole school days a year.

Student B gets the equivalent of only two school days of reading practice.

By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days.

Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days. One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance. How do you think Student B will feel about him/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

Which student would you expect to read better?

Which student would you expect to know more?

Which student would you expect to write better?

Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?

Which student would you expect to be more successful in school....and in life?



# Odds and Ends

## Science Centres

"I have a science center because it seems I never have enough time to devote to science during a regular day. It's the one subject that always seems to get pushed back if another subject takes extra time! The science centre activity relates to whatever we are studying at the time.



- Animal classification: picture cards of animals they classify into the different categories (reptile, amphibian, bird, mammal, fish, insect). They like to mix up the cards and race each other to see who can classify them the fastest. All I had to do was put a stopwatch in the center!
- Living/Non-living posters: I provided big pieces of construction paper and magazines. They drew a line down the middle and label one side 'Living' and the other 'Non-living' Then they searched through the magazines and cut out 5 pictures of each and glued them on.
- Five Senses experiments: shape search, texture books, sound effects tape they listened to and drew pictures of what the sounds really were, sound boxes, smelly bottles, etc.
- Apple tree life cycle posters: pictures of the different phases of the apple tree. They had to put them in order and glue on a large apple tree to show the cycle.
- Bat Wing skeleton models
- Human Skeleton models: cut outs they have to piece together to make a skeleton.
- Meal Worm observation logs: (actually this could work with any class critter!) They are fascinated to just watch! Then they write down what they observed.
- Rock Crystal Gardens: grown from charcoal bricks
- Pumpkin decomposition, bread mold, any kind of 'scientific change' (We never say, 'OOOO! Gross!' in my class...instead we say, 'OOOO! How scientific!')
- Dinosaur classification, fossil molds, dinosaur skeleton puzzles, etc.

## Buddy Activities

"Most of these activities take a little modelling and practice at first, but now my kids know exactly what they can do. I list the activities on a work wheel, turning the wheel one job each time so that everyone has a chance to do all the activities. The kids each have a 'work buddy'. The buddies stay the same until I change the activities.

- Two kids work on computers.
- I let kids quietly partner read with their buddy from a special selection of books.
- I make small, stapled books available to the kids in which to write and illustrate stories. They can collaborate if they wish.
- Patterning centre - there are small bags of connecting manipulatives and cards with patterns described using letters, such as *aabb*, or *abccabcc*, etc. Kids take a pattern card and must create that pattern.
- Math centre...with laminated math sheets for practice; using dry erase markers or grease pencils. The kids like to use these to have 'math races' with each other. I also have some dot to dot books. They like doing these, too, as part a part of our math centre. Math centre also includes a balance scale, with items to weigh/compare, things to measure with rulers, etc.
- Domino fact families...choose a domino and write and illustrate a fact family.

- I let two kids 'read around the room' each using a pointer. They have 'magic glasses' (sunglasses with coloured lenses) to make this more fun.
- They can 'write around the room'. These two each have a clipboard and can write down words fitting a specified framework; like words with the digraph 'ck', or words with consonant blends, etc. They get to wear a plastic visor for this task.
- Old magazines...find and cut out letters to spell spelling words or word wall words.



"My Grade One class has been matched up with a Grade Five class. It's the perfect match! We:

- practice sight words (word wall words) that are kept in a small ziploc bag in each student's reading box

- go to the computer lab together - we wrote pen pal letters together.

- we performed an assembly together for Halloween

- spend time looking at our class web site together

- send cards to each other for each holiday

- practice counting by 1's, 2's, 5's, 10's on small hundreds charts

Also: another teacher suggested that we have the older buddies help the younger ones come up with a 'story plan'. The big buddy would help the little buddy 'rehearse' the story. Later on his/her own, the little buddy would write the story. My Grade Ones absolutely LOVE their buddies!"

## **Special Children**

### **Autism**

"I have an autistic child in class. Actually I have two. They both can function at 'fairly' good levels. By this I mean they can complete some of the activities of our classroom, but probably only understand about 20% of what we do. They have an aide with them most of the day. The little boy talks ALL THE TIME, and quite loudly. This has been a problem all year as it sets the tone for the whole class. A quiet classroom has become a dream! The little girl is a charmer. She has learned to communicate very well this year. In just the four months I've been with her, she has made super gains. Lucky girl, her mom is a fierce advocate for her and has educated herself well. They have put her on a gluten free/cassin free diet and from what I've read this is the key to unlocking her expressive side. If she gets any gluten( and I mean as little as absorbing it through the skin from playdough) she has several off days where she is highly distracted and self stims a fair amount of the time. Mom has learned to cook only appropriate foods for her and she eats ONLY what mom sends to school. From the information she has shared with me, there is a whole support group (and newsletter) that supports this theory with lots of suggestions and testimonials. I don't know if this approach works for every autistic child or if mine is just blessed, but it has made such a tremendous difference in this little one's life. Yesterday, she and I had a real conversation with about five exchanges between us - all on the same topic!"

### **Irlen Syndrome**

"I have a student who was just recently diagnosed with Irlen Syndrome. He has Scitopia, which means he has a hard time reading black ink on white paper with the lighting in the classroom. We are getting him tested and 'prescribed' coloured overlays which cut down distortion.

Here's a short article on Irlen Syndrome. Very interesting...."

<http://www.pamelasims.com/arthy/arthyisitaread.htm>

### Using Coloured Overlays

"Some dyslexic children have the words 'jump off the page' or the letters scramble. Try using coloured acetate sheets (coloured overheads). Over the years, I have found that a light tan colour seems to work best for some dyslexic students. This colour seems to stop letters from flipping and jumping off the page."

"We have coloured overlays for the kids to use when they read. I've found that for the kids for whom coloured overlays work....they really work!"



Do coloured overlays help students with dyslexia? I read somewhere that yellow, gold or other coloured overlays did make a difference - the letters didn't move about as they do on a white page. Or..... photocopying pages onto gold or other coloured paper? These things are worth a try!

### Early Signs of Reading Disabilities

#### **From the Learning Disabilities Association of America:**

"Many children, including children with learning disabilities, do not learn to read in the first grade because they lack the basic readiness skills or the school's method is not appropriate for them. They may be allowed to fail for two or three years without effective intervention. Unless these children are identified early and appropriate instruction provided they may be passed along in school until basic reading instruction is no longer available. Quality reading programs must be available across the age range if we are to significantly reduce illiteracy. While accommodations may be appropriate, they must not be substituted for direct reading instruction. Common educational practice is for schools and adult literacy programs to adopt a single method for teaching reading, with the assumption that it will be effective for everyone. Research indicates that some students with learning disabilities need a multi-sensory phonics approach, with instruction in phonological awareness; some students need a more meaning-based approach; while other students need interventions to address comprehension problems. For many students a combination of approaches is effective."

### Dyspraxia

*Children with gross and fine motor difficulties, or difficulties with phonics and language may have dyspraxia.*

Dyspraxia is believed to be an immaturity of parts of the motor cortex (area of the brain) that prevents messages from being properly transmitted to the body. There are three types of dyspraxia. Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia (DVD), Oral Dyspraxia and Motor Dyspraxia. The three variations of dyspraxia affect 3% to 5% of the population with approximately 70% of those effected being boys.

Children with Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia have difficulty making sounds or making sounds into words. Oral Dyspraxia causes children not to be able to reproduce mouth movements.

Motor dyspraxia inhibits an individual from moving as planned and organizing sensory input. Children with Motor Dyspraxia appear to be clumsy, and have difficulty with new physical skills, both gross and fine motor.

Dyspraxic children are often of average or above intelligence. As you can imagine, having dyspraxia and not being able to do things the way you want (i.e. talk properly or throw a ball correctly) can be very frustrating.

Praxis is the link between brain and behaviour. To do these things, one first needs the idea of doing them (ideation), then to know how to do them (motor planning), and then be able to perform the actions

(execution). Children with motor dyspraxia, for example, find simple physical skills difficult as the natural links between the brain and body movement are impaired. There is no known cure for dyspraxia, but the earlier a child is treated the greater the chance of developmental maturation.

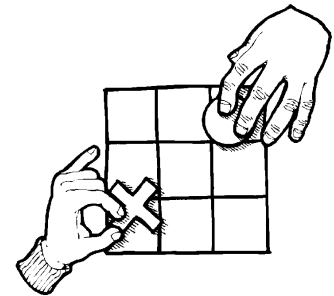
These are some of the conditions caused by dyspraxia: (Not all of these will apply to one child.)

Clumsiness Poor posture due to lack of strength and tone in muscles Walking awkwardly Confused about which hand to use Difficulty with throwing or catching a ball Sensitive to touch Poor short-term memory Poor body awareness Reading and writing difficulties Cannot properly hold a pen or pencil Poor sense of direction Cannot hop or skip or ride a bike Slow to learn to dress or feed themselves Cannot answer simple questions even though they know the answers Speech problems, slow to learn to speak, or speech may be incoherent Impatience Intolerance to having hair/teeth brushed or nails/hair cut Learning disabilities.

## **Learning Games**

### **Tic-Tac-Toe**

Divide the class into 2 groups of equal ability. You can play 'tic-tac-toe' with the class. You ask a review question, the students on that team discuss the answer and give you their 'final answer' and then if they get it correct, they get to place a mark of the board (or the overhead).



### **Red Rover**

Divide the class into 2 groups of equal ability. The students stand in two lines. Alternate back and forth asking a student a question. If they answer correctly, they get to go back to the end of their team's line. If they answer incorrectly, they have to go to the end of the other team's line.

### **The Quiet Game**

This is a really neat game to use when you need some quiet time. You can use a nerf ball, or just use a small stuffed animal instead.

The leader starts the game. Everyone has to stand up and push in their chair. They HAVE to stay by their desk, and not get out of their space. Then the leader gently throws the dog to someone in class. If he overthrows the dog, he has to sit down. Here's the quiet part: you can only throw it to someone who is being absolutely quiet and still. If they make any noise when they catch it, they are out and have to sit down. That person throws it to a different person. The main object of the game: silence!

### **In Between**

Write two numbers on the chalkboard. Mentally choose a number that is between those numbers. The children try to guess your number. Give one clue, if you wish - it is an even number, you say it when you count by 5's, etc. When a child makes a guess, say 'my number is more (or less)'.

### **Ten Questions**

Say 'I am thinking of a number!' Write it on a bit of paper and hold it out of sight. The children can ask 10 questions to see if they can discover the number, and you answer 'yes' or 'no'. Good questions might be 'Is it even or odd?' 'Do I say it when I count by 5's?' 'Is it between 60 and 80?', etc.

### **Bonkers**

Sit in a circle. Pick a one-digit number that is 'bonkers' - 5, for example. Count to 100, each child taking a turn around the circle. Do not say any number that has a 5 in it - say 'bonkers!' instead. For example, do not say 15 - count 13, 14, bonkers, 16..... This becomes interesting when you get to the 50s - 55 would be 'bonkers, bonkers!'

## Sparkle

All the students stand. The teacher picks a student to begin the game with by selecting a spelling word from the current week's list and asking them to give the first letter, i.e. SCHOOL. The first student would say S, the second C, and so on. If a student gives the wrong letter, the word needs to begin being spelled from the letter S. Once the word is spelled correctly, the **next** student would say 'sparkle' and the **next** student would sit down. The next student starts the second word and this would continue until all of the words are finished. If needed, use challenge words. The last person standing is the winner.

This is a good game to use with counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s - or even counting by ones. When you reach a pre-arranged end, the next person says 'sparkle!' and the child after that is out. This is great because the child who is out may be a child who knows all the answers.....

## Having a Student Teacher

If you have a student teacher or know one, pass on this link:

[http://www.tooter4kids.com/Classroom/teaching\\_tips\\_for\\_student\\_teachers.htm](http://www.tooter4kids.com/Classroom/teaching_tips_for_student_teachers.htm)

"I have a name tag for the student teacher so the children can relate spelling to his/her name. I always put all the supplies a teacher needs on the desk also, scissors, markers, stapler, pens, pencils, etc. and I also leave a simple gift for him/her (such as sticky notes and a note tablet, neat pen - wrapped with raffia) and don't forget a card, either welcome card or encouragement card. I find that my student teachers go through those sticky notes so fast.



One of the first things you should teach the student teacher is how to model expectations for the children. I always tell mine that after (s)he leaves I have to deal with the kids, so I want things done right. So teach the student teacher how to model desired behaviours for the children, and also the desired use of objects and tools in the room. I made a list of week by week expectations for the student teacher so it's in print and right in front of them. They can't say to you that they didn't know what you wanted. If your student teacher comes for observation days before the children's first day, give him/her some responsibilities. The more involved you make the student teacher feel the better.

One important thing that I always tell my student teachers is about discipline. She was afraid to discipline them because they would hate her. My advice to her was, when you discipline they may be upset but they will hug you at the end of the day. After she adopted that thought, she was more confident with her discipline. It's really important that the student teacher be strict at the beginning to set the tone for behaviour for the rest of the time she is the teacher."

"I had a student teacher last fall. The following are my suggestions..... I fixed her a desk and gave her storage room. Make a space for her and her 'stuff'. Give her access to your resources because it will take her years to accumulate what you have and she needs it now. Show her everything when she comes - where the photocopy machine is and how to use it, bathrooms, gym, playground, library, computer lab, and introduce her to the staff that she will be working with. Tell her all the applicable rules she will be expected to follow (school rules and your rules for your children). You can make her a notebook of these things; school map, schedule, rules, how to use the technology (that's a good thing for substitutes, too). Do it in a ringed notebook and you can add things as needed. It is a good idea to keep a log between you of questions, responses, problems and how you solved them. Let



her be your shadow....and let her phase into teaching your class at a pace comfortable for both of you. Do not just throw her in to 'sink or swim'; model teaching these classes/lessons often before asking her to take over."

### **For Your Student Teacher**

"I did a notebook for my student teacher last year. It was well received. My student teacher (now teaching Grade One) still calls the notebook her 'bible'. I also did a page for each part of our day, explaining what I did and why I did it. For instance, there was a page called 'Working With Words' that had a word wall page to copy, word wall cheers, samples of a flashcard format that I send the word walls home in, 'On the Back' activities, a brief explanation of what the instructional objectives were, and why I thought these activities were great for accomplishing the objectives. I did this for writing, guided reading, math, science, etc. I also threw in some special activities I do every year, like ideas for the 100th day of school. In addition, I had a page of teaching tips; organizational, motivational, etc. At the end of each page, I included the words Things I Noticed, Wondered, and Insights. I left a blank part on the page for the student teacher to jot down thoughts after observations for us to discuss later.

My pages were:

- 1) Meet Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ (a brief hello and a little bit about me)
- 2) Our Daily Schedule
- 3) Student Teacher Schedule
- 4) Calendar time (which included days of the week songs and detailed instructions for calendar activities)
- 5) Guided Reading (with information about preview activities, think-alouds, graphic organizers)
- 6) The Daily Letter (where we do grammar skills.)
- 7) DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read)
- 8) Working with words: what I do - cheers, guess the covered word, make a word, on the back activities, review games like Here comes the judge and the flashlight game, songs for 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 letter words)
- 9) Journal writing and Weekend Journals descriptions
- 10) Math (detailed descriptions and master copies for mad minute math, doubles/neighbours/fast 9's and 10's, Grady Graph (a "talking" graph), etc. Special activities for math with detailed instructions and master copies for M&M math and the popcorn ghost (from box it or bag it)
- 11) Science and Social studies
- 12) Spelling: how I do it; websites for strugglers, sentence dictation tests

It was a lot of work, but I saved it all on the computer and now can print out pages for a new notebook whenever I need to. I also headed each page with a cute graphic."



"I would have loved getting assorted assessment forms and checklists, behaviour contract outlines, game lists, fast and easy activity lists, 'how to teach reading' strategies, classroom management ideas and strategies, and all sorts of essential 'what you need to know about teaching that they don't tell you in university' information, etc. I am still struggling to figure all this out!"

"When I've had a student teacher I had the kids each give a 'tip' on being a good teacher. I made a book with a page for the child's picture and his tip. Each teacher has loved it. I also allowed the child to write a little message to go with the tip."

"The teacher purchased a plain scrapbook in the arts and crafts department at WalMart. She let each kid in the class have a page to write a note to the teacher and words of advice from Grade One students on how to be a good teacher. The kids got to decorate their pages and include a photo. Then there was a section in the scrapbook in which the teachers each picked a page and wrote 'Our words of Wisdom' to her."

## **Left and Right**

We say this each morning:

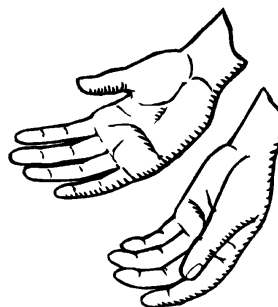
Left hand

Right hand

How can you tell?

Look very closely

The left makes an L.



(The children hold arms straight out in front of themselves as they recite the chant.)

"For visual memory, have them trace little mittens from their own hands. Then they colour the left mitten green and the right coloured red so that they go from go to stop - green to red, left to right. Put them in the upper corner of desks or at activity centres, on easels, over doors, etc. Ask them to stare at them without blinking and then close their eyes and see them. They love this and it helps reinforce L and R for the visual learner... (write the words on each hand, too.)"

## **Teacher Vitamins:** (M&Ms, Smarties or jellybeans)

Prescribed for: \_\_\_\_\_

To help you get through the new school year.

To temporarily calm your craving for chocolate, eat the BROWN one.

At first sign of 'Meeting Overload' eat the RED one.

The ORANGE one minimizes 'Mental Block' during long range planning.

The GREEN one calms your frustrations while dealing with stress!

If you feel a 'Lesson Plan Headache' coming on, eat the YELLOW one.

The BLUE one reduces Bulletin Board fatigue.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR USE:**

Take one tablet as needed to reduce fatigue commonly associated with Back to School Syndrome. If all symptoms occur at the same time, eat the whole bag.

Although scientific evidence is inconclusive, this product is thought to be habit-forming, resulting in severe addiction. In the event you find yourself experiencing tremor-like symptoms upon attempting to discontinue use, call the hot line listed below immediately.

1-800-CHOCOLATE

"I put all the students names on popsicle sticks. I have sets in different areas of the room - i.e. carpet, my desk. I draw their names when I want to make sure that I have called on each student. That way I never miss anyone. I use them for keeping students on task, I pull a name and if that person is on task they will receive a 'super kid ticket' (school wide draw - they are handed out as positive reinforcement) or jelly bean."

# **Brain Gym**

Brain gym is a series of exercises or physical activities designed to develop the brain's neural pathways so as to enhance and ease learning processes. It grew out of clinical studies started in 1969 by Dr. Paul E. Dennison, a remedial educational therapist. Dennison's work with learning-disabled children and adults led him to the study of kinesiology, the science of body movement and the relationship of muscles and posture to brain function.

Brain Gym is premised on the notion that functional disabilities occur when information cannot flow freely between the many functional centres of the brain due to neurological blocks. It's movements, therefore, are designed to enhance the interconnections in the brain along three dimensions: laterality, focus and centering.

The notion that learning is not a stand-alone 'brain' function is not unique to Brain Gym. The literature on child development often talks about 'developmental movements' that help develop the neural connections in the brain. For example, a baby crawling develops connections between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Moreover, cross-motor and behavioural optometry activities have been around for some time. Like some sports, dance, yoga and other exercise programs, Brain Gym helps to increase flexibility, coordination, and concentration/focus.

Brain Gym activities have reportedly been used successfully for some years in a number of schools throughout the US and Canada to facilitate learning in learning-disabled children. A number of schools and teachers are also using Brain Gym activities to improve the performance of students on tests.

## **Exercise and Activity Examples**

***Drinking a glass of water.*** This supposedly helps to increase energy and concentration. It is premised on the notion that the body's energy is conducted through water. The first step in Brain Gym activities is therefore to drink plenty of water. **Brain Buttons.** This exercise supposedly stimulates the blood flow to the brain. Increased blood flow to the brain is supposed to help improve the concentration skills required for reading and writing. Make a 'C' shape (as wide a space as possible) with your thumb and index finger. Then place your index and thumb at either side of your breastbone, just below the collar bone. Place your other hand over your navel. Massage lightly for about 2 minutes your collar bone area. Then reverse and repeat.

***Cross Walking.*** This exercise is supposed to help coordinate the right and left hemispheres by exercising the information flow between the two hemispheres. It is supposed to help with spelling, writing, listening, reading and comprehension, and to improve left/right coordination. As you lift your left knee, swing your right arm over the midline to touch your left knee with your right hand. Then alternate and touch the right knee with the left hand. Continue for 10 to 20 repetitions. This exercise can also be done sitting down.

***Lazy-Eights.*** This supposedly helps with reading, writing, and hand/eye co-ordination. Extend one arm in front of your face. With one thumb pointing upwards, slowly and smoothly trace the infinity sign in the air.

***Thinking caps.*** This supposedly helps with spelling, short-term memory, listening, and abstract thinking skills. With your thumb and index finger, gently pull the outer part of the ear. Start from the top and slowly move to the lobe. Repeat the whole exercise three times.

***The Elephant.*** This activity is recommended for children with ADD (attention deficit disorder). Place the left ear on the left shoulder extend the left arm like the trunk of an elephant with knees relaxed, draw the infinity sign in front of you. Do three to five signs. Repeat with other arm.

***Energy Yawn.*** This is supposed to be a stress reliever. Massage the muscle around the temporal-

mandibular joint at the junction of the jaws.

**Hook-ups.** This supposedly helps to calm the mind, diffuses stress and improves concentration. Sit on a chair. Stretch your legs. Cross the right leg over the left at the ankles. Place your arms in front of you. Cross your hands with the palms of the hands facing each other. As you clasp them together, bring them toward your chest until they rest on your breast bone. Breathe evenly in this position.

**Positive Points.** This exercise supposedly releases memory blocks, relieves stress, clears thinking, and increases speaking abilities and organization skills. Lightly touch the point above each eye halfway between the hairline and the eyebrow with fingertips of each hand. Close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply.

**Calf pumps.** This activity supposedly help with concentration, comprehension, answering questions, and the ability to finish tasks. Stand, arms length away from a wall. Place your hands against it. Extend your left leg straight out behind you so that only your heel is off the floor. Your body should be slanted at 45 degrees. Exhale, leaning forward against the wall while bending your right heel and pressing your left heel against the floor. Do the movement three or more times, completing a breath with each cycle. Then alternate to the other leg and repeat.

## **Thank Your Volunteers!**

- Tie a note to a pair of sunglasses with colourful ribbon - on the note, print a special message to include the person's first name, followed by 'Thank you for all your work as \_\_\_\_\_. Your leadership and energy have helped to make our \_\_\_\_\_ so bright we gotta wear shades!'
- Paint terra-cotta pots for volunteers. On the rim of the pot, paint 'Thank you for helping us grow.' Inside, place packets of flower seeds and a certificate. Tie raffia around the top and deliver the pots to volunteers.
- Wrap votive candles in cellophane and tie them with ribbon, attaching a note stating 'You light up the lives of so many!' and 'You lighten our load by volunteering!'
- Tape/staple or attach a small plastic toy dinosaur to a round circle of coloured construction paper, on which is printed 'Dinomite job! Thank you for all you do!'



"I like to give my volunteers a large card that the children have all signed, with a class photo on the cover. I add a long-stemmed rose."

## **A Retiring Staff Member**

"Each child in your class can draw a little picture and write what the teacher could do with all her 'free time'. *When you retire you can \_\_\_\_\_.* The kids usually come up with great ideas."

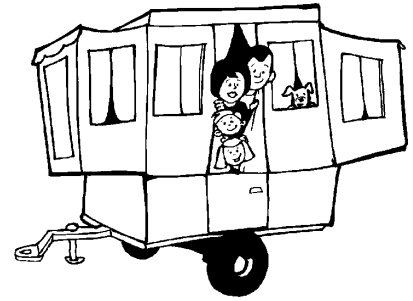
"My class helped to write a book based on 'That's good...that's bad' when our principal retired. It went something like this:

*Did you hear that \_\_\_\_\_ is retiring? That's good, because now he can play golf every day, but that's bad because we won't get to see his colourful ties as we enter the building. But it's good because he can spend time with \_\_\_\_\_ (his grandchildren), but that's bad because now the children in our building won't get to see him. But that's good because \_\_\_\_\_.*

The children helped to think of things. It turned out cute. You could put clip art on each page or have the children illustrate it."

## **Good Advice!**

"You really do need to remember that your family needs you as much as your job does. Your children deserve your time. Tell yourself what time you will be leaving that day and do it. Just walk out. It's amazing what can be done within the school day if you know you are leaving. I used to live at my school and my family (now grown) does not have happy memories of that time. I do stay some evenings, but it is planned and fits in with the family schedule. If my husband is out and other family responsibilities are not needed that night, I will stay. If not, JUST WALK OUT. School can eat us alive if we aren't careful. I'm still trying very hard to not allow it to take over my life. Our families crave and deserve our time, too."



"Take a time each week to plan for the week ahead. If you do this on the computer it can be easily changed if things don't work out as you expect. Mark as much as possible with the kids - it is much more worth-while educationally and will save you lots of time outside of school hours. Take ten minutes each day, right after school, to clean up your classroom and clean off your desk - file and organize."

## **English as a Second Language**

"I teach in a school that has a large population of non-English speaking students. One of the first activities that I have them do during class time is to look through a picture dictionary. They are usually fascinated with the English words and can recognize the pictures. I created a booklet of big boxes above sentence lines. The student looks through the dictionary, draws the picture in the box and writes the English word of that picture under the drawing. Then when I have a few minutes, I sit down with the student and say the words and point to the pictures. They can repeat the words when I point. The book is just a basic idea to get the student involved during class time initially. Some of my new students have shared their dictionary booklets with the class. They seem to like discovery and they feel a sense of accomplishment. Again, this is a very basic activity but it helps to get started."

"We have a lot of ESL children at my school so there is a fair amount of ESL support. One of the ESL teachers gave me a great idea to help the new ones who speak NO English: use those books that have a picture of a place like a classroom or a kitchen and it also has the words written beside each picture - kind of like Richard Scarry books but not as hard. Get a child who needs to learn to read and also needs to be successful to 'read' the book to your ESL child. We also used the beginning ABC books that have a picture and a word and used the same child to 'read' to her. It gave me a bit of time with the rest of the class. I find the brand new ESL children need a lot of time to look around and feel relaxed before I can really work with them so I use a lot of in-class buddies. At the beginning, I show them the bathroom and explain the word. I also spend a lot of time on names."

"If you can teach the student the basic vocabulary for class they start picking up more from there. I usually start with pencil, paper, basket, book, etc. I play games like 'Simon Says' which teaches them body parts and movements like sit down, stand up, etc. I find they learn to read along with the other kids as the process is the same, they just don't always have the same level of comprehension."

### Elements of Movement

Words that describe movement are a fundamental part of a child's vocabulary. Understanding is enhanced through movement; there is an intimate relationship between language and the body.

**Body parts** - head, neck, shoulders, back, stomach, arms, legs, hands, feet, wrists, ankles, toes, fingers, elbows, knees

**Actions** - walk, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, leap, roll, crawl, clap, bend, wiggle, swing, shake, turn, twist, tiptoe, freeze

**Space** - high/medium/low, front/back/side, up/down, big/small, curved/straight, right/left, far/near, up/down, wide/narrow

**Qualities** (time and force) - slow/fast, heavy/light, sudden/smooth, strong/weak, tense/loose

**Relationships** - over/under, on/off, near/far, inside/outside, in front/behind/around

This is only a partial list. When children are familiar with basic words, introduce colourful variations such as bounce, bubble, crinkle, crouch, dangle, dart, fling, float, glide, lunge, melt, ooze, plunge, quiver, rise, scamper, scatter, wobble, and zoom.

### Individual dry erase boards

"I use my dry erase boards for a lot of things. They are kept at the students' tables for easy access. I use them for sounding out words and writing, practice spelling words, and addition and subtraction problems. Our Math has Daily Practice Problems and I'll have the class write the answers on their boards sometimes. Any time we do anything together as a class, using the boards to write the answer is always an option. I have put a marker and an eraser each in a baggie that helps manage the time it takes to pass things out. Sometimes we keep those in the tote on the table but it usually is full with scissors, glue and cubes for doing the daily practice problems."

### Macaroni Manipulatives

"To colour macaroni, put about a cup of uncooked macaroni into a gallon zip-lock bag. Add drops of food colouring (more or less depending on the density you want). Also add approximately 1/2 teaspoon of rubbing alcohol. Close the bag, roll the macaroni around with your hands - hands are outside the bag, of course. When all the macaroni is coloured, pour it out onto newspaper or paper towels to dry. It dries almost instantly. You can even have the kids help you make it."

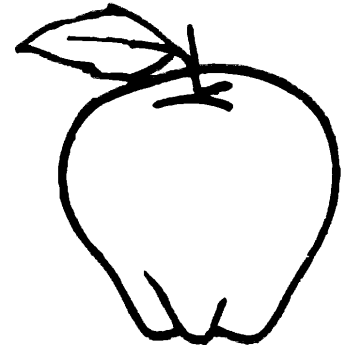
### Old Crayons

- You can melt down old crayons and pour them into greased muffin tins to cool... they make great giant crayons.
- If you are making candles, the crayons can be melted in as dye with the clear wax.
- You can put tinfoil on a warming tray, wrap the foil around the handles so it won't slip. Draw on the foil with crayons...move slowly so the crayons have a chance to melt. Once you have a picture, lay a piece of paper on top and gently rub with a wadded-up paper towel. Lift the paper and you have a print. (You have to make sure the kids don't touch the plate.....they could wear oven mitts.
- You can melt same colours together and pour into candy moulds - use different shapes to go with seasons or themes.
- Remove the paper and use the side of the crayons to do prints with paper over leaves, coins, etc.
- You can simply save the crayons in a container and the students can go and find any colour they have lost or you can put the container in a centre and they have ready crayons to work with on a project.

## **Apples for Parents**

"At open house give the parents each an apple - with this poem  
An apple for the teacher,  
Is really nothing new,  
Until you remember,  
Parents are teachers, too!

Instead of or as well as real apples it might be fun to glue the poem on an apple cut-out with a magnet on the back for their fridge."



## **A Timely Idea**

"I use a timer. I got it at Wal-Mart, I think. It gives 2 beeps when there is 10 minutes left, and 4 beeps when there is 5 minutes left, and then 20 beeps when time is up. I love it, because they know exactly how much time is left when they hear those beeps, and of course I have those who 'report' that there are 10 or 5 minutes left. It has a magnet on it, so I can hang it on my board. That's a lifesaver, because when it's not on the board, in my infinite 'chaotic organization' it becomes easily lost!"

## **I'm Bored!**

"One of the teachers in my building has a favourite quote for parents when they complain that their child isn't challenged or is bored. 'Truly gifted children will always be able to find something interesting all by themselves, because so many things are of interest to gifted children.' Find what is most interesting for him, let him read and create."

## **No Interruptions!**

"Our principal instituted a 'no interruptions' policy. There are no messages over the intercom during instructional time except to send a child to the office for parent pick-up or for an emergency. Parents must check in at the office and have a reason for being there. Of course, they can't screen parents, but if a teacher has a parent who does interrupt instruction the office will take care of that if they are informed."

## **Audience Behaviour**

"Many children have never been to a live performance before. They've only seen TV or movies or sporting events and behavior is different. I think it's important to point out the difference - that there are real people up there. You will hurt their feelings if you don't clap, etc. We talk about appropriate sitting - on our bottom if we sit on the floor. We discuss how to politely ask the person in front of you to sit flat. If there are chairs, we talk about that. I've even had them practice in the classroom - sitting in rows, clapping, etc. I talk about how whistling/hooting is OK outside at a ball game - not at a performance. I get very specific in regards to the behaviour I expect. I also prepare them for what they are going to see. For example, if they are listening to the school band, I might tell them that their friends have worked very hard, but learning an instrument is difficult and there might be a squeak. If there is, then the polite thing is to ignore it - not laugh.

"When we get to the performance and the children are seated, I make sure the potential 'problems' are seated on the end near me. I sit to the side and slightly in front of my class because it gives me more eye contact. I can try and catch someone's eye if I need to. And, if necessary, I pull someone out of the assembly and they have to sit in the office. Usually, if you do it once, the whole class gets the message that you mean it.

"It's sad but just because a class has learned to be sweet in the classroom, they don't know how to be a good audience. I think many children are not in situations where they would have learned those behaviors (for example, church)."

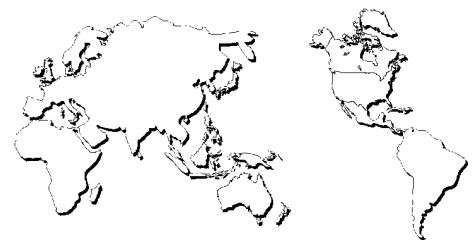
"I tell the kids before every assembly that I'm making a secret pick of two kids to watch. If those two kids make the right choices and show good audience behavior, then the entire class gets a non-material reward (10 minutes extra play, relax time with pillows, an extra group activity, whatever). When we get back to the classroom, I reveal the identity of the two kids that I was watching (of course, only if they earned the reward. If the kids did the wrong thing, I just say that there was no reward earned and don't mention names.)

"The kids really celebrate the two kids that earned them the reward and they never fail to say 'don't forget to pick two kids' to me on the way to an assembly. It really helps them to focus.

"Also, I teach the kids how to pass a message down the line when they're at the assembly, so that I don't have to call down the line or climb over kids. That helps a lot, but you have to make sure that your kids are mature enough to handle it."

## **Map Skills**

"I loved teaching map skills to my grade one students. I always started out by bringing in all kinds of maps - picture maps (like ones you get from theme parks), maps of museums, maps of parks, maps of caves, topographic maps, political maps, street and road maps, etc. I would have the maps available for the kids to look at for at least a week before we even began our study.



To begin the actual study the first thing I do is give every child a compass. I show them how to hold it and then tell them to turn until the red hand is inside the red arrow (different compasses would require a different explanation). It was always so neat as I watched all of their bodies slowly turning. They are looking down at their compass and not watching their neighbor. Then as each child finds north they begin to look up. The amazement on their faces is wonderful when they realize that slowly everyone in the room has turned to face the same direction! We have found north! Then we label the room by putting the 4 main directions up on the wall. I also have a large cutout compass rose that we then tape down in the middle of the floor. Then I pass out maps for us to find the compass rose. This is a great beginning. Another thing that can make a map unit more interesting is to participate in some sort of postcard project. When I do map skills I also tie in landforms and we find them on maps. My students always love map skills and learn far more than our grade level objectives."

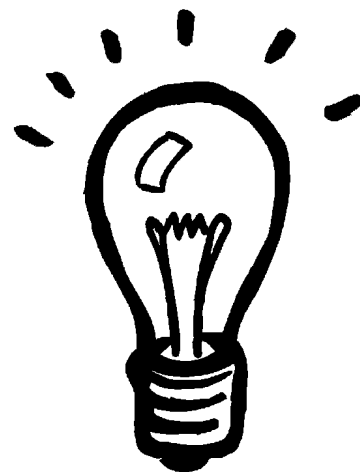
"One idea I learned from somewhere for marking incorrect answers (this works great when monitoring in math) is to put a circle beside the incorrect problem/question, etc. This alerts the student that they have an incorrect answer and they are to correct it. When it is corrected I turn the circle into a smiley face. The kids love it and this gives them a chance to correct their answer and receive positive feedback!"



## Good Ideas

"I use the highlight tape in my reading centre. The students highlight high frequency words in big books and count them. You can use it to highlight words in quotation marks, short vowel words, vocabulary words, parts of speech, etc. The kids enjoy it. Just don't leave the tape over print too long. After a long period of time, it removes some of the ink, but it is fine for shorter periods."

"One of the little things I do involves choosing sides for games. I have a cup with blue and red tongue depressors. After putting in a stick for each child playing, each child chooses a stick and that decides whose team they are on (the red team or the blue team). It is quick and eliminates being the last one chosen."



"On my weekly newsletter I include a section titled 'What Did You Do Today?' I briefly list some of the things we did during the previous week so parents can ask specific questions. Usually they ask 'How was school?' or 'What did you do today?' and the answer is 'Nothing'. Now they can ask 'How did you make the collage apples?' or 'How many different kinds of spider webs do you know about?'"

"Rickety Rackety: two children play quietly together. One holds a bead or cube tightly in one fist, makes a fist with both hands, and puts one fist on top of the other. He says 'Rickety Rackety, Rickety Row, Which hand do you choose, the high or the low?' The second child guesses whether the bead is in the high (top) hand or the low. Then it is the second child's turn. I post the rhyme in the room for reference."

"If you put a yellow highlighter mark in a special corner of your master copies you won't duplicate your precious masters or thrown them out by accident. Using yellow highlighter, it will not show up on copies."

"When I start passing out papers, I start to sing 'Theeeeeeeee....first thing on your paper is your name and your date.' The kids sing it with me after I sing *the*."

"This is a time filler I use if I have a few extra minutes. I got the idea from Saxon Math. I think up an attribute that I can sort the students by, such as everyone wearing a red shirt. I call those students who have the red shirt on to stand in front of the room. After I've called all those students up front I say 'What's the sorting rule?' The child who guesses gets a sticker or later on in the year gets to be the 'sorter'. Later on in the year I will 'sort' the students using 2 attributes. The kids are always begging to play this and it helps develop their sorting skills."

"I am making an effort to be at my classroom door as the children enter to greet each one in a personal way, 'Hello, Erik', 'Good morning, Fred or Jane', etc. This gives each child recognition and decreases the need to seek teacher attention."

"A little thing I do to emphasis personal space while in line is: tell them they are in their own 'bubble'. They know how fragile bubbles are. If you are too close to another person (or they to you) you break your bubble and 'we never want to break our bubbles!' They eat it up. It's so cute to hear someone

say - you're too close to my bubble. My kids have a really hard time with spacing. For some reason they want to stand right on top of one another and this has helped."

"I end my day with closure. We all sit in a circle on the rug. I have a little stuffed dragon which the children name the first week of school. I start by holding the dragon and say 'I had a good day today because...'. I then pass the dragon to the next person and he says 'I had a good day today because...'. The dragon goes all the way around the circle and then we end by clapping our hands (we call it the firecracker). Rules are: only the person with the dragon can speak and everyone looks at and listens to the person with the dragon. This helps the children to end the day on a positive note."

"I use this to teach slow/fast in music. My students have always loved it - I start slowly, then repeat it several times until we are going so fast that I can barely say it. Make sure they are aware of self space and we ALWAYS talk about turning 'in control' the first time. It is very quick.

Riddle, riddle, riddle ree

Do what I do, after me

Stomp, clap, stomp, clap,

Sway - , sway - ,

Touch your nose, touch your toes

Round in circles each one goes.

Bow once, bow twice,

Bend down low and plant some rice.

Lift your hands up in the air,

Shake them down like raindrops there.

Clap your hands *clap on each word here*

Stomp your feet *stomp on each word*

Turn around and it's complete!

Here, I point at the class and they yell 'Faster' and I do it faster!"



## **Celebrating Birthdays**

"I let the child whose birthday it is select a book from the birthday book basket. I read the book at snack time and substitute the birthday child's name for the birthday person in the book, and I change the names of characters to those in the class. (Sometimes I add some characters in when I can and add more names of students. They LOVE it....and they catch me if I get distracted and use the wrong name!)"

"I do a combination of things.

1. Over the summer I was at our town fair and they had a painting booth where they paint license plates, etc. I had them paint a birthday rug with 6 candles on it. It's absolutely beautiful and the envy of my friends. This rug (the size of 2 carpet squares) is in my classroom and the birthday child can sit on it all day long. A special treat!
2. I've collected a basket of birthday books and the birthday child gets to choose one that I will read to the class.
3. I made a birthday center in my room with all sorts of birthday words like presents, ice cream, etc. I have streamers, horns, and birthday pictures from magazines all nicely displayed on a 'word wall'. The kids use this wall to write and decorate a birthday letter to the birthday child. I then bind all the letters into a birthday book. The birthday child creates the cover.

4. I give them a birthday pencil and bookmark.
5. They bring in a treat to share with class.
6. I purchased a variety of crowns over the summer and they get to choose a crown and wear it all day.

## Time Fillers

- 1) I Spy. "I spy with my little eye something in the room that (rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_, starts with \_\_\_\_\_, etc.)"
- 2) Brain quests. A commercially available series of cards with questions on them that are broken up into grade level material.
- 3) Map Attack. Name 3 things on the north wall of the classroom, etc. (of course you have to have already taught the cardinal directions!)
- 4) Simon Says.
- 5) Head, shoulders, knees and toes. Vary the speed and the order. The kids LOVE it.
- 6) Silent Ball. Get a beach ball and have the kids catch it. The rule is NO NOISE. Any laughs or comments and the kid is out.
- 7) SPARKLE. A spelling game where children sit in a line and give one letter of a spelling word (I use word wall words). The person after the last letter says 'Sparkle' and the *next* one is 'out' just by the luck of where he/she happens to be sitting. Continue until only one child remains.
- 8) Around the World. Students sit in a circle and one student ('IT') stands behind another student. The teacher shows a flash card (math facts, sight words, etc.) and the first one of the pair to get the answer correct is 'IT' (the one standing up) and moves behind the next student. The object is to go all the way around the circle (the 'world').
- 9) Math Fact Relay. 2 teams are lined up. The first two are shown a flash card. The first one to get the answer goes to the end of his/her line. The other one is 'out'. Play until one team has all its players 'out'.



### Do You Work?

"Just had to share this one! Yesterday (Hallowe'en) I was getting the kids to tidy up just before home time. One of my little guys who was waiting said, "Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, do you work?" I stopped dead in my tracks, looked at him (hopefully not too dumbfoundedly) while I tried to think of an APPROPRIATE response (ie. not "What the #\$\*&# do you think I'm doing here?!") and said, "This is my work." He looked at me, absolutely deadpan and said, "But we do all the work, you just do the fun stuff." Hmmm. I wonder if this is why parents think we're overpaid and under worked...our kids go home and tell them how much fun their teacher has at school!"

## Preparing for a Substitute

"I have a generic lesson plan that I use. If I know I will only be out a day or two, I usually have the children review things that we have already covered. I have them review our previous vocabulary words by reading them and using some in sentences or making a class story using the review words. We also have "take home" books with our reading series. I had a couple of these books that we didn't read and I put them in my substitute folder. For math, I pulled some worksheets on skills that we have recently covered. I do this for all of our other subjects as well. I update the material about once a month because the children do change so much. I keep all of this in a plastic file bin on the corner of my desk. On top of everything I have a list of procedures and emergency information. This system has worked for me. Now if I think I will be out longer than a few days (this has only happened once, thank goodness,) then I usually try to write out a simplified version of my lesson plans so the children won't get behind."

"I have a folder with my manuals that says EXTRA TIME - DO THIS. It may list a game that they can play to reinforce vocabulary or to use the writing words in sentences at the board and use it as a guided lesson. Sometimes it may have a weekly reader that I just didn't get to. I also throw in a literature folder and the book that goes with it. The sub can read the book and do any of the activities that go along with it. I always keep a typed, laminated set of directions that tells how my day runs. It explains jobs, prep times, etc. I keep one copy in my lesson plan book and hang one on the bulletin board nearby."

"This is what I do. I have a stacking file on the shelf behind my desk with 5 boxes labeled Mon - Fri, and a 6th box labeled 'Substitute Instructions'. In each box are folders labeled Math, Science, etc. I try to keep handouts, a book to read, whatever I will need in there. I used to write really detailed plans in the plan book, but that just takes forever. In the Substitute file is a generic outline of the day I did on the computer which gives very detailed information for each time of the day and things like my discipline plan, but just says 'refer to plan book' for page numbers, etc. There are also some *If You Need Something Else to Do* worksheets. If I know I'm going to be out I always pull up the generic plan on the computer, make additions, and deletions and leave everything necessary for the day's work on the desktop."

## Have a "Principal's Day"!

The end of principal spells PAL  
And that, my friends, will tell it all  
For in this school, the principal  
Is just that way to big and small.

To organize and summarize  
And lay it on the line,  
With follow through and follow-up  
The job s(he) does is fine.

So on this day of honoring  
Our principal, it's true,  
There's only one that's really great,  
OUR principal, that's YOU!



# **Principal's Observation**

*From a Principal's Viewpoint....*

"I guess it depends on the principal. I don't like to see 'pat' lessons. I like to see the teacher in a more natural state. I cannot tell how well a teacher will teach a new concept if it is a pat lesson. I am there to help the teacher and if she/he is not trying something, then there is not much help I can give.

"I look to see how the teacher starts the class. Do you 'hook' the kids? Then I look to see if the teacher is using the child's prior knowledge. Do they use KWL or other methods to check the prior knowledge? Are the students excited and involved? I have seen teachers teach really boring things in a really exciting way.

"I look at the use of time in the classroom. Is most of the time used to discipline? Do the students get a chance to talk? to ask questions? How does the teacher help kids to become risk-takers? I look for a variety of activities in the lesson - visual, oral, kinesthetic activities. I look at the preparation and organization of the lesson. Are all the materials ready? Is everything in working order? If a teacher needs to run out to make photocopies, that is not being prepared, but if a bulb in the overhead burns out - that is not the teacher's fault. I look at classroom management. I expect to see good transitions between activities. A good teacher will anticipate problems. For example, saying, "If you have any questions, raise your hand and I will be there to help you."

"I look at the classroom climate. Do the kids seem to be excited about learning? Do they seem happy to be in class? (Yes, I know there are always a few - but principals have been teachers too!) Does the teacher respect the kids? Do the kids respect the teacher? Is discipline done in a respectful and unobtrusive manner? Do all kids participate or does the teacher seem to ask the boys/girls more questions?

"When I speak to the teacher, I check to see if she/he has done lots of observing. For example, one of my teachers said, " \_\_\_\_\_ has gone from nods, to answering questions, to actually volunteering answers". To me, this indicates a keen sense of observation. The teacher is aware of progress in a specific area. I asked her what she was hoping next and she said, "I want to encourage him to take more risks because right now he is volunteering only when he knows he is right." She knew where she wanted the child to go and what she needed to do. Great teacher. Good teachers will know a lot about their students and speak negatively only about behavior, not about the child.

"I guess I am fortunate, but I have observed hundreds of really wonderful lessons. The teachers model what they ask the children - they take risks. I try to model what I expect from the teacher. Some of you will not agree and some of your principals may only be doing observations because it is their 'job'. To me, we are a team and we are trying to get better. That is the reason I want them to try something new. I hope they see me as a safety net and not a police person."



## **Beautiful Book Covers!**

"To make a beautiful cover: first make some beautiful paper (you can do it in centers with a parent or aide helping):

1. sponge prints - materials: paint, sponges cut into squares, water, bristol board (can buy in Staples or similar store, also called tag board - it is heavier than regular paper, like the stuff index cards are made from) - wet the sponges, rub in paint, press onto paper repetitively until you like the finished product.

2. wet on wet - use sponges to wet entire paper (use card stock paper throughout). Then with brush apply watercolours to paper. I always tell the children not to draw anything, just make a blend

of colours.

3. wet on wet with salt - do same as #2, shake salt over paper. It dries into very nice texture.

4. plastic wrap paper - make a wet on wet paper (see #2 - take a piece of plastic wrap larger than paper. Kind of scrunch it all over until it fits the paper. Make another wet on wet paper. Put it face down on top of the first paper and plastic wrap (the plastic wrap is like a sandwich in the middle). Let it dry. It comes out beautiful, sort of like stained glass .

You can make other papers using other techniques. I do marblized papers, finger painting on table and pressing paper on top, bubble art, blowing with a straw.

Finally you are ready to begin. Use the papers to construct a cover for your book. Use one of the beautiful papers as a background. Cut up some of the others for grass, trees, people, or whatever you want. Glue with Elmer's glue. Do not draw on the front of any paper (only on the back so that when you cut them out, you won't have any marks showing). I type the child's title and name and cut it out in a shape that compliments their cover - for example a cloud shape or just an oval, etc. Laminate the finished product. Now you can bind the whole book. Use another of the beautiful sheets as the back cover.

I do this once a year, not for every book. We also do all the illustrations for the book using the same collage technique, but you could do just the cover and make it less of a production."

### Learning Phone Numbers

My song for phone numbers is very very simple, The children simply sing their phone numbers to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (without the area code, try singing yours) . It just helps them to remember the numbers.

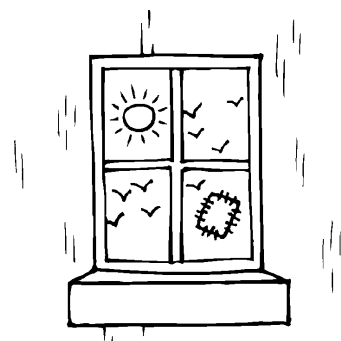
**Label your books 'hard', 'harder', 'hardest'!**

### Faux Windows

"I teach in a room where the only window is ten feet in the air. The only thing you can see out of it is the overhang of the building. So for all intents and purposes, I have no window. I'm very claustrophobic so I've taken to making my bulletin boards in the shapes of windows, with window frames, the whole bit. I have one board I entitle 'Our Weather Window' and it changes with the seasons. It has a 3D tree made of paper and the tree changes as the seasons change, for example, green leaves in the summer, brown leaves in the fall (real ones which I pick up off the street and glue to the branches), then no leaves in the winter and blossoms in the spring. I add touches like the sun and clouds (both white and gray). I make sure the sun remains up throughout the seasons. In the spring lots of butterflies and birds adorn the board and in the winter there is snow, of course! Since I use felt instead of butcher paper to cover the board and velcro on the backs of all my graphics, it's a cinch to change, even to the extent of putting on raindrops or taking them down daily."

"You can make your window look out on any type of scene - desert or rainforest. I have even made it look like a porthole under the sea!"

"I had no window for the past 2 years....However, Staples has 'sky' posterboard. So I purchased 2 large sheets of that, and added a curtain rod on the sides and top of that to look like we had a window. The kids loved it!"



Are you short of tackboard? Buy a 4' x 8' sheet of inexpensive foam board from a builder's supply store and attach it over a chalkboard. You can easily cut it with an Exacto knife to fit any space.

### An Overhead Trick.....

"I saw a colleague do the coolest thing ..... She was using the overhead projector to read and analyze the words of a poem. After the reading, she was asking children to isolate certain words - i.e. Which word is another name for Autumn, which word rhymes with goat, which word has the 'ing' ending, etc. Here is the really cool part: she was using a yardstick that had a rectangular piece of paper attached to the top (approximately the size of a large mailing envelope). Individual children would come to the screen and point to the word that matched the clue with this stick. This caused the word to be projected onto the paper rectangle. Then, the kids would 'pull' the word off the screen! The word stays projected on the paper, looking like a sign. It was SO cool!"

### Keeping Neat

"Last year I bought 5 small, swinging lid trashcans at K-Mart for \$1.00 each. Each pod has their own trash can. The leader empties it every day. This has all but eliminated little snippets of paper all over after a cutting project. They love them! I also bought straw cup holders really cheap and velcroed them onto their desk tags. They use them as pencil/supply cups so they don't have to keep getting in and out of their desks."

### Days of the Week - to the "Addams Family"

Days of the week \*snap snap\*, days of the week \*snap snap\*  
Days of the week, days of the week, days of the week \*snap snap\*  
There's Sunday and there's Monday, there's Tuesday and there's Wednesday  
There's Thursday and there's Friday, and then comes Saturday  
Days of the week \*snap snap\*, days of the week \*snap snap\*  
Days of the week, days of the week, days of the week \*snap snap\*

### Class Jobs

"Here are some fun class jobs I've used..

**class jester** - whose job is to read a riddle or joke to the class. We keep them in a book in class library and it is very popular reading.

**class poet** - finds and reads us a poem.

**class mathematician** - writes and tells a math problem.

**town crier** - who is in charge of watching the clock and 'announcing' every hour.

The kids love this stuff but I suspect the parents think I'm nuts!"



# The End of the Year

## Memory Books

This is a great project for June. The children can do writing and art to add to their books.

Now that digital cameras are easy to use and affordable, memory books are easy to make for your kids. Here are some ideas. These are possible pages - pick and choose the ones you want.

Cover Page - Memories of Grade One 2002 - 2003 and the child's name

The cover can be photocopied on light cardboard, and another sheet for the back. The completed book can be bound on a binding machine or simply stapled.

A class photo and the class members' names in the order of the children in the photo so they can be matched in later years.

Memories of my school

The name of my school is \_\_\_\_\_. (photo of outside of building)

This is my classroom. (photo)

This is my favourite place in the school. (drawing or photo)

This place is special because \_\_\_\_\_.

Memories of my teacher

My teacher's name is \_\_\_\_\_. (photo)

My teacher likes to \_\_\_\_\_.

I like my teacher because \_\_\_\_\_.

Memories of my friends

My best friends are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

This is me with my friends. (drawing)

Memories of my classmates

(Individual photos of the children in the class.)

Special events

(Photos or drawings of the child during special events throughout the year. The child may write a couple of sentences to describe each.)

Handprint

This can be done by painting the child's hand and then pressing it to the paper.

Self-portrait

Draw a careful picture. You might want to use self-portraits from the beginning of the year and the end.

Favourite things

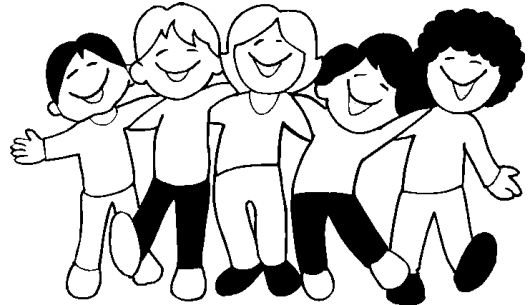
(Have the children all write on this subject and sign their name on a good copy. Photocopy these into the book. You can type them up or use the children's copies.)

Autographs

(The students can sign a page.)

Samples

Samples of art, stories, or special work.





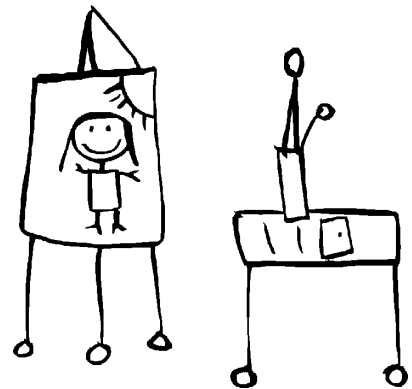
"I make a little photo album for each of my kids at the end of the year. I take pictures all year long, some with the digital camera, some with the regular, and usually try to have at least 2 children in each picture so when I have doubles printed, I've got one of each of them. I just cut construction paper slightly larger than the photos and glue them on with a little caption - maybe just the date or what they were doing at the time or who's in the picture. It ends up being a lot of work at the end but if I got myself more organized I could be doing it all along through the year. I try to have 4-6 pictures of each child and I slip the album into their report card so they get a nice surprise when they go home and open the envelope."

"I put together a Memory Book for the kids at the end of grade one. My pages are:

1. My first day of grade one (with a photo I took of each child on the first day)
2. A poem and hand print of each child taken the first month of school
3. My teacher (child draws a picture of me and I print my name)
4. I learned so much in Grade One (a page for the kids to write on)
5. I made a lot of friends in Grade One. We had a lot of fun together. (write about friends and draw a picture)
6. Fill in the blank page of different favourite things done in our classroom.
7. Now I am \_\_\_\_ years old. I will be in Grade Two. In Grade Two I will: (writing activity and photo of each child)
8. I'm glad I was your teacher poem. (picture of child with me)
9. Goodbye letter from me."

#### **More Memory Book Ideas**

1. A photocopy of the class photo
2. Any photos taken during the year. (I mount these throughout the year on coloured ditto paper and the children write or dictate sentences about their pictures. It is also a nice way to show how their writing has developed throughout the year.) Especially good are photos from the first day of school and the last week of school, special projects or days.
3. Self portraits, dated.
4. A page titled 'My Favorite Book or Story', illustrated.
5. Samples of art, student written stories. (I mount these on coloured paper and write a 'translation' if needed.)



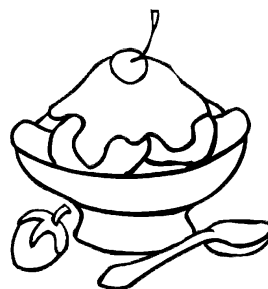
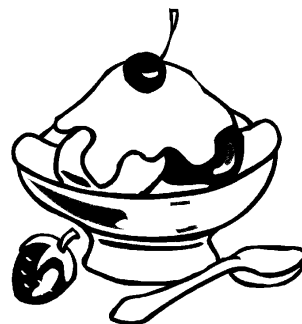
#### **End of the Year**

"Remember to rest and do something for yourself during your time off. I like the analogy of how airline passengers traveling with children are instructed to put their own masks on first in case of oxygen problems and to THEN put it on the children traveling with them. If the adult loses consciousness, then the child has no one to help. I see these vacations as the same thing. We teachers need to take care of ourselves during this period because our kids need us to come back refreshed and ready to give them all we have to give."

## The Last Days of School

These are ideas to do during the last 26 Days of School.

- A - Animal Day, bring your favourite stuffed animal
- B - Backwards Day, wear your clothes backwards
- C - Card Day, make a card for someone at the nursing home
- D - Dinosaur Day
- E - Elephant Day - read books, write stories
- F - Friend Day
- G - Game Day, bring one from home to play
- H - Hat Day, wear your favourite hat
- I - Icky Day - worms, slime, make oobleck
- J - Jacks Day, learn how to play
- K - Kite Day - make kites and fly them
- L - Lollipop Day
- M - Movie Day
- N - New Word Day, bring a new word to school, graph the letters, etc.
- O - Orange Day
- P - Puzzle Day, bring a puzzle from home to do at school
- Q - Quiet Day (or Quilt Day)
- R - Reading Day - wear pj's, bring favourite book
- S - Sundae Day, yum
- T - T shirt Day, wear your favourite
- U - Unusual Shades Day, wear your craziest sunglasses
- V - Visor Day, make a visor and wear it
- W - Watermelon Day, another yum
- X - Xcitement Day, cheer on your school
- Y - You Choose Day - Yellow Day
- Z - Zoom Out of School and Zip into Summer Day!



## End of the Year Presentation

"I'm doing my end of year presentation on Friday. I've decided to call it Poetry Pizazz. Music and Munchies didn't seem quite right and we're going to have cake and punch for refreshments. I made a poster with Printshop and sent it home as an invitation. We will be reciting poems and singing some songs for our parents. We went through our poetry books and chose our favourites. Then 3 or 4 kids 'signed up' to say that poem. They worked as little groups and divided them up into parts. In between the poems we will sing our songs - favourites, too - from our good morning song to our graduation song. (*We had a great year in grade one.....*)"

"After our presentation I will say a few words about how fabulous and supportive the parents have been. Then we will have cake and punch. I will buy a cake from the bakery. After - just for something completely different - we will have a soccer-baseball (kickball) game with our parents joining in. One of our songs is actually *'Take me out to the Ballgame'*."

## End of the Year Souvenirs:

"Buy an inflatable beach ball for each student in your class. Blow up each ball and using a broadtip marker, write "We had a ball in Grade One, Mrs. \_\_\_\_'s class, etc." along with the student's name. Then sign it yourself, and allow the students to have their friends autograph their ball with a

Sharpie marker. Give them time to play with the balls before having to put them up. For transporting purposes, you might want to provide a bag with "Have a ball this summer!" printed on the outside and the date. Have the students deflate their ball and transport them in the bag."

### **End of the Year Count Down:**

"This eye-catching display guarantees that the last week of school will be filled with surprises. Label each of five paper strips with an end-of-the-year surprise, such as lunch outdoors, a popcorn party, or a video. Place each strip inside a balloon; then inflate the balloons. On a bulletin board, display a character cut-out holding five balloon strings. Title the display 'Let's End the Year With a Bang!' Attach the inflated balloons to the ends of the strings. Pop a balloon each morning of the last five school days and enjoy the resulting surprise that day. Pop goes the year!"

### **End of the Year Awards:**

"Some teachers recognize each student in their class for some kind of accomplishment at the end of the year. You can make your own awards at several sites on the 'net. They could say something like: This award is presented to \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. (There are some awards at <http://www.janbrett.com>)

Some possibilities for awards are:

Computer Whiz, Great Sportsmanship, Stick-to-It Award, Class Bookworm, Always Helpful, Beautiful Handwriting, Most Cooperative, Creative Writer, Excellent Artist, Excellent Thinking, Great Participation, Brightest Smile, Hardest Working, Best Boy Athlete, Best Girl Athlete, Outstanding Behaviour, Most Improved \_\_\_\_\_, Excellence in \_\_\_\_\_ (subject area), Most Improved in \_\_\_\_\_ (subject area), True Friend, Math Problem Solver, Most Responsible, Wonderful Singing, Happy Attitude, Dependability, Sharing, Politeness, Citizenship, Academic, Achievement, Perfect Attendance, Most Attentive, Neatness

### **Summer Survival Kit:**

A cup of goodies just for you!

This cup is for you from me with love. Inside I have put some treats that you can use this summer.

A piece of sidewalk chalk for this summer when you need something to do (be sure to ask your parents where it's ok to draw!)

A Band-Aid for one of those summer ouches!

Hugs and Kisses for those times you need them!

A pencil and eraser to practice writing over the summer.

A postcard with my address on it so you can write me sometime this summer to let me know how you are and what fun things you have been doing.

A summer reading log and bookmark... return the completed log to me in August and receive something special!

Have a wonderful vacation, remember to come visit me next year!

I'm glad I was your teacher

I've come to love you so.

The year now ends and we must part.

Always know you are in my heart.

Have a wonderful vacation! Love, Ms .....



### **Last Day of School**

You're a special person,  
And, (student's name), you should know,  
How I loved to be your teacher.  
How fast the year did go!  
Please come back to visit me,  
As through the grades you grow.

Try hard to learn all you can,  
There is so much to know!  
The one thing I tried to teach you,  
To last your whole life through.  
Is to know that you are special,  
Just because, (student's name), you are you!  
Love, (teacher's name), year

"I make little autograph books. I model a few silly autographs and then let them give it a try. They give each other their autograph and add a little picture of some sort to go with it. It takes anywhere from half an hour to 45 min. Later in the day we clean our desktops with shaving cream. Quick, easy, and lots of fun on the last day."

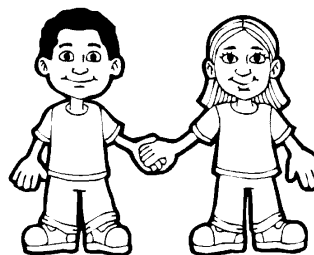
"At our school, we do a school-wide volunteer appreciation assembly. Each class is responsible for reciting a short verse or singing a short appropriate song.... we award each volunteer a nice certificate, and then they are treated to refreshments out on our teacher patio... fresh fruit, Danish and punch. The children have an extra long recess that day, so that the teachers can attend the tea. It is very nice."

"You might want to have everyone bring in a clean, white t-shirt and let everyone sign it, as a remembrance for each student. You also may want to give everyone a sticker, pencil or little note from you telling them to have a nice summer. If you find a pad of paper that is shaped like a light bulb or a clip art of a light bulb you could write 'I'll be thinking of you this summer!' and tell each child one thing you liked/admired about them this year and one thing you think they should work on during the summer to prepare them for next year."

"I go to the grocery store and get enough brown paper bags (with handles, if possible) for each student to have one. We spend one day decorating with crayons, markers, whatever else we can find, reflecting on what we did in the past year. Some kids get all of their friends signatures, phone numbers, etc. This is the bag that they use to clean out their desks, cubbies, lockers, etc. If you can get the ones with handles, they are easy to carry. On the last day of school, my kids leave with all of their stuff and memories of the year."

### **Friends**

The nicest part of being in school  
Is not the books you take;  
It's not the crayons or the paints,  
But all the friends you make.



### **Keeping Them Busy!**

"Here are some things I'm doing to keep everyone busy and out of trouble as the year comes to an end:

- 1,000 books - Children have special bound books with grids in which they write to 1,000, 100 to a page. This has become a highlight of the end of the year. It seems every year my kindergarteners (I have K-1, same students for two years) ask when they'll begin their 1,000 books. I make it sound like a grade one privilege to receive a 1,000 book.

- Accelerated Reader - My k's and l's are busy trying to accumulate points for prizes the last day. If you don't have accelerated reader you could have a little comprehension sheet with about five questions they have to answer after they've read the book and give them points for correct answers.
  - Lots of science - we're 'growing' crystals with water and salt. Wrap a pipe cleaner around a pencil. Fill up the jar with warm water and about 1/4 cup salt, add food colouring and watch. Due to evaporation, the crystals form on the jar and pipe cleaner. We get our magnifying glasses out each day and check the progress.
  - We're also growing plants and go out to water them each day. We set them outside our window so we can take a little hike outside.
  - We've made autograph books for the children to sign for each other.
  - Reading outside. I'm doing my reading groups outside.
  - The teachers have a softball game between themselves and the kids get to go out and cheer.
- We're going to the airport and museum on Friday.  
We're going to the movies on the last day of school (Monday) and coming back with a sack lunch and will be having games outside.

### **Summer Activities**

1. Write numbers form 1 to 100.
2. Find an object in your house that begins with each letter of the alphabet.
3. Write 5 sentences. Use a number word in each sentence.
4. Make something in the kitchen involving the use of measuring cups.
5. Go outside and find something yellow.
6. Write a story about your pet or a pet you would like to have.
7. Write a letter to someone.
8. Make words of \_\_\_ig. Read them to someone.
9. Write the long vowels on a sheet of paper. Think of a word for each vowel sound.
10. Make a scrapbook of mammal pictures.
11. Read a story to someone.
12. Count the money in your billfold or ask mom or dad to give you some coins to count.
13. Use only the letters in your first and last name to write as many words as you can.
14. Write numbers from 101 to 200.
15. Write the alphabet three times.
16. Go outside. Find 4 things - a) something smooth b) something rough c) something soft d) something hard.
17. Correctly spell as many colour words as you can.
18. Write numbers by 5's to 100.
19. Make little signs to name things in your room. Put them up in your room.
20. Draw a picture of something outside. Write 2 sentences about it.
21. Write all the number facts that will add to 6. ( $2 + 4 = 6$ , etc. )
22. Go on a nature hike. Collect things and put them in a picture.
23. Pretend you are a giant. Write a short story about it.
24. Write numbers form 201 to 300.
25. Cut out words from the newspaper - one for each letter of the alphabet.



### A Picture to Remember

"Here is a cute end-of-the-year idea: I xerox the children's school pictures and run a copy off for each child. They decorate the edges of a large piece of white construction paper like a frame and cut and paste all the children's pictures into the center. Then, they get signatures and phone numbers under each photo. I also make a title like 'My Grade One Class 2000' which they cut and paste on the paper."

### Ready For Grade Two

(Tune: *Whole World in His Hands*)

We had a great year - in grade one  
A really great year - in grade one  
We had a great year - in grade one  
Now we are ready for grade two!

We liked \_\_\_\_\_ - in grade one  
We liked \_\_\_\_\_ - in grade one  
We liked \_\_\_\_\_ - in grade one  
Now we are ready for grade two!

We learned to read books - in grade one  
We learned to write stories - in grade one  
We learned to spell words - in grade one  
Now we are ready for grade two!

We had a great year - in grade one  
A really great year - in grade one  
We had a great year - in grade one  
Now we are ready for grade two!

We learned to count real high - in grade one  
We learned to add and subtract - in grade one  
We learned to measure and graph - in grade one  
Now we are ready for grade two!

### A Last Day Project

"Have your kids each write a page of a classroom book that you will read to your new class on the first day of school next year. Here is an example:

Dear Grade One students,

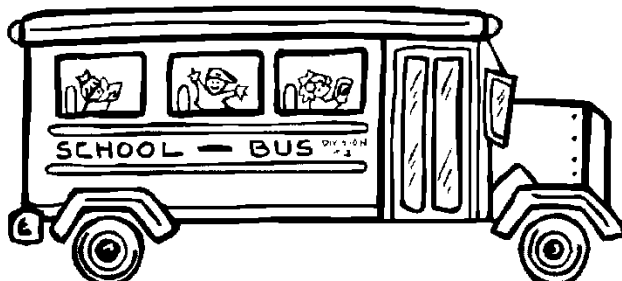
My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I was in \_\_\_\_\_'s class for Grade One.

I learned to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. My favourite subject was \_\_\_\_\_.

Have a good year in Grade One.

From,  
\_\_\_\_\_

"I had each child illustrate their page. The book was adorable. The new class enjoyed reading it as much as the others enjoyed sharing their wisdom."



# Teachers and Teaching

## You are a 'primary' teacher!

What does this mean?

**primary** is an adjective meaning 'earliest'.

**Synonyms:** beginning, direct, first, firsthand, immediate, initial, original, prime

**Concept:** time (early)

**primary** is an adjective meaning 'fundamental'.

**Synonyms:** ABCs, basal, basic, beginning, elemental, elementary, essential, first, foundational, introductory, meat-and-potatoes, original, principal, rudimentary, simple, three R's, ultimate, underlying

**Concept:** origin/source

**primary** is an adjective meaning 'best'.

**Synonyms:** chief, crackerjack, dominant, excellent, fab, first, first class, greatest, highest, leading, main, number one, numero uno, paramount, prime, principal, stellar, top, tough, world class

**Concept:** superiority

The holidays are over.....  
"What holidays?" I say -  
I did go to the beach  
And my kids and I did play.  
But every day, no matter what  
I did, or where I went,  
From working in my garden  
To camping in a tent,  
September first was with me  
And thoughts of things ahead.  
I planned when I was swimming  
And while I lay in bed.

They all say that teachers  
Have this cushy year  
With two months off each summer -  
It makes me shed a tear.  
For teaching's always with me  
Especially with this grade.  
The great responsibility  
Never seems to fade.  
It seems odd to say this,  
And I'm sure it isn't cool -  
But I'm glad the summer's over  
And I am back at school!

*Jean R.*



## Laws of Teaching

Disaster will occur when visitors are in the room.

A subject interesting to the teacher will bore students.

The time a teacher takes in explaining is inversely proportional to the information retained by students.

A meeting's length will be directly proportional to the boredom the speaker produces.

The problem child will be a school board member's son.

When the teacher is late, she will meet the principal in the hall.

If the teacher is late and does not meet the principal, she is late to the staff meeting.

New students come from schools that do not teach anything.

Good students move away.

Murphy's Law will go into effect at the beginning of an evaluation.

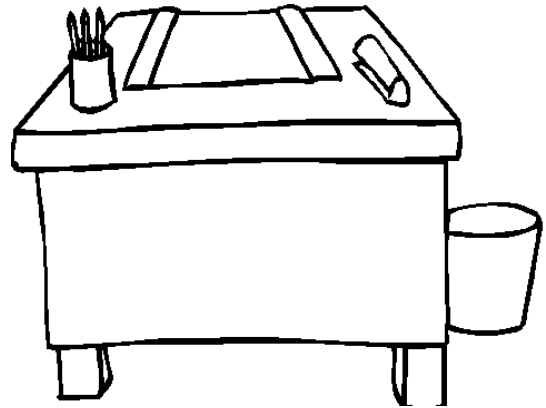
Oh, the perfect desk would have papers corrected  
All perfect, of course, all my lessons connected -

It would be clean as a whistle, so shiny it squeaks,  
And neatly laid out would be plans for eight weeks....

But best of all on this fairy tale desk  
Would sit my large calendar not covered with mess.

With the miraculous goal we would all like to reach  
I'd have nothing to do but to learn, plan and teach -

I wish I could have that.... Oh, how about you?  
But I'd settle for less piles of things I MUST do!  
*Victoria Belmont*



### TRUTHS ABOUT PARENTING

- A baby usually wakes up in the wee-wee hours of the morning.
- A child will not spill on a dirty floor.
- A young child is a noise with dirt on it.
- A youth becomes a man when the marks he wants to leave on the world have nothing to do with tires.
- An unbreakable toy is useful for breaking other toys.
- Avenge yourself; live long enough to be a problem to your children.
- Be nice to your kids, for it is they who will choose your nursing home.
- Celibacy is not hereditary.
- Familiarity breeds children.
- For adult education, nothing beats children.
- God invented mothers because he couldn't be everywhere at once.
- God invented guilt so mothers could be everywhere at once.
- Having children is like having a bowling alley installed in your brain.
- Having children will turn you into your parents.
- If a child looks like his father, that's heredity; if he looks like a neighbour, that's environment.
- If you have trouble getting your children's attention, just sit down and look comfortable.
- Ill-bred children always display their pest manners.
- Insanity is inherited; you get it from your kids.
- It now costs more to amuse a child than it once did to educate his father.
- It rarely occurs to teenagers that the day will come when they'll know as little as their parents.
- Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch.
- Never lend your car to anyone to whom you have given birth.
- One child is often not enough, but two children can be far too many.
- You can learn many things from children... like how much patience you have.
- Summer vacation is a time when parents realize that teachers are grossly underpaid.
- The first sign of maturity is the discovery that the volume knob also turns to the left.
- There would be fewer problems with children if they had to chop wood to keep the television set going.



New York Times columnist Tom Friedman, in this 2003 commencement speech at Yale University, told a story about the value of teachers.

One night at a dinner, a CEO decided to explain the problem with education. He said, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his/her best option in life was to become a teacher? You know, it's true what they say about teachers: Those who can do, do. And those who can't do, teach."

To corroborate his statement he said to another guest, "Hey, Susan, you're a teacher. Be honest, what do you make?"

Susan replied, "What do I make? I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could, and I can make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. I can make a C- plus feel like the Congressional Medal of Honor and an A feel like a slap in the face if the student didn't do his or her very best. I can make parents tremble when I call home or feel almost like they won the lottery when I tell them how well their child is progressing."

Gaining speed, she went on: "You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them write. I make them read and read and read. I make them understand that if you have brains, then follow your heart. And if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make in money, you pay them no attention." Susan then paused. "You want to know what I make? I make a difference."

According to a research at an English university, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter is in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because we do not read every letter by itself but the word as a whole. Ceehiro

#### **You know you are living in the year 2004 when:**

1. Your reason for not staying in touch with family is because they do not have e-mail.
2. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
3. Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG file of your newborn so she can create a screen saver.
4. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
5. Every commercial on television has a web site address at the bottom of the screen.
6. You buy a computer and 3 months later it's out of date and sells for half the price you paid.
7. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go get it.
8. Using real money, instead of credit or debit, to make a purchase would be a hassle and take planning.
9. You just tried to enter your password on the microwave.
10. You consider second-day air delivery painfully slow.
11. Your dining room table is now your flat filing cabinet.
12. Your idea of being organized is multiple-coloured Post-It notes.
13. You hear most of your jokes via e-mail instead of in person.
14. You get an extra phone line so you can get phone calls.
15. You disconnect from the Internet and get this awful feeling, as if you just pulled the plug on a loved one.
16. You get up in the morning and go online before getting your coffee.
17. You wake up at 2 a.m. to go to the bathroom and check your e-mail on your way back to bed.



## Proverbs

A grade one teacher collected well-known proverbs. She gave each child in her class the first half of a proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb.

Better to be safe than.....punch a 5th grader.  
Strike while the .....bug is close.  
It's always darkest before.....Daylight Saving Time.  
Never underestimate the power of.....termites.  
If you lie down with dogs, you'll.....stink in the morning.  
An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.  
Happy the bride who.....gets all the presents.  
Two's company, three's.....the Musketeers.  
Don't put off till tomorrow what.....you put on to go to bed.  
Children should be seen and not.....spanked or grounded.  
If at first you don't succeed.....get new batteries.  
You get out of something only what you..... see in the picture on the box.  
Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry and....you have to blow your nose.  
When the blind leadeth the blind.....get out of the way.  
Love all, trust.....me.  
You can lead a horse to water but.....how?  
Don't bite the hand that.....looks dirty.  
No news is.....impossible.  
A miss is as good as a.....Mr.  
You can't teach an old dog new.....math.  
The pen is mightier than the.....pigs.  
A penny saved is.....not much.  
Where there's smoke there's.....pollution



## Being a Grade One Teacher .....

"It is incredible when you see that light go on when they first "get it" (whatever it you are trying to get them to get). That is a feeling like getting to the top of Everest - just look what we did! Anything is possible.

It is wonderful to be in a profession in which little boys jump up in the air and say "I love you teacher!" just when you are feeling like you've been a real crumb ..... or when you get attacked with the biggest, tightest hug from out of nowhere from your shyest, most reserved little tyke.

Or when you get a note from a parent that says that they understand that you've gone the extra mile and that they do appreciate it.

Those experiences are what keep me going when I'm fed up to my eyeballs with paperwork, **administrivia**, parents that seem to actively work against helping their children, and lessons that go ker-splat. They keep me going back the next day when I feel like I'm not getting anywhere with my students, when I'm very frustrated.

And then one of them does something incredible- something that anyone else might brush off as a minor, everyday thing - but which I know is incredible because I know my kids so well.

That's what everyone should know before they start teaching because it is really the only reason to do it."

"I love what I do but there are hard parts. The hardest part of my job:

- writing report cards 3 times a year. My husband and I figured out this morning that each reporting period takes me about 36 hours altogether which is roughly 4 or 5 business days worth of work that I have to find in MY weekends and evenings. I don't get time off to do these. Those 36 hours don't include the time I spend in class assessing the children to find out what they have retained.

- writing reports in words that parents can understand. How can you say nicely - your child is unable to do the work in class because he is expecting me to spoonfeed it to him the same way as you spoonfeed him his lunch? How can I say this in a report card to parents who don't speak English? How can I tell parents that their precious child is a vicious bully on the playground?

- people thinking that I don't work very hard because I teach grade one. People thinking I'm not very smart because I teach grade one. 'How hard can it be to teach a kid to read?' said a parent a few years ago. People thinking that grade one is not that important because 'well, they're just little children' as if children are somehow not very important.

- using my own money to buy things for my classroom. I spend more money on my classroom than I do on my clothes. Isn't that sad?

- public expectations that teachers will be parents, social workers, counselors, police officers, psychologists, etc., all wrapped up in one tidy little package.

- This is the hardest one: saying good bye at the end of the year to the children I've loved for 10 months."

"I'm wondering how some teachers 'do it all'. I have finally gotten to the point that I only come in on the weekends once - or twice- a month. (And this only because I have realized that the only truly important children in my life are my own! The others are simply on loan.) After almost 20 years - why? I had a new teacher ask me when she wouldn't need to come in like that any more. What do you say? Some teachers are in every weekend and it's not because they aren't organized. It's because they need to be in to get things ready for the next week. Are we ever really ready for the next week? A teaching partner of mine has been teaching for 33 years and will retire this year. (She still comes in every weekend for at least an hour.....)"

### **What is the role of the teacher?**

The early childhood teacher holds several roles.

The teacher must love all of her children and treat them as equal but special individuals, thus she is a mother.

The teacher must ask though provoking questions and encourage exploration and investigation, thus she is a scientist.

The teacher must sing loud and proud, even if she can not carry a tune, thus she is a musician.

The teacher must run, hop, jump, skip, and tumble with the children, thus she is a gymnast.

The teacher must share accounts of far away lands and imaginary people, thus she is a storyteller.

The teacher must bandage scraped knees and kiss 'ouchies', thus she is a nurse.

The teacher must give words of encouragement, louder and stronger than anyone thought possible, thus she is a cheerleader.

The teacher must listen with open ears and an empathetic heart, thus she is a friend.

The teacher does not entertain, dictate, police, referee, lecture, demolish, or judge.

The teacher is a facilitator, enabler, questioner, encourager, organizer, nurturer, backer, advocator, and



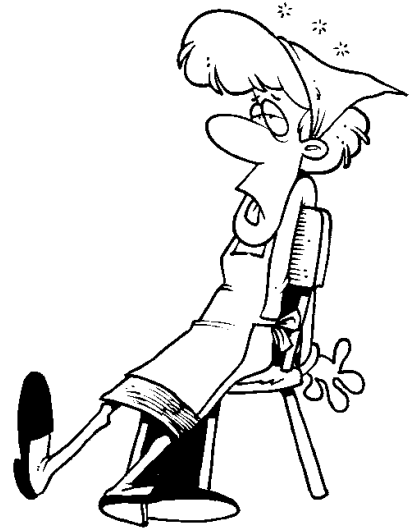
supporter.

The early childhood teacher holds several roles, each different in action, but equal in importance. To teach is to touch a life forever. That is the most important role of the teacher.

### Happy January

'Twas the month after Christmas, and all through the house  
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.  
The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste  
At the holiday parties had all gone to my waist.  
When I got on the scales, there arose such a number!  
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber)  
I'd remember the marvellous meals I'd prepared;  
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,  
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese  
And the way I never said 'No thank you, please.'  
As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt  
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt...  
I said to myself, as I only can,  
'You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!'  
So - away with the last of the sour cream dip,  
Get rid of the fruitcake, every cracker and chip -  
Every last bit of food I like must be banished  
'Till all the additional ounces have vanished.  
I won't have a cookie - not even a lick  
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.  
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,  
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.  
I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore...  
But isn't that what January is for?  
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot,  
Happy New Year to all - and to all a good diet!

Back to work so soon!  
No more lounging until noon.  
Bye to watching late night shows.  
No more dancing 'till they close.  
Granny isn't able to play.  
Baby, you can't spend the day.  
All the housework was never done.  
But the shopping sure was fun!  
Trips to the beach were grand,  
With friends we walked the sands.  
But it's back to work we go.  
For as we all know -  
Honey, we've run out of money!

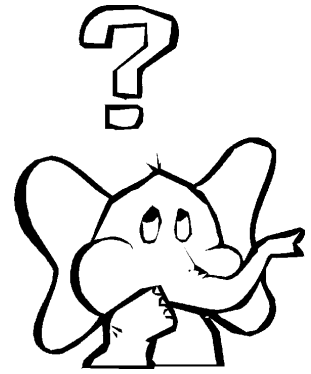


### **WORKIN' IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Children scream, they're not listnin'  
When they go, we're not miss'n 'em,  
In all of this pain, we try to stay sane,  
Workin' in an elementary school.  
Christmas comes, they're excited,  
Though our nerves they've ignited,  
They're off of the walls,  
They run in the halls,  
Workin' in an elementary school.  
In the lunchroom we can hear them yellin'  
And we know that they are really wound,  
Someone hits, the other says, "I'm tellin'!"  
And that is when our heads begin to pound.  
Pretty soon we'll be restin'  
'cause our nerves, they've been testin'  
We're happy, it's clear,  
It just comes once a year  
Christmas in an elementary school!

### Things to Ponder

In a country of free speech, why are there phone bills?  
Why isn't phonetics spelled the way it sounds?  
Why is the alphabet in that order? Is it because of that song?  
Why do you park on a driveway and drive on a parkway?  
Why do they call them apartments when they are all together?  
Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?  
Did Noah keep his bees in archives?  
Do you realize how many holes there could be if people would just take the time to take the dirt out of them?  
How does the guy who drives the snow plough get to work in the mornings?  
How do they get the deer to cross at that yellow road sign?  
Before they invented drawing boards, what did they go back to?  
What happened to the first 6 'ups'?  
What was the best thing before sliced bread?  
If the pen is mightier than the sword, and a picture is worth a thousand words, how dangerous is a fax?  
How do a fool and his money GET together?



### Kids say the darnedest things!!

*Typos are left as they were written.*

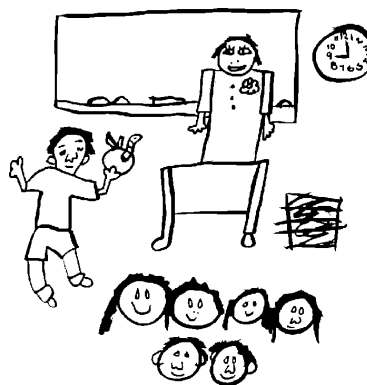
- \* Our new teacher told us all about fossils. Before she came to our class, I didn't know what a fossil looked like.
- \* One horsepower is the amount of energy it takes to drag a horse 500 feet in one second.
- \* We get our temperature in three different ways. Either fasinheit, cellcius, or centipede.
- \* A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water and forcing it through an aviation.
- \* Pavlov studied the salvation of dogs.
- \* My aunt won't be having any more kids because her tubes are tired.
- \* A molecule is so small that it can't be seen by the naked observer.
- \* A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, two molars, and eight cuspidors.
- \* In biology today, we digested a frog.
- \* The big artery in your neck is called the jocular vein.

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.  
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.  
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.  
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.  
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.  
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.  
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.  
If a child lives with security, he learns faith.  
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
he learns to find love in the world.

### **I am a teacher**

I am a counselor to a problem-filled child,  
I am a psychologist to help a child gone wild.  
I am a travel agent scheduling trips for the year,  
I am a confidante who wipes a sad child's tear.  
I am a banker collecting money for things,  
I am a librarian sharing joys a book brings.  
I am a custodian who cleans little messes,  
I am a psychic who tries to understand guesses.  
I am a photographer charting a child's yearly growth,  
When mother and father are gone for the day, I am both.  
I am a nurse who detects when a child feels sick,  
I am a magician who must always recognize a trick.  
I am a party planner for holidays from winter to fall,  
I am a decorator of a room, filling up every wall.  
I am a news reporter updating the current events,  
I am a detective solving mysteries and suspense.  
When we seem to stray from values, I become a preacher,

But I'm proud to be these people because ...  
I can say, "I am a teacher."



### **Have you heard about the next planned Survivor show?**

Three businessmen and three businesswomen will be dropped in an elementary school classroom for 6 weeks. Each business person will be provided with a copy of their school district's curriculum, and a class of 28 students. Each class will have five learning-disabled children, three with ADHD, one gifted child, and two who speak limited English. Three will be labeled as severe behavior problems.

Each business person must complete lesson plans at least 3 days in advance with annotations for curriculum objectives and modify, organize, or create materials accordingly. They will be required to teach students, handle misconduct, implement technology, document attendance, write referrals, correct homework, make bulletin boards, compute grades, complete report cards, document benchmarks, communicate with parents, and arrange parent conferences.

They must also supervise recess and monitor the hallways. In addition, they will complete drills for fire, earthquakes, or shooting attacks. They must attend workshops, (100 hours), staff meetings, union meetings, and curriculum development meetings. They must also tutor those students who are behind and give extra help to their 2 non-English speaking children.

If they are sick or having a bad day they must not let it show. Each day they must incorporate reading, writing, spelling, math, science, social studies, P.E., music, art, and personal safety into the program. They must maintain discipline and provide an educationally stimulating environment at all times.

The business people will only have access to the golf course on the weekends, but on their new salary they will not be able to afford it anyway. There will be no access to vendors who want to take them out to lunch, and lunch will be limited to 30 minutes.

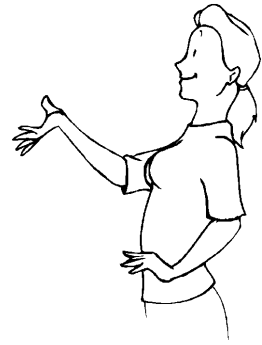
On days when they have recess duty, the business people will be permitted to use the staff restroom as long as another survival candidate is supervising their class. They will be provided with one 40-minute planning period per week while their students are at specials. If the copier is operable, they may make copies of necessary materials at this time.

The business people must continually advance their education on their own time and pay for this advanced training themselves. This can be accomplished by moonlighting at a second job or marrying someone with money.

The winner will be allowed to return to his or her regular job.

### Things You'll Never Hear a Teacher Say:

"Our principal is soooooooooo smart. No wonder he's in administration."  
"Thank goodness for these evaluations. They keep me focused."  
"I'd like to see Red Lobster offer a meal like this!"  
"Here, class, just put all your gym shoes in this box next to my desk."  
"I bet all the people in our administration really miss teaching!"  
"Gosh, the bathroom smells so fresh and clean!"  
"I can't believe I get paid for this!"  
"I think the discipline around here is just a LITTLE too strict!"  
"It's Friday already?????"  
"We'd be able to educate our children better if they let us teach through summer too."  
"Have you noticed that the teachers drive better cars than the students?"  
"This in-service training has been fabulous."  
"It must be true; the superintendent said so!"



### Back to School Kit for Teachers

*This Back To School Kit includes necessary items to guarantee you a terrific school year.*

Pipe Cleaner	Flexibility is important for a successful school year.
Rick Rack	This year will be full of ups and downs, but eventually everything will smooth out.
Matches	For those days when you feel you need to light a fire under someone.
Wiggly Eye	Keep an eye on our students to discover how best to help them. Or, for when you wish you had eyes in the back of your head.
Battery	Like the Energizer Bunny, to help you keep going, and going, and going.
Animal Crackers	Eat these when you think your office is a zoo.
Jingle Bell	Ring for help if you need it. We're here to help each other.
Present	Remember our students are a gift to us.
Candy Bar	Use this whenever you need a 'Sweet Escape'.
Smiley Sticker	Try to wear a happy face.
Flower Pot	We are here to plant the seeds of knowledge.
Clothespin	Hang in there!
Hole Reinforcers	Don't forget to reinforce the efforts of each other.
Pen	You are a priceless part of _____ School.
Orange	'Orange' you glad you are a part of the best school in _____? (your town)

Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on? He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. When the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off then it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on - this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. Once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them." She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots....." Ever have one of those days?

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, wordlessly he picked up a large, empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks -- about 2" in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life. The rocks are the important things - your family, your spouse, your health, your children - anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else. The small stuff."

If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Take care of the rocks - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.

*Advice to a teacher who has moved from the Intermediate Grades to Grade One.....*

"Beware of culture shock. You can still tell jokes but none of your students will get them. You have to be able to teach while students are falling out of their chairs (a common occurrence). Before your students do anything you have to tell them how to do it - including lining up to leave the room. On the first day early in the morning practice lining up and marching to the bathroom. Show them how to wash their hands. I teach them how to rip out a workbook page without destroying it. Plan on 20 minutes to get the page ripped out and 30 minutes to do the page. I went from Grade 5 to Grade 1 and will never go back. This is where the action is."

T'was the night before school started  
When all through the town  
The parents were cheering  
It was a riotous sound.  
By eight the kids were washed  
And tucked into bed  
When memories of homework  
Filled them with dread.

New pencils, new folders,  
New notebooks, too  
New teachers, new friends -  
Their anxiety grew.  
The parents just giggled  
When they learned of this fright  
And shouted upstairs-  
"GO TO BED - IT'S A SCHOOL NIGHT!"

Brrr! It's winter!  
Make me shake!  
Snow on the ground  
And ice on the lake!  
Look what's falling!  
Another snowflake!  
A big round snowman  
Is what I'll make!

Some nice hot cocoa  
Is what I'll take!  
Don't even think about  
Ice cream cake!  
Brrr! It's winter!  
Give me a break!





### How Can You Tell a Grade One Teacher?

Grade One teachers are the first people at the school in the morning and the last to leave.

Grade One teachers speak in clear short sentences, and have a tendency to repeat themselves. When giving directions, they give no more than two steps at once.

Grade One teachers must have lots of stuff... in their basements, in their classrooms, and even in 'limbo' in their cars when there is no place else to put it. They throw away only when necessary and have been known to throw something away, then change their mind and pick it out of the trash. They never wear 'dry clean only' clothes and have become masters at removing tempera paint from fabric.

Grade One teachers know multiple copier tricks. They could teach college courses on enlarge, reduce, cut and paste, get rid of splotches, etc.

They must be able to read sideways out loud with their arm twisted at an odd angle so the kids can see the pictures. On the same note, they also can read upside down.

Grade One teachers are loved by their systems for not taking personal leave days. It is simply too difficult to plan for a sub when there isn't an incredibly important reason.

Grade One teachers have an aura of love and kindness and patience.

### Lost

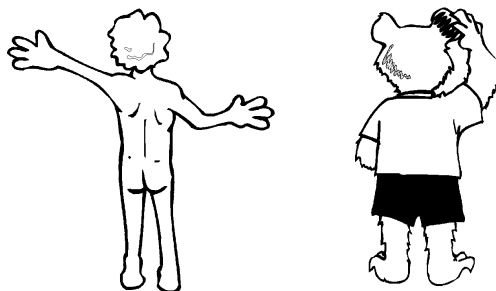
Dear Mrs. Butler, this is just a note  
About our little Raymond's coat  
Which he came home without last night,  
And so I thought I'd better write.  
He was minus his scarf as well, I regret  
And his aging grandma is most upset  
As she knitted it and it's pure wool.  
You'll appreciate her feelings, I'm sure.  
Also his swimming towel has gone  
Out of his bag, he says, and one  
Of his socks, too - it's purplish and green  
Since September it hasn't been seen.

Have you noticed his gloves?  
There has not been a sign  
Of them after your class visited  
The pantomime.  
Well, I think that's all. I will close now.  
Yours sincerely, Maureen Howe  
(Mrs.) P.S. I did write one before  
About his father's hat that Raymond wore  
In the school play and later could not find,  
But got no reply. Still never mind,  
Raymond tells me he might have lost the note,  
Or left it in the pocket of his coat.

### Funny Words

English has some funny words  
They give my mind the jitters  
They sound the same to you and me,  
But are spelled with different letters.  
There's see and sea  
And be and bee  
It's terrible confusing!  
There's new and knew  
And through and threw.  
It's really not amusing!  
There's deer and dear  
And here and hear.

It's horribly disturbing!  
There's there and their  
And bare and bear.  
It's really most perturbing!



### **I'm a Grade One Teacher.....**

Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning. Not only that, I'm to instil a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify disruptive behaviour, and observe them for signs of abuse, allergies and learning disabilities. I'm to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, personal safety and raise their self-esteem.

I am to check their heads occasionally for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of potential antisocial behaviour, offer advice, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and always making sure that the girls and boys get equal attention without sexual stereotypes.

My job requires me to work, on my own time, weekends and evenings and at my own expense towards additional certification, to coach the school volleyball team, and after school I am to attend committee and staff meetings and participate in staff development training. And then there are the extra hours of marking, planning and report cards.

I must keep the parents completely informed of everything I do and how each child is progressing. I am to communicate frequently with each student's parent by letter, phone, newsletter, and report card. I must keep voluminous records.

I am to be a paragon of virtue and a role model in the community. I must support my current administration. I must incorporate technology into the learning, and monitor all web sites for appropriateness. I must model neatness and organization. My classroom must be tidy and beautiful with seasonal and appropriate decorations. I must provide a personal relationship with each student. I must watch the children on the playground and I am responsible for their safety. I must be mother, nurse, psychologist, policeman, secretary, entertainer and social worker.

Oh, yes, and teach all my children to read, write, spell, love literature, work with numbers, have scientific curiosity, understand the world, know music and exercise for good physical health. Is that all? And they say we are overpaid.....

### **RULES FOR TEACHERS 1915**

You will NOT marry during the term of your contract.

You are NOT to keep company with men.

You MUST be home between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am unless attending a school function.

You MAY NOT loiter downtown in ice cream stores.

You MAY NOT travel beyond the city limits without the permission of the chairman of the board.

You MAY NOT ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.

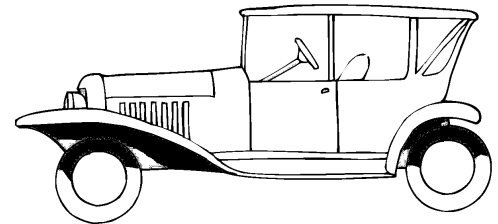
You MAY NOT smoke cigarettes.

You MAY NOT dress in bright colours.

You may UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES dye your hair.

You must wear AT LEAST two petticoats.

Your dresses must NOT be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.



### **DUTIES**

To keep the schoolroom clean you must:

- sweep the floor at least once daily.
- scrub the floor with hot soapy water at least once a week.
- start the fire at 7 am. so that the room will be warm by 8 am.

### Are you a true Grade One teacher?

1. Do you ask guests if they have remembered their scarves and mittens as they leave your home?
2. Do you move your dinner partner's glass away from the edge of the table?
3. Do you ask if anyone needs to go to the bathroom as you enter a theater with a group of friends?
4. Do you hand a tissue to anyone who sneezes?
5. Do you refer to happy hour as 'snack time'?
6. Do you say 'I like the way you did that,' to the mechanic who repairs your car well?
7. Do you ask 'Are you sure you did your best?' to the mechanic who fails to repair your car to your satisfaction?
8. Do you sing the 'Alphabet Song' to yourself as you look up a number in the phone book?
9. Do you say all directions twice... and all questions three times?
10. Do you fold your spouse's fingers over the coins as you hand him or her the money at a tollbooth?
11. Do you ask a quiet person at a party if he or she has something to share with the group?
12. Do you make little turkey name tags for everyone at your family's holiday dinner?
13. Do you find yourself explaining to a cashier why you bought 24 boxes of crayons that were on sale?
14. Do neighbors drop off empty coffee cans, margarine cups, Leggs eggs, milk bottle cartons, scraps of material and old newspapers at your house?
15. Do your slippers have fuzzy little animal faces on them?
16. Does your refrigerator door look like a military command center because it is covered with notes, calendars, coupons, phone numbers and a thousand other things?
17. When you're in a theater, do you often turn around and 'shush' the people behind you?
18. Do you often browse through toy stores and children's clothing stores even though you don't have any children?
19. Is one of the drawers in your kitchen full of pencils, pens, crayons, markers, erasers, glue, etc.?
20. Have you stopped at the curb to pick up discarded old shelves, bookcases, file cabinets, or magazine racks?
21. When everyone else at the beach is catching up on the latest novels by King and Grisham, are you cutting out little oak tag people for your September bulletin board?
22. Do you know exactly how many Oreo cookies are in a package... and how many jelly beans are in a jar?
23. Do you have at least a dozen colourful sweaters and sweatshirts for each of the holidays?

