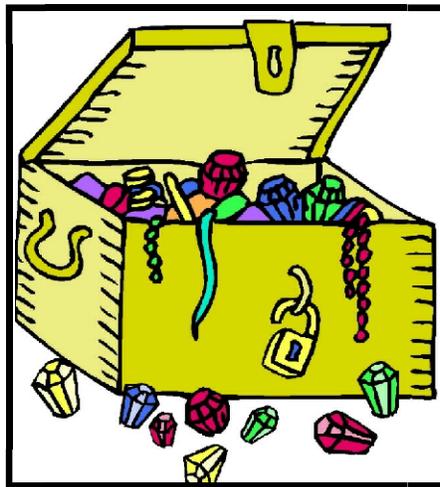


Primary
Success
Publications



The Grade Two Treasury



The "Grade Two Treasury" is a collection of ideas that were published in the "Share-Two" Newsletter in the issues from 2000 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.



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Primary Success Publications

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Notes - Favourite Pages and Best Ideas

Classroom Management

Greetings!

"I start each day by greeting my Grade Two kids at the door. They have a choice of a high-five, hand shake, or a hug. By doing this, I can take care of any problems that might have happened on the playground or see which students might have had a bad start to their day. I also have instrumental music playing. An activity to get started on is a must. I give table points through the day, so they know that I will be looking for tables that settle down quietly and get right to work. I would also recommend a new CD I just received titled 'The Most Calming Classical Music CD Ever!'"

'No Name' Papers

"I have the children highlight their names before they hand their papers in."

"I have a basket that they put their completed work in. I alternate between a highlighter, stamp, and stickers. I put them next to the basket and they can highlight their name or put a stamp or sticker by their name. I used to work with a teacher who had a faceless man on the wall. He was called 'Mr. No Name'. All papers without names were posted around him. The children took them down when they saw their paper, put their name on it, and turned it in."

"When the children write their names on their papers, I always ask them to put a yellow (or some other colour) dot, square, heart, etc. next to it. If they have nothing to put it next to...they know that they forgot their names."

Sing to "If You're Happy and You Know It"

The first thing on my paper is my name.

The first thing on my paper is my name.

My teacher has to know *(or substitute your name if it works with the rhythm -*

Mrs. Roberts has to know)

Who did this work, and so,

The first thing on my paper is my name.

"Everyone knows how frustrating it is to get papers with no names. When I am passing papers out I say, 'Let's get our names on the paper before ____ does.' He's the last one to get the paper and everyone rushes to beat him."

"I hate no names on papers. I will often say, 'Put your finger on your name' or 'Hold up your paper so I can see your name' just before they hand it in. Those who forgot quickly scramble to write



it on."

"I often say, 'Check your neighbour's paper to the right and to the left of you for their names.'

"An idea that I have just started to use is to have highlighter and a pencil near the tray where my students turn in their work. They are to highlight their name. They love to use the highlighter so much that they write their name on their paper if they have forgotten. Then they can highlight their name."

"I purposely call the child who does not put their name on their paper 'Fred'. As I circulate or check work, I say things like 'Nice printing, Fred.' The kids all check their pages when they hear 'Fred'. It is a reminder, and fun. No one wants to be Fred!"

"I always say, 'Draw a smiley face (heart, square, etc.) beside your name.'

- Make a bulletin board using black paper and label it 'the black hole'. This is where you post the student work that is missing names. Students can claim their work there.

We sing - to If You're Happy... :

"Write your name on your paper, write your name.

Write your name on your paper, write your name.

Write your name on your paper,

Write your name on your paper,

Write your name on your paper write your name."

They clap or snap at the end if they have their name on the paper by the time we finish the song. Sometimes they just start singing and

I don't have to sing or remind them about their name. If we want to add dates to our paper, at the very end they just shout 'and the date' after the last line. They love it."

- In my class, the 'no name' papers get chewed by our pet hamster. I tell my principal that the hamster is an integral part of my classroom management.



Lining Up

"I post a list of each line, written in big letters by the classroom door. They can easily see the list when they are in line. But I have found that after practicing this 3 or 4 times, they don't need the list. The first day I do this, I call them up in the order of the list and have them stand in line, inside the classroom. Then I have them look at who is in front of them and in back of them. They also look at the person that is beside them. Then I have them take note of a 'landmark' (a poster on the wall, or lined up with a shelf, etc.) to remind them where to stand, because they may be dismissed to line up before the kids ahead of them. For example, if they are the seventh person in line and they get dismissed first to line up, then I don't want

them to stand at the front of the line. I want them to stand about seven paces back. This way there is no need for the kids ahead to push anyone back when they line up. After they get familiar with where they stand, I have them sit down. Then I ask all of Line 1 to line up. We work out any problems and make sure that they all leave room for anyone ahead of them. Then I do the same for Line 2. The order never seems to be a problem, but spacing themselves out takes practice. Most kids are used to racing to be first and that's what they naturally want to do.

"Lining up after recess may take an extra day or two. Remembering to step back and let others in front may be temporarily forgotten after the excitement of recess. You may want to be waiting just before the bell rings. This works great for me, but be sure to practice!"

When we line up we do it by alphabetical order so there is never a need to run to be first, or push someone out of the way.

"Some ideas to think about while lining your students up.....I number my students and then ask them:

Line up if....

your number is odd (or even)

your number has two digits (or one)

you have a 2 in the ones place of your number

your number is 5 or you can add or subtract your digits to equal 5 ($14 \dots 1 + 4 = 5$)

someone you live with has black hair, then blonde and on and on

you have one sister, and on and on

you live in a house.....an apartment.....a mobile home

you had _____ for a first grade teacher

you moved here this year, you've lived here for 2 years.....

If you want to do more complicated math problems, give the students a larger number, for example, begin at 50 or 240, etc."



"I pick the leader of the week. I go in alphabet order. That child is the line leader and also the messenger, and does all of the other jobs. At the end of the week, this child becomes the line ender. It solves that ever persistent problem of who will be first and last in line. I always have 26 kids in my class so every child will get a chance at one time during the year. Why do I do it this way? Because I hate changing the job chart and I can remember one child per week. It's just easier for me to manage!"

"I play 'If you talk, I win' game with the kids. The deal is to walk to our destination without making a sound. If I talk, the kids win and vice versa. You'd be surprised how hard it is for me to keep quiet when other teachers want to talk as we pass by. Some teachers try to get me to talk much to the delight of the kids. We play this quite a bit at the beginning of the year (but not every time we're out in the hall.) There are no prizes but I keep a tally count score on the board. They absolutely love this game and beg to play it. It's really quite funny if you think about it!"

"Here's another management trick I use for lining my kids up. In the past, my kids would come running full speed to the line after recess so they could be first. So after about the first week of school, when I get to know personalities, I create a line list. I have two lines that are usually boy, girl, boy, girl. I try to separate those that I think will talk or play in line and put my 'busier' kids toward the front. The line leaders change everyday according to the helpers of the day. We practice lining up in our new order for the first few days. They learn who stands in front of and behind them. I teach them to leave space for the kids who stand in front of them, in case they are dismissed to line up before others in their line. They usually look for a marker on the wall next to where they line up, to help them remember to leave space. I change this line order every quarter for a little variety!"

"If you number your children in the rollcall sequence, they can line up according to the number. You can make any number the leader and then number 1 goes after the last number. For example, if there were 5 kids and number 4 was the leader, the children would line up 4, 5, 1, 2, 3. They could line up with even numbers first and then odd numbers, in reverse order, etc."



Number Your Students

"Every child is given a Magic Number (in alphabetical order). This is the handiest thing! They put this number on all their work, on tests, on personal items, etc. You can ask them to line up in order using this number (great for fire-drills). A child can put sheets in order for filing, or tell you if a paper is missing. There are lots of other uses. And the students learn the magic numbers before I do!"

"Each of my students has a 'magic number'. I have a set of cards with these numbers on them. When I need to distribute freebies we have a Magic Number drawing. The children devised the next one. They use the magic numbers with math facts. For example, if Tony is 12 and Mitchell is 24, two Tonys equal one Mitchell....."

"One of the most important things I do is assign each of my students a number, in roster order, at the beginning of the year. Those numbers save me so much time and headache over the course of the year, I don't know how I managed without them!"

"My students' numbers are on their coat hooks, their mailboxes, their portfolios, some of their personal materials, any of my classroom materials I want to keep track of and every paper they turn in to me. Some of the advantages:

- Marked assignments can be quickly entered into my computer grade book.
- Any papers to go home can be quickly placed into mailboxes (by me, a parent volunteer, or even by students).
- Papers with no name OR number can be more quickly identified without interrupting instruc-

tional or independent work time.

- Samples of student work can be quickly filed (again, by me, a parent, or a student).
- Rearranging materials (for parent conferences, etc.) is no problem. After the conferences, I only have to reorder the numbered folders/portfolios/report cards, etc. This REALLY saves a lot of time!
- Multiple page projects (like illustrating poems or books) can be collected on a daily basis with no marking except the student number, on the back, in a specified corner.
- When we leave the building for an emergency drill, (fire drill, for example), my students line up in our assigned area and I quickly call out the numbers in order. Each child responds when his./her number is called.
- We even line up in roster order to go to lunch (a huge time-saver for the lunchroom aides, who use a scanner to record lunch purchases on a class roster). Our library aide can also have the students line up in order to make book returns quick and efficient.

These are just a few of the ways this little system helps me. It is not as impersonal as it sounds, either - the students learn their numbers and their classmates' numbers very quickly, and they develop a real sense of responsibility for taking care of their things and each other."

"Give each student a number! I put my students into alphabetical order by the first names and number them from 1 to _____. This number stays with the child all year. New students that come in during the year get the next number at the end of the class list. This helps for lining up - I say, for example, "Number 10 is the leader!" and the numbers go on from there to the end of the list and then continue with 1 to 10. The kids put their numbers on all their supplies. They print the number on all work that will be handed in, and this makes work you want to file simple to sort.

When they do art work a small number in the bottom corner does not mar the art. Dismiss the children by calling out numbers, by asking for prime numbers, multiples of 3, or by asking math questions. The children soon learn the numbers of all members of the class. It is fast to have the children check who is absent when there is a fire drill, as they will know when a number next to them is missing. This is a strategy I would not be without!"



"Every student is given a number in alphabetical order. They put this number on all their work, on tests, on personal items, etc. You can ask them to line up in order using this number (great for fire-drills). A child can put sheets in order for filing, or tell you if a paper is missing. There are lots of other uses. And the students learn the magic numbers before I do!"

- In your classes, assign each student a number from 1- 30 (or whatever). This is done alphabetically. Then have the students put their numbers in the top right hand corner (I

put a small box in the corner before photocopying) of their assignments that they hand in. Have one student put them in numerical order and within a minute you have all your papers in alphabetical order (easier for recording marks) and you know immediately who to call on for missed assignments.

Plans and Records

"This is the blank template of what I use for lesson plans. It is the whole week, so it is long. I make one master copy, then copy it double-sided for my lesson plan binder. I feel it is complete enough that if I was ever unexpectedly ill, the sub could figure it out. I have been using it for four years now and love it."

A part-day sample.....

Monday Lesson Plans Date _____

8:30-9:00 Arrival

*Children come into classroom. When entering the room students put bookbags in the baskets, coats on hangers, and put their card in the correct cup for their lunch choice. Messenger can take attendance and lunch count to office.

*Children then have assignment of either handwriting, journaling, or incredible equations.

Assignment for today: _____

*If they finish the assignment, they choose a book from a basket and bring it to their seat.

9:00-9:20 Morning Meeting and Calendar

*Go over calendar with children. Discuss the date, a few incredible equations to go with the date, and money exchange.

*Review helpers chart with children.

*Discuss any schedule changes or special events.

9:20-10:05 Reading

*Introduce story to class

*Pre-reading: _____

*Read story _____

*Activity with Read-Aloud: _____

10:10-10:40 Independent Reading

*Read aloud for 5-7 minutes

*Children take self-selected reading baskets. They read by themselves. The children have their poetry notebook and at least four other books in their basket. During this time the children read as teacher makes observations and conferences with them.

"I have a 'sub tub' for when I'm going to be gone (it contains my lesson plans and all the materials they will need for that day). My main reason for this is simplify things - we never know who will show up to be a sub! They may need to be spoon-fed, so to speak!"



"Here's an idea that can save you time in your lesson plan book. I take two pages from my plan book and fill in my schedule across the top. Then I write in all the things that are the same every day and every week. For example: library day, computer lab time, recess, lunch, chapter book after lunch, buddy reading, spelling routine, etc. I even write in the centers that I use every week like listening center, computer, library, etc.

"I always make a column in the far left box that I label Notes. In this column I can write notes to myself like assembly, staff meeting, picture day, etc. This is just a little reminder that there might be something different in our schedule to work around.

"Then I take these master copies and run them through the copy machine so that they come out back to back just like they would be in my plan book. I only run about 8 or 10 at a time in case I want to make changes in my schedule. (We have a binding machine at my school so I can punch holes in them and put them back in my plan book. You may need to use a binder and 3 hole punch.) Then each week when I'm filling out my lesson plans, most of the work is done already! I just fill in math book page numbers or the reading book story title. No sense in re-writing the same information every week!"

"If I wake up sick, I have a fairly generic plan on my computer (in fact all my lessons plans are on the computer). I can switch things around, add things, eliminate things, etc. Then I just E-MAIL it to a friend who takes it in for me, talks to the sub and helps her find anything she may need. This has worked SO GREAT that other people are doing it too."

"My 'grade book' is a large three-ring binder (with children's names on tabs - I put in their running records, etc.)"

"A few years back when I had the luxury of a student teacher, I alphabetized my files (it sure made life easier) and organized my 'themes/units' in large Rubbermaid tubs. I keep all my posters, books, lesson ideas etc. in the tubs."

"I have four reading groups (Blue, Green, Red, and Yellow) - everything is colour coded for these groups - their 'independent' and Home Reading books are in that colour tub, I use colour coded rubber bands around their books that I will be reading with them in group, and I run my 'running record' sheets on that colour of paper - it just makes it easier for them (and me) to keep all our materials organized."

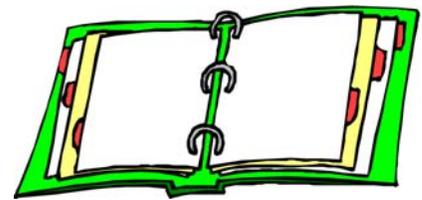


"I have a binder that is always left in view for substitute teachers who come into my classroom. I have my weekly schedule showing the specials that my children go to, and the routines involved. There is an up-to-date seating plan. I have a page of the classroom rules and the expectations I have for behavior and the consequences for inappropriate behavior. There are ideas for extra lessons in every subject in case I am unable to prepare for some reason. I give an overview of the classroom routines. Teachers-on-call have told me that this has been very useful!"

- I type up a two page template for each day of the week/cycle and that way I don't have to re-write the things that are the same for my lesson plans. I use to do my whole lesson plan on my lap top when I had a printer in my classroom. Now I just do up the templates and make a few photocopies each month or so and fill it in as I go along. If there are changes then I make them on my master template and print them out. I hole punch these and store them in a binder with monthly dividers and that's my plan book. I have two dividers per month.

- I keep my plans on a clip board for the week/cycle and then put them in my plan book when the week/cycle is up. I also hole punch all memos and all the other paper work and put them in my plan book in chronological order. I also can keep any faxes I've sent or add sticky notes to pages regarding phone calls or reminders. I use mini-sticky notes to flag copies of my 'leave work' sheets. I have to do this for sick days, PD and any days I'm taking off. Lesson plans go under the month and the other documents go under the other divider for that month.

- I also have a Planning Binder with dividers for each month that I use to put new ideas that I pull of the internet. If someone gives me a good idea for 100th Day I'll file it under February as that is usually when we celebrate it. Once I use the new idea then I can file it in the binder where it should regularly stay. I have binders for each month. Some months have more then one. I can go through them and pull out a few things I'd like to use and place them in my Planning Binder ahead of time.



Here's an idea that can help organize both new and veteran teachers. I have a 'Planning Binder' that helps me keep my school year organized. Here are a few of the things I keep in this binder:

1. I keep a list of the supplies I order every year.
2. I print a calendar page for each month of the school year. Before school starts I sit down and mark all the holidays, professional development days, parent nights, Open House, report cards due, etc. Then I pencil in when I want to start each new theme, author study, writing project, math topic, etc. This gives me a visual idea of how my year might look. Some themes are only a week and some last two or more weeks, so I can see how they will fit around related holidays, seasons, vacation time and report cards. I keep one calendar from the previous year to see what worked and what didn't. I try to make notes as to things that worked and what I might change for next year.
3. Web addresses - as I surf through the web, I often come across sites that I might want to use later to go with a theme. I jot these down on a notepad and then add them to my planning binder later. I keep a binder page for each theme I teach that includes web addresses and related book titles.
4. Student information - name, phone number, address, birthday, emergency numbers, etc.
5. New ideas - I get so many great ideas from other teachers, that sometimes I don't know what to do with them all! I love yellow sticky notes and have them stuck all around my computer screen, my classroom, my car and everywhere else they'll stick. When I come across a

new idea, I either print it out or jot it down on a sticky note. Sometimes I put these sticky notes on a planning binder calendar page to tie in to the theme I have planned. That way, when I get to that theme, I will see the note and remember to try the great new idea."

"I have a special 'Sub Binder'. It contains ALL the things a sub may need while in my room such as class lists, seating plans, emergency forms which must be taken out of the building during a fire drill, the crisis management flip chart, reading groups, duties, behaviour management, where they can find any materials they may need for the lessons, etc.

I started tucking my lesson plan book into this binder at the end of the day so if a sub is in all this information is at their fingertips. Each page is slipped into a vinyl protection sheet so I won't have to keep redoing it again and again."

Keeping Things Tidy

"Tidiness is a pleasure! I enjoy my classroom so much more when everything is put away and organized."

"From time to time the 'Clean Desk Fairy' visits overnight and rewards the neat desks with candy or a small prize."

"I have Silent Vacuum as one of my class jobs. It's for 2 children and they love it - they go around and get all the trash off the floor."

"I have my students pick up a number of scraps in exchange for their homework folders. I change the number every day. In Grade Two we teach about community. We talk about how helping clean up is an important part of being in a community. I think that part of learning to be responsible is learning to clean up after yourself. The children have never had a problem with this and their parents appreciate the lessons learned."

"When we clean up at the end of the day I tell my class that everyone has to pick up 10 pieces of paper (or some number), then they have to show it to me before they can line up to leave. I just don't let mine go until the room is picked up. I let the bus students leave when the bell rings (I have 3) but everyone else has to wait till it is clean. It took about 2 minutes to get everything up the first time I did this. Mine pick up automatically now, they don't have to show me the paper any more."

"I put little bits of masking tape on the floor where each leg of each table should rest. They can then put their tables back where their tables should be. I've got one guy who is a real traveler!"

"One little trick I have learned: CAMOUFLAGE! If you have work tables or display ta-



bles for author centers, etc. You can drape them with fabric or a fun bedsheet. If you have a piece of plexi-glass to put on top, that is really great. You can store unit boxes, etc. under the tables without looking cluttered. I have also seen teachers use that plastic gathered sheeting (available in craft and party stores) that can be velcroed or stapled on around the perimeter of the table.

"To keep the kid's desks organized, this is a great idea! Collect 'pop flats' (those cardboard trays that several six-packs of pop fit in at the grocery store) so that each child has one. These boxes become their 'drawers'. Kids place their materials in the boxes and slide them inside the desks. When they want something out of the desk, they slide the box out. There is still a little room off to the side of the box to store some additional supplies. The kids keep plastic containers that resemble the bottom half of a babywipes box to the side of the pop flats. With this method, kids are less able to shove things inside the desk, and it is very easy to do desk inspections - just plopp the drawers on the top of the desks!"

"I use plastic tubs...Rubbermaid dishpans - labeled for different scribblers or booklets. For example, one is Journals, another is Social Studies, etc. They stack nicely on top of each other. I am also fond of themes...and took a tip from my predecessor and put all theme materials in a file box. They stack nicely. When I am doing a theme I bring out the box and dig from it! When I am finished a lot of displays, materials, etc. go back in the box ready for the next time I use it. My predecessor had every theme under the sun for Grade 1 and Grade 2 in filing boxes stored in storage rooms all over the school."

"For things like displays, borders, etc., I had our custodian put nails in a piece of wood and then bolt it into the closet space I have. But a wall works fine too, especially if it's behind a door. Then you can hang borders, etc. It keeps them from getting curled and ruined as well. I've also done this with plastic hooks that have a sticky tape on them (you can buy these at hardware stores) and I put them on the side of my filing cabinet.

"A lot depends on your room itself. My room is not huge, but it works. I have a long counter with shelves underneath that runs the length of the classroom. The shelves are not great as they are not always the right size for everything, plus I just have way too much stuff. So I have 2 bookcases on top of the shelf just for my files and teacher resource books. This keeps them nice and handy.

"With plastic tubs you might be able to convince your custodian to store a few somewhere in the school's storage system, especially things you do not use as often.

I store my big themes and especially science units in tubs. Resource books, resources, student books, etc., then I never have to worry about where everything is. The plastic tubs keeps out mice, water, etc."

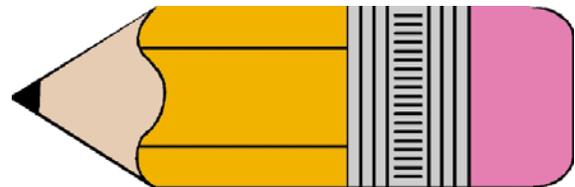
"I hate cluttered desks and one thing I do is to keep most of the students' notebooks and duotangs on a shelf. I have card-



board magazine boxes labeled for each subject (math, poetry, spelling etc.) and all their books go in the boxes. It takes time to hand them all out but I know where they are if I need to find one, and it really keeps down the desk clutter. A friend keeps all of her notebooks in Rubbermaid dishtubs on a shelf. I label each book at the TOP with the student's name and book name (journal, math). That way, they can more easily find theirs by flipping through the books than when the names are at the bottom on the space provided."

Sharpening Pencils

"If a pencil breaks throughout the day, they quietly go to the pencil bucket and get a pencil. I make sure the pencil bucket is just a little bit high to them, and points are up. That way, they don't search for one with a good eraser. I also sometimes say "Don't pick and choose, just grab and go!" The kids were saying this to each other by the end of the year. Or, if a less than desirable pencil emerges, "You get what you get, and don't throw a fit." They love to say it when someone is whining!"



"I have community pencils. I have 2 plastic cups FULL of sharpened pencils that are for everyone to use. I also have a cup of erasers next to it. Each morning they come in and take a pencil. When it gets dull, they put it up in the cup that is labeled 'To be sharpened'. At the end of the day I will sharpen the pencils."

Classroom Helpers

"I have a large cardboard poster with about 20 jobs on it. Some are: line leader, attendance attendant, homework helper, equipment manager, absentee assistant (when someone is out), subs helper - if someone is out they do their job, teachers helper, messenger, group/row arranger, conservation specialist (lights), board washer, floor cleaner, paper passer, mail-box organizer, etc. What I do is I have each student write their names on a clothespin (both sides). I then basically rotate them at the beginning of each week."

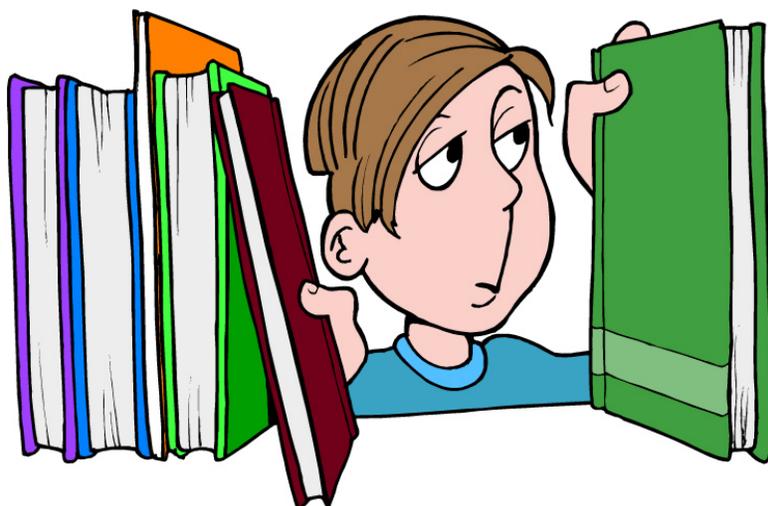
"Each child in my classroom has a specific job. I have clerks who handle paperwork (passing out, taking up, putting papers in mailboxes, running errands). I have a clean-up crew (they are responsible for picking up, straightening the room in general, washing boards, chalk trays, sinks, emptying pencil sharpeners, etc.). I have a shelf crew (they are responsible for straightening puzzles, games, cubbies, dusting shelves). I have a desk and chair crew (they are responsible for keeping desk washed, chairs washed, desk and chairs kept in straight rows). I also have librarians (responsible for keeping the classroom library nice and orderly, repairing any books, checking student desks for books that belong in library). Each student

had to 'interview' for these jobs by writing in his/her journal which job he/she wants and why he/she would be the best for that job. It has worked really well and has taken a load off me. We spend the last ten minutes of each day doing our jobs."

Library Books

"I have baskets of 25-30 books directly on the student's tables and we rotate them weekly (from 4 Blocks). The kids may only go to the 'Book Nook' shelves with permission from me and only after they have looked at every book in their basket. I have all smaller books grouped by category into baskets on a different set of shelves (phonics readers in one, Wright Group books in another, etc.) There are about 10 baskets in all with those kinds of categories, 5 more mixed baskets on the tables and 3 very full shelves of miscellaneous books. This does not even take into account all the books I have boxed with my units. I find that the children do not make as much of a mess of the shelves when they have all those other choices in the baskets at their tables and elsewhere. I also learned my lesson... I never assign them to clean up the shelves. They wind up pulling them ALL out onto the floor in order to straighten them up. I just do it myself after school for a few minutes when I can. It's easier!"

"I have had a problem with books a mess on the bookshelves, so I got baskets for my books and have labeled them by authors. This helped IMMENSELY! But, I still had some that were not putting the books in the right basket. One day I made a HUGE deal out of the fact that when the kids' parents send them to school in the morning I teach them and send them back home in the afternoon. And, Joey has to go back to his house, Molly hers, and James his. Molly's mom does not want Joey and James' mom does not want Molly and on and on. They were giggling hysterically by the time I finished - but I made my point and accomplished my goal!"



Classroom Management Tips

"I put the children's names on popsicle sticks and whenever I need to choose a child I pull one out. The kids love it because it is 'fair'."

"I celebrate half birthdays for those summer birthdays! That way, June is not overloaded, and the birthday is more meaningful, and the children get to have a feeling for what 1/2 is."



"One thing that I do (mainly for myself) is use a digital kitchen timer. When I tell the kids that they have 15 minutes to finish their morning work I set the timer. It has a 10 minute 2-beep warning, and a 5 minute 4-beep warning. This tells them how much time they have left without having to ask me. Every time I give them a time amount, I set the timer. I also use this because if I told them that they had 10 minutes to finish something, and I got involved with correcting or something, those 10 minutes would run into 20 or 30!"

I raise my hand as a quiet signal, with the thumb and pointer fingers forming an L (Look, Listen, and Lock Lips). Students raise their hands, too, until everyone is quiet.

At the beginning of the school year, my students are placed in one of five groups, depending where their desks are: Monday group, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Monday, the Monday kids are the helpers, they line up first, collect papers, share their journals and share at Sharing Time (Show and Tell). On Tuesday, the Tuesday kids get their turns, etc. Later, when desks are moved around, they remain the "Monday Group" throughout the year, no matter where they sit. They know their groups by then.

"I send all my vocabulary word sheets home on neon coloured paper and I never use it for any other type of notes. It is easy to find when it is lost in a pile of papers. I chose a different colour of paper to send home my 'stuff'. I warned the parents at the beginning of the year to look out for lilac coloured papers and they would probably be from me...very seldom does anyone else use lilac."

"I have a table set up near my desk with filing shelves, baskets, etc., All the workbooks, worksheets, etc., stay on this table so the students know where to put their completed work. This makes it easy for me when I want to grab marking to take home. I have a special basket that is for work of students who are absent. The students who hand-out just put their workbooks, sheets in this basket, so if a parent calls and wants homework I just have to grab the basket, take out the workbooks, etc., and write a short note."

"I think I've finally made subbing easier in my room. I used to write a note each time and it seemed as if I was always writing the same things over and over again. I decided to type up a special sub note which takes them through the regular routine of a day, and placed it in a sub binder. (a 3 ring binder that I wrote SUB on the front and leave it on my desk at all times).

"It contains---- ALL the things a sub may need while in my room such as class lists, Emergency forms which must be taken out of the building during a fire drill, the crisis management flip chart, reading groups, duties, behavior management, where they can find any materials they may need for the lesson, etc.

"I started tucking my lesson plan book into this binder at the end of the day so if a sub is in all this information is at their fingertips. Each page is slipped into a vinyl protection sheet so I won't have to keep redoing it again and again."

"At the beginning of school I make labels on the computer with each child's name, about 15 sets. I use these for their books, journals, workbooks, crayons, etc. Also I make about 10 sets of labels with their names and addresses. I use these on motivational post-cards. This helps me know the number sent to each student."

"The best tip I have received is a book shelf that you can make from vinyl rain gutters. Cut them into 4 foot lengths, attach to wall with brackets which are sold with rain gutters and concrete screws to hold the brackets. I have 4 shelves on my wall and they hold about 25 books, all which are flat against the wall and can be seen, and the whole thing only sticks out about 5 inches!"

"One thing I do during discussions to get everyone thinking of a possible answer is this: After I ask a question, I see all the familiar hands go up immediately. I then say, "I will give every one a minute to think of an answer." I then see more students thinking and then putting their hand up as they know we are waiting for them. If it is an easy question and I know everyone can figure out an answer, I say, "I will wait until I see every hand up." This gets all children trying to get an answer. They know they must explain their answer if it is a math question, so they do figure out an answer before putting up their hands.



"If we are doing a group activity and someone is not participating, I say, "We need to start again, Jane was not participating." then we start all over. I don't find many students not participating because they don't like it when I do that."

"I use cardboard mail slots for everything that is going home.....work done and checked, into the mailbox, reading book home...to the box, notes, party invitations, pictures you want to take home...into the box. Then in the afternoon I load the contents into their folders, which we keep above our mailboxes, and everything is ready for home."

"When I was at a conference I bought a new management book. It has very extensive ideas about classroom organization, and productivity. I've implemented a few already in my classroom! I've numbered the students, and used the numbers for easier grading. I've started using a timer in my classroom and it really has changed my life. I didn't realize it could be so powerful, and keep me and the students accountable to the time commitment. I've found that with the timer if you give the kids a reasonable time limit, and other work or choice time when they're done, it seems to work out, and they almost always finish in time."



"When displaying art work, etc., put together as a quilt. We did poems, toothpick art, drawing and other things about hedgehogs earlier in the year. I glued various pieces down and tied it all together with yarn and made it a paper quilt. We also did some small spring pictures and just tied those together as a quilt also. If you don't want to use real yarn, draw the yarn ties with bright crayon."

"I took a tip from another teacher to help keep my kids' desks organized: Each child has a 'pop flat' box (short box bottoms that a case of pop comes in) that is used as a desk drawer. These drawers are inserted the long way into the desk. There is enough room on the side for a good sized pencil box (I use baby wipes tubs), bottle of glue, etc.

"We organize the desk drawers as a class. We talk about which items we do not use much, and those things go at the bottom of the drawers. Things that we use all of the time go on the top.

"Most kids take care of the trays very well. Some kids poke them with pencils, etc., but it costs them big bucks (our classroom dollars) to get replacement drawers. The kids who keep them in good shape earn classroom dollars for doing so.

"We have chair back pockets that a mom sewed. We keep our free reading books inside of these, as well as our Personal Spelling Dictionaries and Literacy Binders.

"I can't stand stray papers shoved into desks! I also despair because I know that most stray papers get chucked into the garbage as soon as they cross the threshold at home, without much of a look-see. I solved this by creating 'Learning Logs' for the students. These are simply stapled packets of approximately 20 sheets of notebook paper inside of a construction paper cover. We use these for 95% of our paperwork tasks. We practice math calculations and word problems in these booklets, and track attendance and lunch counts in them. We do a lot of fun word work and games (from 4-Blocks), and use these packets for the 'on the back' activities. I like this because the kids look forward to taking these home to share with parents when they are complete. It provides a nice little record of learning and progress for the parents. They are also handy for parent conferences. The kids get excited about seeing what the new cover colour will be! This past year, I had a great mom who took home paper and stapled together about 10 sets of Learning Logs. She even went so far as to decorate them, adding little motivational messages inside. It was great!"

"This year I use the video boxes. I got 30 really cheap. They hold crayons, scissors and pencils. I taped their names to the inside. They have lasted the year."

"I put each child's name on a craft stick and put them in a can. I use this for partner work, calling on students, etc. When I shake the can they know that we are getting ready for partner work or they need to be ready in case I call on them."

"I use large zip lock bags for the kids to keep their markers and coloured pencils. They can see just what they want, and clean up is a breeze."

"My class is set up in groups and we have a 'team captain' who is in charge of various helping with supplies. When students begin an assignment, it is the captain's responsibility to check papers for names, etc. I give each captain a pencil top stamp and they stamp beside the person's name if it is written with the child's number also."

"Label a quart-size freezer zip-loc bag with each child's name. Use this to store their crayons, scissors, glue stick and dry-wipe pen. They will probably need replacing halfway through the year. We use the new style ones that have the little zipper tab. We like using these much better than pencil boxes!



"Give each child two pocket style folders. Have them keep one in their desk to store word lists, papers that you need to work on another day, etc. The other folder is their 'take home' folder. They put everything in it that goes home each day and use it to bring back notes, lunch money, picture money, etc.

"Buy each child a small, square shaped bottled water (so it won't roll around). Label the bottle with their name and tape over it. Put their initials on the lid. It's so much easier than having them in a long line after every recess.

"Put a limit (3 or 4) on the number of pencils they can keep in their desk and only let them sharpen them at certain times.

"Stack books and folders - anything flat - on the left side of their desk and put the zip-loc bag and water bottle on the right."

"I am not a good filer (as in folders). So I bought a large Rubbermaid box (rather like the ones that fit under the bed only deeper) for each month. Now I just get the new one out for each month. It has all my idea books, dittos, art samples, magazines, stickers, and books for that month. It works well for me. And I do have things in folders inside the box."

"I send a note home in about October requesting a box of kleenex from each child. I open a new box when one is done.

"For my reading groups, I put all the activities into coloured baskets so I call up the blue basket people."

"Observation: Loose papers get lost. Solution: I try and have a notebook for EVERYTHING. In subjects where there are lots of photocopied sheets such as math - we use a duo-tang. The kids will do the worksheet and then put it in their duo-tang. I use duo-tangs upside down. They always put the newest sheet in front and face up. They feel so grown up using them."

"I use folders. I have the children bring those inexpensive ones - one each in red, blue, yellow, and green. The aide or I will pull out the current chapter we're working on and put the whole chapter in the folder. One folder is used for loose writings, too. One could even be a 'free time' folder that has things to do when assignments are finished ahead of others. The folders are also helpful for children who are absent. You know right away which assignments they missed when you look in the folder. These folders are kept in their desks, so no loose papers. A place for everything and everything in its place!"

"A tip to new teachers or anyone thinking of using ziplock bags for books or other storage. Invest in the ones that have the sliding clip on top. I found that with regular press/lock bags my students often didn't get them 'zipped' or when they opened them they would pull and the bag would rip at the sides. They cost a little more but end up lasting longer."

"I went to WalMart and bought two 3-drawer shelves. The drawers in the shelf are about 9" x 12" -- the perfect size for paper. I labeled each drawer with a day of the week, and the bottom one for notes/passes. All the worksheets I'll be using for the week, and anything that I want to remember to use, I put in the drawer. Math papers, phonics papers, science papers, and any overheads that I may want to use, but will forget if I don't put them right in my line of vision, go into the drawer. This is the only way I've been able to know where everything is!"



"I keep a box near my desk for filing. I'm not as organized with files throughout the year, so everything gets dumped into the box. When I get a moment (I try at least 2-3 times a year) I refile back into my files.

"I always make 2 extra booklets or worksheets of everything we do. We tend to have kids move in and out of our area, so if I get surprised with a new student, I always have an extra workbook, etc., ready to hand-out to them. Saves running to the photocopier.

"I have a wooden shelf (used to be used for puzzles) that I now use for keeping all upcoming worksheets, forms, etc., that I will be using during the next month. This allows me to do some early photocopying and keeps everything in one place so I know where to find it when I need it.

"Since I have students at so many different levels, I always make up extra workbooks at their levels (usually with comprehension reading and questions, answering questions, putting in missing words, etc.,) that the students can work in when they finish 'class' work. This keeps my 'top' group working and learning and allows my 'lower' group enough time to finish up the regular work."

"I store my construction paper on end rather than in a stack. Hold it up with a tall book end and it is easy to get just a few sheets of paper at a time without disturbing the whole stack."

"If you go through a lot of chart paper, this is for you! Laminate the chart paper and mount it to your easel. Use the erasable markers. When you are finished with the sheet just spray with water and wipe with a soft cloth."

"My favorite tip is: using the computer to make address labels for the classroom! I send a lot of letters, etc. home with students. I make labels with these 'sayings' on them:

Please return to: Ms. W

Progress Report

This book belongs to: Ms. W

To the parents of: _____

"Make up a sheet of labels for each student with their names and numbers. You can do these on your computer. These can be stuck onto supplies, exercise books, coat hooks, magnets for graphing, etc. This saves a lot of work!"

"I have a different 'Class Parent' each month. This parent calls all the other parents if this should be necessary, finds volunteers if they are needed for field trips or other special occasions, organizes food for special days, etc. This takes a lot of work off my shoulders."

"Are you planning on getting rid of your teacher's desk? Where will your piles go now? I got rid of my desk once, and my whole room replaced it. Scary thought, isn't it! So I have a desk again and it is called the avalanche zone and all the kids know what that means. If any unsuspecting adult goes near (we have lots of people in and out of our class), the kids just tell them that you need to stay away from the avalanche zone. Someday I'll get organized - I admire organization very much!"

"The only things in their desks are their pencil boxes, glue, scissors and rules, and 2 notebooks and 1 duotang. We keep a notebook for Working With Words (4 Blocks) because we use it almost every day, and a "Thinking Book" notebook. I use this for brainstorming, when I want them to make a quick prediction, estimate, etc., when I don't really want to be bothered finding the "right" notebook but I don't want to bother with handing out and dealing with odds and sods of paper."

"If your class owns calculators, as opposed to students bringing their own, keep track of them by numbering each one, then standing them in a shoebox or other container where they can stand up on end so the labels are visible from the top. If each student has been assigned a number and uses the calculator with that number it will be easy to see what ones are missing and who would have them."



"If you've got bunches of papers held together with those giant sized paper clips, and the stack is so thick the clip is all twisted out of shape, use spring-type clothespins instead. They stick out to the side when you have all the stacks piled up on your desk, and you can put labels on the clothespins to identify what's in the stack."



"The kids are hysterical! For example, on the first day, I told them that the following day they'll have to pay a toll to come into the classroom. One little boy looked at me with his arms on his hips and said, 'Yeah, how much?' I explained that they each have to give me one of three H's (hug, handshake or high-five) before they come in, so I can connect with each child first thing. I was surprised that I mostly got hugs!"

"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 students to give a book to the class on their birthdays. It's a good way to cut down on the kids' sugar intake and build up the class library. I always let the birthday child open the gift for us and take his or her photograph with the book. The photo is then mounted on the inside cover so we always remember who donated it. I have a few wrapped books for children who are not able to bring one on their birthday."

"A grade two teacher friend and I develop a monthly 'I'm finished!' folder. We choose a theme. It may be related to an upcoming holiday, such as Christmas, a seasonal theme, such as winter, or an interesting theme that we never have time to fit in, such as dinosaurs. We collect 15-20 easy worksheets that fit the theme and a cover sheet with a check-off list. (We don't name each worksheet, but we do number it. So the check-off list would be something like #1 - #15.)

"At the end of the month, anyone who is able to turn in all work and the packet gets a small treat like ice cream at lunch. Please make sure though, that if you have students who are working hard but are still unable to complete everything that you make adjustments in private with that child."

"I use craft sticks with each child's name in a cup. I have three different cups for selecting students for different activities: 2 extra helpers at lunch, 3 students to share writing daily, and 3 students to read in book nook at SSR. I also have the students names written on 5 x 8 index cards which I use to call on students throughout different activities. It's amazing how something so simple and inexpensive is revered by the students because 'it's fair.'"

"An organizational tool that works for me is using computer labels to write comments for students as I meet with them during writer's workshop. I use my clipboard with the labels and just peel them off and put them in student's notebooks while we meet. I also use labels as I collect information for report card comments and stick the labels into my record book. It saves re-writing."

Most computer word processing programs have a label-maker and there are label software programs. Print Shop has a label maker that is extremely easy to use and you can make coloured labels. Make up your class name labels on this, then with a flick of the mouse you can make them whatever size or colour you want. Use a font that is similar to the printing you wish the children to do. You can buy sheets of labels at any stationary store in white and in florescent colours, too! It is much easier to 'peel and stick' than it is to make tag pieces the correct size, print and then tape them on. These can be used for exercise books, supplies, library cards, etc. 101 uses!



If your routines became less efficient in December, spend time in the first week back in January reviewing them. "We have a motto in our classroom: *'It's is cheaper to do it right the first time!'* I introduce this the very first day. I tell them that if something cannot be done right the first time then they will have to 'spend' their time doing it again and again until it is done correctly."

"Here's two ideas for organizing magazines.

- get 4 magazine boxes and label them Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb/Mar, Apr/May/June. Sort magazines into boxes - when you need back-to-school ideas, grab the September issues.....all your September issues from all the different years will be in the same box.
- put a file folder in each magazine box and label it 'Indexes'. Photocopy the table of contents from each Sept/Oct issue and staple them in the file folder. Keep this folder in the box with the Sept/Oct issues. When you need fall ideas, grab the folder and skim through all the tables of contents.....then you can go to the magazine to find the idea you need.

You can grab the index folder and take it home or look it over while you are waiting for a meeting to start. It makes finding ideas in magazines a snap!"

I try not to handle paper more than once and put it where it should go immediately - but that does not always happen. I also have a calendar that I carry with me all the time in case something is scheduled; on my desk is a large desk calendar where I write important things.

I think you have to create a system that somehow makes sense to you in the daily organization that you experience."

"I keep a plastic basket on my desk where I put everything that comes in that day that I need to look at later. At the end of the day it's all in one place and I go through it then."

"Paper organization is essential. Don't let it get you down, however! The amounts are awesome sometimes. I always have three paper stacks:

1. One stack must be done today before I go home.
2. One stack I return to the office each time I leave my classroom. I keep this near the classroom door. That way when I'm leaving the room, it's right there.
3. The last stack needs to be done but can wait."

"I'm a huge fan of gallon ziploc bags and rubbermaid! I should own stock in them! The smaller rubbermaid (plastic shoe boxes) are great for storing things in and easy to organize and they look nice on the shelf. They have bigger ones for your gameboards and put your game pieces in ziploc bags."

"I have a basket for homework and a basket for their folders. In our school we use a notebook called the Home/School Connection Notebook. Its a way for the teachers and parents to communicate with each other. This is also where they copy their homework. It has worked out quite well."

Saving Time

"Several years ago I discovered something that really saved my weekends. I make Monday very routine. All my creative lessons are Tuesday - Friday. I have found that it really keeps me from stressing/prepping on the weekend. I don't have much to gear up for because Monday is so routine. I also try to schedule 2 or 3 specials on my Monday schedule. So, for example, this year my class has PE (my prep) and library on Mondays.

I also like to do a graph each week as a math lesson. I have all my graphs made up for the year and in a drawer. (Yes, it takes some time to do this but it's so worth it.) So each Monday I know that my math lesson is already planned and prepped! I do stay later on Monday afternoons in order to prepare for Tuesday - Friday. But routine Mondays have given me less stressful weekends and it's worth it!"

The saying goes something like 'If it can be done in less than two minutes, do it now.' This may not work when you have a bunch of 7 year olds tugging at your sleeve, but worth a try!

- I snip the top corner of all my master copies so I don't ever accidentally hand out my last copy of something. (*Note: clip the corners off flash cards, too - if you do they are always right-way-up.*)
- I keep a list of parents' names and phone numbers by the phone in my classroom as well as a pen and a notepad (I know this is simple, but I learned this one the hard way, writing on skin...)
- I keep an extra pair of kid-sized jogging pants and a t-shirt. You would not believe how many times I've had kids fall in mud, throw up on themselves, etc. I just give the clothes to the kids, they change in the bathroom, and their parents wash them at home and return them a.s.a.p.
- I put a piece of tape on the floor about 3 feet away from the class sink and this is where the kids begin their line to wait to use the sink. This is so they don't crowd around the person who is using it. It encourages them to use it **one** at a time.



- Keep scissors, glue stick and a felt pen in your mail box in the office. My classroom this year was miles away from the photocopier, and having these supplies close by saved me so much time.

- Do a unit on nutrition right away. I always get my kids disgusted by junk food, so most of them never bring it in their lunches. Even if their parents pack it for them, they are too embarrassed to take it out of their bags! I don't even let them bring juice boxes (most of them are sugar anyway and I hate the sticky mess), they bring water instead.

- Put a dry erase note board by the door to write down upcoming events. I used to write reminders on paper posters and then throw them away. What a waste...

- 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 all laminated. This way, your tables/desks don't get dirty. The kids clean their own mats.



"I put my name in yellow highlighter on my master copies. This doesn't show as they go through the photocopier and lost or borrowed copies will find their way back to you."

"Our entire school does SSR (Silent Sustained Reading) every morning for fifteen to twenty minutes before announcements. Our principal walks around the school during this time and selects a class who was doing an exceptional job of silent-reading and this class wins a small treat! It really helps the kids settle down and focus - I'm at a new school now, but I still plan to do SSR each morning."

"Each month send I home a calendar that highlights times when parental participation would be encouraged on a school and class level. Include times in your daily schedule when parents are free to drop in, perhaps a reading time when they can come listen to readers or read themselves. Invite parents to lunch, recess, library times, computer lab time and special activities. Try to schedule some things that will occur in the evening (for working parents). Have an author's tea where students share works they've published. Set up an art museum for parents to come and see."

"After enrolment when I receive my class list, I make a sheet of name labels per child. This saves time labelling books, workbooks, journals, etc. for the entire year." *(Note: these computer labels (Avery, for example) can also be used for making quick anecdotal notes and then you can stick them in a folder.)*

"I make a spread sheet containing information about each child - address, phone number, mother's and father's work phone number, etc. I post it by my classroom phone for easy access."

- I use a carbonless message book to write notes home and to co-workers. This way I have a copy of what I sent without having to run and photocopy it. There is even a little box for PLEASE REPLY or NO REPLY NEEDED which is nice too. Otherwise I try to just use e-mail.

- I make copies of all my registration forms and put them in order by number. Each child gets a number that matches my register. I keep this information in a duo-tang in my attendance file by the door. I also keep my phone log there too.

- I have a basket where our glue bottles are kept and at the end of the day I have a helper check the glue basket to make sure they are all tidy - and standing up straight. I've learned that one the hard way. What a mess!

- NYFF - Not Yet Finished Folders. At my old school we had NYFD - Not Yet Finished Drawers. Each year a child is given a pocket folder/drawer with his/her name and number. When absent I can place missed work in the folders. When the time is up for the task, those that are not yet finished put their work in their folder. Around the middle of the week/cycle I check all folders for Day 4 Homework. This work is sent home with a pre-copied note explaining that the child has not yet finished his/her work in class and to please help the student complete the work and return by Day 6. On the last day of the week/cycle I check these again and anything not completed is stapled together, date stamped and placed in the student's archive incomplete. I don't usually hold work over from week to week. .

- I use *Thinkwave* for my software gradebook. It has been a great investment! What I really like is that I can make comments on each assignment for each student while I record my grades (letter, points, pass/fail, complete/incomplete, percentage). Then I print these out for report cards and voila my comments are already done - I just put them on the report card. For tests and quizzes I can note if someone was ab - absent and it also gets printed out. I can show parents what a child misses that can not be made up when absent and all the *missing* assignments too.

"I have cups with craft sticks with each student's name written on it. As I call students' names, I band the sticks. I do this for sharing after writer's workshop, extra helpers at lunch cleanup, readers in the book nook. I write the names in a different colour for each cup in case the sticks get mixed up (which has happened a time or two). The kids love the fairness of this selection process and it saves on my sanity too. I also write the students' names on 5x8 index cards for selection of students to participate in various activities such as Making Words, etc."

"I start by handing out all the homework in a packet on Monday. This saves me time and allows them to work on it at their own pace. Parents like this because it allows them to do more on days they are free and skip a day if the family has plans. I include spelling words for which they are tested. I have implemented a 'Homework Race'. I use an incentive chart with a racing car theme and each student moves one space for the week if they hand their homework in when it is due."



You're Never Done!

Do you think you are finished?

1. Read a book.
2. Edit a story in your journal.
3. Practice your handwriting.
4. Read the word wall.
5. Write a poem.
6. Piece a puzzle.
7. Write in your science journal.
8. Make up a math word problem and illustrate it.
9. Choose an SRA activity.
10. Practice math facts. (I have timed test sheets for all the facts. There are 100 on each page. They can do these with a timer or without when practicing.)

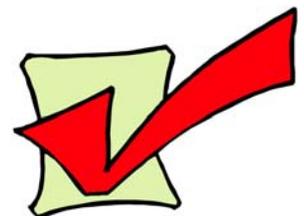
More Useful Tips

"We've all known for a long time about soap and shampoo bottles that can be put to use in the classroom holding glue, water, whatever. Having just started wearing contact lenses, I've discovered another: the cleaning solution bottle. Smaller in size than soap bottles, with a flip top cap that won't get lost, these are great for glue, but you may want to use a small drill bit or a red-hot nail to make the hole larger. Anyone who wears contact lenses goes through this solution regularly, so have them save the bottles for you."

"A traditional complaint box with a slot in the top can help you to stay on task with your teaching since students can complain all they want without taking up your time in doing so (they might even get some writing exercise in the process). Read through them at the end of the day; the important ones are kept to be dealt with as you see fit (hopefully you've been able to see and deal with hitting and other physical things immediately). The more insignificant ones are usually ignored since the student already achieved what they were needing to do: just get something off their chest. In those cases they likely forgot all about it by the time you read about it."

"During the times your entire class is lined up and waiting, have one child start by using fingers and hand signals to give math problems. (Example: Hold up one finger (1), then make a plus sign (+), then two fingers (1+2). Lastly, put one hand above the other facing in opposite directions for the equal sign (=).) If a student wants to answer, he/she must raise their hand to be called on. They must give the answer using fingers and hand signals. The kids love it and it keeps the noise level down!"

"Mark everything you can with each child. Marking after school and returning it to the child the next day is an almost useless exercise! They have forgotten the thought processes that went into the exercise by then. I know it is time consuming in our busy day, but every minute spent marking with the child is valuable. Marking it right away reinforces the positive and you are immediately able to spot children who are not understanding or who need frequent reminders."



"Take 25 or so file folders and fold a posterboard in half. Glue one file folder on the top of the posterboard. Continue to glue the file folders on top of each other leaving the tab showing. When you are done, you should have 25 pockets to fit papers in. Label the tabs with student's names. Lay it flat somewhere in your room that the children can reach. I teach my children how to file their own papers throughout the day. As I grade or check papers, I then return them to that child and they file it themselves. I never have to file one paper! On Fridays I pull the papers, staple them together, and put them in a pocket folder to go home."

"When we line up we do it by alphabetical order so there is never a need to run to be first, or push someone out of the way."

- I have a list of student recommended SSR books posted in my classroom.

- To do lunch count with my class, I have each student's name on a wooden clothespin. There are large, laminated cards attached to the front board where I've written today's "lunch offering", and the choices on each. As students enter, they clip their clothespin to the appropriate card.

- Do an 'Opinion Walk'. Hang a sign on each of the 4 walls in the classroom: agree, disagree, strongly agree, strongly disagree. You make a strong statement (e.g. Hunting is a great sport). The students decide which wall fits their opinion and move to stand at that wall. Have an active listening/debate session. Students must include 'What is your opinion based on?' 'What support evidence do you have?' 'Has anyone influenced your opinion and why?' 'Has listening to anyone today affected your opinion?'

- Have a folder in your classroom labelled "'check here if you were absent'. Put absent student work in folder. Students are responsible for checking the folder when they return.

- Set up a special corner in the classroom for students who would like to work in isolation.

- I have students close their eyes and they stop talking.

- When constructing a test, always start with easy questions and work toward more difficult ones. This way you build confidence and prevent children from mentally quitting right at the start.

- Because many children prefer absolute quiet while reading/studying, one teachers told us she keeps 'ear protectors' (resemble headphones without the cord) for use in the classroom. You can buy them at hardware stores. Clean/sanitize between uses or slide a disposable plastic bag over them.



- Use post-it notes to encourage changes or editing on students' work. This way you are not marking up their 'work in progress'.



"We celebrate summer birthdays on one day in June. We go outdoors and have an afternoon of fun."

"I put the student's names on popsicle sticks and whenever I need to choose a child I pull one out. The kids love it because it is 'fair'. I use this to call for volunteers, to ask for helpers, to call on students for answers."

"I have community pencils. I have a box with sharpened pencils that are for everyone to use. I also have a cup of erasers next to it. Each morning they come in and take a pencil. When it gets dull, they put it up in another box. At the end of the day I will sharpen the pencils."

"I have a table set up near my desk with filing shelves, baskets, etc., All the workbooks, worksheets, etc., stay on this table so the students know where to put their completed work. This makes it easy for me when I want to mark a specific subject. I have a special basket that is for work of students who are absent. The students who hand-out just put the absentee's workbooks and sheets in this basket, so the student can take these home or catch up when he returns."

"One thing that I do (mainly for myself) is use a digital kitchen timer. When I tell the kids that they have 15 minutes to finish their morning work I set the timer. It has a 10 minute 2-beep warning, and a 5 minute 4-beep warning. This tells them how much time they have left without having to ask me. Every time I give them a time amount, I set the timer. I also use this because if I told them that they had 10 minutes to finish something, and I got involved with correcting or something, those 10 minutes would run into 20 or 30!"

"At the beginning of school I make labels on the computer with each child's name, about 15 sets. I use these for their books, journals, workbooks, crayons, etc. Also I make about 10 sets of labels with their names and addresses. I use these on motivational postcards. This helps me know the number sent to each student."

"Loose papers get lost. I try and have a notebook for EVERYTHING. In subjects where there are lots of photocopied sheets such as math - we use a duo-tang. The kids will do the worksheet and then put it in their duo-tang. I use duo-tangs upside down. They always put the newest sheet in front and face up. They feel so grown up using them."

"One thing I did with my file folder games after I coloured them and before laminating was to scan them into my computer. Not only can you print off multiple copies but if you ever lose a piece, you can print out that page quickly to replace the missing piece. This is also good for sharing file folder games. If the other teachers on your team scan the games they colour, then everybody can print off everybody's else's games without even having to do the colouring!"

"If you hand colour a game and want more copies, use the colour copier!"

"If you have access to a digital camera, there are so many things you can do in the classroom with it. Take pictures all through the year and keep them on your computer. At the end of the year make up a keepsake book with pictures of all the favourite activities and photocopy it for the kids. Use the kid's pictures for bulletin board displays with their work or their stories. Use pictures as story prompts."

"For folding rectangles we fold paper either the 'hotdog' way or the 'hamburger' way - or into a long rectangle or nearer to a square."

"Use bingo daubers to make quick patterns for math. Great when you begin multiplication - and the kids love to use them."

"If you have a student moving to another province, prepare while he/she is still with you:

- a map of Canada with your town clearly marked.
- a class letter to the child's new class introducing him or her and inviting that class to write back. Add your e-mail address. The other teacher may want to get in touch with you. A pen-pal relationship between the classes may develop, too."



Behaviour Management

"I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, a child humanized or dehumanized."

Haim Gigot

Rules

1. Make rules very clear and consistent.
2. Make it simple.
3. Put the onus on the children to remember guidelines.
'What are you supposed to be doing right now?'
4. Work on mutual respect. ('Whose turn is it to be talking?')
5. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Every time you line up, briefly set expectations.
6. Explain. Get them to explain it to you. ('Why don't we run in the halls?')
7. Proximity is powerful. Keep the ones who have trouble close to you.
8. Develop a 'teacher look', or some kind of non-verbal reminder for situations where you can't stop and talk (assemblies, etc.)
9. Develop a relationship with each child. If they know you like them, they'll be much more inclined to go along with you.
10. Develop clear, predictable routines so the kids can take some responsibility for their tasks.



The 'Teacher Look'?

Short and Simple

1. **Respect people and things.**
2. **Cooperate**

"That's it. Short and simple. First the kids brainstorm what they think the rules should be and we usually end up with a huge list. Then we talk about how all the rules they came up with really fit into one of these 2 rules. As for discipline, I'm just very upfront with my expectations and the consequences and, most importantly, I'm consistent with how I deal with problems."

"The schools I have worked at have had broad rules and I've used those as my classroom rules. For example, my current school has 3 rules:

- Be safe.**
- Be responsible.**
- Be respectful.**

If you teach these rules thoroughly by modeling them and discussing them, children can become good decision makers. They will internalize the rules and make good judgments about being safe, etc. (Well, most of the time anyway!) I use lots of praise - particularly early in the year - when children are making good decisions. I don't have any set consequences. It all depends on the situation and what seems appropriate."

Class Rules

"My idea is a unique way to display your rules in your classroom rather than just writing them on a piece of poster board. First, draw a puzzle. You should have one more puzzle piece than the number of rules you have. For example, if you have five rules then draw your puzzle with six pieces. (One piece needs to be directly in the middle of the puzzle.) After drawing the puzzle, run it off on transparency film. Use an overhead projector to make it the size suitable for the area that you post your rules. It is really cute to do each puzzle piece a different colour. Write a class rule in each puzzle piece. Save the center piece for writing "Good Behavior Completes the Puzzle." For durability, you can laminate it to use year after year."

"Establish rules in which the children feel ownership. Make them general enough to fit everything.

1. Follow directions the first time given.
2. Treat others kindly (keep hands, feet and objects to yourself, use kind and appropriate language).
3. Raise your hand and wait to be called on to speak.
4. Honour the speaker (no interruptions, eyes on the speaker).
5. Celebrate each other's successes.

Establish and teach consequences. Mine are

The Teacher Look

Teacher uses your name in context.

Teacher tells you the rule.

Time out

Repeat offenders - Notes home and/or conference with parents.

Extreme or dangerous behaviour - See the Principal

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.



Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful

"Our school has three rules and they are posted around the building and in all classrooms. I only show students the 'Be Safe' rule for the first week or two of school. We talk about how to be safe in the classroom, on the playground, walking in the hallways, etc. Each morning we model safe ways to join the circle, put away materials, play with playground equipment, etc., and I continue to do this while reminding students about the 'Be Safe' rule. I find it much more effective to focus on one rule and model, model, model the safe way to do any activity. We sometimes discuss unsafe things to do that we would never try like run up a slide and then we name the dangers. They seem to understand the reasons for the safe way of doing things when we fully explore what could happen. We then add 'Be Responsible' and then model every day examples of responsible behaviour. This only takes a minute of review daily but it is well worth the time. Before transitions it is good to ask for safe, responsible, or respectful ways to manage the move.

Not only do I model behaviours, but the basics for materials. I am trying to use *The Responsive Classroom* and so we also talk about how to use things like markers. We include everything from using the tip for a fine line and side for a wide line and listening for the click of the cap fitting tight. It sure has helped!"

Because our Classroom needs to be a safe, peaceful and comfortable place to learn, I will do my best to :

- 1. be kind and respectful**
- 2. be safe**
- 3. be responsible**
- 4. treat others the way I would like to be treated.**

Classroom Expectations

- Listen while others are speaking.
- Raise your hand quietly when you have a thought or a question.
- Be polite and respectful of others - use your manners.
- Follow directions the first time they are given.
- Work quietly.
- Be prepared.
- Use your time wisely and always do your best.



"My rules are posted in the front of the classroom:

- 1) Follow directions.
- 2) Keep hands and feet to ourselves.
- 3) Speak kindly to each other.
- 4) Use inside voices when we are in our classroom.

"On the first day of school, and daily thereafter, I explain the rules and the kids sign the poster board. I am finding that as I become more confident in my teaching, I don't need as many rewards/and consequences."

Teaching Manners

Teach:

introductions (for example, introducing a new friend or parent to teacher)
greetings
telephone manners
giving and receiving gifts
sharing or borrowing supplies in the classroom
taking turns
asking permission
respect for adults
not interrupting others
listening manners - waiting to say 'excuse me' when two other people are having a conversation

The Wrinkled Heart

"With the class seated on the floor, start talking about the difference in the things we say that make people feel good or that hurt them. While talking, cut a big heart out of red construction paper. After it is cut out, hold it up and tell the children that each one of us starts out with a heart that is as pretty as this one. Have the children begin sharing things that a person might say that might be hurtful to someone. With each response, fold the heart (in random ways - so it gets another fold in it for each 'hurtful' sentence). Eventually the heart is crumpled in your hands. Tell the class that each time they say something hurtful to someone, they are putting a little wrinkle in that person's heart. Talk about how someone's heart might begin to look like this crumpled heart if people continue to say mean things to them.

"Then have the children begin to tell things that they might say to someone to make that person feel good. With each response, unfold one of the creases in the heart. Eventually you will 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 unfolded. Talk about how we each have those wrinkles in our hearts from things that people have said to us, and that the wrinkles last forever. Stress that we want to be careful with what we say so as to not add wrinkles to anyone's heart.

"We put that heart up in a high corner of the 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."

"I used the Wrinkled Heart today. What a great lesson! We had some 'hurt feelings' at recess and in the class and this was perfect. As I kept folding the heart one boy said 'the heart looks wrecked now.' When I opened up the heart some of the children were quite upset that the heart was torn and wasn't pretty anymore. I think I got the message through."



"Have expectations and standards for behaviour. It is better not to use any of the negative 'punishments' or positive rewards (except praise) if you don't absolutely need them. With some classes you will certainly have had to use everything in the book, both positive reinforcement (extra privileges, prizes, stickers, candy, certificates, etc.) and negative (taking away privileges, time out, letters or phone calls home, etc.). Many teachers find management strategies work better if the rewards or negative reinforcement are used on an occasional basis. We do, of course, want the children to behave well because it is the right thing to do, not for rewards or because of punishment. Other teachers use one method all year so the children feel secure and confident with the same rewards and/or consequences, and this works well for them.

Many of the procedures are time consuming. Make sure you are gaining time because of the more well-behaved class, and that you are stopping your lessons less frequently than you would without them."

Positive Behaviour Management

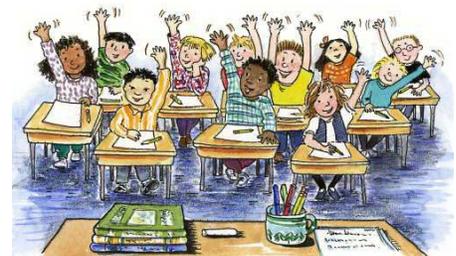
Shape Behaviour

Learn to reinforce desirable behaviour

1. Continuously
2. Immediately
3. As a consequence
4. Step by step

Reinforce

If inappropriate behaviour is reinforced, it will become a learned behaviour. This may happen if a child receives attention for his inappropriate actions. Teachers should make a concerted effort to ignore or divert undesirable behavior and praise and respond to appropriate behaviours.



Catch Him Being Good

Many children have predominantly received negative feedback. Catching a child doing appropriate behaviours and praising him for this will reinforce this behaviour. Teacher criticism for negative behavior may provoke the child to continue to behave inappropriately. A nagging, criticizing teacher quickly sets a negative tone in the classroom.

Design a Plan

You may wish to do a rewards or consequences type of behaviour management. Always remember that your ultimate goal is to have the child behave appropriately without dependency on tokens.

Use Verbal Praise

Say things such as, 'Good for you!', 'Super!', 'What a hard worker!', 'I am so glad you are remembering to _!', etc. Make sure you can be completely honest, as children quickly pick up on insincerity.

Use Actions of Praise

Wink at the child, touch him,, smile, tell his peers to clap for the child, shake his hand, etc.



Analyze Consequences

Make sure your consequences will have the desired effect. If a child who dislikes outdoor play has a recess or lunch detention, the conduct may be reinforced. If a child desperately seeking attention is sent to the office, that may be just what he wants.

Good Teaching and Learning Experiences

Children may act out when they are having difficulties learning to read, spell, write or do math. Teach so that all children achieve success on a daily basis.

Do Not Use Sermons

Don't you hate being given a sermon? Children quickly learn to tune you out if you give long speeches.

Praise one good behaviour every two minutes! You will see a positive change in your classroom

Positive Management Ideas

Recognition

"In December we used a stocking (red or green, with a white cuff at the top which the students decorated with their name, after Christmas we made a yellow window frame, with a black or dark blue sky behind it, etc.). We hang these down from the bulletin board across the front of the classroom. At the end of each day, I ask who has something nice to report. Each student reports what things another student did for them that was nice (i.e., helped him pick up a spilled crayon box, clean up spilled paint in the art center, lent him a pencil, etc.). The student who did the nice thing gets a sticker on their shape (in December it was Christmas stickers, after it was stars). The student reporting has a chance to say 'thank you'. No one is allowed to report what they've done nice for someone else. The report always has to come from the recipient. The room needs to be quiet for this, and everyone listens as students are recognized.

"When I begin this activity with my classes, some students don't get stickers. We take

a couple of minutes to talk as a class about what those students might try the next day. The next morning - I try to pull them aside and give them a pep talk, reminding them of what we talked about the previous afternoon. It's not always instantly successful, but those students do have a chance. And recognition of their efforts comes from their peers, not just the teacher. Before long, students are making 'deals' with each other - I'll tell about when you...., if you'll tell about when I....., just to get those stickers. And sometimes they even plan what they will do to help each other, just to get the sticker and the recognition. And, this is okay - it gets them focusing on the nice things they can do for others.

"During this time we'll read books and have different discussions about friends, respect, manners, etc. After the students catch on, and are doing really well, I might get a different type of sticker and stretch the reports over two days, then maybe three, finally we'll try working for a whole week and the students who earn one or more stickers for the week, will get a cup of popcorn at recess or some other reward that fits with your school's culture."

Solving Disputes

"When I have two quarrelling children who come to me, each telling me their side of the story, the first thing I ask them to do is to sit together somewhere away from the other children so they can have privacy. Next, I tell them to talk between themselves about what happened, and then come back to me when they both have the same story as to what really happened. Many times, through this discussion, they will conclude that it was just a misunderstanding, and they will come back to me and say they have resolved it by themselves. If this is not the case, then when they come to me, I know I will hear what is probably the 'truth' about what happened, and I am able to handle it from there. This teaches the students the importance of communication, and that many times they are able to resolve their own problems without my interference."



Give Me Five!

"As the kids file into the room (I greet them at the door) they come up to me and get their morning high 5, hug or handshake. It takes no more than 5 seconds per child, and it's a great way to begin the day - not many get it at home. I also end the day the same way."

Compliments

"This is a strategy I use for teaching children to give and receive compliments. I choose a student of the week and make a colourful poster on which I write a few specific compliments about the student. My class takes time out at the end of the day for the children to give compliments to the student of the week. As I write the compliments on the poster, the children practice responding with 'thank you's and 'you're welcome's. We continue to do this everyday until there's no more room on the poster. The poster is displayed in our

classroom along with pictures of that student's family, pets, and hobbies. At the end of the week, the special student gets a certificate and can take the poster home to share and hang up. The posters serve as authentic writing for students to read to their parents and reminders of how positive their peers feel about them."

Kindness in the Classroom

"I use a marble jar - we add a marble whenever a good deed is observed. It promotes good deeds and citizenship and it also does amazing things for their self-esteem. Some good deeds are saying kind words (unsolicited), being good sports, helping pick up dropped things, honesty, etc. At the beginning of the year they vote on class rewards - in our class it has been extra recess, no homework, ice cream party and pizza party. Each goal is labeled on the jar - every increment they earn a new class goal. It usually takes about 2 months for each goal - so it hasn't been a 'gimme.' I also will put a marble in at the end of the day if we went a whole day without any tattle tales. This has helped to practically eliminate that problem."

Positive Thinking

"I type this on little coloured shape pads and they put this in their assignment notebook or sometimes on their desks. We use this at the beginning of the school year to set the expectations for the mood of the classroom.

1. Today will be great!
2. I can handle more than I think I can.
3. I'll be satisfied with trying to do my best.
4. I will make someone happy today.
5. Life is great! I'll make the most of it."

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

"Here's the respect poster I made for my classroom about 5 or 6 years ago. I put it on fadeless blue paper, with black lettering that came in a pack. I laminated it, and I hang it from the ceiling with paperclips. We discuss the parts of respect on the poster at the beginning of each year, and refer to it frequently. I play a copy of Ms. Franklin's song often. The letters for RESPECT are vertical.

- R each for the stars
- E arn respect
- S hare
- P raise others
- E arn friendship
- C are for all living things
- T reat everyone with kindness.

(As for the 'C', even spiders, crickets, bees and ants get respect in my classroom. We put them in a cup and release them outside.)"



Good Better Best
Never let it rest.
Until your good is better,
And your better is best!

"To motivate student cooperation, behavior and citizenship: Every student has a star card (4x5 piece of construction paper, or whatever) with their name on it. If they are caught doing a good deed, they are asked to choose a star sticker from the star container and put it on their card. Once they have ten stars, the star card goes on my desk. The student then receives a new star card (with the number 10 in the upper right corner, so I know they are on their second card), and they take home a certificate with their old star card attached. Stars are easy to get at first, and harder to come by later. One year, I had a student reach 118 stars. That's the record!"



Positive Statements

"We brainstorm our hopes and dreams for grade two. (I'm going to use Kevin Henkes' new book *Wemberly Worried* as my springboard for this discussion.) Then we use the hopes and dreams and talk about what the kids think needs to happen in our classroom to have those hopes and dreams realized. We brainstorm everything first. I write it on the chart they way they phrase it. Then we go back and discuss each of the ideas, looking for similarities and ways to group them. We talk about how some of their ideas can be said in two ways: 'don't run in the room' or 'please walk in the room.' I use this as an opportunity to explain to the kids the difference between positively and negatively interacting with friends. We try a few rules both ways and talk about how each way makes them feel. We role play a few, and I use both statements to redirect the behavior so the kids hear the difference. They can also feel the difference and understand the reason for the positive. We talk about respect for each other and how word choice makes a difference in how you feel. We talk about editing in writing and how changing a guideline to make it positive is like an author editing his sentences: our message stays the same; the wording has changed. I put them in charge of the editing. I also tell them about the struggle I have gone through in previous years when I made all the statements positive and didn't really talk about why with the kids. Kids are amazing. They love to hear what you are thinking. We talk about how important it is that they are the ones helping decide the guidelines and that everyone can contribute, even the teacher, because the classroom belongs to all of us. This does take awhile. We brainstorm one day, discuss the next and role play the behaviors and the statements. We begin editing the guidelines. The third day we finalize the class guidelines and everyone signs them. The time is worth it to me because the kids have both the ownership and the understanding behind the wording."

"My students respond very well to statements about 'role-model behavior' and I am sure to mention each thing that the student is doing that makes it role-model behavior. Then I tell them to 'go to the Head of the Class' and they go to the front of the line (this is in the hall). What a treat! I have used 'I like the way that....' and I DO notice that some don't respond to it well.... and try to use 'Shawn is following procedures...he has his feet together, ...etc., etc.' I also choose a person to show 'role-model behavior' when we are waiting in line.....they take a step out and turn to face the class with all the right behaviors. It really reminds the others how they should be doing.

"I do know that they respond MUCH better to praise than being 'fussed at'! We talk about making choices. This works for me!"

Being Unusually Good

"Several years ago our staff felt that we had a problem with a lack of respect in our building. We tried several programs but a couple of years ago we hit on the BUG award idea. We have stickers that look like a ribbon award with a cute bug on it and it says 'B.U.G Award' and 'I've been BUGGED!' A volunteer staples the award to a small form. The form says something like 'I have been BUGGED by _____. Name _____ Class _____' Some of the staff carry them around with them all the time. I don't always have pockets so I don't do that. Anyway, when any adult that works in the building sees a student 'Being Unusually Good' they sign their name and give the award to the student."

Secret Walker, Secret Worker, Secret Reader, Secret Listener

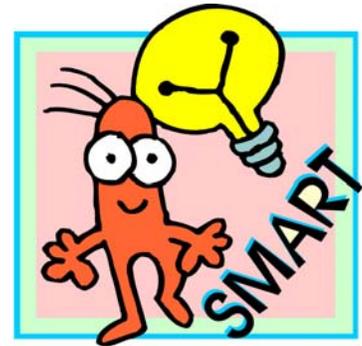
"This has been the most effective single strategy I have ever used to get all students doing what they should be doing. When we are walking to library, lunch, art, whatever, I tell them I am picking a secret walker. I keep a Ziploc bag with student names written on little plastic discs (counters?). As students are lining up I draw one or two names from the bag - these are my secret walkers. The kids don't know who the secret walkers are so they all do their very best to follow the rules for walking. It is amazing. Usually one name is for going and the other for coming back. When we get to where we are going I tell them that my secret walker did great and will get a reward when we get back to the room. They still don't know who it was. Then on the way back I remind them again that I have a secret walker. When we get back to the room both secret walkers get a reward. Usually the reward is a sticker, piece of candy, something small. If the secret walker has not done well, I tell them that I'm very sorry the secret walker did not earn his/her reward, but perhaps next time. I don't usually tell the class when the secret walker doesn't earn the reward, but will try to pull that child aside at some time and tell him/her what behaviour he/she needs to work on when in line.

"As the heading indicates I also choose secret workers, readers or listeners whenever I feel I need to reinforce behaviour at these times."



DYB

"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 get a charge out of remembering what it means."



Smart Compliments

"Something that works wonders I have combined from two things. The first was several years ago when I had a student teacher. I had free time on my hands and I visited different classrooms of close friends in my building. One taught sixth grade and she had a student that was giving her fits. I told her I'd stay with the class and she could take the child to the office. With me teaching primary the grade six kids laughed me off. I just by chance told one of the students how smart he looked sitting there doing his work. Well, after I did others started working. I realized that I had basically called the ones not working stupid or lazy. They didn't want to be seen this way. I tried this out over a period of time. It really worked for lots of situations with the older students.

"The other thing is - a close friend was getting her masters in counselling and told me about bracketing, where you compliment the students on either side of a child whose behavior you wish to change. This can be done without giving negative reinforcement. I really have had success with bracketing. I then started combining the smart compliments with the bracketing of the child I need to work on or to have stop doing something and had even more success. My class this year craves the comments. I will start a lesson with general statements like 'I'm going to teach you about addition today and everyone that wants to get smarter will put their things away and sit up with their hands and feet still.' Other comments could be, 'Susie, you look very smart sitting there so quietly.' 'Bob you are so smart to remember to put your name on your paper.' 'Toni, you are so smart to leave your neighbours alone and get your work done.'

"Try them see how they work for you!"

'I' Statements

"I was told recently to stay away from 'I' statements, and to put these back on the student. For example, say, 'John, you are sitting in the chair correctly.' 'Sue, You have your name on your paper correctly. Thank you.' 'Tommy, You have been doing a good job following rule 3, working quietly at your seat. You should be proud of yourself.' I know this takes a little longer, but we recently had a parent and student survey sent home. One of the student questions was 'Does your teacher tell you when you do a good job?' In most classes the answers were mostly no. But in the classes where the teacher uses these types of statements, the children almost all said yes. We talked amongst ourselves over the responses we got before turning them in. I think the statements let the children know that they were being praised. It put the statement on them and not the teacher."

Positive Tallies

"I use a positive approach rather than a negative (take away one) approach to discipline. I have everyone's name on one end of the board. If someone is misbehaving, I go to the board and give everyone else a tally mark. For each 5 tally marks a child gets to pick out of the 'goodies bag'. When I ask them to change gears (go from one activity to another) I will give the group or individuals who do this first and quietly a tally mark. I don't interrupt class this way because I don't even speak. It's a positive way to get things done and it works. It's less stress on you and not expensive because I just have small things like those half marbles used in fish tanks, anything free from book clubs, chocolate kisses, etc. It doesn't take up much room because I erase the tally marks after they have 5 and go to the goodie bag."

Beary Good!

"I use a name-on-the-board system (but not extensively) only because it is required by our school, but mostly I try to manage behavior through the use of positive discipline and class meetings (Jane Nelson has wonderful books and material on the subject). I also do a whole class thing I learned about from another teacher that really helps with lining up quietly, walking down the hall quietly, taking class restroom breaks in an appropriate manner, working quietly when that is necessary, behaving as a class during indoor recess, etc. I have 10 little strips of velcro going up the door frame by the inside of the door to our classroom...then I have a little flat plastic bear that has the opposite velcro material attached to the back of it. The kids know that if we have a quiet break, etc., the bear will move up to the next velcro strip. I also move the bear up one if the class as a whole gets a compliment on behavior from another adult in the building...parent, other teacher, janitor, principal, etc. When the bear gets to the very top, the entire class gets to pick from the treasure box, or gets a class treat such as popcorn, pizza, extra story time or a video. Some teachers in our building use the same system for working towards extra recess minutes, but they take away minutes, too, for misbehavior. I prefer the positive angle, myself. If the class gets a good note from a substitute, the bear moves up TWO spaces!"

Getting Their Attention

"I raise my hand and say, 'May I have your attention please.' About once a week we practice and make a game of how fast everyone is ready. We do it maybe three times that day as a practice. I tell them if they got an 8, a 9, or a 10. I use the words 'WOW!'...or I get a SAD face and say, "AWWWW, let me see, who is making us wait...now we can't get a 10." (I don't say names unless that person keeps making us wait...and even then I might just walk over to the person or to the board to write a name up, etc.)



"I teach them 'ready position' (standing quietly behind their chairs, listening for directions) - this is great during those 'unexpected' moments where you really need their attention quickly (i.e.. fire drills, etc.). I also may say, Let's see if everyone can be ready by the time I get to 3 (or 5, or whatever) and I proceed to count to that number very slowly with a reminder that we need to be safe, even when we hurry..."



"I use a noisemaker or something to get everyone's attention. I have a bell which I hate, but it works. The art teacher last year used one of those clicker toys, like a frog. One teacher I know uses an electronic kitchen timer. He pretends to set it but keeps it in his hand, and sets it off when some of the students seem to go off-task, or lets it continue if everyone is staying on task.

"We've also, as a school, used, 'If you hear my voice, clap once' etc. - very rarely do we go past 'twice'. On the whole it works really well, but we've used it for so many years a lot of the older kids are not as responsive as they might be to something new. I like to use a Simon Says approach - 'If you hear my voice put your hand on your chin.' I say this very quietly so that only one or two might hear, and we play 3 or 4 positions and everyone is silent by then.

"And then I use, 'One two three, eyes on me.' Kids respond 'One, two, eyes on you.'"

"I use a chime to get children to settle down. They love the beautiful sound and it is a way to indirectly teach a little music."

"When the children get too noisy, have them put their heads down on their desks, darken the room, and play a few minutes of classical music. It calms them right down!"

"I do a lot of low key attention-getters (Superintendents and Principals seem to love this, so I assume I'm doing something right). Little things like touching them on a shoulder, praising the ones who are doing what is expected, moving around the classroom, flicking the lights, ringing a bell. I also have a number of little chants that get their attention. Or I'll ask a question aloud, "Now who is following the good listening rules?"

"I use a method I read on one of the boards. I say 'Give me 5.' This means two eyes, two ears and 1 zippered mouth (this is only said at the beginning of the year to reinforce it, later I just say the 'Give me 5.' They all put their arm straight out (horizontal to the floor with 5 fingers held up and they become COMPLETELY quiet. It's just perfect. I can stop anything at the drop of a 'Give me 5', even in a hallway. Of course, I did what Harry Wong suggests and I practiced this and went over and over it until they got it right. I never yelled about it, I just practiced and explained it again and again. After a while I don't think they wanted to go into the explanation again! Anyway, with this and the other procedures I have taught them I spend 99% of my time teaching. I think it is a combination of good kids (and this is inner city) and the pro-

cedures I have for EVERYTHING. I never acted upset when they didn't get quiet at first. I just calmly said that we needed to practice again so that we would all understand. I can even make the motion of give me five to them in an assembly, with no words, and they will immediately stop whatever they are doing."

"I use a little brass bell and signs. I have a collection of them with the various instructions needed most. 'Quiet, please', 'Come to the carpet, please' etc. I use these for two reasons: 1) The quieter I am, the quieter the class is - it helps to create an atmosphere. 2) I firmly believe in a print rich class where reading is a part of what we do all the time - therefore reading the sign is a necessary part of the function of the classroom."



"Some of my best attention getters include: clapping out a pattern, and having the kids clap it back to me (this works on a school-wide basis, too!). I also have a little bell, timer and use the lights...all of which really do work! My favourite one, however, is to start singing a song they all know...they join right in, and when the song is done, they are all 'with you'. So much more pleasant than trying to talk over them!"

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"I say, 'Eyes on who?' and they repeat, stopping and looking at me, 'Eyes on you!'"

"I use wind chimes that I tap. Sometimes this isn't handy, but I use it when I can because it makes a very lovely sound and the children stop to hear it. When the chimes are rung, students know to set down what they are doing, put their hands on their heads or raise their hand (depending on the particular group of students, so they're not messing with things), and face the speaker standing under the chimes. They love it and it works beautifully."

"I say 'Itty bitty bop'. They respond 'Everybody stop.' They're supposed to stop what they are doing and look at me. I tried to use a really pretty sounding bell. What I found was that it was always on the other side of the room and, when we left the room, I didn't have the bell!"

"I clap a pattern and they clap back. It works because my hands are always with me!"

"One of many I use is: 'Listen once, listen twice, listen chicken soup with rice.' This can easily be adapted to 'Hear me once, hear me twice, etc.' 'Clapping once, clapping twice, etc.'"

"The idea I like the best is counting in sign language. Once someone sees me counting they usually say 'She's counting!' and that gets their attention. Then they raise their hands to tell me what number where I stop. I keep counting until everyone is quiet and seated. They all learn their numbers in sign language by the end of the year."

Tattling

"I just tell my children that the only things I want to hear about are when:

**Someone is hurt or

**Something is hurt.

I just also started a tattling journal this year with great success!! They are to write in the Tattling Journal when they want to tattle. I know that when I'm upset, I feel better when I write down my feelings. It's working for the children. The journal is hysterical. I read it and then later on talk to the children about how to handle certain situations that I read about in the journal."

"I always try to listen to some of the tattling because on the few occasions that I didn't listen, I should have. Sometimes there is bullying going on that I need to know about. I make the kids come together and resolve their conflicts with me watching. Sometimes this helps the less assertive students be more brave and try out a strategy such as using an 'I' message. Having me as a witness sometimes stops the problem as the bully knows that I know about it. If the problem continues, then I talk to parents."

"I always ask 'Are you tattling to *help* someone or to *hurt* someone?'"

"When someone tries to tattle I always ask that person if they tried to use an 'I' Message with the other party. An 'I Message' is 'I don't like it when you _____ action _____, would you please stop?' This works 90 % of the time. I teach kids to give an 'I message', ignore, walk away, if none of those strategies work, THEN come and tell me. But they must first try those first."

"We use the 'Double D' rule. The D's are danger or damage. Our counsellor comes in and teaches the children about danger (somebody being hurt) or damage (property being mistreated). It works really well."



"Last year I had lots of tattlers! I made a job for the Tattle Monitor. Any time a student wanted to tattle, they had to tell the Tattle Monitor about it and the Tattle Monitor wrote it down in a Tattle Log. The Tattle Monitor could then report all the tattles to me at the end of the day. The Monitor never remembered or very rarely remembered to report it to me. It took the burden of listening to tattling off me and it did work. I sometimes forgot to let the T.M. handle it. Sometimes I would read the Tattle Log and I got a huge laugh out of it. They took the job very seriously and wrote down the funniest tattles."

"We generally have discussions about what are important things to tattle about. I usually make a lesson about the difference between tattling to get someone into trouble vs. tattling to get someone out of trouble. They can understand the concept of if someone is going to get hurt, I need to know about it because they are 'in trouble' instead of trying to get someone 'into trouble'. If they tell me something I don't need to know, I respond with 'That's something that you will need to work out yourselves....' or 'Do I really need to know this?' or 'Are you trying to get them into trouble?' I find this really works."

"I have a tattle tale form that I have them fill out. It has every question under the sun on it before it even gets to the questions about the issue. Sometimes I will ask them if they are trying to get the other person in trouble or out of trouble. (Sometimes that has helped....) I also have a hurt form for those injuries that are complained about but don't need medical attention. I tell them I will look it over after they fill they whole sheet in. Never happens. Get a notebook that has the pages sewn in, and a teddy bear (really, any old animal will do). Prop the notebook in the lap of the bear and title it 'Tell it to Teddy'. The things kids write in it are hilarious!"

"The character education in-service that we had last year was good in how to handle tattling. In the beginning of the year you talk about what an emergency is - let them tell you what they think it is and put on chart/board, etc. (If emergency is too harsh you can say 'what I need to know'.) Then talk about what they think a tattle is - make a list of that too. Then really hold them to it - add to it as situations come up and before they get one word out of their mouth when they come up to you I usually say 'wait - think - is this an emergency (need to know) or a tattle?' Nine out of ten times it's a tattle and usually you can tell when it's an emergency! It really worked and it got them to think about things before they whined."

Tattling Rules

Do not tattle unless there is one of the 3B's - blood, bathroom, or barf.

Do not tattle unless you see one of the 3D's - dangerous, destructive, or disturbing.

"I visited a classroom this year where the teacher used a 'Tattle Tale Application Form' that the tattling child had to complete during recess. It contained the tattler's name, address, phone number. Then it went on to ask the name of the person being 'tattled on'. It was completed when the tattling child then wrote several nice things about the person he tattled about. It was quite a lot of work and it worked very well."

Behaviour Control



"Make red green and yellow posterboard circles. When it is a red zone then there is no talking, when it is yellow then you can use a six inch whisper, green means you can talk. Set out certain times that there can be absolutely no talking."

"I used to have difficulty getting the class quiet. Nothing seemed to make any difference. Then I wrote the word 'awesome' on the board. When I had to speak to the entire class, I erased a letter beginning with the final letter. If the class made it to lunch time with the word intact, they sat where they liked. If not, they had assigned seats. If they lost the entire word by the end of the day, the following day they had silent lunch. If the entire word was intact at the end of the day, they were rewarded with 15 extra minutes of PE the next day. The first two days the class was at 'awe' by lunch time and they had an 'a' left at the end of the day. Each day they improved. This past week they had the word intact at lunch two days out of five. It worked for me when all else failed."

"One thing that works in my class is the 'I feel _____ when you _____ because _____.' The 'I feel' statement reminds them they are not being respectful and need to remember their place. For example, sometimes my kids try to talk when I am teaching.....they already know everything and interrupt all the time. When this happens I stop and quietly wait for the offenders to stop talking too. Then I say, 'I feel frustrated when you talk when I talk because we cannot get our lesson done and it isn't fair to the others who are listening.' Amazingly enough, when the offenders hear this they will look repentant and stop the calling out or playing around. Its taken us awhile to get to this point but it really seems to be hitting home."

Move Down the Metre Stick

"For about 4 years now I have a yard stick that I painted 4 colours. Green is at the top, yellow next, blue next and red at the bottom. Every student has a clothespin with their name on it. This yardstick hangs on a hook at the front of the class (for all to see). All pins start on green every day. If a child ignores my first warning he/she must move his pin to yellow. This is considered a warning just between the student and me. If he/she continues to misbehave the pin goes to blue and they must go to timeout in the classroom and I write a note home. If the pin goes to red the student is sent to the office with a pink slip and usually detention or removal from class follows. This also gets a note sent home from the principal. I never move them back up during the day. But I do remind them that they can start new on green the next day. I think the fact that their name is not with the rest of the group is an embarrassment. I have also given treats when everyone stays on green all day. (15 minutes of free play or popcorn, etc.) I do feel it works because of the support from the administration. They know if I send one to the office it is because all other avenues have been used."

"I put 3 yellow (for caution) unifix cubes on the students' desk each morning. If they call out an answer, or break other class rules, I just walk by and pick up a cube. If all cubes are lost, I give the student a red cube. This means 5 minutes of recess is lost. If they get more than 3 red cubes, we are going to call Mom or Dad. This has worked great for me, and the kids consider it to be fair."

"I do a behaviour chart for the whole class. It's a colour chart with green (super), yellow (warning), orange (5 minute time out), red (10 minute time out), blue (out of classroom time out) and black (office) construction paper, labelled with each 'infraction'. Each child's name is on a clothespin. Everyone begins each day on green. If I have to speak to anyone more than once about a classroom rule that they're breaking, I say, 'Move your clip.' They are responsible for getting up and moving their clip down the chart. As an incentive, after 2 weeks of this, anyone who's been on green for those 2 weeks gets to have lunch, with me, in the classroom."

"We do two for one. Two compliments for every insult or hurtful thing said. I know this can be an interruption to your normal schedule, but one thing I do when I hear a lot of negativity is to stop class and have a friendship circle. Each person stands up and everyone says one nice thing about that person. Then I ask each person standing how it feels to have good things said about them. Then we go through each person until the end when we discuss the difference between positive language and hurtful language. We practice being positive and I ask them to give me examples of how to use positive language when you are mad at someone. Then we discussed that. This entire process has taken me about an hour and a half with 22 students. I've done it twice. Once was planned and once was spontaneous because they were being nasty. The kids have made using positive language one of our class rules. So far so good this year."

"We also have a 'Caught you box' which is a place where classmates write each other up when they see someone do something nice or 'extra'. They cannot be added to the box if they brag on themselves or tell anyone what they did. They can only be written up if they are noticed by a classmate. It is their responsibility to notice one another. A few weeks of having only a few and the kids started writing more of them up. We do sticker charts where the kids collect stickers and when they fill up a card they pick from our prize box. I asked them what we should do with the people who are written up in the caught you box and they said that we could pick one name out of it and that person gets an extra sticker for the week. The rest get to take them home to let their parents see that they were caught being good."

"For repeated misbehaviour, I have a little 'behaviour sheet' they fill out and take home for a parent's signature. It has places for them to write:

What was I doing?

Why is that a problem?

What will I do next time?

I keep these on file."



"I have found that for a system to work, the teacher has to feel very comfortable with it. I have tried elaborate systems, but then I forget to hand out stickers or cards and the system loses its effectiveness.

"I am going to try something new which I'm sure others have used before. I am going to have a jar on my desk and popcorn kernels. Whenever I catch anyone in the class following the rules or doing exceptional work, I will drop in a kernel. Sometimes I will drop in enough kernels for a group of students or even the whole class. When the class has helped me to fill the jar, I will reward them with a video. I want to try this again next year and have other types of rewards too.

"I also do sticker charts for individual students. When they earn 10 stickers they get to go in my prize box. My prize box has stickers, pins, pencils, erasers, small toys, etc.; things I get free or I pick up on sale. They just love getting stickers on their charts. I often will give stickers if they are quiet during reading time or when they go to wash their hands. Sometimes I will give stickers to one person or a small group.

"I find in September/October I hand out little things like jelly beans or small candies to reinforce the rules often. By mid November I have weaned them from this system into doing the sticker chart more often plus other things.

"As far as punishment goes, I start with time-outs in the room or in the hall-way with my T.A. If the behaviour progresses or is very serious then they may miss some of their gym time, recess or centre time. Usually it ends with the time-out. On rare occasions it can mean a phone call home. This is only with my severe behavior kids.

"One last thing that has worked well for me is sticky notes. My class knows when I start to write on a pad it means I am catching those who are behaving and they will get stickers. This allows me to keep track of who I need to put stickers up for as going to the chart every time is not always easy to do). Also it allows me to observe more of the class. By the time I get to the sticker chart everyone is behaving so it's hard to tell who shouldn't get a sticker. Sometimes all I have to do is pick up the pad and paper and I have instant quiet."

"I use several CDs of calm classical music. I play it as the children are coming in from the breaks and when they are having SSR. Does it help? That is hard to say, but the students enjoy it and it makes a pleasant atmosphere."



"I use this idea and it works great! My class earns an extra recess after they receive 15 compliments from any adult. We keep track on a circle that resembles a clock without the numbers, and move a distance of a minute for every compliment. When they get one-quarter of the way around they earn the recess. This makes it very easy to teach time later in the year. To make it a little more interesting - a compliment from the principal is worth 2!"

"We use a card system. Our colours are blue - good (where they all start in the morning), yellow - warning (usually I have given several oral warnings first), pink - specific note or phone call home about the problem and a signed note back to verify that it was received, and red - at this point the student is sent to the office. The principal knows about our system and supports us.

"The cards are stacked in front of the student's name and when one has to be changed the student moves the front colour to the back so the next colour shows.

"We take out our take home folders at the end of the day and colour the behaviour boxes and I write on those on which I need to write. The sheet is for a month and we have a place for parents to sign weekly. The rules are also listed on the sheet. We use coloured cards and then at the end of the day they colour the box with that date in it. We write a little message about the problem for the day."

"I use music all the time in my Grade Two classroom. There is always music playing softly when the students enter the room from another activity, and we start and end the day with songs. Our morning ritual consists of songs I choose to give us an optimistic start to our day - like *Whistle While You Work*, or something bright and quick. We end with *What a Wonderful World*. During writing and SSR I play different kinds of music, some classical, mostly instrumental, and often popular songs in instrumental versions."



"One teacher tells the children they have power and when they are in control they are showing their power. The more in control the more power. She looked at two misbehaving boys and she said "I can tell you don't have a lot of power."

"I wrote the word 'awesome' on the board. When I had to speak to the entire class, I erased a letter beginning with the final letter. If the class made it to lunch time with the word intact, they sat where they liked. If not, they had assigned seats. If they lost the entire word by the end of the day, the following day they had silent lunch. If the entire word was intact at the end of the day, they were rewarded with 15 extra minutes of PE the next day. The first two days the class was at 'awe' by lunch time and they had an 'a' left at the end of the day. Each day they improved. This past week they had the word intact at lunch two days out of five. It worked for me when all else failed."

"I tell them they can keep talking, just without sound. It usually catches their attention quickly."

The teacher next to me says, "Be mean till Hallowe'en....."
And there is the old saying: "Don't smile until Thanksgiving!"

A Noise Thermometer

"Last year as a first-year teacher, I tried what I call a 'noise thermometer' that my students keep their eyes on to monitor their own noise level. The tool worked so well that it will be a permanent fixture in my room. My noise thermometer looks like a three-foot thermometer with red Velcro that acts as the mercury. I number increments from zero (no noise) to ten (extreme noise/out of control). The thermometer starts at zero each morning. When my class gets louder I raise the thermometer to a level that matches their noise level. I never have to say a word. They see me near it and the room immediately becomes quieter! If it hits five, the class loses two minutes off recess and as it is raised even higher, they lose more time. This has proven to be an effective way for students to monitor themselves and work cooperatively to keep noise down. Last year, my class got to five only three times. I hate to use lost recess as a consequence, but losing six minutes all year isn't a bad trade-off for a relatively calm classroom."

Managing Behaviour

"Take a blank monthly calendar and fill out the dates each month. Then on the days you have trouble with students or students do something neat, list their names on the square for that particular day with a one or two word reminder of what they did. It's very easy at the end of the month to look back and see how the month went. Another method I have used (taken from a magazine) is to take the very small post-it notes and write the child's name and the date with the comment. Then stick the note inside a file folder. This is great, but you may still want to go through this every month so you don't get over-noted! I have used both of these methods, and they work equally well, especially when parents want to know how things have been going for their child that month."

"Take a tube of toothpaste and talk about how unkind words hurt us like sticking a pin in the tube. Students give examples of unkind words and prick the tube with each example. Squeeze the tube with each pinprick and, of course, the paste starts coming out of the holes. Then discuss apologizing - makes it better, etc. So after the apology say, "Now put the toothpaste back in the tube to 'fix' the unkind words you said". They can't, of course. The lesson learned is even after you have apologized the effects of the unkind words linger on."



"In my class, on the first day of school I have students brainstorm (first individually and then in small groups) what they think makes a successful student. After they have come up with their lists, I have them prioritize their lists. I then go around the room and they give me their top 5 ideas. We write them on large butcher paper. These then become our classroom rules. I have them do the same procedure asking what makes a successful teacher. By prioritizing their lists, we weed out such things as longer recess, etc. I then put the paper up in the classroom for all to see. This really gets them thinking about why they are in school and how they should behave."

Problem Solving

"Three years ago I had a very difficult class. One day I finally had enough of dealing with all the problems. Before they came into the room I announced that they weren't allowed to tell me about a single problem. When they sat down I gave them all a square of paper and (putting the Math lesson aside) told them to write what happened at recess time. Then I brought out two shoe boxes, labelled one of them Problems, the other one, Peace. Without any explanation, they had to choose which box to put their story into. I put the boxes away again until after lunch, and we did the whole thing over again. At the end of the day, I pulled out the pictures from the Peace box, and we talked about the 'nice' things that went on in the pictures. The students who had a peaceful play time all got a bookmark for sharing and playing co-operatively. I got a chorus of "No fair! Next time I'm going to do a peace picture!" I said I really hoped so, and that it would be the truth. Then I pulled out the Problem box. Tediously, we went through every problem. They weren't allowed to name any names, but say 'Somebody' instead. I wrote the problem down on chart paper. Here's an example:



Problem: Somebody in the class kept chasing me, tagging me, and saying I was it and I wasn't even playing. I got mad and kicked him.

Next, I said that the class had to come up with (minimum) three solutions to the problem.

Solution #1: Tell that person "I'm not playing your game right now" and then play somewhere else.

Solution #2: Say "I don't like it when you chase me. If you want to play with me, we can go on the swings."

Solution #3: Sit down (they can't chase you if you're sitting) and keep your feet to yourself.

Every student that offered a solution to a problem was rewarded with a bookmark - they caught on really fast and all started putting their hands up and thinking of creative solutions (I said I wasn't going to accept the same solution over and over). The great thing was the student who had the problem wanted to be the one to offer the solution (and I could say, "See? You do know what to do next time this happens. Good for you!") By the time the box was empty, we had five or six problem charts (we had several repeat problems). We put them up around the room, and the next day reviewed them before recess. We did the Peace/Problem pictures after recess and lunch again, and emptied the boxes at the end of the day. This time, only the creative solutions and peace pictures were rewarded. Anytime a problem came up that had already been charted, we reread it and asked the student with the problem what they could/should have done. I think it took about a month for them to run out of new problems, but we reviewed them all year. After a week, I stopped rewarding any pictures/solutions, but instead I put up the Peace pictures on a bulletin board. It was super time-consuming at first, but after awhile, the students came in and started reading the charts and then running to their friends with possible solutions to their problems."

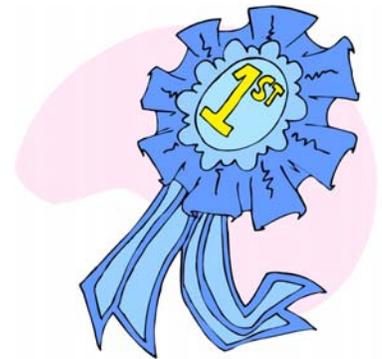
"I also like to do some community building. Last year we sat in a circle on the carpet and I explained how each person must do their part in order for our classroom to run smoothly and successfully. I had a big ball of the heavy school-type yarn which I then rolled to a student across from me. They in turn, rolled it to someone across or caddy-corner from them. We did this until each person was holding a piece of the web. We then said if one person lets go of their anchor, the web falls apart. We each are an important part of this terrific classroom. That was a great visual that they referred to all year."

"Just before they are excused for the day, I cut an apple crosswise to show them the star inside. I explain that while each apple is different on the outside, there is always a star on the inside and I will always be looking for the star inside each of them. I then send home an apple in a bag that has a poem about looking for the star inside themselves. I ask them to show their parents how to cut the apple to look for the star. I love hearing what they say the next day."

"I have taught students in my classroom about 5 cm. voices and 30 cm. voices. I began by actually using a ruler in front of my mouth and speaking quietly and saying that my voice only went out 5 cm. I then speak louder and move my finger down the ruler to the end and said 'This is what a 30 cm. voice sounds like.' I tell them there are times for the 30 cm. (reading or sharing their writing) and time for 5 cm. voices (centers). Now when they forget to be quiet in centers, I get their attention, put my thumb on my bottom lip and my finger about 5 cm. away. They understand what I mean and immediately get quiet."

Blue Ribbon Behaviour

"Every day is a new day. Each student has a pocket on a chart with four coloured pieces of paper. Each starts on green and if there are no behaviour problems, it will stay on green all day. If there is a first behaviour problem, I will ask the student to change the card to yellow. This is a warning and there are no further consequences if the poor behaviour stops. If the poor behaviour continues the card will change to orange and the student will spend either a morning or afternoon recess with me in the classroom. If the poor behaviour continues the card will change to red, the student will lose another recess and write a "Refocus" explaining their behaviour and describing what they will do next time to correct the problem. This form will be signed by me and then will be sent home with the student to be signed by the parent. If I feel it is necessary, I may call or email the parents to let them know that it is coming home. If the form does not return, the student will lose morning and afternoon recess until it is returned. With extreme behaviour problems or physical aggression, the student may go straight to a red card or be referred to the principal. However, if I notice a student having an exceptionally good day, I will put a blue card in their pocket on the chart and they will bring home a "Blue Ribbon Day" certificate."

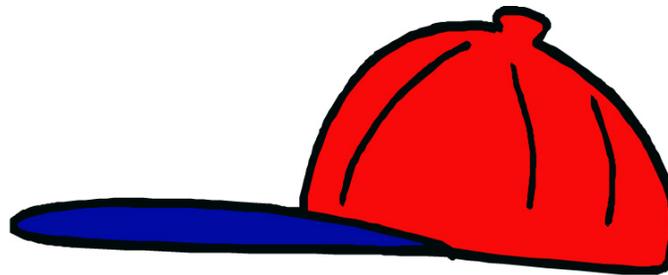


Stop and Think

"I have started what I call STOP AND THINK. I made a traffic light with three large circles. Above it I have a uniformed stop-sign man that says STOP AND THINK! Right now we are working on listening and not chatting at inappropriate times. Each child has a clothespin with their student number on it. Everyone starts on green. After two warnings the child moves the clip to yellow. It stays there all week. Two more warnings and the clothespin moves to red. It stays there the rest of the week. On Friday I have 'Friday Free' time. If you are on yellow you lose 5 minutes of 'Friday free' time, on red you lose 10 minutes and if the clothespin is removed all together you don't get any free time. Friday Free time lasts 15 to 20 minutes. Actually a lot of choices during are academically related. My students really like that time so missing out is not fun."

Please Don't Interrupt!

"During my Reading Conferences (when I really hate to be interrupted), I wear my red hat. It is a ball cap. I tell the kids that red is for 'STOP'. If they plan to interrupt me when I am wearing it, there had better be a fire or a broken leg! One teacher wears a necklace with a red circle on one side and green on the other. When the red circle is showing the children know they are not to interrupt unless their is a REAL emergency! It seems to work pretty well."



"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."

ADHD Children in the Classroom

- Class rules should be few in number, clear, concise and positive. Consequences must be immediate and easily enforced. Change positive consequences often. Post the rules.

- Provide a written schedule of daily events. Avoid changes in the daily routine, if possible, and also avoid waiting periods. ADHD children are especially difficult for substitute teachers, as this is a severe break from the normal routine.

- Get the child's attention before giving instructions. Keep the instructions clear, specific and simple. If you are not sure if the child understands, have him repeat the instructions.

- Have hand signals for simple instructions, e.g. - raise your hand for 'stop', point to your eye for 'look' and to your ear for 'listen', etc. Develop a secret signal to remind the child not to blurt answers.

- Have shorter work periods for this child, and break assignments into smaller pieces.

- Give the child a reason to move around - doing errands, helping in the classroom, etc.

- Allow a transition period after recess and lunch time.

- To decrease disorganization, keep his materials at a minimum. Distribute them as needed.

- Seat the student near you and away from distracting places (the pencil sharpener, for example.)

A 'Back-and-Forth' book will keep the parents informed of problems, homework, good behaviour, etc.



Children With ADHD

"Children who suffer from ADHD are living a life of negativity. The first thing that I would recommend to you is to try to focus on the positive instead of the negative. These children are used to receiving punishment and often become negative attention seekers. This then perpetuates the problems that they have. Here's what I do:

1. Realize that the children are suffering too. No one likes them (sadly enough - this often includes the teacher), they are always 'in trouble', and they are likely failing miserably.

2. Realize that these children don't have brains that function the way yours probably does. They oftentimes can't see past their impulse to do something in order to focus on the consequence of their actions. Then, having to focus on a whole day can be too overwhelming for them to even contemplate.

3. I find at least one positive thing about them and make that my focus. If he's constantly talking, allow him opportunities to do so - maybe as the class messenger.

4. I've found that behavior contracts work extremely well with ADHD children. If I break our day into smaller, more manageable chunks of time, the child is able to focus on one chunk at a time. for example: our chunks are the following - arrival and up until recess; after recess until lunch; after lunch until SSR time; after SSR time until dismissal. I have a form that the child and I work together to complete and that child sets individual goals (with my help) and we determine a reward for accomplishing that goal. For example, for every time period that the child achieves his goal (maybe staying in seat or raising hand before speaking but only

one goal at a time), he gets a stamp on the contract. After 10 stamps (or whatever) he can choose a prize."

"For ADHD - Ask your O.T., or get one through the school - available through catalogues... these are great - they are called 'Sit 'n Squish' They're round or square and fit on the seat of a child's chair. Kidlet sits on it and it gives back some of that movement that they crave. It's filled with air so it has some movement. This doesn't work with every child, nor should you do it without O.T. support, but for some it's wonderful."

"I had an ADHD child several years ago. The school psychologist happened to be my good friend, so I mentioned him to her. She observed him and then gave me a little 'squeeze ball' for him to keep at his desk. He kept the ball in his hands and squeezed it constantly. He had energy that just had to be released...squeezing the ball released it. He squeezed it and hummed while he worked, etc. It did calm him down considerably, but by no means was the complete answer. Anything that helps in the classroom is worthwhile."

"I have an ADHD child. With him, I have learned that if I allow a bit of movement, he does his work, whereas if I insist he stay in his seat he spends his time thinking of ways to get to move (sharpening pencil, getting more materials, etc.). For example, last week, we had a Math activity which involved estimating measurement, cutting out shapes and checking the estimates. Throughout this activity, he never once had his backside on a chair. He stood, he knelt, he hummed, he moved. But he WORKED. It's not always possible, of course, for him to do this, but after working with him all year, he knows that if I say, 'Don't move out of your seat', I mean it and that I WILL let him move when I can. He is a happier, more achieving child than if I had insisted on immobility all year. The other children in the class accept his moving around and, indeed, if it's a hands on activity, I don't insist on immobility from them, either, but they are more content to stay put for a 30 minute activity."

"I teach a special class, and we use this cushion. They're filled with air and let the kid wiggle around on their chair. They have made a difference with some of my kids.

<http://www.fitter1.com/Catalog/Category/10/ActiveSitting.aspx>

We have the round red ones and the blue wedge ones. Different kids have different preferences. Here's another thing I saw when I was looking for the cushion: when children need to move while sitting in the classroom, I have often tied theraband to the front lower legs of the chair. They can bounce their legs against it to their heart's delight, and best of all, it is not disturbing or even noticeable to the other children! Plus - I let all my kids bring in regular chair cushions for their chairs and for carpet time. They love them and it helps them be more comfortable.

Besides fiddle strings my kids are getting these sand bags in balloons at the dollar store or squishy/stress balls or hacky sacks. Even a lot of my calm kids enjoy holding them."



Off to a Good Start

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,
While 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!



Getting Ready 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

 - Supply lists

5. Organize supplies

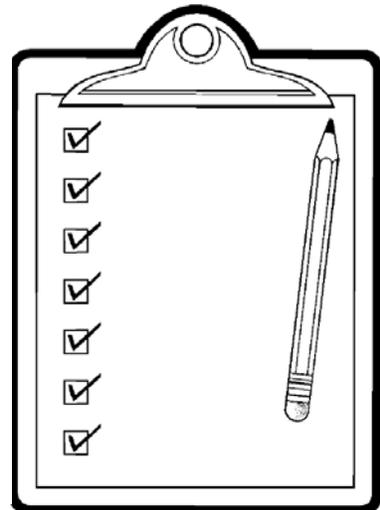
 - Teacher's supplies
 - Students' supplies, pencils sharpened, etc.
 - Paper - variety

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

Notes to Self!



First of all - remember that these children are still *Grade Ones!* They really become *Grade Twos* some time in October.....

A Checklist For You

1. What is your policy regarding: names on papers, writing on back of paper, colouring or drawing on paper, printing expectations, late work, incomplete work, neatness, make-up work?
2. How do you intend to: provide for absentees, handle transitions, set rules for behaviour?
3. For effective monitoring of work, how and when will you: make sure you get around to all students, not just the demanding ones, look carefully enough at students' work in progress to catch errors?
4. How do you want students to turn in work: where to put it, how to pass papers in, how to keep track of whose work is or isn't turned in?
5. What is your policy regarding: checking for turned-in work, work not turned in on time by the end of the day, specific feedback, criteria for displayed work, how and when to return papers to students, having students correct papers of their own, checking and returning corrected work?

Here We Go!

Some really easy things to do the first day:

1. Read a story and have them do a simple reader response.
2. Decorate name tags for their desks.
3. Play "Name Bingo": Everyone has a bingo grid; they walk around the room and collect a different signature in each square (have slightly less squares than there are kids). Pass out chips and pull names from a jar.
4. Organize supplies (this always takes time).
5. I always discuss the rules with the class. I let them come up with all sorts of rules but then help them narrow them down to three. This year I'm going to narrow it down to one ~ Treat others as you would like to be treated ~ (the old Golden Rule). My consequences vary according to the situation. Usually I try and get the kids to work out their own problems. If it's someone disturbing the class, though, I give a 5 minute time out; 2nd infraction is another time-out, 3rd time they miss recess and 4th time they phone their parents and tell them they were misbehaving.



How to Start the First Day

1. Collect your class! Have a greeting for each child.
2. Go to the classroom: Go to classroom together and find coat hooks. Hang up jackets and backpacks. (Collect all notes.) Find names on tags lying on desks and sit down.
3. Attendance: Take attendance and lunch count quickly and send to office.
4. Welcome: Introduce adults (teacher and aide) and welcome class.
5. Pictures: Video class briefly and snap a couple of pictures. (Take the video home that night and practice names and recognition!) Save tape to periodically add to it during year. Parents may make a copy at the end of the year.
6. Rules: Explain the basic rules. Practice getting quiet for your signals or whatever key words you are using. Explain and then practice going to seats quietly and tell the children how you expect them to sit to be quiet and listen. (These are probably the most useful techniques we teach all year. If you insist from the first day, it doesn't take long for it to be a habit.)
7. Bathroom: Explain bathroom procedures and rules.
8. Size seats: Place the children in correctly sized desks if there are options. Then fasten the names down on the desks with wide tape.
9. Paper and supplies: Look at the supplies and show the children what you wish done with them - e.g. collect all pencils and make them community property, put supplies that will be used later in the year in the cupboard, etc.
10. Do a 'names' activity: Have the children decorate their name tags, or play name Bingo.
11. Read a story: Explain the 'listening' rules - that they must sit cross-legged, hands on lap, etc. Again, if you insist on it from Day 1, you will minimize future problems.)
12. Lunch: Discuss how we get ready for lunch, line up, procedure, etc.



"Spend a lot of time going over rules and procedures. Make them simple and phrase them in a positive way. Also, plan your reward system(s) and start them right away. I spend the first 3 weeks of school concentrating on that stuff, and I reward and praise students for doing it right every chance I get to reinforce it. I also start the year by doing a lot of one on one testing to see where the students are in reading, math and writing. I do units on Friendship and School Safety to reinforce my rules. Try to meet the parents as soon as you can and explain your rules and procedures so they're on board from day one."

"Another thing I do is send a postcard or letter home to each student a few weeks before school starts. I tell them how excited I am about the year, etc. I then request that they bring in something to share on the first day that tells about them or their summer. Kids usually bring in a favourite toy, pictures from a summer event, or even stories they've written!"

A Welcome Bag

"I include a hug (Hershey's candy), smartie, small pack of life savers, tissue, eraser, starburst (candy) and a soccer ball sticker. I place all of these in brown paper bags with an apple painted on the front. I fold down the top and punch two holes then tie them with a ribbon.

This is the note that I include -

This is your reminder bag. Please read this note with your parents and discuss each thing in the bag. Mrs. F

The hug is to remind you that everyone needs a hug from time to time (even Mrs. F). If you need one please let the teacher know.

The Smartie is to remind you that everyone in our class will be learning a lot and getting smarter everyday.

The Life Saver is to remind you that you can come to any adult in our school if you need someone to help you.

The tissue is to remind you to dry the tears of a friend if they need it.

The eraser is to remind you that we all make mistakes and it is okay.

The starburst is to remind you that each student in your classroom is a star.

The soccer sticker is important. It reminds us to stick together and work as a team to reach our goal."

More 'Welcome Bag' Ideas.....

The cotton ball is to remind you that our room is full of kind words and warm feelings.

The chocolate kiss is to comfort you when you are feeling sad.

The sticker is to remind you that we will all stick together and help each other.

The gem is to remind you that you are valuable and special.

The star is to remind you to shine and always try your best.

The toothpick is to remind you to pick out the good qualities in your classmates

and in yourself.

The bandage is to remind you to heal hurt feelings in your friends and yourself.

The gold thread is to remind you that friendship ties our hearts together.



Another teacher made a card with *Mrs. _____ Grade ____ - Welcome Bag* with a welcome poem on the inside of the card, and she gathered the items together and placed them in a zip lock baggie with the card and passed them out to the parents on Back To School Night.

The First Day

"One thing I've done is to have out a colouring page for the kids to colour when they arrive. With Grade Two, I've also gone to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com> and created a word-search puzzle with all the kids' names as well as mine, the school's name, etc. Some had trouble with it, but most enjoyed it and it helped the kids get familiar with their classmates. One big point - be firm about your expectations from the very first minute. You might also want to take a look at Harry Wong's *The First Days Of School*. It's a great resource no matter how long you've been teaching (I always look it over before a new year starts)!"

"I make icons (5 X 7) for all of my procedures and rules and we go over them on the first day. For the following day I have a procedure bingo game using the icons in different spots. When I pull a card they have to tell me the procedure that goes with it. (Example - sharpening pencils - icon of pencil sharpener, procedure: put your pencil in 'needs sharpening' cup and take new pencil from sharpened pencil cup.) You can do this with anything that is a rule in your classroom or a procedure you want them to learn and follow. I hang the large icons on a board with a cute saying (ex. Working together). We also play name bingo the first day so they can get to know each other. We make a class book and start the first day with a self portrait done in crayon. The next day they answer questions about themselves, favourite food, favourite colour, etc. We also make a birthday graph with cupcakes already made with their birthday on it and their name. They just have to decorate the cupcake. Some years we make individual books about the school after we take a tour."

"Here are some ideas I have collected..."

1. Read **The Important Book**. 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 _____.
2. Graph how everyone came to school - by bus, car, foot or other.
3. Make a class book 'The First Day of School'. Each page is the shape of a school house. Students write what they want to learn about in grade two. Add a comment page to the end of the book. Send home with each child to share with family. The parent can write a comment on the comment page.
4. Getting to Know the Teacher Box - Fill a box with things that tell about you. Share with the class. You could have each student bring in a box that tells about them.
5. Snack Share - Sit in circle. Pass around snack such as pretzels. Each child takes a handful. For each piece they have to tell something about themselves.
6. Make Time Capsules."



"As they come in, I have each child make a name sign on tagboard strips and decorate it. We use these signs so other children can take attendance and write down the absentees for the rest of the year. We unpack school bags and put the supplies they have brought in away. (I send a supply list out with the class assignment cards - easier on parents than the first day of school.) Then we play some sort of get acquainted name game. We take a room tour and I let them know what cabinets are open to them and which they must ask permission to go into and which are just Mrs. M's. I set up the calendar math routine with them. We journal write and of course I do at least two read alouds and one silent reading time for them. This means I have to explain the class library rules first. About 3 times during the day, we take out some supplies and label them with their use and the child's name. For example, Reading Folder, Writing Workshop Folder, Writing Journal, Math Journal, etc. I have written these labels on the computer beforehand. They just stick them on and add their names. I find if we do supplies all at once, it becomes cumbersome and boring. Sometimes we don't finish labeling everything for a day or two. Since we have a one hour delayed opening the first day, by the time you add lunch and a prep period to this, the day is over."

The First Days

It is a good idea to over-prepare for the first few days. It will give you a sense of security, and when the students are actively engaged it is unlikely that you will encounter behaviour problems. When you write out a lesson, make it a detailed plan. This will make you feel really prepared, even if you don't refer to it when it is being taught. This is like a rehearsal and will really help you, especially if you are a new teacher or new to the grade level.

First, set up your classroom routines. The students need to know what you expect and how you want things done. Model your expectations. The children need to have a clear understanding of what you expect them to do and how you would like them to behave. This may take two or three weeks, but it is time well spent.

Here are some ideas for the first day:

1. Show the children how you want them to sit in the circle or gathering place for Opening Exercises. This is the important Day One on the 'Days in School' chart, so it is important to do this on the first day. Go through the basic items in your Opening Exercises - the date, calendar, days in school, weather, the new month, poetry, etc.

2. Play a 'name game'. While in the circle the children each have a turn saying their name and doing a body or hand motion. Each child in the circle repeats the first child's name and the motion. The next child says his name and does a motion, and the class repeats that and the first child's name and motion. This continues around the circle.



3. Explain the routines -- when they can sharpen pencils, when they can use the bathroom, the bus routine, lunch routine, practice lining up, handing out and collecting papers, the library, etc. If you have students who are new to the school you may wish to go for a walk and show the washrooms, gym, office, etc.
4. Have each person think about one thing they would like the class to know about them. You can model it first and then they introduce themselves one at a time and tell the one thing.
5. Brainstorm what a good classroom should be like. Group these and see how few rules you can have - perhaps: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible Once this is done, you can have each child trace their hand print on coloured paper. Glue them around the rule chart. Explain that this is the way we 'sign' a pledge to follow the rules. It makes a colourful bulletin board!
6. Have an SSR time. See which children are actually reading and the material they have chosen.
7. Have a poem with at least eight lines printed on the chalkboard or a chart. Give the children inter-lined paper and ask them to copy the poem as carefully as possible. You will see which children are able to print fluently and legibly..
8. Give each child 10 math manipulatives and have them make number patterns. Have them move the counters to make different groupings of 10 and give you full equations that equal 10. Print them on the chalkboard or a chart. Then you can give the class a sheet of addition questions to 10 and watch how the children find the answers. The next day you can do the same for subtraction to 10.
9. When the class is busy with an activity, have children come to you individually and read a page from material that is end of Grade One level. Have a variety of easier and more difficult reading material also and find each child's approximate reading level.
10. Begin reading a chapter book to the class. Suggestions: *My Father's Dragon*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (or other books by Roald Dahl), *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*, etc.

11. Bean Bag Game. You can have the class sit in a circle. When you are thrown the bean bag you catch it and say one thing that you like to do in school!

12. ABC Scavenger hunt. This is a nice game to play the first day. Divide your class into small groups and assign the certain letters of the alphabet. They need to search around the classroom for things that begin with that letter.



13. After reading *How I Spent My Summer Vacation* by Mark Teague, the class can write about their vacation, (real or imaginary) to share with the class. It is a nice idea to do this on cut-out suitcases.

14. After reading *My Teacher's Secret Life* or *My Teacher Sleeps in School* by Leatie Weiss, have students write about what they think it would be like to be a teacher living in school.

15. Go outdoors and discuss the rules of the playground and then play a game.

16. Using their imagination: give each child an 11 x 18 inch white paper with a single wavy or zigzag line on it. Make the line part of a drawing. The students can turn the paper in any direction and then make it into a picture, complete with background. The students then write a story to go with their picture. Model this activity using a different design. You can use this as an assessment in creativity, fine motor skill and writing. Stress trying to think of something that is creative.

17. Go outdoors and find perfect autumn leaves. Bring several back to the classroom and do leaf prints. Put a leaf on the desk with the veined side upwards. Lay a piece of white paper or newsprint over it. Take the paper off pieces of orange and red wax crayons and colour over the leaf with the crayon held horizontally.



18. Teach a song.

More Ideas for the First Day

Some interesting things to do on the first day:

- Welcome the students them and give them a little talk about what to expect in your class. Go over the schedule with them, discussing lunch, specials, recess, etc., and put the information on a chart or on a weekly timetable that they can refer to.

- Show them where you will have class meetings and calendar groups, then role-play how they should go there. In the group spot, discuss rules for behaviour during meetings (taking turns, hands off others, listen when others are talking, etc.) As the children tell you the rules, write them on a chart.

- Begin your calendar and opening exercises. Today is 'Day 1' on the 'Days in School' chart.

- Practice some of your routines - model your expectations.

- Read a special story, a favourite.

- Play a name game or other circle game to learn all the names: Give each child a name tag or the name on a cord around the neck. Play, for example, 'Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?' Go through this until the children are comfortable with the sequence and words - then put it to rhythm by slapping the knees with alternate hands.

Who Stole the Cookie?

Leader: Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?

Group: Amanda stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Amanda: Who me?

Group: Yes, you.

Amanda (point to self, shake head): Couldn't be.

Group: Then who?

Amanda: Thomas stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Thomas: Who me? Etc.



If you aren't comfortable with 'stole', use the word 'took' instead.

- The children are always eager to see the new classroom books, so do two DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) times.

- Write in the journals at the end of the day. Today they can tell all about the first day of school and what they enjoyed. It will be a nice remembrance later on, when they go back to read what they wrote.

- Do a class Time Capsule. You could use a Pringles can that has been decorated for the capsule. Each child gets a paper and has to write out their answers to a few questions about their favourite colour, book, food, etc. They copy a sentence or poem in their neatest printing and draw a picture of themselves on the first day of school, and then they trace and colour their handprint on the back. When everyone is done, collect the papers, roll them up, stuff them in the can, and put it away in a place that is out of reach, but in their view. On the last day of school take the tube down and pass back the papers. The children like to see if any of their favourites have changed, and you can encourage them to put their hand on top of the 'old' print to see if they've grown during the year.

- Set aside a place where you can collect items during the year for the end-of-year bulletin board. The last week or so of the school year, put a header (Remembering the Year... or something like it) on top and hang up all sorts of things that remind you of the year together. Items include: sample of projects you've done, brochures from field trips taken, a fancy napkin from a class party or birthday, an empty butterfly garden box, a book jacket from a favourite read-aloud, thank-you notes, etc. It is a nice way to look back at the end of the year! Try to do one each month and each special day.

- Go around the classroom and read all the charts and poems, etc. Then give the children some time to 'read the room' themselves. Have magic wands, pointers, glasses, binoculars, flashlights, magnifying glasses, etc. to focus in and help them read the words.

- Give the children clip-boards and interlined paper. Have them 'write the room', printing words they know. Have them hand these in and you will be able to see the level of printing accuracy.

- Play 'Name Bingo'. Each student gets a blank bingo board. They walk around the classroom and have other people sign theirs until it is full - and then play bingo (with M&Ms as markers).

- I read *Chrysanthemum*. We graph our names by length.

A Time Capsule

"The first day of school my Grade 2 students make a time capsule. They are asked to bring an empty paper towel roll and begin their first day by decorating a piece of construction paper that will cover the roll with their name and a picture. A good part of the rest of the day is spent completing the contents of the time capsule. They include a tracing of their hand, a picture of themselves, and a questionnaire which asks about their favourite books, movies, TV shows, friends, etc. It also asks them to write three things that they want to learn this year. I measure each student with a piece of string and the string is also put into the time capsule. I collect them all and hide them until the last day of school. It is fun to remind them of their time capsule goals throughout the year. Reopening them on the last day of school is a much anticipated event!"

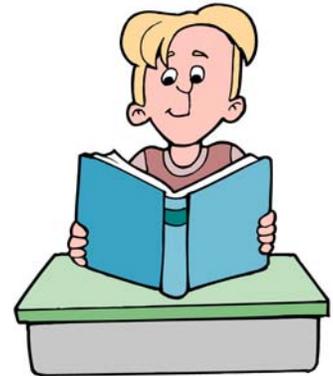
Art for Names

"A friend of mine just shared this art idea and it sounds so simple and messy and great. First you need glossy paper which masking tape will come off. Then each student spells their name using masking tape on the paper. Some letters will be quite difficult. Then have the students fingerpaint the background, wait until it dries and remove tape."



Poor Readers

Most Grade Two classrooms have children who are very low readers. Some, in fact, may be non-readers when they come to you in September. This is very serious for these children. In many cases, you may be the best hope for literacy. Special Education teachers and Learning Assistance may be of help, but the responsibility is yours. Special Ed people often have very large case loads, and the time that can be given to your children will not likely be enough to make these kids readers.



What can you do? First, know what was taught to these children in Grade One. Did the teacher teach explicit sequential phonics? Guided reading to the whole class? What was the teacher's philosophy and methodology? Whatever it was, this method obviously didn't work for these children, so whatever you do must be different and target different modalities.

Next, assess each child's knowledge thoroughly. Discover how many of the Dolch high frequency words the child knows. Mix the alphabet letters on a page and see how many letter sounds the child remembers and can say accurately. Give the child some CVC words with the different short vowels and see if the child is able to blend. Ask the child to read very simple material, gradually becoming more difficult until you find an approximate level. Do not use predictable material - if a child can guess at the words from the pictures or repetition of phrases, you will not see the level accurately. These children may have developed strategies to help them read predictable material, but this skill is not very helpful when they are faced with material that isn't predictable. They have learned a strategy, but not how to actually read. Do a reading analysis, looking at the child's errors and his word attack strategies.

Some of the children in your classroom are likely to be learning disabled. Some studies say that up to 20% of children have some form of a learning disability. That can be 5 or more children in one class! While this may be a high estimate, all studies say that there are more than 10%. There are several different reading disabilities. Children may be visually disabled, so they have difficulty remembering or 'seeing' words. They may be told a word on one line, but when they come to the same word on the next line it will still be unfamiliar. Often these children have reversals in letters and words. These children need to be taught sequential explicit phonics, with training in blending and rules to help them learn to decode. Other children have an auditory disability. They do not hear the sounds in words correctly, and find phonics very difficult - they should still be taught phonics, but it will never be their primary modality. These kids need to be taught a sight word vocabulary, and some need this vocabulary to be specific and sequential. Children need to be taught to their strengths. A few children will have a strength in kinesthetic learning, and will learn best when the teaching has fine and gross motor activities connected to it.

Now you hopefully understand what the children know and you are beginning to find their individual strengths. You will need to teach these children separately in a small group of

no more than 4 or 5. As the majority of LD kids (and children with other problems) have visual modality deficiencies, it is suggested that you teach this group explicit sequential phonics. Begin at the very beginning of *Grade One* again, and lead them through the program learning to blend from the very first letters. Your children will likely go quickly in the beginning, but you will find that soon they will be working more slowly and needing more repetition. Always use the three modalities at every step of the lesson - using the visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses at the same time, so the children see, hear and feel the blending process. Make your lessons fun - teach in a brisk manner, with enthusiasm.

That isn't all that is needed. Your phonics lesson will take up a great part of the time these children will be in the group, and these children need to read orally to follow the lessons. Here is what the Learning Assistant will be pleased to do: send the group to the LA teacher for oral reading each day for at least 15 minutes. Teaching is always best to be done by the classroom teacher, as you can monitor the progress and follow through in the rest of the day, so ask the LA teacher to do the oral reading part.

You will find great improvements as the children go through this every day. By the end of the year some of these children will be reading at grade level and ready to go into *Grade Three* with the other children.

On the same theme.....

Students in *Grade Two* who are still struggling with reading are in danger of being forever behind their peers. These children are at high risk of being functionally illiterate adults - a very scary thought. *Grade Three* teachers rarely go back to teach the basics, and as there is a great amount of reading expected, these children will have great difficulty.



What can you do to help these kids before it is too late? Here are some possibilities:

- First, test the children to see where they have gaps. Test knowledge of the single letter sounds and the short vowel sounds. Test the Dolch list of basic sight words. Do a reading inventory to discover the types of errors in a passage at the child's instructional level.

- Can you discover the child's strength? Every child will learn best through one of the modalities - auditory, visual or kinesthetic. Auditory learners need phonics taught specifically, visual learners need to be taught the sight words, and kinesthetic learners need to print and use physical imprints to learn to read.

- Take a group of these children every day for a month and teach blending short vowel words until they can blend easily.

- Drill and teach the Dolch words, one list/level at a time, until the children have automatic recall of all the lists. These can go home and the parents can help drill the words, too.

- Give these children lots of oral reading practice at their instructional and independent reading levels. These children often don't read in self-selected silent reading time.... they may pretend, but aren't actually reading. Reading to other children is also not satisfactory for these children, as they may feel awkward showing their low skills. These kids need to read to a helpful adult for at least 15 minutes each day - 1/2 an hour would be better. This is where parents who want to help out in the classroom may be helpful, or an excellent use of aides.

- Make sure they are also reading at home every day. Give that child specific material to read at the correct level.

- Search your school for old basal sequential sight word readers, and have the children read through a series, beginning with a level that is easy for them. Teach the vocabulary as needed.

- Have the children re-read material until they can read it fluently.



Lastly, know that you have the responsibility. Even if children have been labelled LD, in most schools there will not be enough Learning Assistance to make huge changes for these kids. There should never be tests read to them or tapes for their reading.... someone should be teaching them what they need. Perhaps one in one thousand children will have such extraordinary difficulties that they cannot learn to read in the classroom.

This isn't easy, but here is where your skill will show. Bright kids learn on their own, soaking up information. The children with problems really need your help, and will test your teaching ability - especially as there often is a different reason for lack of progress for each child.

Teaching Reading in Grade Two

Most Grade Two teachers are faced with a serious problem in the early weeks of the year. We soon discover that there is a wide range of reading skills in the class. Some of the children are reading fairly fluently above the grade level, some are struggling but have some of the needed skills, and then you will likely discover a number of children who are barely reading. They are still working at the mid-grade one level or lower, and the summer vacation has lowered the levels they had at the end of the last school year. What can we do to give every child the help that is needed?

The children who did not do well in Grade One and who come to you with few reading skills need your assistance, and it is always a concern. The first thing to do is to assess these

children and find their approximate reading level. You can use a standardized test for this, the Marie Clay assessments, or use the reading assessment in the assessment chapter of this book. It is not especially accurate, but will give you an idea of how far back you must go to teach each child. If you have a set of basal readers, you can find the approximate expected levels that would be read in *Grade One* and have the child oral read different selections until you understand what he or she knows.



Many teachers are now doing *Guided Reading* lessons. If you have children who have few reading skills and they are being faced with text that is at their frustration level (below 90% word recognition), they will not likely improve their skills very quickly. They need to be taught specific skills at their level, and this is difficult to do in a whole class situation. Grouping your students is quite acceptable, providing you do different lessons with each group. The more variation in lessons, the better. If you use basals, use a different publisher's set. It is helpful to teach concentrated phonics lessons with a large amount of blending practice to the lower students, as they are often missing this skill. They also need to be specifically taught the sight vocabulary.

By the end of *Grade Two* we would like to have all our children with a wide reading vocabulary and to be reading automatically. To be able to read this fluently, the children must have instantaneous recognition of sight words. This means that they should be able to read a vocabulary of more than 500 words without conscious thought of decoding. They should be reading in phrases, reading several words together with one eye movement.

The children with reading difficulties do not remember the reading vocabulary easily, and must see words in isolation, in phrases, in sentences and in a variety of texts and trade books up to fifty times in order to make the reading of that word automatic.

They need to understand phonics and be able to use it to help this recognition. They need to be able to decode simple unfamiliar words. If your lower students are weak in phonics and blending sounds, it really helps to do blending lessons and have daily drill practice blending sounds to form simple words.

The third necessary part of the reading program is printing. A number of your children will be kinesthetic learners and need to print the words and feel the shapes of the letters in order to remember them. Doing a daily printing exercise using the reading vocabulary is helpful for all your students. This is also a productive way for students to be engaged when you have a different group.

Last, but not the least in importance, is practice! Fluency will not come without it. Your lower students need to read aloud to you or another adult every day. It helps if they re-read a passage, or read it after hearing you read it and following the words. Listening to you model good phrasing and expression is helpful. Children who lack reading skills often do not read independently, so to get the needed practice they need to read to an adult. They need to read and practice the skills as much as possible each day.

Most schools have a *Learning Assistance Teacher* (Special Education) who will help you with your lower readers. These teachers, however, are always very busy and can rarely give

the time necessary to supply an adequate complete reading program. It is much more beneficial for this group of children to be taught the skills by you in your classroom so that there is a carry-over of the lessons into other parts of the day. Many teachers do find it helpful if the L.A.T. takes this group for additional oral and directed reading practice. It is important that you give these children a reading lesson each day, using a sequential repetitive program.

Literature Ideas

Choosing the right book

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.

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.

The Goldilocks Method

Is this book just right? Ask yourself these questions.

If your answer is YES, the book is probably:

Too Easy

Have you read it lots of times before?

Do you understand the story very well?

Do you know almost every word?

Can you read it smoothly?

Just Right

Is the book new to you?

Do you understand a lot of the book?

Are there just a few words a page you don't know?

When you read, are some places smooth and some choppy?

Too Hard

Are there more than 5 words on a page you don't know?

Are you confused about what is happening
in most of this book?

When you read, does it sound pretty choppy?



Home Reading Ideas

"In our school the kids take home what we call Book Slips. Each slip has a place for the student's name, three book titles and authors, and a place for a parent signature. If they read a book, they (or the parent) log it and the author on the slip. We are really trying to encourage reading! If they are reading a chapter book, they can log each chapter. Magazines count too. When they have three books logged, they bring in the slip. Now, different teachers then use them differently. In my room I made a paper bookshelf outline on the wall. Each student has a 'book' on the shelf. (It looks like books lined up on a library shelf I use different colours of construction paper.) For each book slip they get to put a sticker on their book spine. (I found some little smiling books.) When they get five stickers, (15 books) they get a new book spine. We are attempting to fill our entire 4 shelf bookshelf. Last year we filled about 2/3 of it and then at the end of the year we figured out how many books that was. I think it came to around 1,300 books. We were impressed!"

"I have a daily folder that goes home. I run off sheets that are the size of the pocket. Each sheet has the days of the week, name of book, number of minutes read, and parent's initials. I staple enough sheets together for the marking period. I expect 100 minutes, I send home a certificate saying that they are in the '100 20 minutes of reading per day for a minimum of 5 days a week. If they meet their minimum of Club'. At the end of the marking period, anyone who has reached their 100 minutes every week gets a pizza party. This works really well for me. Before I did the 100 Club, I had about 25-35% participation. Now I have about 90% success."

"I have my students read 300 minutes a month outside of school. That is a mere 10 minutes a night or 20 minutes for 15 nights! I send home a calendar for families to tally up the minutes read. This makes a great visual to hang on refrigerator to remind families. At the end of the month, they bring calendar in and I send home a new calendar for next month. It has worked for me!"

Comment from Dr. Bruce Murray, the Reading Genie: "I like the idea of giving books as rewards. It recognizes the reader's progress and says, 'Books are so valuable that I'm giving you a book as a reward.' If you give a pizza as a reward, it says, 'Books are not so valuable, so if you read one, I'll give you something really good, pizza.' No one persuaded us to like pizza by giving us something else (candy? ice cream?) if we would just buckle down and eat our pizza. They provided pizza and modeled how delicious it is. We need to do the same with reading."



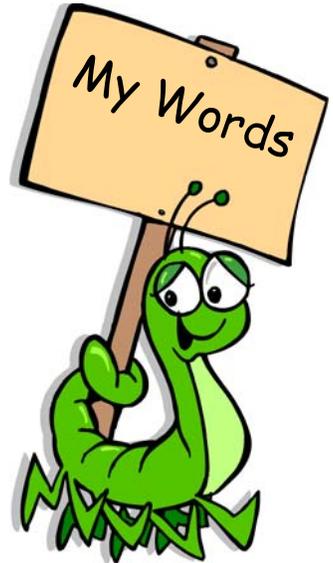
Teaching Reading Vocabulary

Vocabulary Words

"Discuss the vocabulary words with the class, using your usual strategies. The next day, write the words on flashcard-sized pieces of construction paper. Attach string long enough to go around the students' necks (and over their heads!).

Pass the words out to students and have them wear the words. At any time during the morning, you might ask a child to pronounce the word, use it in a sentence, tell the class what it means, or whatever activity you wish. If the child does so correctly, they could get a prize or a 'Word Wizard' certificate. During the morning, if you don't have enough for all children, have children who have been asked pass the word to another child to wear. Be sure to stop often in your teaching time to ask a child for some aspect of the word.

We actually did this with some advanced words (quagmire, monkey, drabble, draconian, etc.) and enjoyed ourselves, as well as found ourselves challenged!"



Vocabulary Games

"I play a game with vocabulary words. I write all of the vocabulary words on index cards. I walk around the room behind the students (I hum a piece of classical music - asking if anyone knows the title or composer - good way to get some music education in with vocabulary practice) Then I stop behind the 'victim'. They beg to be the victim! I put a word above their heads so they can't see and show the rest of the class the word. The 'victim' calls on someone to give the definition of the word on top of their head. The victim then guesses the word and gives a sentence using the word correctly. This is repeated until I have gone through all of the vocabulary words at least once - hard words or words with multiple meanings are shown several times. The kids LOVE this game!"

"I play vocabulary tic tac toe. I draw a huge tic tac toe on the board and write their vocabulary words. Then I make two teams and they play tic tac toe. They play one player at a time. The player says a word and tells its meaning. If they can do it they come to the chalkboard and draw an X or an O in the spot where the word is. If not their team loses a turn and the next team gets to try. It's great fun, and they really learn the words! We also play vocabulary hangman with similar rules."

Teaching Sight Vocabulary

"Discuss the vocabulary words with the class, using your usual strategies. The next day, write the words on pieces of construction paper about 2 x 8. Attach string long enough to go around the students' necks (and over their heads!). Pass the words out to students and have them wear the words. At any time during the morning, you might ask a child to pronounce the word, use it in a sentence, tell the class what it means, or whatever activity you wish. If you don't have enough for all children, have children who have been asked pass the word to another child to wear.



You can use some advanced vocabulary, as long as the children understand the meaning. Once they understand how to do this and are able to answer questions about their words, ask a visitor to come into the classroom and see if he/she can 'stump' a child!"

"Rather than randomly selected words 'at the grade level', present words in related groups. Examples: present words about feelings, and make a poster with the students, with different words to describe being 'afraid' or 'happy'. Students can discuss the degrees of emotion - is 'terrified' more than 'nervous' or 'anxious'? 'ecstatic' better than 'pleased'? - and the differences between the words - how is 'snicker' different from 'guffaw', 'terrified' different from 'horrified'? Another option is to study word parts: have the students learn that 'ject' means 'throw', and then tackle 'projectile', 'reject' and 'trajectory'."

"Show pictures that demonstrate the meaning of a word. Have students draw and label something illustrating the meaning of the word. This is not limited to concrete nouns - a **grim** expression, a **contemplative** person or absurd **conduct** can also be drawn. The labels explain how the word and drawing fit. Drawing skills are not important; stick figures with accurate labels can succinctly express an idea as well as finely crafted caricatures. Flashcards can be made more meaningful with illustrations, as well. Show different ways that the idea is expressed and having the students discover what makes them valid illustrations - for instance, could news be **grim**? How?"

"Use cloze exercises before you expect the students to use the words in sentences themselves. This is also a good way to test students, or to make the transition between working with the definitions available and recalling what the words mean on their own. Have a word bank with five vocabulary words and five sentences with blanks, and have the students decide which word goes in which blank. Your challenge will be constructing sentences which only match with one word, so small groups of words are better. These exercises are also opportunities for you to give a wider scope to a word, and discuss how that word fits into a sentence that the students might not have considered."

Vocabulary Games

"I know a game called 'Fly Swatter'. You put a scattered bunch of vocabulary words on the chalkboard. You can write the words in a haphazard manner with chalk, or write the words on index cards and tape them all over. Give two students fly swatters to hold. Read off the definition of a vocabulary word and the first person to swat it with the fly swatter gets to remain standing to compete against another student. If you don't have fly swatters the kids can use their hands, too!"

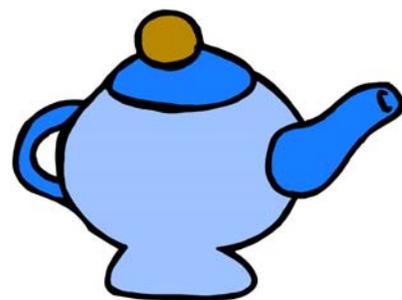
"We've been doing a little game for vocabulary with tap lights. We bought some of the tap lights (you can get them in sports shapes, stars, moons, etc.) and have students come up individually, in pairs, or in small groups. We give students a definition and the first one to recognize the word taps the light and gives the word. Of course you can also give the word and ask students to use it in a sentence. The kids enjoy doing this and get very excited."

"'Inside/Outside Circles' is another good way to reinforce vocabulary. Students have cards with a word/definition. They form two circles, one inside the other, then turn and face one another. Teacher calls out 'inside' or 'outside' and that circle gives their partner the word (or the definition) and the partner has to come up with the definition (or the word). The circles then rotate/stop to make new matchings of pairs and you repeat the process. Students will practice the same word more than once. It's a blast!"

Teapot

"This is an old game that may be used with the word wall words or vocabulary you wish to re-enforce. One student leaves the room and the class comes up with a word (noun) that is to be the secret word. Once the word is decided, the student is asked to return to the classroom and sits in a chair at the front of the room. Then each student has to say a sentence using the word 'Teapot' in his/her sentence instead of the secret word. If the student cannot guess what the 'Teapot' is, the students are encouraged to give easier clues as the game progresses, until the student guesses the 'Teapot' word. The last student to give a sentence about 'Teapot' before it is correctly guessed is the next one to leave the room when a new 'teapot' word is chosen.

I tried out the new (or rather old!) game and wondered if it would work. The first student left the room and his classmates excitedly came up with a word. I do not recall what the word was, yet I do recall the excitement with which they played the game until he guessed the 'Teapot' and the next student left the room. From that moment on, they were enthralled. Every day, at the end of the class, they requested a few minutes of 'Teapot' and I obliged, soon realizing that this was one way of getting them interested in thinking of words and how



they can be used.

I have even used 'Teapot' outside of the classroom, while driving with my boisterous little nephews and niece, who now insist, every time they climb into a car with me, that we play. It sounds something like this ... 'I like teapot.' 'Ummm ... chocolate.' 'No. I would like to go up the Teapot.' 'C.N. Tower!' 'Yes.' 'Now it's my turn to think of a teapot!' The most exciting time we played the game, however, was when the 'Teapot' was actually a teapot!"

More Reading Ideas

Celebrate a Book!

"At our school we do something called 'Celebrate a Book'. The students read a book, then do some type of project to show the class. As they're showing their project they tell about the book. Depending on how much information they give, I may ask them clarifying questions to make sure they comprehended the book fully. My students love it. They do posters, mini-books, dioramas, paintings, clay figures, reports, poems, songs, etc. They can do whatever they want, and it's interesting for me and a lot less work. They are required to do 25 at my school, but you don't even have to set a limit. I have a poster up and they put up a sticker for each one they did that day (several of mine bring in many at one time!)."



Read Around Canada

"I run the following program in my classroom. The aim is to encourage children to read (and it even gets reluctant readers on board) and it helps them to learn about Canada.

"Every time a child completes a book they bring it to me and I check how many pages have been read. For every two pages they earn 1 kilometre. These kilometres accumulate and enable them to 'travel' around the country.

For example, if a children reads 100 pages they will travel 50 kilometres and this continues until they reach a nearby town. It is very easy to adapt, e.g. change the country in the title; award kilometres for more or less reading (i.e. 1 kilometre per page/chapter, etc); have them travel around the world."

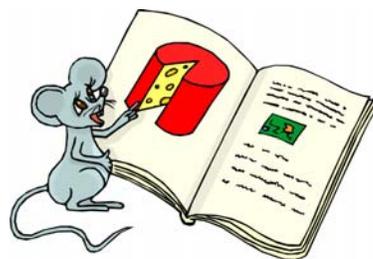
Prediction

Prediction is a very useful reading skill! This activity can be used with any book, although ones which are split into chapters (which have 'cliff-hanger' endings) may be more suitable. It can be organized a number of different ways:

1. Most teachers read a book to the class, and this is an ideal opportunity for the children to predict. When you reach the end of a chapter (or an exciting part in the story), stop reading and discuss what might come next. Ask the children to justify their ideas (i.e. why do they think that? have they based their ideas on the story so far?). The children could write down their ideas, so that they can refer back to them later, if you wish. Continue reading, and discuss the children's predictions. Were they correct?
2. Working in small groups, ask the children to read a story together. At the end of each chapter, they should discuss the story so far, and predict what they think will happen next (based on their reading so far). They should then read the next chapter, and look back at their predictions. Were they correct? Before reading on, they should refine their predictions in the light of what they have just read. Do they still think the same thing is going to happen? This process should be repeated at the end of each chapter, until the children reach the end of the book, when they can discuss the story itself, and their predicting skills.
3. The above activity can also be carried out individually, with each child making short notes about what they think will happen next, and then reading on.

Home Reading

"I do my own system since there isn't a school-wide program. I call it 'Let's Read'. Basically, it is an voluntary program at the beginning of the year and by the end is part of their homework. I try to get the students to either read aloud or be read to for 15 - 20 minutes /week. Many do much more than that. In the past I have had the parents fill out a Reading Log with the name of the book, number of minutes, date, and their signature. Then I total the minutes weekly and each time the student reaches 30 minutes they get a sticker on their individual chart. When their whole chart is filled, they get a certificate and a prize. This year to make it easier for the parents, I have made monthly calendars and they will just have to record the minutes on the date and initial it for the student to get credit. As the year goes on I count silent reading as well. I let them choose the books themselves but I offer some guidelines. It really improves their reading."



The Best Thing in the World (Following page)

This is a story using all the Dolch words. Use it as a vocabulary test - if a child can read all the words in this story, you know that they have the basic sight word vocabulary. You can also use it as a test for fluency. This passage contains all of the 220 Dolch Basic Sight Words. There are 675 words in the story.

The Best Thing In The World

Once upon a time, there were four brothers who lived in a far away land. Their father was an old king. One day he said, "I will not live long now. Today you must start out into the world. In a year, bring back the best thing you have found. The one who can pick the best thing shall be the new king."

The first brother said, "I will look in every city or town. I will buy the best thing I can for my father."

The next two brothers said, "We will both go on fast ships over the sea. We will find something better."

The last brother said, "I am going to ask the people here in our own land to tell me the best thing." The other three brothers began to laugh.

"Then you will never be king!" they said.

The last brother started off. When he had gone about six miles, he met a man. "What do you carry in those big bags?" he asked.

"The best thing in the world," said the man. "These are full of the good nuts which fall from my five nut trees."

"I don't think that would work," said the brother to himself, "I must try again." The brother went on another seven miles. He found a small brown bird. It had been hurt, so he put it in his coat where it could keep warm. As he went on, he saw a little girl crying. He ran to meet her. "Why are you crying?" he asked.

"I want to get some water from the well," she said. "We use so much. We drink cold water. We wash the clothes clean with hot water. But I do not know how to pull it up. Please show me."

The brother said, "Hold this bird and I will help you. It does not fly around any more because it got its wing hurt."

"Thank you. What a pretty bird!" she said. "I wish you would give it to me. If you will let me keep it, I will always be very kind to it. I will take care of it myself. I will make it grow well again."

"Yes, you may have it," said the brother. So he gave her the bird and went on.

At night, he went to sleep under a round yellow haystack. When it was light again he walked on. Every day he would walk eight or ten miles. He asked the people about the best thing in the world. Some said it was best to sing. Some said it was best to run and jump and play. Some said the green grass was best. Some liked the red and blue and white flowers best. One man said the best thing was to ride a black horse.

He always stopped to help people who needed it. Soon he made many friends. All the

people began to like him. They would say, "See? There goes the king's son. He would be just the right kind of king for us."

Every door was open to him. The people would call to him to stop. They would ask him to come and eat with them. After he ate, he would sit down and read to the children. After he read, he showed them how to draw and write.

Months went by. He still had no beautiful thing to take to his father. Just before the year was done, he went home again. The time came when the king called his sons together.

"What did you bring?" He asked them all.

The other brothers had many beautiful things.

"And what did you bring?" said the king to the last brother.

"This is too funny!" said the other brothers. "He has nothing!"

But the king was kind to the last brother. "What did you bring me?" he asked again.

"I bring only the friendship of your people," said the last brother.

"That is the best thing!" cried his father. "You shall be the new king."

The End



Caught You Reading!

"I took several pictures of my kids reading. I really tried to catch them reading things other than books. In the hall reading posters, reading the computer, reading their stories to others classes, reading directions to a game, directions on a work page, post-cards, pen pal letters, lunch menu, readers theater, reading to the principal, etc. I put these on a bulletin board (in the hall) with the caption 'I Got Caught Reading!'



"Once a week we do 'Popcorn Reading', sometimes whole class, sometimes in teams. Here's how it goes: every child must have a copy of the same book/story. One child begins to read, he reads 1-3 paragraphs (whatever he wishes), when he finishes he says 'Popcorn to... (Joe, Jane)' The person named must keep reading another 1-3 paragraphs, and so on. My children have always enjoyed doing this. Also, it makes sure they are all paying attention."

"During SSR my students select books to read from the tub on their table. The tubs are filled with all sorts of reading material, at all different levels. A few items that the students really like are reading the basal at that time. (I rarely use it for instruction, so they are excited to read from it at SSR). They love going back and reading all the books I have used for guided/shared reading. These are books they have 'mastered' and feel very confident reading. My students also love nonfiction books and they often put their weekly library book into the tub. Lots of choices! I rotate the tubs each week. Also, one table a day has the choice of going to the book area and selecting books from the theme tubs or books from the shelf. This has worked really well in my classroom."

The 'Main Idea'

"I use the following strategy. First I read a known book so that the students already know the text and don't have to focus on the 'words'. Then I ask what happened in the story (retell). Go in sequential order and list it on chart paper. It can fill the whole paper.

"Then we find the main idea by doing the following:

Who (was in the story)

What (what was the problem or situation)

But (something happened, what interfered?)

So (the conclusion)

Then have the children make a sentence or 2 at most for the summary. Have the children look at the two charts to see what the difference is."

"I write the comprehension questions down, and the kids have to copy them (I use this as a handwriting grade), and then they have to go back into their story and find the exact page where the answer is. After the question on their paper, I have them write the page number where they found the answer."

Using the Newspaper

"We get the paper in each week. Some weeks I lift out an article and we put it on the overhead. We then use comprehension strategies as we read it together. Some days, I copy comics that are good springboards for mini-lessons. There was one recently with Dennis the Menace that helped teach exclamation points and periods. There was also some that I used to model my thinking with a think aloud. You can do connections as well.



"We also have a regular kids section in our paper. There are good articles some weeks that go home for homework. You can have the kids find and highlight key content words and use context to define. You can model using words from a question to write an answer by having them answer questions about the article they read. I also taught them to highlight where they found the answer - a good test taking strategy.

"My class also created a class newsletter modelled after the kids section of the paper. It goes home 2 times a month. They write the articles. We had a Dear Abby column, we had a word search, ask ___ with science content questions, etc. The possibilities are endless.

Mapping a Story

"Sometimes after reading a story in our reading text, I will break the kids into groups of 3 or 4.....and each group has to draw and write about the setting, main characters, plot or problem, and ending/solution. The kids like to do this. They sit on the floor and discuss who is going to draw what part. They automatically begin discussing the story, and also correct each other. When they are finished drawing and writing a couple of sentences about their part, I give them a large sheet of coloured butcher paper, and they mount their pictures in order, label them, write the title of the story and author, make a border of associated pictures around the poster, and sign their names to the poster. Then I hang each poster on the wall, and the groups come up, one at a time, and orally present their poster. I give them a pointer stick to point out their pictures and they read and discuss their drawings in front of the class. They love to do this. Try it.....it will be a big hit!"

A 'Just Right' Book

Since reading is all about understanding, we want to be sure that our students are reading manageable text and understanding what they read. Here is a list to help the children find a "Just Right" book.

It feels smooth.
It is calm; it doesn't make you feel nervous.
It only has a few tricky words.
You know what to do in the 'tricky spots'.

It makes sense.
You really understand it.

R - E - A - D (sung to the tune of YMCA)

Here at... here at our great school
We say reading... reading is super cool!
And we love it... found how fun it can be
When we go to the library

To find one... find a book just for you
This will be more... fun than you ever knew
You'll be reading, never putting it down
It's the hottest thing in our town

X X X X X

We grab our books and we just R - E - A - D
Our favourite thing here is to R - E - A - D
Beverly Cleary is neat
Eric Carle can't be beat
There's an author out there for you

Just grab a book and we will R - E - A - D
Our favourite thing here is to R - E - A - D
Hey now Junie B. is so cute,
Marvin Redpost's a hoot
They make you want to read them again

We love it when we R - E - A - D
It's really fun when we just R - E - A - D
And when we find success
By doing great on our test
We know we gotta do it again



Comprehension and Fluency

How do you help students read with comprehension? A number of studies have shown that reading fluency is highly related to reading comprehension.

Research has shown three instructional principles to support fluency:

Repeated reading

Reading in manageable text (text the child can read with at least 95% accuracy)

Hearing good models.

"My children go 'shopping' for books to put into a baggie. They keep these books for a week. I let the children take their Guided Reading books when we have finished with them. That's one way I always have a variety of books on their level. They keep their books in their Reading Folders and can read these during DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read), but they can also choose three books of interest from our Book Center in my room. The children are allowed to keep 5 Guided Reading books in their folders."

Cause and Effect

"Capitalize on things that happen! 'I think I see a cause and effect!'...then write it in sentence form on the board. Children seem to learn best when it is about them.

For example: Cause: Frank got to school late. Effect: He will have to _____.

Cause: It is raining outside. Effect: We will have inside recess.

By identifying cause and effect for a week or so like this helps them see how one thing causes another."

Fluency Instruction

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word and their oral reading is choppy and plodding.

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

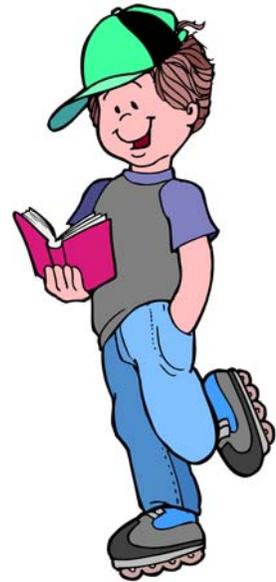
More fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on comprehension.

Less fluent readers must focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. Therefore, they have little attention left for comprehending the text.

Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. At the earliest stage of reading development, students' oral reading is slow and laboured because students are just learning to 'break the code' - to attach sounds to letters and to blend letter sounds into recognizable words. Even when students recognize many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless, not fluent. To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include phrases and clauses. Readers must know to pause appropriately within and at the ends of sentences and when to change emphasis and tone. A reader who lacks fluency may read, probably in a monotone as if it were a list of words rather than a connected text, pausing at inappropriate places.

Fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. Fluency changes, depending on what readers are reading, their familiarity with the words, and the amount of their practice with reading text. Even very skilled readers may read in a slow, laboured manner when reading texts with many unfamiliar words or topics.

A recent large-scale study found a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension. Students who scored lower on measures of fluency also scored lower on measures of comprehension, suggesting that fluency is a neglected reading skill in many



classrooms, affecting many students' reading comprehension.

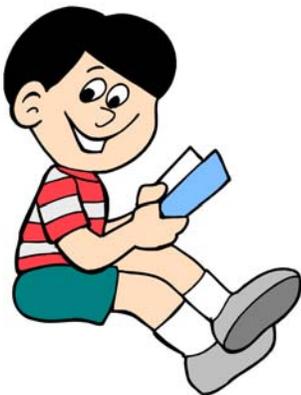
Researchers have investigated two major instructional approaches related to fluency. In the first approach, repeated and monitored oral reading (commonly called 'repeated reading'), students read passages aloud several times and received guidance and feedback from the teacher. In the second approach, independent silent reading, students are encouraged to read extensively on their own. Key findings from the research on fluency instruction include the following conclusions that are of particular interest and value to classroom teachers.

Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement.

Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency. To a lesser but still considerable extent, repeated oral reading also improves reading comprehension. Students should read and reread a text a certain number of times or until a certain level of fluency is reached. Four re-readings are sufficient for most students.

No research evidence is available currently to confirm that instructional time spent on silent, independent reading with minimal guidance and feedback improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement for children who are not yet reading fluently.

Reading Fluently With Expression



Students need to be able to read fluently and proficiently in order to be able to read the amount of material that is given to them in a given amount of time. If a student is a slow reader, chances are they are going to have a difficult time being able to keep up with their other classmates. Fluency may be practiced. Reading with expression adds to the fluency and comprehension of the material, and makes oral reading a pleasure for the listeners.

Try these exercises to improve your students' fluency.

1. First, read some passages from a story they have been reading. As you read the first passage model how to read quickly and smoothly. Then model reading that is slow and choppy. After each passage allow time for the children to discuss the different ways the passages were read. Which one did they enjoy? Have the students pair up (be sure

that one partner is at a higher reading level than the other.) In the pairs, the students take turns reading the story to one another, practicing reading as fluently as possible. Then tell the students that they are going to read the story again, but this time they are going to be timed on their reading. Model for them how fast fluent readers read and how they should all work on reading at a quicker pace.

2. Have the children watch the clock and time you reading silently for one minute. During this time read as many words as you can. When the time is up, the children will tell you when to stop. Show them the number of pages and/or paragraphs that you were able to read during the given time. Now have them do the same thing, but give them 2 minutes to read. Discuss honesty and tell them that the score is private. Mark where they ended.

Pass out graphs to students and teach them how to label them and use them. Label the left side counting by 2's from the bottom upwards. This side will be where they count the number of lines (or pages, depending on the book and the level) that they read. The bottom numbers will be the amount of times they read the material. Fill in the graph for the first reading. Then do 3 more timed readings of the same material, filling the graph each time.

To make sure that the students are comprehending what they have read and not just flipping pages, have them write down everything that they remembered after each trial. Hopefully they will remember more and more each time as well as get further in their reading during each trial.

Show them how their graph should look if they were improving each time. Go around the room and look at the students' graphs so you can see how they are doing.

3. Discuss what kind of punctuation marks are at the end of a sentence. Elicit the different punctuation marks, such as the question mark, the period, and the exclamation mark. Talk about the expressions that go with each punctuation mark. Model a sentence using each punctuation mark to the class. 'What a beautiful day!' is an example of a sentence with an exclamation point. 'Welcome to the class.' uses the period at the end, and 'May I have something to eat?' uses the question mark. Have the children come up with examples and talk about them.

Model reading a passage looking for the punctuation to help add expression to the reading.

Divide the students into pairs. Practice reading with expression.

As a follow up activity the students can write their own short story. The story will need to have some of the different punctuation marks.



Developing Reading Fluency

Some children will enter Grade Two reading fluently, but in most cases this desirable result will appear during the year. Children who are not reading fairly fluently by the end of Grade Two will have great difficulty with the work in the third grade.

What is fluent reading?

Children need to be able to decode and recognize words without conscious thought. They must have instant automatic recall of at least 95% of the words in the reading material. But fluency is more than that. The child needs to be able to look ahead so that he can put words into meaningful phrases and word groups so that the text flows. The instant recall of 250 to 300 basic words make up the foundation of fluent reading, and decoding skills are necessary to add additional words to this base. Many districts say that a child should be reading at least 80 words per minute by the end of Grade Two.

Why is fluency important?

Without the instant word recall and correct phrasing the text is just a tangle of words. If the reading is halting and choppy, much of the comprehension will be lost. Fluency allows readers to focus on the meaning in text.

How can we develop fluency?

1. Read Suitable Material.

Make sure the child is reading material at his independent reading level. If the child knows 95% or more of the words the material is at the independent level. Teach new words and skills at the 90 to 95% word recall level. Below 90% the material will be frustrating to the child.

2. Teach the Missing Vocabulary

If the child is not yet able to recognize the basic words, they must be taught and then practiced.

3. Model Fluent Reading

In order to read fluently, students must first hear and understand what fluent reading sounds like. From there, they will be more likely to transfer those experiences into their own reading. Read aloud to them, often and with expression.

Following a read-aloud session, ask your students: 'After listening to how I read, can you tell me what I did that is like what good readers do?'



4. Do Repeated Readings

Have the students practice reading short passages aloud, repeating several times until it is fluent. Model the passage, if necessary. Discuss reading behaviours such as phrasing (the ability to read several associated words together in one breath), rate (the speed at which we read), intonation (the emphasis we give to particular words or phrases) and expression.

Ask the student to do 'echo reading' in which you read a sentence and the student repeats the line back to you. You can do this with a small group as well as individually.

5. Promote Phrased Reading

Fluency involves reading phrases seamlessly, as opposed to word by word. Show students how good readers cluster portions of text rather than saying each word separately. Make sentence strips with phrases and have students read the phrases together.

6. Oral Reading Practice

Give your non-fluent readers a chance to oral read each day. The more time you can provide, the more useful the strategy. Have the child read to you, and then to other adults for as much time as can be provided.

7. **Whole word error correction** is found to be more effective than phonic prompts to encourage fluency. Re-read the sentence.

8. Neurological Impress

Read a story aloud simultaneously. As above, make sure the passage is at the child's independent reading level. Sit slightly behind the student holding the book in front of the child so that you speak toward his dominant ear. Read together in 'one voice' with the teacher moving along the line of print. The passage should be read slightly beyond the student's normal rate so attention is paid to whole words, phrases and sentences.

9. **Listening to the teacher read** a passage and then having the child read will help with fluency.

10. Do Reader's Theatre

Because reader's theatre is an oral performance of a script, it is one of the best ways to promote fluency. In the exercise, meaning is conveyed through expression and intonation. The children do not memorize the script. Give each student a copy of the script, and read it aloud as you would any other piece of literature. After your read-aloud, do an echo read and a choral read of the script to involve the entire class. Once the class has had enough practice, choose students to read the various parts. You can put together a few simple props and costumes, and invite other classes to attend the performance. Have the readers stand, or sit on stools, in front of the room and face the audience.

11. **Practice!** The best way to promote fluency is through extensive practice. Once the basic skills of word recognition and decoding are in place, practice is necessary. The more practice, the sooner the fluency will appear.



Reading Fluency

What is reading fluency?

When you or I read, it is an unconscious process. We take in perhaps five words in each eye movement, and each movement takes only a fraction of a second. Because the actual 'reading' is an unconscious process, the brain is free to absorb the content. Occasionally we will stop when we come to an unfamiliar word or to re-read a passage, but generally we read automatically.

A fluent reader reads in meaningful phrases. He or she will be able to scan the text to group the words in these phrases, and read them as one unit. A fluent reader will be able to read with expression.

Many children gain this skill in *Grade Two*. They will now be able to read simple material fluently. But you will likely have a number of children who are not yet to this point. Some of these kids may have a variety of learning disabilities, or be slow learners. Some may simply be lacking necessary skills. If you have children who are not to this point at this time of year and do not seem close to reading fluently, this can be very serious for them. Kids who are not reading fluently by the end of *Grade Two* will have great difficulties in *Grade Three*, where reading becomes more about comprehension and content and the passages are so much more difficult.

Why is a child not reading fluently?

The child who is not reading fluently will be lacking some of the necessary skills. Make notes to answer the following questions:



Phonetic Skills

- Does the child know all the consonant sounds and consonant blends and digraphs?
- Does he know the sounds of the short vowels?
- Can he blend sounds to form words?

These are *Grade One* skills, but some children have either not been taught these skills so that they can blend short words easily or they may have an auditory disability. This prevents them from hearing the sounds correctly and makes it difficult for them to reproduce the sounds. These children will likely not be able to spell short vowel CVC words accurately. Without these simple word attack skills unfamiliar text will be very difficult. The children will only be comfortable reading words that they have learned by sight, or text that has been memorized (and this is little help when faced with unfamiliar words on different text).

Some children learn these basic phonetic skills and how to apply them as they learn to read without direct teaching, but many do not. In order to read fluently, they must not only know the basic sounds, but be able to blend them automatically. If you have children who do not know these basic phonetic skills, they need to have systematic and explicit lessons and learn these skills.

Sight Word Skills

- Does the child recognize the basic non-phonetic sight words?
- How many of the Dolch words can he read?

As adults, we read using a combination of word memory and phonics. Children need many sight words in order to read fluently. Some children learn these easily, but others need direct and explicit teaching in order to use these words automatically.



Other Questions

- Is the child getting enough reading practice? If the child has the phonics and sight word skills above, then he/she will need great amounts of practice in order for reading to become automatic.
- Could the child have a physical problem that makes reading difficult? Vision problems are the most common - if the child's eyesight is poor then reading will be affected. Auditory problems may be caused by hearing loss.
- Are there emotional problems that could be causing learning problems? Children may have learning problems when they are troubled or have some mental illness.
- Could the child have a learning disability that prevents him from reading well? As many as 1 in 5 children may have some learning disability. Some children have visual disabilities, some auditory, and some kinesthetic. Make sure you understand the symptoms of each. These children need specific teaching so they can learn to read.

What can we do to promote fluency?

In general, the answer is to read and re-read in text that is at the child's instructional to independent reading level - 90 to 95% word recognition. Decode unknown words rather than guessing from context and give the child interesting material to keep up the interest level.

There are two general approaches to improving fluency. The direct approach involves modelling and practice with repeated reading under time pressure. The indirect approach involves encouraging children to read voluntarily in their free time.

Repeated readings

We often restrict reading lessons to new material. Who could learn a musical instrument by never repeating pieces until they could be played in rhythm, up to tempo, with musical expression? In repeated reading, children work on reading as they would work at playing an instrument: they continue working with each text until it is fluent. Use a passage of 100 words or so at the instructional level. Unknown words should be decodable, not predictable.

You can graph how fast students read in one minute. Graphing is motivating because it makes progress evident. Emphasize speed and accuracy. Set a reachable but challenging goal, e.g., 85 words per minute. Have the student read orally for 1 minute. Count the number of words read (subtract errors) and graph the result.

Use check sheets for partner readings. With a class of children, pair up readers to respond to one another. Begin by explaining what you'll be listening for by modelling fluent and not so fluent reading. For example, show the difference between smooth and choppy reading. Show how expressive readers make their voices go higher and lower, faster and slower, louder and softer. In each pair, students take turns being the reader and the listener. The reader reads a selection three times. The listener gives a report after the 2nd and 3rd readings. All reports must be complimentary. No criticism or advice is allowed.

Voluntary reading

Sustained silent reading (SSR, USSR, DEAR, Drop Everything And Read) gives children a daily opportunity to read and discover the pleasure of reading. Each student chooses a book or magazine, and the entire class reads for a set period of time each day. SSR has been shown to lead to more positive attitudes toward reading. In addition, the use of peer discussion groups with SSR leads to gains in reading achievement.

The problem with SSR comes when the low readers do not actually read. Make sure they choose books that are at their independent reading level. Watch these children, and make sure that they are not just looking at pictures. If a child doesn't read in this time, perhaps he could read to you.

There are three rules for SSR:

- a. **Everybody reads.**
- b. **There are to be no interruptions during USSR. The U is for uninterrupted.**
- c. **No one will be asked to report what they have read. It is essential that students feel that this is a period of free reading, with the emphasis on reading for enjoyment.**

You need a plentiful supply of interesting books that have been levelled. Children should choose books that are at their reading level or lower. To promote fluency, ease of reading is important. Unless the child is a superior reader, difficult non-fiction books should not be used in this time.

Introduce new books at different levels so the children will be eager to read them.



The 4-Blocks Framework

The Four Blocks framework represents four different approaches to teach literacy. The blocks are *Guided Reading*, *Self-Selected Reading*, *Writing*, and *Working with Words*. Each of these blocks must be taught every day, each block lasting approximately 40 minutes.

Each block has an outline that must be followed as closely as possible.

Guided Reading:

If you follow the writings of Patricia Cunningham, guided reading is taught to the whole class. Fountas and Pinnell advocate ability grouping in this block, to target the needs of the different levels.

Part One - the teacher introduces a book or story with multiple copies. This can be a basal reader or trade books.

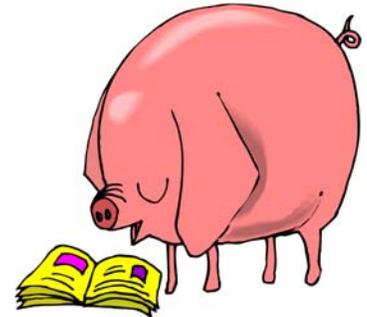
- builds students' prior knowledge
- leads a shared, choral, or echo reading
- discusses key vocabulary in context of story
- other identified needs

Part Two - 15 - 20 minutes. Reading of text

- individual reading
- small groups
- partners

Part Three - 5 - 10 minutes - The teacher leads the closing activity

- discussion
- acting out the story
- writing in response to the story
- other related activities



Self-Selected Reading:

This is a time when children read materials they personally have selected from a tub of books at the correct level. The teacher starts by modeling reading and introducing children to a variety of texts during the read aloud part of the lesson. The read aloud is followed by an opportunity for students to read individually on books at their independent reading level. While the students are reading the teacher holds conferences with individual children about what they are reading and how they are reading. The Block concludes with a short time for students to share what they have read with others.

- Teacher reads aloud to students
- Variety of levels, topics, and authors are selected
- Students read books of their own choosing
- Teacher holds conferences with 1/5 of the students
- The students share what they have read

Working With Words:

The children learn to read and spell high-frequency words and learn the patterns which allow them to read and spell lots of other words. Each day the teacher leads a whole group routine for the introduction and practice of five words selected for the week. An On-the-Back activity utilizes the remaining time.

Start the Words Block each day with the five words selected for the week from the Word Wall list. Use a sentence or other clue to bring meaning to the word being focused on. Use a cheer to spelling the word aloud. (Use 3 to 4 cheers each day). In seat - clap, snap, drum, tap, etc. Standing up - Blast Off, Lumberjack, Chalkboard, Pitch, etc.

Have the children write each word on a piece of paper. Handwriting instruction may be done during this time. Do an on-the-back activity during the remaining time.

Each day children learn how to use word patterns to read and spell using a wide variety of activities available for use during the second part of the Words Block.

There is more on this block in the Phonics section of this book.



Writing:

The teacher models the writing process. He/She models the things writers do, including: selecting a topic, spelling troublesome words, editing and publishing work, and the elements of focused/process writing.

The children practice the writing process. They learn and practice writing conventions. They apply everything they learned in the other three blocks and build confidence as a writer. The students write on a wide variety of topics Teacher conferences with five to six students on an individual basis. During the last five minutes students are allowed to continue writing or to illustrate the work.

Selected students share their work and answer questions.

There is more on this block in the Writing section of this book.

The Guided Reading Lesson

"At our school, we do a running record on each child to find out which level at which he/she is reading. Once I know the levels, I group the children. I take more running records as the year progresses (each reporting period or when I feel a child has improved or is finding our guided reading session too difficult). There is a question of how many children to have in a group - the fewer the groups the less individualized the lessons but the groups get longer and more frequent lessons, and the more groups the less time the groups get, but the lessons can be more directed to the level and the skills needed.

Once we have done a book talk, I have them whisper read. I get around to each person to hear them read. They often have a highlighter with them to highlight words they don't know (if they are using a photocopied book of their own).

We discuss the story - the main characters, setting, plot, etc. Then we discuss the vocabulary and discuss the interesting and difficult words.

Then I do a mini-lesson that is the same focus as all of my other groups. The lesson might be a cloze activity, answering questions in full sentences, word-parts, descriptive and action words, rhyming words, etc. This way the children are all doing the same skill, but at their instructional level of reading. After I work with a group on this mini lesson, the group goes to the next centre which is a follow-up of the min-lesson and the story at their level. My guided reading is part of my literacy centre activities, and the children rotate through the centres and the guided reading group. The other centres are: journal writing, computer, reading logs, follow-up to story, spelling, writing on a specific topic (story writing or picture prompts) I'm still working on expectations during these centres so that I am not interrupted during a guided reading lesson and to keep everyone on task."

A Lesson Plan for Guided Reading

Grade Level: _____ Day: _____ Date: _____

Selection: _____

Pages to be Covered: _____ Genre: _____

Segment 1: Pre-Reading

Activating Prior Knowledge:

Vocabulary:

Method of Introducing Words:

Focus of Comprehension Mini-Lesson:

Method of Instruction of Mini-Lesson:

Purpose for Reading:

Prediction(s) for Reading:

Segment 2: During Reading

Teacher Read-Aloud _____ Audio Tape _____ Small Group _____

Whole Group _____ (choral reading) Book Club _____ Reading Circles _____

Paired _____ Independent _____ Other _____

Segment 3: After Reading

Closure Activity:

Teachers' Ideas About Guided Reading

After the teacher has a lesson on some reading strategy the children need, the reading part of the lesson can consist of several of the following:

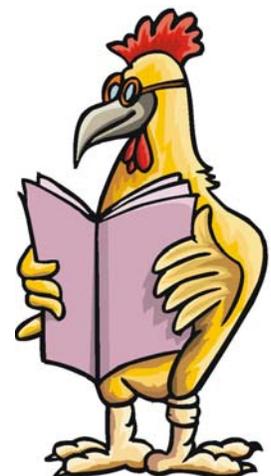
The teacher reads aloud and then the children read the same passage, page or story, shared reading, whole class reading, small group reading, echo reading for fluency, partner reading or independent reading. These rank in order from the highest teacher support to the lowest teacher support.

Setting a purpose for reading is very important. It gives the students a focus. You can give each student a sticky note and tell him or her to place it in their text as they are reading to identify a very important point. You can also give students a sticky note with 4-5 cuts in it (just make cuts up to the sticky part before handing them to students). Students rip the strip the rest of the way when they are ready to use it. They can identify characters, setting, etc.

"I didn't find the 4-Blocks Guided Reading very useful when I was teaching Grade 1, but it's working much better with Grade 2. I don't follow it that closely. I sort of combine the GR block and the independent reading block and throw in some Fountas and Pinnel. I have levelled all my books and so tell the kids roughly which level they should be choosing from. They can read alone or with a friend or a group, anywhere in the room. While they're doing that I pull my lowest group over for a 15 minute Fountas/Pinnel type of GR, then for the last 10 minutes I pull individuals over to listen to them read and make sure their book isn't too easy or too hard. I've been quite amazed at how well this is working. I've had some lowish readers practicing and practicing books well above their independent reading level until they get it! Quite exciting.

"The other 2 blocks (writing and working with words) are great and I try to follow them fairly closely. I find there's a lot of transfer with the word wall."

"I test my students to see the level at which they are reading. First, they read the Dolch sight words. Then I have them read some stories from an old basal reader and mark the number of words that they don't know, and do a standardized test if possible. Then I compare the results and make groups of 3 or 4. The groups are very flexible and the children can move up or down at any time. The other students do literacy centres and I take a group to a table and we practice phonics, sight words, and reading books on their level. First we do a picture walk and discuss the pictures, then we go through the story and write down any words on that aren't known. We use different techniques or skills to figure out the new words. Then, we read the story either silently or orally together. Next, we discuss the story...Who? What? When? Where? We use dry erase boards to make sentences with new words, write a new ending, write one interesting fact we learned, complete a short worksheet on phonics, etc. The lessons are ten to twenty minutes long."



"I found that F&P fits my teaching style much better than 4-Blocks. F&P really emphasizes where the students are developmentally in their reading. I use some activities from 4-B because I can't be with everyone everyday, but I am into diagnosis to see what my students need to work on for specific skills. This has helped my students tremendously. I have 4 groups at different levels. They are homogeneous and I try to change them every 6 weeks."

"When you meet with a group, you have a text they have NEVER read before. You are using this text to teach them to read unfamiliar material. You teach skills such as skimming, figuring out vocabulary through context, using picture clues to help with comprehension, etc. Sit down, introduce the book (make predictions, maybe do a picture walk, review key vocabulary, etc.) Then you start on your lesson, having students read about one page silently (they could 'whisper read' to you as you go around) and then discuss it based on the skill you decided to use the book to teach."

"I have taught guided reading both ways and I prefer 4-Blocks. These are some of my reasons:

1. With 4-Blocks children are not singled out as being in a low or high group. Even when the groups are flexible the students feel that.
2. The tons of seat work and/or the work involved in running good centres makes me shudder. I hated correcting the papers that were not valuable but kept the kids busy while I taught a group. And too often centres are really questionable. You also may have many more discipline problems because the students know where your attention is focused.
3. With 4-Blocks my guided reading time is spent entirely teaching and practicing comprehension skills. Part of the time the texts used are at my grade level and part of the time they are easier. There is some research I read about the low ability students never having a chance to read grade level material and so always stay behind. I also use socials and science and occasionally a math book so that they learn how to understand those books also. All students are given support as needed."

"I do F&P guided reading lessons. I like the individual help I can give the students when I group. I try to have only three groups, but sometimes there will be four or even five - then the children get more individual attention, but the lessons are not as long and I may not see the groups every day - so it is a toss-up which is best. I have problems with literacy centres - I find the children are noisy which is not good when I am teaching, I find it hard to keep track of work accomplished in the centres, and I find there are children not accomplishing anything of value. And they are a lot of work to set up. So now I have the children do three tasks in the time when I am teaching other groups: they must do a printing exercise from the chalkboard, they have a worksheet to do, and they read independently. The printing is very good for them - they soon are printing much more neatly and fluently and this is great when they do their creative writing. The printing exercises has a reading 'job' - a cloze exercise, sequencing, etc. The worksheet is usually questions on the story we last read, or an exercise doing contractions, compound words, word ending patterns, etc. The class is quiet and on task and doing work that is useful!"

"I do guided reading, but not four blocks. In our school each teacher has a notebook with benchmark books and questions in it for us to test the students to see what level they are reading on. Then I take those students who are basically on the same reading level and put them into a group. We have a Literacy Room that is nothing but levelled books. One side of the room is French and the other side is English. Once I figure out my groups and how many there are, then I go to our Literacy Room and choose books I think they will enjoy. While the other students are doing Work Stations then I pull up those students in each group and we read a levelled book and discuss it.

Different things to do with a levelled book:

1. Look at the cover and talk about what the book will be about,
2. Take a picture walk and discuss what they see and what they think the book will be about.
3. Have them read aloud the book or silently to themselves (use note pad or dry erase to write any words they are having difficulty with).
4. Discuss words they had trouble figuring out (a good time to reinforce those word strategies - chunking, prefixes, etc.).
5. Make a list of interesting vocabulary.
6. Discuss the book with them and read aloud together - discuss problem and solution or non-fiction.
7. Point out any blends, contractions, etc. you are working on in language.
8. Ask them questions to make them think about the book.
9. Sometimes we rewrite the book with a different character, or change the ending.
10. Sometimes we write a letter to the character.
11. We talk about what we liked best about the story.

More on the Self-Selected Reading Block

There are three components to this block:

1. Teacher read-aloud: Read a variety of genres. Read many books from your students' book baskets. Chapter books can also be read over several days. As you read to your students, you are 'blessing a book' - sparking their interest so they will want to read it as well.
2. Students read books of their choice: Having book baskets of levelled books works the best. The students must be able to find a book at their independent reading level easily. The purpose of this segment of SSR is to read!

Have different genres in each basket; chapter books, favourite author books, magazines, theme books, non-fiction books, etc.

During this time of SSR, the teacher conferences with students. The teacher meets with four or five students daily for about five minutes. At this time the teacher asks the student about his/her book. The student can also read a page, so the teacher can check on oral reading skills. It's not a time to write things down when the child is standing there, even though it's very tempting. When the student is leaving your area, then you can jot down some notes if you wish. A teacher can have a reading log for each student to record this information.

3. Students share: You can have a 'Share Chair' where students can take turns sharing their book with their classmates. Two or three students a day is fine. You could use a podium, or you can make a TV screen out of a box, prop it on a table and have your students pretend they are on TV as they share. You may also tell your students to turn to a partner and share something about the book. Variety is good! This encourages other students to read more books. The children like to use toy microphone (or a real one).

Readers Theater

"Readers Theater is a fun and effective way to build fluency and confidence. It is a wonderful alternative for your 2 easier days in the Guided Reading Block. Any story can be easily adapted into a readers theater script. If your script is based on a book, I recommend reading the book first. Then I would type the script using a larger font and give each student a copy. Have the children use a yellow crayon, or highlight pen to highlight only their lines. Then let them practice, practice, practice. This is lots of fun and a wonderful way to develop expression and fluency. The children can make scenery and props in co-operative groups. When ready to 'perform' - invite parents and watch your readers shine."

Go to <http://www.readinglady.com/>

The website has scripts from the following books and many more. Just print them out for your children!

Frog or Toad
Gingerbread Boy
Humpty Dumpty
Jack Prelutsky Poems
Once There Was a Wood
Owl Moon
Piggie Pie
Snowballs
Tacky the Penguin
Three Billy Goats
Whales
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
The Red Hen
Whales



<http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>

Lots of scripts, wonderful for the Grade Two level.

Procedures for teaching Readers' Theatre

"Give each student two copies of the **SCRIPT** (written story). One is to be taken home to practice daily at home. The teacher reads the script to the class. As a class, discuss vocabulary, characters, and the plot.

1. **MODEL READING** (teacher reads)
2. **ECHO READING** (teacher reads a line, students repeat)
3. **CHORAL READING** (teacher and class read together) Assign parts to groups of students to read. Assign parts to partners to read. Assign parts to individuals to read. When script is learned, have students highlight their parts. Parts may be assigned to one or more students.

Readers Theatre Vocabulary

SCRIPT - the play or story that is read **REHEARSAL** - practice of the play **CAST** - people who read the play
UNDERSTUDY - a person who substitutes for another player
STAGE - place the play is read **UPSTAGE** - away from the audience **DOWNSTAGE** - towards the audience
PERFORMANCE - reading the play **DRESS REHEARSAL** - practice exactly as it will be read last practice before the performance
BOW - bending from the waist, a thank you for the applause **AUDIENCE** - people who listen to the play
OFFSTAGE - any area that is NOT the stage **APPLAUSE /CLAPPING** - putting two hands together to make a sound, says thank you for a job well done

The Script

Have students highlight their part.

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.

Also, discuss the meaning and job of an **UNDERSTUDY**.



Rehearsals

Practice **SLOWLY LOUDLY CLEARLY**.

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**.

Performance

For the **PERFORMANCE** students line up holding the script and folder in the hand away from the audience. (**UPSTAGE HAND**) They walk onto the stage, turn to the audience and wait for the signal to raise and open the folder. The teacher or a student leader can give the signal. A second signal is given to begin. The student leader reads the title, author, and adapter of the script and the **PERFORMANCE** begins. When the performance is ended, the cast counts to themselves 1-2-3-4, closes the folders, and lowers them in the **UPSTAGE** (away from the audience) hand. They **BOW** (practice bowing), turn and walk **OFFSTAGE**. The cast may use one student for each part or use several students for each part.

More on Reader's Theatre

You and your kids will love Readers' Theatre! Readers' Theatre is an activity in which students read directly from scripts. These scripts tell a story in a very entertaining form, without props, costumes, or sets. This is a *reading* activity, and students are not asked to memorize their lines. They are, however, encouraged to be expressive and use intonation and gestures that are appropriate to their characters and the words being spoken.

- It provides repeated reading practice and builds fluency. Repeated reading practice also improves students' confidence, and enthusiasm for reading.
- It's an enjoyable change of pace from everyday practice sessions.
- Students are so thrilled at their new-found skill that they ask to perform for other classes.
- Children who are used to feelings of failure are able to have success, especially important in the group setting.
- Oral reading is improved.
- It enlivens the curriculum and is wonderful for special days.
- It is a team effort where each child can have an important role to play.

Reader's theatre can be done in many ways, but almost always has these traits:

- The children hold scripts and generally do not memorize the lines.
- There are no costumes or costumes may be partial and suggest the character.
- There are no sets. If used at all, sets are simple and suggestive.
- Dramatic action is imagined and understood through narration.

It is sometimes described as radio reading. Readers theatre focuses on the oral interpretation of a script rather than on memorization, staging, or elaborate props and costuming. Readers Theatre builds fluency and confidence. It can be easily made a part of the Guided Reading block. Read the book first, and then the RT script.

From teachers:

"I love to do reader's theatre. It is an excellent way to develop fluency and expression. I have the kids stand in a half circle. Some may sit if it fits the character. I always have them make a cardboard sign around the neck so they can display which character they are for the audience. I have simple props (pig noses for pigs, hat for the farmer, etc.) We put these plays on for other classes and the local seniors centre. They love it!"



"They have to practice quite a bit to develop fluency and character. Also, they practice how to hold their script, project their voice, and how to not distract the audience when it's not their turn to speak."

Literature Circles

The components of literature circles include choosing a book, reading the book, discussing the book, writing in a journal, and sharing the book.

Book choice is important for successful literature circles. Good choices include fiction works that are highly descriptive language and have good dialogue. Throughout the course of a year you can offer a variety of materials which include a wide range of reading and interest levels. Books can be chosen around a theme, an author or illustrator, or because of strong student interest.

Several groups operate simultaneously. In primary grades, the teacher may need to model the procedures a number of times, and then work with the groups. The timing of moving into literature circles and the teacher moving out of the leader's role depends to a large extent on the way the classroom climate has been established. You can be ready to begin literature circles when your class demonstrates good listening skills and the ability to work together more or less independently.

Literature Circle Tasks -

Discussion Director - Your job is to make a list of fat questions for your group to discuss. (A fat question is a question that can not be answered with yes or no.) Write the questions down.

Here are some examples of questions you might ask: What was going through your mind while you read this story? How did you feel while you read the story? Did the story remind you of an experience you have had? Did anything in the story surprise you? Can you make a prediction about what will happen next?



Passage Picker - Your job is to find several passages from the story that you would like to read or have read aloud. Mark the passages with a sticky note. Write why you thought the passages were important.

Here are some ideas of passages that you might pick: Something funny, something interesting, something confusing, something well written, something that reminded you of a past experiences, something new that you learned.

The Artist - Your job is to make an illustration related to the story. Your illustration should be original (do not copy a picture from the book). Do not let the rest of your group know what you are drawing. At the sharing meeting have each member of your group try to decide what you illustrated. After everyone has had a guess, tell them about your picture.

Here are some ideas: Draw a cartoon, make a sketch, make a diagram, draw a scene from the story, illustrate a main character, illustrate a main event, draw a picture of something the story made you think about, illustrate an exciting part of the story.

Connector - Your job is to make real life connections with the story. Look through the selection you read, and think of something that the story made you think of. Mark the part of the story with a sticky note. Write your ideas on the note.

Here are some ideas of connections you might make: A trip you have taken, an experience at school, something funny, something sad, another book you have read, a movie you have seen, a TV show.

Word Wizard - Your job is to make a list of interesting words from the story. Put a sticky note under each word that you choose. On a piece of white lined paper, write the word, the page number, and the definition of the word. During your sharing meeting, share the words with your group. See if they can tell you the meanings of the words.

Here are some kinds of words you might choose: Funny words, new words, unusual words, words used in a new way, difficult words

Roles for Literature Circles

"I adapted 'roles' in the literature circles to be more Grade Two/kid friendly. My students did quite well, and *really* enjoyed their work. I'll try to briefly describe my tasks.



Word Wizard chooses at least three words in the story that may need more discussion, and possibly a definition. They also record a synonym for each word. We read the book "Donavan's Word Jar" and we now have a "Word Jar". The Word Wizard selects the 3 words from the story and the class decides on one and into the jar it goes. They love the idea of a word collection.

Action Artist writes down the beginning, middle and end of the story. We can use these to write story summaries.

Character Catcher writes down words to describe the main character, and also writes a short paragraph describing the character.

Thoughtful Thinker reads a few pages (for a short story), writes down in a sentence what is happening, then moves to the other half of the paper and makes some inferences about what is possibly going to happen. There is room for seven or eight inferences.

Problem Prober figures out the problem, looks at the solution and relates it to a problem in another book, or a similar problem in life.

Setting Snooper describes the setting (place and time), uses words to describe the setting and writes down how the setting is important to the story.

Book Responses

"Here's what I do to introduce book responses.

1. I start at the beginning of the year by asking everyone to bring in a favourite book. We sit in a circle and everyone shares why they chose that book. I model first. I ask everyone to listen closely to each other's responses because at the end we'll talk about them. After everyone shares we make a chart of the different types of responses. You will probably get things like: My favourite part is . . ./ I liked it because . . information about the characters..... humoretc. We write these on a chart called 'What we Can Write About Books'. (This stays up and is added to throughout the year.)



2. Next I introduce written book responses. I do this on the overhead, with picture story paper. I draw a quick sketch of why I chose my book and then write 2-3 sentences. I think aloud about what I'm writing - spelling, capitals, etc. Then they go back to their seats and do a response for their book. We get back together and share a few.

3. After we've done a few of these (either for books they've read during SSR, ones we've read together during shared/guided reading), I introduce rating sheets. What makes a good response? I choose a few good ones (not just the super ones), with that student's permission. Then we look at the response. Why is it a good response? Ideas like: good picture, lots of sentences, details, etc. (Their first attempts won't be sensational, don't worry. Just use whatever they decide is important, plus a couple things you want to focus on.) We make another chart with these rubric ideas. Now the students have to check their work over using the chart before handing in a response.

4. Once we've got those up and going, I add more response ideas. I always make sure we do them lots of times together in a group before putting them on the chart. You can do:

- jobs from literature circles (artist, passage maker, questioner, etc.)
- strategies from Mosaic of Thought (text connections, imagery, etc.)

Again, I do lots of modeling and oral responding before adding new ideas to the chart. We do 'Pass the Book', where we sit in a circle and pass around the book we just read. Everyone says something about the book. You'd be amazed at how insightful kids can be! After that you can ask them to do a written response if you want."

"Throughout the year I try to move the kids away from just 'I liked the book because. . . .' or 'My favourite part was' to more in-depth responses that have them really look at the text. At the end of this past year our chart looked like this:

What We Can Write About Books

I liked the part . . . because . . .
My favourite part was . . . because . . .
characters in the book
humour
text connections (text/text, text/self, text/world)
places where I see pictures (images)
questions I have
passage picker
word finder



"When the students create the chart, they take more of an interest in what is up there and more responsibility for doing it."

Reading Responses

Be encouraging: 'I can see you are really looking carefully at the words today.'

Demonstrate strategies: 'When I get stuck on a word I can.....sound it out, read on and re-read.'

Stretch the response: 'Tell me more about that...'

Add information: 'A _____ is a very unusual bird. These birds can...'

Extend vocabulary: 'A word that rhymes with _____ is _____.'

Extend student responses: 'What do you think will happen next?'

Review story structure: 'What happened first...and next...and last?'

Make the student prove it: 'Find the words that show that...'

Model smooth fluent reading: 'Today let's try shadow reading so you can feel the flow of the words.'

Reflect: 'What part of the story did you like? What words were tricky to remember?'

Other Tips

- Encourage the child to read the story more than once.
- Introduce the child to shadow reading (reading with the child at the same time).
- Ask questions related to the story.
- Ask the child to tell the story in his own words. (Starting with what happened first, what happened next, and what happened last)
- Try reading it to the child first to get him/her familiarized with the story, then have it read to you.

What Do the Others Do?

"I love guided reading and found the following centres enabled me to work with guided reading groups:

1. **Computers** - I had computers loaded with software to which the students could listen. The computers had individual headsets so the students could work quietly without disturbing others. Only two of my computers had the capability to run some programs so when this happened, I got a headset splitter from my local electronics store so two students could use one computer. The pairs worked well together! (*Teaching Target:* Phonics skills, fluency, comprehension)



2. **Reader's Theatre** - students were assigned parts of simple plays. This works best if a parent or aide is available, but can work well as long as you model your expectations and help the students choose parts. At first my students would bicker about which parts they wanted. I solved this by writing a character on a bookmark and placing it in each book. They randomly selected books and whichever character name was on the bookmark was the one they played. (*Teaching Target:* fluency, expression)

3. **Reading Games** - I have two games at this centre so pairs can play together. I used to have just one game for each group of four, but found management was better when I split the fours into pairs. There was less downtime for those waiting and all were involved in some action (either reading the question for the other or listening to the answer). (*Teaching Target:* Phonics skills; finding the main idea, etc.)

4. **Listening Station** - children listen to books on tape. I invested in five individual headsets so each student listened to his/her own book. It wasn't expensive and decreased management issues. (*Teaching Target:* fluency)

5. **Listening Reports** - students chose and filled out a book report form on the story to which they listened at the listening station. This way I knew they were actually listening to the story. (*Teaching Target:* comprehension, writing)

6. **Partner Reading** - this centre is always after the guided reading meeting. Students work together on guided reading strategies or word work assignment (from our guided reading lesson) then they partner-read familiar material such as shared reading poetry; former guided reading books; etc. (*Teaching Target:* guided reading strategy, fluency, expression)

7. **Writing Station** - children respond to stories as assigned or write their own stories or reports. (*Teaching Target:* sequencing, report writing)

"I include letter writing in my writing centre. I teach students the friendly letter format; any letters going out of the room must be proofed by me. I have lots of coloured envelopes and I bought a mailbox at Home Depot. I also have spelling stations. These are various activities to allow the students to practice their assigned words. These include using magic slates to write their words, small chalkboards, small dry erase boards, painting their words, typing them on the computer, letter stencils, making word searches and then trading papers with someone. I also bought folders and attached them to the side of each student's desk with Velcro. They keep their guided reading books in there to practice when they have extra time. This is in addition to the paired reading they do. I recently bought *Word Matters*, by Pinnell and Fountas, for more ideas."

Literacy Committees

"I use Literacy Committees because the students can work independently while I teach guided reading groups. Everyone has an opportunity to do each of the five tasks and there is no extra marking for me. I divide my class into five co-operative learning groups. These groups stay together for five days. My groups are run by the facilitator in the group. The facilitator is the only child who can speak to me after the 'three before me' rule. Some years I also have a literacy parent who comes in to assist.

Language games - I have lots of games that I have made and use. (They mostly are about language structure -compound words, dictionary skills, contractions, parts of speech, etc.)

SSW (Silent Sustained Writing) -They peer edit and share ideas and WRITE.

RAP (Read Any Place) - They self-select a book and record in their RAP journal. They can book share or partner read as well.

Research - The group has to research a topic. (At the end of the 5 days we compared what we have learned about the topic. At first I get books for them about the topic. I also make a list of questions to be answered. They work together and help each other. The easiest to start with is animal research, which is part of our curriculum.)

Message Board - I write a message, much like morning message, on a small white board. I also ask questions about it so the kids have to look up information. They discuss the errors and re-write the message.

good mourning boy and grils

soon it wil be haloween how many days is it untin haloween. What duz haloween mene.

luf mrs b

I usually don't have problems or interruptions because they know what's going on. After committees I have the reporter report. This takes about five minutes, but it is worth it because it familiarizes the rest of the groups with the tasks, gives accountability and closure, and alerts me to any pitfalls."

I have two centres a day for guided reading so that I can meet with each group twice a week. I have six centres a week and if possible, only four students in each group for optimal management. I make sure the students do at least one quiet centre a day."

Literacy Centres

Word Shake - Use an empty egg carton and write blends, endings, etc., in each compartment. Place a bean, counter or penny in the carton. The students shake the carton, open it and see where the bean has landed. Then they list all of the words that they can using the blend, ending, etc. This can be used for tons of other games. The kids love it and it costs nothing!



Computers - Set up something for them to do; a search, webquest, research if you are on-line, or a math or reading game.

Read the Room - We read the room with beginning/ending sounds, find words that begin or end with certain sounds, blends, digraphs, vowels, compound words, plural words, silent e words. You can relate this to any skill that you are teaching. They can count how many times they find a new vocabulary word(s) in the room, or find verbs, nouns, things you wear, things you play with, things you eat, transportation, names, etc.

Sense Writing - Make a poster with See? Hear? Smell? Taste? and Feel? written on it. Write places on sentence strips. The students will pull a place card and answer in complete sentences each of the sense questions. Example for a place: zoo, beach, grocery store, etc.

What Are the Others Doing?

"I've been teaching guided reading for at least nine years now (to Grades One and Two) and I've experimented with a lot of different scenarios. What I find absolutely the best ~ and most meaningful ~ is to do away with centres and have the kids read. After all, they can never read too much and even Grade Ones can quickly learn to happily read/look at books for up to 45 minutes.

This is how you make it work:

1. For the first guided reading group (15 minutes) all the children are sitting in their own

spots with their personal book boxes and are reading 'just right' books for them. Book boxes are cardboard magazine holders with student numbers on them (that way I can reuse them for several years and don't have to change names). The boxes contain a poetry duotang, a music duotang, a baggie containing their guided reading books, and books from the general classroom library at roughly their level. They can EASILY read these texts for 15 minutes. And I always remind them that good readers reread favourite books.

2. For the second guided reading group the children may sit with a friend BUT they must still read from their boxes. The difference is, they're sharing a book and alternating selections from each other's boxes. It doesn't matter if they are at different levels - they love sharing their books. This does tend to be a rather noisy reading time, however.

3. For the third guided reading group the children have free choice reading. That means they can read anything in the classroom, wherever they like. Believe it or not, the noise level isn't too bad and of course the kids just love the freedom.

I find this works EXTREMELY well; management is minimal; I don't have to check any work; the kids are reading for 45 minutes! And that's what it's all about."

"That's roughly the kind of system I've evolved for my independent reading time. I don't have them read quite as long and while I may do one small group, I usually use this time for individual reading conferences (following the 4 Blocks model). I do have them read in three separate ways, as you described. I also give them a basal at roughly their level from one of the old sets we have in the school, which is strictly for their independent reading, and I use boxes on each table as suggested in 4 Blocks. It works quite well."



"I don't allow my students who finish early to go to centres or use the computer because some have a tendency to rush through their work to get that extra time.

One activity I enjoy is called Flip Fun. It's something at the bottom of my handwriting sheets (I use a reproducible book). At the bottom of each page it says Flip Fun and gives an activity the students can do when they're done. Just flip the page over and work on the back. For example, on the back of letter 'G' page it says to draw some things that are green that start with letter G. It's relatively easy to make up your own Flip Fun activity related to whatever you are studying. Some of mine who enjoy this activity will either keep their handwriting page and do the Flip Fun later, or will come back to the tray later and get the paper again.

Another great idea I stumbled across is 'Take 5' activities. Post one on the board, on a poster, wherever. Each 'Take 5' gives the students a task - they are to come up with 5 responses to the request. For instance, 'List 5 things that are round'. This activity is great because students who struggle with writing or spelling can also use pictures in their responses.

Frequently students will go well beyond the 5 answers. Some activities they will keep with them and go back to throughout the morning. I use progressively more challenging examples as the year goes by, and those I thought were difficult and required a bit of research I posted on my webpage for them to do at home.

One thing I like about both activities is that they can be done on the back of an existing page or in a journal-type notebook. I don't know about anyone else, but sometimes I feel that I use far too much paper running things off, and I'm trying to cut back."

'I have only one of my groups doing centres. The other four (or five) groups are doing: guided reading (with me), journals, computers, spelling practice and dictionary practice.

This way, five children are with me, five are engaged in the centre activity, five are on computers and the rest are in their seats. I have a flip chart colour coded by group to show what they should be doing. I use a pocket chart for the centres and rotate down daily."



"I use Literacy Committees because the kids can work independently, everyone has an opportunity to do each of the five tasks and there is no extra marking for me. This is only for guided reading time. I divide my class into five co-operative learning groups. These groups stay together for five days.

My groups are run by the facilitator in the group. The facilitator is the only child who can speak to me after the 'three before me' rule.) The groups cycle through the following activities.

Language games - I have lots of games that I have made and use. (They are language structure things - compound words, dictionary skills, contractions, parts of speech, etc.)

SSW (Silent Sustained Writing) - They peer edit and share ideas and WRITE.

RAP (Read Any Place) - They self-select a book and record in their RAP journal. They can book share or partner read as well.

Research - The group has to research a topic. (At the end of the 5 days we compared what we have learned about the topic. At first I get books for them about the topic. I also make a list of questions to be answered. They work together and help each other. The easiest to start with is animal research, which is part of our curriculum. I model this activity often before they do it on their own.

Computers - I usually set up a something for them to do--could be a game, a search, webquest, 'Where in the World'.

Listening Centre - The kids each have a book along with a tape. They read the book silently while the tape runs.

After committees I have the facilitator report. This takes about five minutes, but it is worth it because it familiarizes the rest of the groups with the tasks, gives accountability and closure, and alerts me to any 'pitfalls'."

"I think the key to good learning centre behaviour is to introduce slowly what exactly you expect of your students. The first week of school I start with the reading centre. I only show them one part of the centre each day. We model the behaviour expected and practice it and practice it. By the end of the week, they understand what to do at that centre and that they are responsible for their own behaviour. I only had to take two children out of the centres last year for not following the centre rules. I made them sit at their desk for ten minutes and they were ready to go back to the centres.

When I started guided reading they were already familiar with the centres and what they should and shouldn't do. I had groups of three and one group of four and each day someone was chosen captain for the day. That person was responsible for reading the directions and making sure the group completed the assignment. They also assumed the role of teacher and kept the noise level to a minimum. I think this added responsibility helped them learn and enjoy the centres more."



Phonics - Making Words

Consonant Rules

1. The letter *q* is always followed by the letter *u*, and it makes the sound 'kw'.
2. For the /k/ sound, fat *c* goes with fat *a*, fat *o* and fat *u*. Skinny *k* goes with skinny *i* and skinny *e*. (cat, cot, cut, kit, key)
3. For the /g/ sound, fat *g* goes with fat *a*, fat *o* and fat *u*. Skinny *j* goes with skinny *i* and skinny *e*. (gas, got, gun, Jim, jet)
4. We often double *l*, *f* and *s* and *z* following a short vowel at the end of a one syllable word. [ball, off, miss, buzz]
5. 'ck' is used after a short vowel at the end of a one syllable word (pack, peck, pick, pock, puck)
6. *c* is used at the end of a 2 or more syllable word. (picnic)
7. 'dge' is used after a short vowel (badge, ledge, ridge, lodge, fudge)
8. 'tch' is used after a short vowel at the end of a one syllable word (hatch)
9. Never end a word with 'v', always add a silent 'e'.

Vowel Rules

1. Every syllable must contain a vowel.
2. In words and syllables ending with a single vowel, the vowel is usually long. (open syllable) - (go, he, ba by, fi nal)
3. Vowel *y*, not *i*, is used at the end of one-syllable words (my, guy)
4. Words do not end with the letter a saying long 'a' - 'ay' is used most often. (play)
5. 'When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking and says its own name.' This old rule has many exceptions. It is useful when first teaching the long vowels.
6. Bossy 'r' after a vowel changes the vowel sound. (ar, er-ir-ur, or)
7. The vowel /a/ is changed when used with 'w' and 'l'. (water, saw, all)
8. 'or' may say 'er' when *w* comes before the 'or'. (work)
9. 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'. (receive) But this well-known rule has many exceptions: veil, neither, foreign, sovereign, seized, counterfeit, forfeited, leisure, either, weird, heifer, protein, height, feisty, stein, weir, seismograph, sheik, kaleidoscope, etc.....
10. When the 'vowel-consonant-e' pattern is used, the vowel is usually long and the 'e' silent.

"There are really NO strategies to help children remember some of the vowel patterns. The spellings of individual words are totally meaning dependent. Lest we get hung up on the irregularity of our spelling system, we need to remember that 'ea' is the most errant of all the vowel patterns. The 'ea' spelling represents at least nine different sounds (*bead, bread, bear, beard, break, earth, heart, ocean*, and combined with *u* in *beautiful*). They are probably best taught in the contexts of word families and homophones (read-reed, Lee-lea, Bea-bee) along with their meanings. Sometimes enclosing homophones in silly sentences helps as, 'I use a reed for a bookmark when I read my book,' 'Lee herded sheep on the lea,' or 'Bea was stung by a bee.'



Making Words

"I have to admit that Making Words has become my all time favourite activity. Let me share my strategies.

1. I do Making Words 3 times a week..
2. I use the book exclusively (there are more than enough pages to carry me through the year and with enough to send home once a week as a family activity - not graded, not returned)
3. I call the activity 'Beat the Teacher' - you'll see why in a moment.
4. Each lesson has been photocopied (I originally found that giving the students packets of letters and pulling out the letters for each lesson was too time consuming). Here's my sheet. Top half divided into two rows with 4 columns each (the words in the book never exceed 8 letters). If a letter is questionable I always underline it (*ie: 'u' vs 'n', etc.*) My rule: NO letter is a capital letter thereby ruling out esoteric names, etc. The bottom half of the sheet is lined for writing on.
5. I pass out the sheets. Students make 8 cuts (2 horizontal and 6 vertical) they now have all the letters in front of them.
6. First problem we address: What is the number sentence for the day? This equates to the number of vowels plus the number of consonants equals the number of letters being used that day.
7. I then give them 5-7 words to make beginning with a two letter word, and using words that require a reshuffling of the letters to get a new word (*ie: eat, tea, ate*)
8. I walk around checking and doing quick individual lessons with sounding out, what does it rhyme with, etc.
9. I give the students 10 minutes to come up with all other possible words they can think of using the letters in front of them.
10. At the end of the 10 minutes I go to the board and list all the words that I can think of (I don't cheat and look at the book - in fact, the book doesn't list all the possible words, trust me on this one).
11. After I've listed all the words I can think of I turn to the class and say 'Beat the Teacher'. For every word the students have come up with which I have not thought of they get a point. This is a great time for quick mini lessons (especially with the hard and soft sounds of 'c' and 'g' and plurals, etc.
12. We add the points to a chart in a tally format. To date, they have 176 words which they thought up which I did not. Not bad for Grade Two!
13. After that they flip their paper over, write a sentence using at least 2 of the words that are listed on the board. This allows me to check and reinforce the concept of capital at the start of a sentence, end punctuation, complete thought, etc. Once they've checked their sentence with me they are allowed to illustrate it. They love to take home the weekly sheet to their parents to play 'Beat the Parent!'"



"We do a 'Breaking Words Apart' lesson once a week with our vocabulary words. The kids really have fun doing it and are very proficient at it by this time in the year. Not all kids would need it, but since it involves colouring, no one seems to gripe! I do this a few weeks together as a group prior to at this point in the year, just passing out the vocabulary words and letting them go to it themselves.

I make a chart that I hang in the front of the room. A yellow triangle represents digraphs and blends (I actually write the words digraphs and blends and put a yellow triangle beside it), a red box represents r controlled vowels, a black underscore line represents suffixes, a purple underscore line represents basewords, an orange circle represents soft c and/or g, a green box represents diphthongs like oi/oy, a brown slash mark represents syllables, etc. I add more as the year goes on or as needed.

Of course, I then have a chart that lists digraphs and blends, r controlled vowels, common suffixes, the rule if c or g is followed by e, i, or y, it is usually soft, diphthongs, etc. We slowly learn about these decoding strategies one at a time. The kids see that the rule doesn't always apply and if they can't figure out the word by breaking it apart, I might use it in a sentence or give them clues.

I usually pull the weekly vocabulary words from their focus story for the week and write them in black on ditto paper. I make copies to send home and then every Monday, we do this activity at school. The kids get out their crayons and go to work. It works well as an individual or group activity. All they have to do is compare their papers to see if their colours match. Of course, after about ten minutes or so of them working on it and I see they are finishing up, I do it up front on the white board with coloured dry erase markers.

I can't stress how this stems into all their reading and what a difference it makes for some kids. It really makes them look at the whole word. You can hear them making comments about the structure of words during other activities too, like making words or writing process time or just plain reading. I always say to them, "What can you tell me about this word?"

About 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 changes the whole word. The children are given six to eight letters which will form a final "secret" word. The lesson begins with small words, builds to longer words, and finally ends with the "secret" word that can be made with all the letters. Then, students sort the words according to a variety of patterns, such as beginning sounds, endings, and rhymes. They transfer the patterns by using the words sorted to read and spell words with similar patterns.



Planning a 'Making Words' lesson

Decide what the final word in the lesson will be. In choosing this word, consider its number of vowels, child interest, curriculum tie-ins you can make, and letter-sound patterns.

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:

- words that you can sort for the pattern(s) you want to emphasize;
- little words and big words to make a multilevel lesson;
- 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;
- a proper name or two to remind them where we use capital letters; and

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 ledger. Each child gets a set of the letters in the word. This can be photocopied, or you can use letter tiles.

Write the numeral 2 (if there are two-letter words in the lesson) on the board.

The children 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 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 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. 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 them and have one of them make it with the big letters. If not, say something like, 'It is fun to beat 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.

Making Words - Sample Lesson

Choose your final word. We have chosen the word 'spring'. All the pattern words can be made from the letters in this word.

List of words to sort for patterns (in, is, nip, pig, pin, rig, rip, sip, sir, grin, grip, nips, pigs, pins, rigs, ring, rips, sign, sing, snip, spin, grins, grips, rings, sprig and finally spring).

You can find all the words in a word quickly by going to <http://www.wordles.com/getwordsinwords.asp> and putting in your word.

Print these words on individual index cards. You need a pocket chart in which to place the letters and words.

Have the individual letters on large cards **r p i s g n** for the pocket chart. Have these letters on strips and photocopy one strip for each child. The students cut them apart.



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.

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.

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 **spring**."

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.



Making Words' Ideas and Organization

"I have a large pocket chart that I use to model. The students have file folders that are cut in half vertically and the bottom is folded up one inch to form a pocket. These are laminated. I got the idea from a making words book. The letter tiles are from the book also. I had the letter tiles printed on card stock and laminated. I found some large letters for myself to use on the pocket chart. I keep the students' letters in an organizer box from the carpenter's section of Walmart. It has 30 drawers. I use popsicle sticks for volunteers. Each student selected passes out one letter to each student depending on the letters to be used that day. Then I call out the letters to be sure everyone received the right ones. Another child passes out the pocket folders. Afterward, I choose students to collect the letters. I actually give them the small drawer but I put them back in the organizer box. I have most of the lessons copied from the books. I keep these in folders along with index cards containing the words. I have also put the words on index cards and afterwards I have the students sort words by rhyme/word families, number of letters in a word, etc."



"This is something I'm struggling with, too. I started the year (as above) but I decided it took too much time. Now I have made individual bags, two of each letter and keep them in a basket. When the kids come in, I have the large letters in the pocket chart and after they are unpacked they are to get their bag of letters and sort for the ones they will need for word study that morning. I do word study first attendance. So far this is working!"

"I made individual folders for letters doubled for strength. Then I cut 3 strips from folders and taped them inside the folder. I put the letters in there in abc order. The letters were run on cardstock and then laminated. I put the vowels on pink cardstock. On the front of the folder I have 2 strips. When we do word study, the students take out the letters they need and put them in the bottom pocket on the front. We make the words, etc., in the top strips, and I can whip around quickly to see who has it or who needs help. When we are done, the students put the letters back inside in abc order. I also have a pocket on the inside on the lower side in which I keep extra letters for when we need doubles, etc."

"I just use Excel and do the letters - red for vowels, black for consonants. Usually I do six sets on a page, print them on the computer and give each child a strip. They cut them apart and we're ready to go."

"I take the lazy way. I copy the letters for the week on plain paper and just walk around the room and snip off enough for each table. After we do the lesson, they take them home in a little envelope that asks 'Can you figure out the mystery word?' It is probably wasteful paper but it is fast. I know myself - I wouldn't get the letters re-filed each week and would end up searching through a barrel of mixed up letters!"

"There is also a *Making Words Book* by the Four-Block People. Each lesson has all the letters each student needs for THAT lesson. They snip them apart and the lines are even provided on the sheet below. I love that book! It makes things SO much more manageable. Each lesson get a little harder. When we are finished they stack up their letters and I staple them to their papers so they can do the making words lesson at home."



"I made a blank grid of one inch squares on the computer...there are about 8 or 9 of them....I ran these off on construction paper. My template has about 4 of these on it...so one page makes enough blank grids for 4 kids. On 'making words' days the kids have one of these blank grids on their desks then in the pocket chart they see the large cards showing what letters they need to write. So...as one of their early morning jobs, the kids write the letters in their grid and cut them out."

"I don't pass out letters. I use 1" graph paper, cut in strips. We pass out a strip to each child. I have letters to use on the overhead - blue consonants and red vowels, and they make the letters that I put up - one in each square in their strip. Then they quickly snip the lines separating the squares. That way, they can manipulate the letters to make the words. It helps the kinesthetic and visual learners - as they move the letters around and actually see the word written before they then write it on their paper. At the end of the lesson, I pass out plastic baggies. The kids put their letters in it, and it goes home as homework that night. They play 'Stump The Adult' and try to see how many words their adult can make, and if he/she can make the 'big word' that we made in the end using all the letters given."

"For "Making Words" (4 Blocks) I had made copies of all the letters from the back of the book (Making Words), laminated them and cut them apart. In the beginning I had them in a baggie which the students kept in their desks but sorting through all the letters to find the ones we needed each day was a pain. Then I came upon a new idea - I probably got it from Share One or Two!

"I give each student a duotang with 2 sheets of slide protectors in them (you can get them at London Drugs or other photo shops). They are clear sheets with little pockets to slip your slides into. I sorted the letters so each pocket has a different letter, in alphabetical order, so all the students have to do is open their duotang and grab the letters they need. They are easy to replace and we can tell if the letters have been mixed up with a neighbour. I did make a little tab with clear tape at the top of each pocket to help the kids get into the pocket. They lasted very well last year, no repairs. It took a while to get set up but I am very pleased with the results."

Word Families List

(1) -ay, (2) -ill, (3) -ip, (4) -at, (5) -am, (6) -ag, (7) -ack, (8) -ank, (9) -ick, (10) -ell, (11) -ot, (12) -ing, (13) -ap, (14) -unk, (15) -ail, (16) -ain, (17) -eed, (18) -y, (19) -out, (20) -ug, (21) -op, (22) -in, (23) -an, (24) -est, (25) -ink, (26) -ow, (27) -ew, (28) -ore, (29) -ed, (30) -ab, (31) -ob, (32) -ock, (33) -ake, (34) -ine, (35) -ight, (36) -im, (37) -uck, (38) -um

Soft C

(Tune: Wheels on the Bus)

Sometimes the c says /s/, /s/, /s/ -
/s/, /s/, /s/ - /s/, /s/, /s/.

Sometimes the c says /s/, /s/, /s/.

I'll tell you why!

If after the c you see an i,

Or an e or a y,

They all make the c say /s/, /s/, /s/.

You give it a try.

C is soft in cent and cell,

Cent and cell, cent and cell,

C is soft in cent and cell,

And now you know why!



A Phonics Quiz

"We just had open house last Thursday and I had many parents comment on how they liked the way we do our 'spelling'. We don't give a traditional spelling test anymore. We call it a phonics quiz. We let the parents know on our update sheet which phonics skills we are working on for the week...last week was CVCe patterns with long a words. We type up the patterns --ave: gave, save, pave, wave, brave, etc. ate: date, fate, gate, hate, etc. ame-- ane--- ade-- etc.... and then have the parents/students study the patterns and rhyming words. Then on Thursday we give a quiz and pick out 10 - 12 words and the students write the words down on the quiz paper. It has really made the children accountable for learning the patterns and not just memorizing the words for the 'spelling' test. Of course we practice the word families in class and do activities too. In my class, I do modify the word lists for my ESL students and my very low students by giving them only 6 -7 words and I give them the 'list' to study."

The Word Wall

The Words Block begins every day with the word wall. The children clap, snap, cheer and write the word wall words. These activities take about 10 minutes. In addition, 'On the Back' activities are completed to help children use these words to write others, such as rhyming words or words with endings added.

"The word wall is a primary focus in my room. Children access it frequently for reading and writing. I try to make sure it is big and bold, and that the children can see it from where they sit. It isn't just that they can read and write the words, but that they can access the word wall to solve problems. I use the *Month By Month Phonics for Second Grade*, and if you do the activities you will get the kids to use the word wall as a resource for reading and writing. This process of referral should become second nature to the children."

"I feel that the children should have a personal word wall, or dictionary. If they do writing at home for homework, they should have a home dictionary, too, with all the word wall words in it. I send the words home each week and they enter them in their home dictionary."

Word Wall Activities

"We do word wall activities daily during our word study block. We start off by spelling and cheering our 5 newest words. We spend about 10 minutes doing that and some new activity with the new words - adding endings, writing words in the same word family, etc. The last 20 minutes of word study is spent reviewing words on the word wall and/or other phonics and spelling related skills. We might do activities such as *Be a Mind Reader*, *Guess the Covered Word*, *Changing a Hen to a Fox*, *Making Words*, etc. When I feel the majority of the students know the words I give them test using all the new words and many other words on the word wall. Then all the new words are put up on the word wall. Once on the wall, they are no excuse words. I will not accept them spelled incorrectly on any writing. If it comes to me incorrect they must go back and fix it."

Be A Mind Reader

You need to have at least 20 words up on the wall before you do this activity. Number paper from 1-5. Write a mystery word from the wall and fold it up and tell them they will guess my word from the clues. The first clue is always the word is on the word wall. Other clues can be 'it has ____ beats' (syllables). '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.



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. The students try to guess the 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.

Wordo

Wordo is a variation of Bingo. All you need are photocopied sheets on which 9, 16 or 25 blocks have been drawn in. Have students pick words off the word wall they want included in the game and each picks a block to write it in on their Wordo sheet. You write the word 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'!



Spelling Rhyming Words

Have the students number from 1-5. Say, "One of your word wall words today was *eat*. I am going to say some sentences that you may want to write that have words that rhyme with *eat*. Listen for the rhyming word and then we will decided together how to spell that word." Then give sentences with beat, heat, neat, treat, and cheat. Always provide the words because some rhyming words do not have the same spelling pattern.

Theme and Word Wall Dictation

Each month make a list of theme words for students to use in their writing as well as word wall words. Have students turn over their paper and dictate one or two sentences that are made up of word wall or theme words. This is an activity they love and it helps them write a good sentence.

Using the Word Wall

Clap, Chant, and Write

Dictate five words. When all five words have been written, point to these words on the word wall, and have the students clap and chant the spelling of the words as they correct their own papers.

Review Rhymes with the Word Wall

Have students number their papers from one to five, and write the word that rhymes with the word you give. Give them both a first letter and a rhyming clue:

Number 1 begins with t and rhymes with walk

Number 2 begins with b and rhymes with my

To check their papers, you say the rhyming word and let students say the word they wrote and chant its spelling, 'Number 1 rhymes with walk. What did you write?' Students respond, 'talk, t-a-l-k.'

Review Endings with the Word Wall

Call out the usual five daily words, but add endings on to some of them. Begin with just one ending at first, probably 's'. Then do another ending, such as 'ing' or 'ed'. Do not call out any words with spelling changes until you have taught them. Students chant and spell the words in the usual manner.

Review Cross-checking with the Word Wall

Tell students they must listen to a sentence and decide which word makes sense in that sentence and write it on their paper. Some examples are:

Write 't' on the board. Say...'The first word begins with a 't' and fits in the sentence - Paula likes to _____ on the telephone.'

Write 'r' on the board. Say...'Number two begins with 'r' and fits in the sentence - Midge had to _____ fast to win the race.'

To check the answers, read the sentences again and have the students tell you what word they wrote and chant its spelling.

Make Sentences with Word Wall Words

As the year goes on and more words are written on the word wall, you can dictate entire sentences made up of word wall words. Repeat each sentence slowly and remind the students about grammar and mechanics. Check and chant each word in the sentence in the usual manner. You also can dictate only questions, or exclamatory sentences to work on punctuation during your word wall time.

Be a Mind Reader

In this game, the teacher thinks of a word wall word and gives five clues to that word. Stu-



dents number their papers as usual from 1 to 5 and try to 'read the teacher's mind' as to what word was 'on the teacher's mind'. By the time you give the fifth clue, everyone in the class should guess your word and have written it down on their papers. Your sequence of questions could be as follows:

Your first clue is always the same one: 'It's one of the words on the wall.' Students write a guess by number 1. Possible next clue: 'It has four letters.' Students write another guess by number two. Possible third clue: 'It begins with 'th'.' Students again write their guesses by number three. Possible fourth clue: 'Its vowel is an 'e'.' Write the guess by number four. Possible fifth clue: 'It finishes the sentence, "I gave my books to ____." Write guess by number five. Check and chant the correct word, and ask for a show of hands as to who had the word by number one, two, three, etc.

WORDO

This is a version of BINGO, except that it is played with word wall words. Students need a sheet of paper having 9 or 25 blank blocks on it, and some small pieces of paper or objects to cover words as they fill in blocks. Call on students to pick words from the word wall they want included in the game. As each picks a word, everyone writes it in a blank of their choice. Teacher writes it on an index card. When all 9 or 25 blocks have been filled in on everyone's sheets, you are ready to play. Shuffle your index cards and call out each word. Students are to cover the words wherever they have written them. Students chant each word's spelling and then cover it.

Cheering the Word Wall!

"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 then 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

SLOOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWW 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!

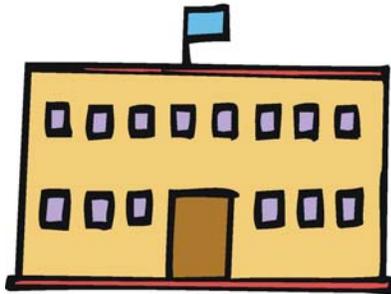
Blowing kisses - Blow a kiss for each letter. On the word use two hands to blow the kiss and extend both arms out and up. Tons of fun, you feel like a movie star!



Grade Two Basic Word Wall List

the of and a to in is you that it he for was on
are as with his they at be this from I have or
by one had not but what all were we there say an
your which their said if do will each about how up
out them then she many some so these would other
into has more her two like him see time can been
too its any who day now same people right my look
made think over also did around down another only
came way come find work use three may must water
because long does little part very even after place
words well called such just here where take most
why know help get put through different back away
much again go off good went could new old no
write number when make our great than me tell
first man men small

You may also want to have seasonal words, words from themes, words that are local (name of the town/city, school, etc.), words from other subjects - science, social studies, etc. These can be up while they are being studied and then removed.

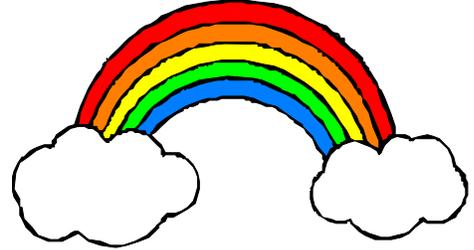


Some teachers also have a Math Word Wall - with math words displayed, sometimes with their meanings.

Spelling

Spelling Lesson Exercises

Rainbow words: Write spelling words in coloured pencil or crayon. Write them first in one colour, go back over them in another colour, do this a third time.



Shaped words: Write words letter by letter in a pyramid, square, rectangle or circular shape.

Example:

a
a p
a p p
a p p l
a p p l e

Disappearing words: happy happ_ hap __ ha ___ h _____

Reappearing words: _____ k _____ ki _____ kit _____ kitt __ kitte __ kitten

Write 3 different ways: Write words each time using a different way of writing until there are 3 of each word. Can choose from: printed, cursive, crayon, marker, coloured pencil, squiggly lines, puffed letters, upside down, or one you have thought up on your own.

Magnet letters: Use magnetic letters and spell your words on a cookie sheet or other metal surface. Read your words aloud to someone.

Coloured vowels and consonants: Write words twice. Once with vowels being one colour and consonants being another colour. The second time use a third colour and write the word in one colour.

Stamp out spelling words. Use stamps and a stamp pad.

Picture words: Draw a picture, write all your spelling words somewhere in the picture. Make a frame for your picture by writing the spelling words around the outside of the picture. See if someone can find all the spelling words in your picture.

Make a word search: Using graph paper, write all the spelling words then fill in all the extra squares with other letters. No backwards words. They can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal as long as they are spelled from left to right.

ABC order: Write words in alphabetical order. Watch 2nd and 3rd letters!

Crossword: I generate a crossword puzzle for each list and offer it as a choice for an activity.

Word within a word: Some words have words inside them...not all do. Write your spelling words. Circle the smaller words that you find within your spelling words.

Example: s u i t c a s e - it, suit, case, as



ABC book: Use scrap paper and fold it in half, and in half again. Open and cut on fold lines. This will make 4 pages. On each page in the middle print the word in a very dark colour. Under the word write the word in a sentence. Above the word draw a picture of what is happening in your sentence. Must use 3 or more colours and no white showing. With a dark colour draw a frame around the picture. Do this for each word. Make more pages as needed. Put pages in alphabetical order. Make a cover page with your name on it. Staple the left edge to make a book.

Write word 3 times: Good old basic drill practice. Write words 3 times each. Your choice of print or cursive.

Spelling collage: Choose five of the words and spell them out in alphabet pasta, then glue the words on popsicle sticks. I pass out small dixie cups of pasta to each group of desks and they help each other search for letters! Great when the weather is bad and kids are restless!

Clay/playdough rope letter words: First have a rag or waxed paper down on the surface to protect it. Use a small piece of clay or play dough and roll between hands to make a 'rope' shape into a letter shape. Continue until whole word is spelled. Read word to someone. Do the next word.

Once Upon a Time: In this activity, the students write a story using all the words on their list. This one appeals to my writers!

Silly Sentences: Write ten sentences using two different words from your spelling list in each sentence. The sillier the better, although I have had some students who wrote serious sentences.

Words without vowels: Write the spelling words, but place a line where each vowel should go. L_k_ th_s.

Words without Consonants: They also like doing the opposite by writing vowels only _i_e _i_.

Write an alliterative sentence with your spelling words. Alliterative sentences are sentences with words that beginning with the same sound.

Acrostics: out of the word. example: THERE: the hairy elephant raced eagerly.

Chalkboard Spelling Bee: Every student stands by his/her desk with a chalkboard in front. The teacher gives a word. All write on the chalkboard. At a signal from teacher, the students turn their boards towards the teacher. Check and correct. Students with correct boards remain standing for the next round.



Coloured vowels and consonants: Write words twice. Once with vowels being one colour and consonants being another colour. The second time, use a third colour and write the word in one colour.

Cut out words: This one is a bit time consuming, but for what it's worth... Keep a box of magazines on hand and have students find their words, pictures of their words, or cut out individual letters to make the words and glue them to a piece of drawing paper.

During the week - If students see or hear one of their weekly spelling words, they tally it next to the word. For some reason they think this is fun - they love to use vis-a-vis markers!) It seems to have brought the spelling test scores up somewhat because they're constantly looking for those words in their books and in their own written work.

Dictionary/thesaurus scavenger hunt: Look for definitions, synonyms, antonyms or homonyms where appropriate. Write down the page number.

3 Different ways: Write words using a different way of writing until there are 3 of each word. Choose from: printed, cursive, crayon, marker, coloured pencil, squiggly lines, puffed letters, upside down, or your own way.

Once Upon a Time: In this activity, the students write a story using all the words on their list. This one appeals to my writers!

Outline your words: I give the class a half sheet of graph paper, they write their words in the squares, being careful to use two squares for the long and tall letters. Then they outline the squares they used with coloured pencil.

Picture words: Draw a picture, write all your spelling words somewhere in the picture. Make a frame for your picture by writing the spelling words around the outside of the picture. See if someone can find all the spelling words in your picture.

Scrambled words: Write each word with mixed up letters. Make it neat so someone else can try to unscramble your words.

Silent spelling game: Divide the class into groups and give each group a set of alphabet

cards which may be spread out on the table. Each student in the group must spell a word with the cards in rotation. Other members of the group may help by pointing, but can not talk. When the word is spelled, all group members must raise their hands. First group spells it aloud.

Silly Sentences: Write ten sentences using two different words from your spelling list in each sentence. The sillier the better, although I have had some students who wrote serious sentences.

Smack! Make flashcards of the alphabet. The kids write on a piece of paper a word of five or more letters. You call randomly the letters on the flash cards and they have to cross out the letter if it is in their word. The first one to cross out all the letters smacks the desk and says SMACK!

Spelling dice: Divide the class into two teams. Teams take turns spelling a word. If it is correctly spelled the team can roll dice and keep the score.

Spell a Word: Split the class into two groups and give members of each team index cards with containing alphabet letters. Some kids will get one letter, others more. When you call a word, the students with the cards must run to the front of the room and hold the letter card in front of them so the class can read the word. Stamp out spelling words with letter stamps.

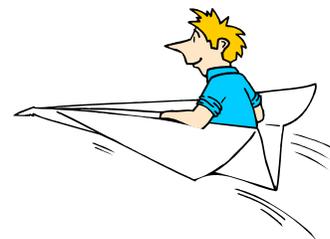
Tic Tac Toe: Divide the class into two teams. Put a tic tac toe board on the chalkboard. Members of the teams take turns, spelling the word, defining the word, and using the word in a sentence.

Word within a word: Some words have words inside them...others do not. Write your spellings words. Circle the smaller words that you find within your spelling words. Example: s u i t c a s e - it, suit, case, as

Alliterative Sentences: Write an alliterative sentence for each spelling word. Alliterative sentences are sentences with words that begin with the same sound.

Paper Planes from Spelling Tests

"A fellow teacher told me he was having difficulty getting his students to take their Friday spelling test seriously. So, one Friday, after correcting the tests, he passed them back to the students and said that anyone who had a perfect score was allowed to fold the test paper into a paper plane. He then took the entire class to the auditorium for a flying contest. The three students whose planes flew the farthest were given a simple reward. Back in the classroom after the flying contest, he announced that they would have another paper plane contest next Friday after the spelling test. In one week, he went from having 8 students with perfect scores to 24 students with perfect scores. You have to love that!"



Spelling Tricks

Sing the tricky words:

(To the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

That's the way you spell because

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

B-E-C-A-U-S-E

That's the way you spell because!



Just 'because!'

O-U-L-D!

"(sung to the tune of BINGO)

There are three words,

they're hard to spell,

they're 'could' and 'should' and 'would'

oh you lucky dog

oh you lucky dog

oh you lucky dog

That's how you spell could, should and would!

The students, when spelling will say the first sound 'cuh', for example and then verbalize 'oh you lucky dog' as spelling ould. You have to show them just to use the beginning sound. They pick it up pretty quickly and lovesinging the song."

"A little trick for the 'ould' words is to spell it this way... w - o - u - little - devil, you are so hard to spell!"

"There is a little boy named Larry Dean. His mother called him L.D. for short (explain nicknames). Larry Dean loves to play outside. It had rained for days and he couldn't go out and play. Finally, the rain stopped and his mother said, you can go out but you **MUST NOT** get in the mud. Well, she looked out the window and wouldn't you know it - Larry Dean was standing there in the biggest mud puddle ever. She shouted out the door, '**Oh, you L.D.** Just wait 'till your daddy gets home!'"

"I use

Will old ugly ladies dance? and

Can old ugly ladies dance? and

Some happy old ugly ladies dance!"

Mnemonics can help you remember the correct spelling:

PIEce of PIE

There is a LIE in beLIEve

BECAUSE - Bunnies Eat Carrots And Uncle Sam's Eggs

WEDNESDAY - WED - NES - DAY

FRIEND - Fri the End - I am your friend to the end.....

KNIFE - k - nif -e

WAS - Wally and Sam

Remember little words inside big words!

Father - fat, her, he

Believe - be, lie, eve

working - or, king

Sing Your Spelling

Sing the letters to the song as if they were the words to the song. Do the whole song since it reinforces the word more often. Point to the word on a piece of paper or use flash cards.

Songs for 3 Letter Words

This Old Man

Jingle Bells

Three Blind Mice

Songs for 4 Letter Words

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Skip to My Lou

YMCA

Are You Sleeping?

Songs for 5 Letter Words

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

You Are My Sunshine

BINGO ("There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o")

Songs for 6 Letter Words

This Old Man

Jingle Bells

Happy Birthday

The Farmer in the Dell

Skip to My Lou

Songs for 7 Letter Words

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

Twinkle, Twinkle

Willoughby Wallaby Woo

Songs for 8 Letter Words

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

Songs for 9 Letter Words

I'm A Little Teapot



Spelling Games

Here Comes the Judge - yes, the title dates one - but the kids don't know the difference.....

"We also played a game called 'Here Comes the Judge'. One person would be the judge (I pick sticks). That person would leave the room and I would choose five more sticks (people) to go to the board. I would give them a spelling word and they would have to write the word on the board in their neatest handwriting. When finished we would call out 'Here Comes the Judge!' The judge would come in and select the best writing and correctly spelled word. The judge does not know who wrote which word. The best would then be the judge. They loved playing this game also. Often they would play it during inside recess. It was fun to watch them!"



Spelling Sparkle

"Students sit on their desk tops. The teacher picks someone to begin. When the teacher says the spelling word the student must say the first letter and the next student the second letter and so on until the word is spelled. After the entire word is spelled the very next student says 'sparkle' and the student **after that** sits down. Students also sit down if they say a wrong letter or need the word said again. This game is a favourite in my class and really stresses good listening skills as well."

Spelling minute: Teams line up and students take turns spelling words. If it is correctly spelled, the speller rolls dice and scorekeeper records the score. Each team is timed and spells for one minute. If the word is misspelled the speller goes to the end of the line and next person must spell the word. The winner is the team with the highest score when it is rounded to the nearest 10

"The Grade Two teachers at my school are trying something a bit different this year. In previous years we've had 10 spelling words. five were word wall words, four were pattern words based on a wall word and one was a challenge word relating to our theme. We also had students turn over their papers and write two or three dictated sentences using new words and already tested words. We found most students could not spell words in sentences which they had just spelled correctly in a list. This year we decided to only give five words a week (wall words) and instead of having a spelling test listing the words, our test is just dictation. I include all five new words, words from previous weeks, and a pattern word/words we have made during the week based on one of the wall words. At first it was a real challenge for most students but I must say everyone has shown great improvement. I feel this has helped them transfer the use of correct spelling to their writing as well."

Mystery Word

"We play Mystery Word a lot.

Take a word like Halloween or Christmas, someone's name or a place name, vocabulary words or even two words, and put each letter on a shape. Put the letters in a bag, having a bag for each child or pair of children. Make a reporting sheet that has 12 spaces for filling in words that they can make out of the letters and then at the bottom the job is to use all the letters to make what the mystery word really spells.

Later in the year we assign amounts for words. A one letter word is worth 1 point, a two letter word is worth 1 point. A three letter word is worth 2 points and a four letter word is worth 5 points, etc. When the exercise is completed the children add up the scores and see who got the most. We like to do these activities in pairs sometimes with reading buddies."

See Paola's "One Word a Day" for everything done for you!

Add up the Words!

"You can put numbers above or under the letters of the alphabet in your room, then as an activity have the students figure out the amounts for different words. It could be morning work or at odd times during the day when they need a little something extra to do. You can assign the same number to common letters and then a higher number to things like 'x'. These could be similar to Scrabble numbers. The students print the word and add the numbers to get a total. You can use this with your spelling words, or have the children try to find a word with the highest numerical count.

Some teachers have a list of words put up weekly and the students do this in their spare time."

Heads Up, Spell Up

It's like the 'Heads up Seven up' game. I select five students to be the 'taggers' of the game. The other kids sit at their desks, heads down, with their thumbs up. The taggers sneak around the room and each tagger selects one student and pushes their his or her thumb down. When all taggers have selected someone, they return to the front of the room. I then say 'Heads up spell up.' If a student had been tagged, he/she stands up. I then give the student a word to spell. If it is spelled correctly, the student gets two guesses as to who tagged him/her. A misspelled word only gets one guess. Guess correctly, become a tagger.

Popcorn

"I made 4 x 6 tag cards, one for each letter of the alphabet. Pass out the 26 cards. If you like, you can put 'qu' on one card instead of just 'q'. Then you say a spelling word and the children who have those letters hurry to the front of the room, arrange themselves in order, shout out their letters in order to spell the word and then the last person yells 'POPCORN!'. This is especially fun at the end of the day when the kids are restless, and it is good to fill five minutes of spare time.

What happens when there are two of the same letter in a word? The child that has that letter has to move from one spot to the other very quickly!

Spelling Ideas

'No Excuse' Words

"Once words have been spelling words, they are called 'no excuse' words. They cannot be spelled incorrectly. Each child enters the spelling words into his/her dictionary and they are added to the spelling pockets and word wall in our room. The children have really good memories so they usually remember if a word was from the spelling list and then they spell it correctly or look it up."

List, Group, Label

"This activity increases students' exposure to vocabulary, forces them to define their rules or categories for their lists and has them working on the skill of classification which is important to learning higher order thinking skills.

Have students study the words on your word wall and make up four different groups of words. Then they read one of their lists aloud. The rest of the students must guess what category the words belong to (or what the rule is for those words). For example, let's say that I read my list of words and they were '...learning, jumping, running, skipping...' The rest of the class must guess that these are all action words or verbs. Another example might be '...dog, cat, bird, monkey...' (names of animals)."

Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com/> and make different puzzles with this week's spelling words. Try lots of different kinds!

Spelling Homework

"My students are to write each word four times on Monday. On Tuesday they pick five of the words and put them into sentences. On Wednesday they pick four of the ten spelling words and write three rhyming words. It's a bit more challenging and the parents check the work and help the students spell words that rhyme, but are spelled differently. I have also challenged some of my students to write a story using all ten of the spelling words. The parents like to help with that, and that is fine! The students like to share their silly stories. I usually have the students write the words in alphabetical order in class sometime during the week. The students are exposed to the words quite a bit during the week. I give the parents a spelling homework sheet that explains the weeks homework for the year. On Thursday night I suggest they test their child on the words then write any words they get wrong 3 times."



Writing

How do our children become fluent readers? ...by reading, reading, and reading! Apply this same method to writing and you'll see amazing results!

Write for a variety of purposes...free writing, shared writing at morning meeting, writing in response to a reading selection, writing letters, writing prompts, write poems, establish a writing centre in your room.... the ideas are limitless. Write often - but remember - quality is better than quantity!

Mini-Lessons for Writing Generating Topics

Brainstorm topics

Give each child a large piece of paper to brainstorm possible topics. First the teacher lists about six broad, general topics on board and reads them to the class. Then the teacher has students write possible topics for two minutes. Interrupt them saying, 'Raise your hand if you have ridden on a train? If you have ridden in a plane? If you have driven a tractor?' Record more topics (for two minutes.) 'Have you ever done something embarrassing? Consoled a friend? Given a gift you've made?' Add to your list. I also ask have any of you ever been in kindergarten. What's your teacher's name? Write it down. What do you remember the most? I usually tell them something I remember from kindergarten. What do you remember from Grade One? etc. Have you ever had a field trip? What was the best part? Add ideas to your list of possibilities.



What do you know about?

Help the children list what they know about. Give them classifications (pets, family members, school kids, friends, field trips, zoo, games, etc.). They can record possible writing ideas on a page of their writing notebook, on a piece of paper, whatever the teacher wishes.

Using the five senses.

Get the five senses involved. Ask probing questions that stir memories. Christmas was fun. How was it fun? Who came? What did they wear? Think about Christmas. Could you hear the sleigh bells jingling? How did Christmas dinner taste? Was the turkey juicy or dry? Did you enjoy your aunt's special pudding? How did it taste? How did it smell? What sounds did you hear? What did you see? Was the present as big as a tree? Was the dinner disgusting or the best turkey you've ever eaten?

Modelling How to Write

Before each writing session, we do a daily news or some kind of modelled or interactive writing. This helps the children have clear expectations of what to do. I model what to do when I come to a word that is tricky ('stretch' the word to hear the sounds, clap long words to hear the syllables), how to find words on the word wall, etc. I do a quick McCracken lesson before I began writing. I give them the tools they need to get started. We started the year writing diary type journals because recalling daily events was easier for the kids than to make up a story. This way they could concentrate on writing words. Once they felt more comfortable in their writing (taking risks through invented spelling and a bank of high frequency known words including using the word wall) I began to model other types of writing. I would model for a long time before I would require them to begin writing different genres but they were always allowed to start earlier if they wished.

Writing Fiction

This mini lesson should be done many many MANY times. Tell the children that today during the writing workshop you will show them how to write a story. Explain that they have a job to do while you are writing your story: They are to use their eyes to watch everything you do. They are to use their ears to listen to everything you say. They are to use their brains to remember what they see and hear so they will know how to write a story.

First, talk about your story. What are some things that I could write a story about?

I could write a story about... Where will my story take place? Who will be in my story? What will the problem be? How will I solve the problem? What words will start my story?

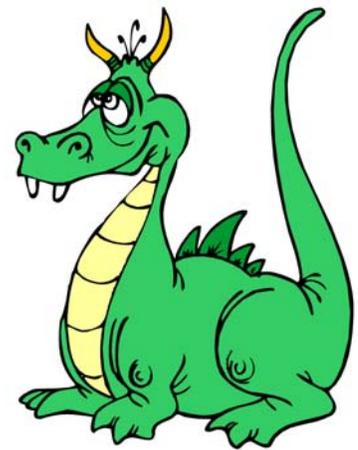
Second, write your story using the chalkboard, chart paper, an overhead projector.

Discuss capital letters, punctuation marks.

How will you handle words you don't know how to spell?

Reread your story often while writing. Correct errors as you go.

When you are finished, have the children tell everything they saw and heard you do while you were writing your story. Record their responses on a chart. Post the chart for future reference.



Writing fiction is very difficult. Children love to write fictional stories, but do not do well at it unless they have a strict format. There must be a beginning where the characters and the setting is introduced, a middle where the characters have a problem, and an ending in which the problem is solved. It is the ending that is the most tricky - coming to a successful conclusion !

Editing Their Writing

What is CUPS?

At the bottom of the child's writing papers the acronym CUPS is written. After the students write their stories I walk them through the "CUPS".

- C = capitalization**
- U = understanding**
- P = punctuation**
- S = spelling**



I say, "Put a C on your paper, go through your sentences and if you have capitals, put a star over the C. If you need capitals, fix them and THEN put the star over the c." (My goal is to make them more aware of correct sentence form, not whether they 'did it right' the first time.)

Then I repeat for U (understanding, "Do your sentences make sense?")

Then I repeat for P (punctuation).

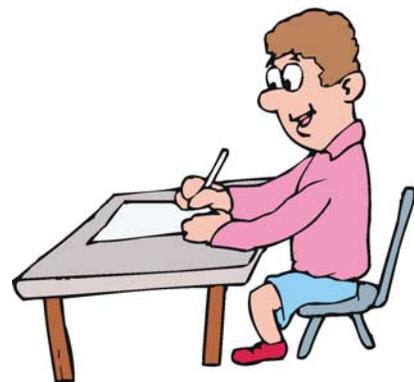
Then I repeat for S (Spelling). Ask the kids, "Did you spell the word wall words correctly?" Or "Did you write down the sounds you hear in the words?"

Mini-Lessons

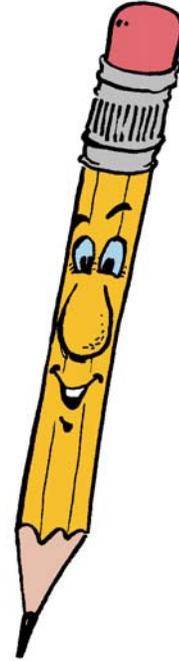
Do a mini-lesson every day at the beginning of the writing lesson. A mini-lesson is usually a short, 5-10 minute lesson, is on one subject, and gives the children a useful 'tip' on the writing process. Pick a topic that your children need.

Examples of mini-lessons are:

- the teacher's expectations
- using whisper voices during writing time
- what to do when a writer is 'finished'
- how to use writing folder - purpose and organization
- teacher/student conferences
- editing techniques
- peer editing - how to edit a partner's paper
- publishing choices
- use of computer for writing/publishing
- understanding the writing rubric and levels
- qualities of good writing
- using the stages of the writing process
- getting ideas - topic selection
- different genres and kinds of writing
- prewriting strategies - brainstorming, webbing
- what to do when you are stuck



- use temporary spelling in draft if word is unknown
- finding words - spelling tips
- using the word wall
- using personal dictionaries
- concept of story- beginning, middle, and end
- organization - story sequence, writing on one subject
- leads, endings
- adding descriptions, using interesting words
- using punctuation and capitalization
- dialogue - quotation marks
- sentences - expanding sentences, no run-on sentences
- how/when to revise: adding on, inserting, changing, moving
- reread previous days work
- choosing a good title
- doing suitable illustrations for publishing
- paragraphing
- margins in stories and poems
- stretching a word to hear the sounds



The Writing Block - from the Four-Blocks structure

The Writing Block includes modeling of the writing process by the teacher in a mini-lesson, student writing, and sharing of the writing by selected students. This block should be 40 minutes long, and writing should be done every day. The modeling is extremely important. At this time the children are learning how writers write.

Modeling the Writing Process

"An overhead works well with this block. The teacher models a writing passage first and thinks aloud as he/she writes. Students love to copy the teacher, so by modeling you can guide them in the direction that you wish the class to go.

Model the thinking to find an interesting topic and brainstorm what you can write about that topic.

Model punctuation and capital letters.

Model good printing and correct spacing of words.

Model the process of finding the words you need and spelling them correctly.

- I remember how to spell the word.
- I look for the word on the Word Wall or around the room.
- I look in my personal dictionary.
- I sound out words.

Model the process of reading what you have written to make sure it reads correctly.

At the end of the modeled writing, you should edit the passage with the students. This is an editor's checklist that you can use:

- name and date on page
- capitals
- punctuation
- circle words when you are not sure of spelling

You should also teach a mini lesson after you finish writing. Pick a topic that you feel your children need that day. Here are some ideas:

- punctuation and capital letters
- quotation marks, commas, etc.
- what to write about
- writing on one topic
- stories have a beginning, middle, end
- re-reading
- titles
- run-on sentences
- making stories more interesting
- using interesting words
- spelling
- editing
- I'm done

Student Writing and Conferences

Then students write in their journals on topics of their choice. There are 3 things that students are NOT to say during this portion of the writing block!

I'm through.

I'm finished.

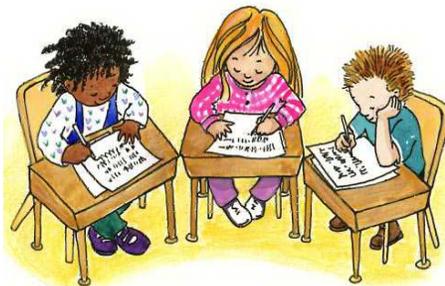
I'm done.

Students can always write another story if they think they are done. They need to use the editor's checklist before moving on.

While the students are writing, meet with 3 - 5 students each day to help them edit their work.

Sharing

At the end of this block, students share what they have written (2-3 a day is fine). You can use an author's chair if you wish. Students who have published their work should share their books with their classmates. You may choose another way to share: share your story with a partner or one table member shares his/her writing with his/her tablemates.



Different Writing Formats

"First of all the children know that there are three kinds of writing. The children need to be able to utilize each method proficiently. I go through each kind of writing and then share a checklist that the children should refer to for ALL of their writing.

1) Narrative Writing

This kind of writing is simply narrating an experience that is true. In order to help the children organize their thoughts, as well as to write a 5 sentence paragraph, we utilize the following words (I have an umbrella and 5 raindrops for this framework):

Title First ... Next... Then... Finally... I felt...

Our goal is to help the child be able to take each word and turn it into a sentence (Ex: First I went camping with my dad. Next we took out our tent and set it up. Then we roasted marshmallows over a fire. Finally we got into our sleeping bags and told ghost stories to scare each other! I felt so happy to be with my dad!)

I call this kind of writing "Sequence Story" because it sets events up in a logical sequence.

2) Expository Writing

This writing I call a "Fact Story" because it aims to tell the facts and is generally non-fictional writing.

Again, we have a framework in order to help the children set up their writing.

<u>Title</u>	What I am Writing About	What It Can Do	What it looks like	What it feels like
	One interesting fact			

An expository text might look like this:

My Dog I am writing about my dog. He can roll over and fetch a stick. My dog is black with white spots. He feels warm when he sleeps beside me. My dog has been trained to obey.

3) Imagination Writing

Sometimes children just want to write and don't want to worry about a 'framework'. That is fine as long as they still focus on the elements of good writing. I have found that when kids write an imagination story they have much more of a 'voice' and much more freedom.

We usually use this kind of writing in their journals where they are free to write about any topic they choose and where I am not looking for a specific structure to their writing.

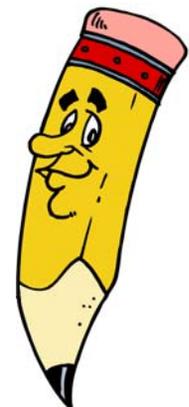
Elements of Good Writing

My goal is for children to:

a) decide on the kind of story they want to do (sequence or fact or imagination)

b) demonstrate proficiency in the following writing skills

I use capitals and periods. I use details in my writing. (we are REALLY working on this now). I choose only one idea for a story. I make sure my story makes sense. I use describing words. I use complete sentences. I use neat writing. I try to spell words correctly. I write as much as I can!"



Writing Rules and Criteria

For the writing process: (tune of Hokey Pokey)

You do your prewriting first.
You do your drafting next.
Then you revise and proof-read.
And then you publish your best work!
You do the writing process,
And you don't forget the steps.
That's what it's all about!



Writing Criteria

"I set up a criteria for every writing assignment. First I teach writing a super sentence, then a paragraph, then how-to paragraph, and finally narrative writing. Each has its own criteria and each differs slightly. Decide what is important to you as a critic to see in a certain piece of writing. Teach those skills. Then assess by checking for the skills you taught. For 'super sentence' the criteria is as follows:

1. Each sentence will begin with a capital letter.
2. Each sentence will end with some form of punctuation.
3. The subject of the sentence will be specific.
4. The verb will be active.
5. The subject will be preceded by an adjective pertinent to the topic.
6. The sentence will tell where, when, how or why the action happened.
7. Spelling will be correct or nearly correct.
8. The sentence will reflect the action in the picture. (we use a picture as a starter)
9. The subject and verb will agree in tense.
10. The sentence will contain at least 6 words.

"Each category is worth 10 points. The same applies for the other forms of writing done in my classroom. The most important thing is to decide ahead of time which skills are going to be important to you. Then form a criteria based on these skills."

A Writing Rubric

- * I remembered to start all of my sentences with a capital letter.
- * I remembered to end all of my sentences with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- * I have spelled all the words correctly.
- * My writing is on one topic.
- * I used interesting words.

Another Writing Rubric

It is a Yes/No checklist.

HOW WELL DO I WRITE?

I used details that tell a lot about my topic.

My story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

I read my story to myself to see if it makes sense.

Each sentence ends with a punctuation mark (!,?)

I used capital letters to begin sentences.

I used capital letters to begin names and special places.

I underlined the spelling I wasn't sure about.

I tried to correct the spelling by myself.



The Mechanics of Writing

Super Sentences

"A simple sentence would be a sentence like: The dog ate. In order to make this sentence a super sentence, I tell my students to put an adjective, describing word at first, in front of the noun. The sentence becomes: The hungry dog ate. Now I tell them they need to tell what, where, why, or how. It isn't a super sentence unless it tells at least one of these things. So, the sentence becomes:

The hungry dog ate a bone in the backyard.

This is your basic super sentence. You can expand on it from there. We switch the words around by putting the where in the front etc."

More Super Sentences

1. Begin by showing students a simple, unadorned but complete sentence. Example: 'I went for a walk.'

2. Ask students to verbalize the questions a sentence like this hopefully brings to their minds - Where did you go? Were you alone? Why did you go on this walk? What did you see or do on this walk? When did you go? Did you come back?

3. Using these ideas, students will then add some life to the sentence - details, description, etc. - to help it become a 'super sentence.'

Example: 'Yesterday afternoon my friend Jody and I took a long walk through the dark forest.'

4. These super sentences should be shared aloud before being displayed (a Super Sentences bulletin board) under the original sentence to emphasize the changes that were made.

Punctuation

Teaching Quotation Marks

"This is a suggestion to teach quotation marks. Sometimes it is nice to get old, because I have wrinkles around my mouth (hopefully they are dimples?). Anyway, I smile and point to my mouth asking my kiddos to note the wrinkles and tell them what comes out of my mouth, when I write it down, is in quotation marks like the wrinkles around my mouth."

"Try using speech bubbles as a way to draw out and motivate kids to read and write. Select a book containing speech bubbles (The Grouchy Lady Bug by Eric Carle is one, there are many others). After reading the story and making note of the dialog inside the bubbles, discuss the use of the speech bubbles - that they contain only the exact words the character says, any clue about HOW it is said is conveyed through punctuation and perhaps the type of font used (no 'he yelled' or 'she whispered'), and how the point on the bubble points to the character speaking. Relate the use of speech bubbles to what is contained inside quotation marks.



"Have the kids look for, perhaps cut out and collect examples of speech bubbles from comics, newspapers, magazines to display (could be homework project with family). Locate and discuss examples of 'thinking bubbles' too.) Use text containing dialog within quotation marks to pull out the dialog, determine what would go into a speech bubble and what would not. Let the students experiment with using speech bubbles you have prepared: ask them to draw a picture showing two characters then make available pre-cut speech bubbles. Children should write dialog for the characters inside the speech bubbles, then glue it on pointing to the appropriate character in his/her drawing."

Capital Letter Rules

Capitalize words which are the individual names or titles of people, of places, of books, of days and months, etc. (Bill, Dr. Smith, Toronto, Amazon River, The Sleeping Beauty, Sunday, June)

Apostrophe Rules

1. An apostrophe takes the place of missing letters in a contraction. (it is/it's; she is/she's; cannot/can't)
2. An apostrophe shows ownership or possession (Mary's coat, boys' coats), but is never used with any possessive pronouns. (my, mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its, whose)

"Ask the children to go through their sentences and trace their capitals with a green highlighter, periods and question marks with red (for stop), yellow for commas, etc. They will erase and fix a mistake if they will get the reward of using the markers."

"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!"

"I find that if you take a transparency of one of the children's stories and then together find the proper placement of punctuation and capitals it is more effective. When they see their actual work it seems to sink in better. Of course we would celebrate the successes and good points of the writing in each piece and discuss how we're using the work as a teaching tool. By using each child's writing at different times (as well as the teacher's) and using a positive class tone, corrections are seen in an accepting light."

"To teach quotation marks, I begin by using cartoons and have the children speak the words in the balloons and act out the sequences. Then they put quotation marks at the beginning and end of the words in each balloon, and finally make sentences. Snoopy said, "Happy New Year!" You can also use macaroni to make the quotation marks."

Fun With Punctuation

- M&M's can be placed for periods, either the mini ones or regular sized.
- Elbow macaroni can be used for quotation marks. Each child writes a conversation sentence on a sentence strip and then glues the macaroni where the quotation marks go.
- Use elbow macaroni for apostrophes to teach contractions.
- Lentils make a nice period.

Different Kinds of Writing

Fiction

Plotting a Story

"I like to use a beach ball after reading a story. On each section of the ball I wrote the story element and a picture to help the kids remember.

setting - house

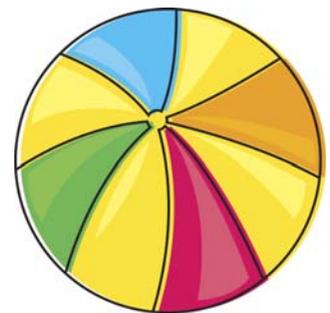
title - book with writing for a title

characters - people

problem - ?

solution - open book with 'The End'

favourite part - heart



We gather in a circle on the carpet and take turns tossing the ball to each other. Wherever their right thumb lands they have to answer as it relates to the story."

"Our district uses the 'Five Magic Words' to summarize the steps for writing a story:

Somebody

Wanted

But

So

Then

This works every time - even Grade Ones can do it. We do it orally a lot."



"I would choose a book with a strong beginning middle and end. (I like to use *Millions of Cats* by Wanda Gag) then after reading the story split the class into three groups (beginning, middle and end) and tell them the author told the story in over 40 pages and they need to tell their parts in just five sentences. Tell only important parts but include specific details. Use exact nouns to tell place, and characters. Join the parts together to give a summary of the entire book."

"I play a game with the kids called 'Stump the Teacher'. We sit in a group and I ask for a character. I ask for another character. Then I ask for a place. Then I ask for a thing. The kids may name a Disney character, a student or whomever.... The idea is not to make the elements related. I am very dramatic when I look like I am thinking. I say, I think YOU have thought of a very interesting story. (I also want them to know they can be authors and use story elements.) I take the most bizarre combinations and draw them into a storyline. There really are only a few classic storylines in children's literature - suspense, danger, magic, fantasy, and a sprinkling of pixie dust can turn things around to make sense of any story. Going from their setting to another and back, a dream sequence idea works, too. Anyway, they listen to the story elements and then I draw them all back together in a conclusion or summary....'and that's how.....' which is usually a restatement of the main idea. We discuss afterward if they think I forgot one of the story elements. We laugh together at the good job they did to challenge me, but I was up to the task. It isn't long before they want to play, 'Stump the Kid!' The students' spoken stories from their thought processes then may become written process, including the summary of events and final statement. The summary statement is not, 'The End'. It's like having a Thanksgiving dinner and lying on the couch and remembering the good food and good times. Reminiscing and having a final say about the experience. Look at some of your storybooks, simple ones and see how even picture books go from a lead-in main idea to individual ideas to a summary or bigger picture ending.'

"Our school has purchased a new writing program. It has a great way to teach them to write a story in order. You write the topic sentence or story starter at the top of the page, then divide the remainder of the page into four sections. Toward the bottom of each block are lines for writing a sentence. They each have transition words (First, Next, Then, Finally). The students draw a picture of what is happening, then write a sentence. First, we did this together a couple times. Then, they did several alone. Finally, they transferred this skill to free-writing. I have many low kids, so the pattern is worth clearly written, logical stories. Once they have more confidence, I'm sure they will experiment more."

Writing Letters

Sing to the tune of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'.

First you write the heading, the heading, the heading,
First you write the heading,
The month, the day, the year.
Next you write the greeting, the greeting, the greeting,
Next you write the greeting,
You start it off with dear.
Then you write the body, the body, the body,
Then you write the body,
You ask and tell some things.
Then you write the closing, the 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 now your letter's through.



"I went to a brain-based conference. We learned an awesome idea for teaching parts of the letter. Have your students stand up. Their head is the **HEADING**. Their smile is the **GREETING**. Their body is the **BODY** of the letter. Have the students close their knees together for the **CLOSING**. And since most students wear sneakers with logos or names... tap their feet for the **SIGNATURE**. I just used it to introduce pen pal writing. It was so much fun! Even the next day I asked about the parts and they were all able to tell me in the correct order."

Writing Letters

- Write a letter to the principal.
- Write a letter to the janitor.
- Write a letter to their parents every Friday telling them of what they had done all week.
- Write a letter to a special person - a hero, a sports figure, the mayor, the Prime Minister, etc.
- Write to a pen-pal.
- Write a letter of complaint, of thanks, of congratulation, etc.

"We learned how to write letters, and to complete the unit, the children wrote letters to friends and relatives around Canada and in other countries. The recipients were asked to reply telling a bit about where they live, and sending literature and pictures when possible. I have a large map and we tag every place from which we receive post cards. The letters and information go into a scrapbook."

Write a Letter!

"In Grade 2 I set up 'mailboxes' for different fairy tale characters such as Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks, the Wolf, etc. Then as we had read and discussed the different fairy tales, the kids would write letters to them. It was really cute. They would write to Goldilocks and fuss at her or ask Jack for some of his golden eggs. On Friday afternoon, I would collect all the letters and reply to them as if I was the character. Then on Monday they would have their mail waiting for them. I tell you I have never seen kids SO EXCITED about reading and writing! After awhile I had to take the mailboxes down because they were writing way too many letter for me to answer! They also had to use correct letter form (this was part of my English lesson on parts of a letter). I told them if it wasn't in the right form their letter would not be answered."

Expository Text

"I am working with the children on writing expository text, since this is our next rubric assessment. I had a small group of children with me at my table today and I gave each one an ice cube - they loved it. They slid it around on the table, sucked on it, played with it and as they were doing all of that I was asking the expository framework questions (these are typed up on a paper in the umbrella/raindrops format of:

umbrella is Title of piece

1st raindrop: What are you writing about?

2nd raindrop: What does it feel like?

3rd raindrop: What does it look like?

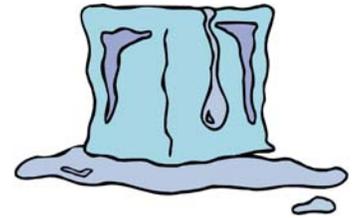
4th raindrop: What does it do?

5th raindrop: Write (1) interesting fact about this

The children did quite well with this. I got them to not just write ideas but then to add one detail to each idea (for instance when they wrote that 'ice is cold' I told them to think of a metaphor like 'Ice is as cold as _____.' I am really pushing them for at least one detail per idea. When they were done with the brainstorming/prewriting page (which is the umbrella/raindrops) then they go to the next page and they take all their ideas from the first page and turn them into sentences for their completed expository text.

"I will be thinking of more things for them to experience and then write about in the near future (a teacher friend said she took off her shoe and placed it on the table! I'd have to think twice about doing that.....)"

"Here's an idea for teaching paragraphs: I present a paragraph as building a hamburger...the top and bottom of the bun are the introduction and concluding sentences...the hamburger is the meat of the paragraph and the lettuce, tomato, cheese, etc. are the sup-



porting details. We use strips of coloured paper to represent the various parts of the hamburger and the children usually get the idea of making a jam packed, interesting paragraph (hamburger)...and we talk about not putting a fish patty right in the middle of it because it doesn't belong (therefore keeping the paragraph on just one topic). Of course I teach it to the group first using a huge poster of a hamburger and we go through the various components together before they set off on making their own. It works best when you incorporate it into a research project. We'll be doing a large unit on salmon in January as my district has Grade One classes incubate salmon eggs and release the fry into local streams in March. We'll look at paragraphs in late February when we put together our Salmon project."

Descriptive Writing

"One easy thing for Grade Two children to do and then present is a piece describing an item they have made. For example, have your children do an art activity making a snowman. Their writing piece would describe the snowman - 'My snowman has a blue and red scarf. He has a black hat with a yellow flower,' etc. When it is time to present, post the artwork where everyone can see but without names. As the students read their writing, the audience has to figure out which one they are describing. It makes everyone pay a little better attention to have a puzzle to solve! We did it with parents as the audience and it went very well."

Writing Directions

"A great writing assignment was an exchange I had the pleasure of doing with a friend's class last year. Each child designed a mitten, then wrote directions on how to make the mitten. We exchanged the directions and the students had to recreate the mitten from the written directions. It was great!

You could also do this with other subjects. It is a great learning experience to 'SEE' what happens when certain steps are left out of the directions!"

"I had my class write directions from our classroom to the gym. Then I had the students switch directions with a partner. The students had to do exactly what was written. If they actually made it to the gym we made a big deal of it. Not many were clear enough to make it there!"

"I had my children write the directions for making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches."

"We did a lesson on how to make a PBJ sandwich, and they had to fill in nine boxes with the steps. It didn't matter what order, they just told me what to do. Then after all of the boxes were filled in we reviewed what each box said and numbered them. That worked really well for my class."



Poetry

Write Winter Poems

Winter (or some winter noun)

Adjective, Adjective

Verb, Verb, Verb

4 word phrase about noun

Synonym for noun

"We have been learning about nouns, verbs (naming and action words) as well as describing words. This winter poem writing is a good way to apply what's been learned, using a winter theme;

Winter poems using simple 4 line format:

Line 1: colour word (*words*)

Line 2: object

Line 3: action

Line 4: Winter is ...(*describing word*)

Here's an example:

Blue

Sled

Speeding

Winter is fun!

Different Poems

A **cinquain** has five lines.

Line 1 is one word (the title);

Line 2 is two words that describe the title.

Line 3 is three words that tell action

Line 4 is four words that express feeling

Line 5 is one word that recalls the title

Snow

Cold and white

Falling, swirling, drifting,

I love going sledding!

Snow.

A **quatrain** has four lines.

Lines 2 and 4 must rhyme.

Lines 1 and 3 may or may not rhyme.

Rhyming lines should have about the same number of syllables.

Mary had a little lamb, etc.

A **haiku** has three lines.

Lines 1 and 3 have five syllables.

Line 2 has seven syllables.

An icy wind blows

The tree is lonely and cold

Its branches are bare.

A **limerick** has five lines.

Lines 1, 2, and 5 have seven to ten syllables and rhyme with one another.

Lines 3 and 4 have five to seven syllables and also rhyme with each other.

There once was a seed in the sky.
That rode on the wind way up high.
The wind did die down.
Dropped the seed on the ground.
A flower will grow by and by.

A **name** poem tells about the word.

It uses the letters of the word for the first letter of each line.

Snow

Soft white flakes
Never making noise
Over my town
Without a whisper.

A **parts of speech** poem has five lines.

Line 1 is one article and 1 noun.

Line 2 is an adjective, a conjunction, and another adjective.

Line 3 is one verb, one conjunction and one verb.

Line 4 is one adverb.

Line 5 is one noun or pronoun that relates to line one

A snowman
Round and fat
Standing and looking
Silent
Snowman

The 5 Ws Poem - Each line answers a question

Line 1: Who

Line 2: What

Line 3: When

Line 4: Where

Line 5: Why



Writing Poetry

"This is a great website with lots of different types of poetry:

www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/poetclass.html

Last year, I introduced poetry writing to my class using the 'I Can't Write a Poem' form. During journal time, I had them list a bunch of excuses they use to get out of homework or chores at home. Then, they picked ten and put them into the 'I Can't Write a Poem' form. We had a blast when everyone shared their poems. It was a positive, fun way to get them interested in poetry and not be so uptight about writing it. We also studied tongue twisters, some song lyrics, jump rope chants, etc., to keep interest high."

This site is wonderful! It gives a student-written example of 24 different poetry forms and a description.

www.tooter4kids.com/forms_of_poetry.htm

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Assessment

Writing Checklist

"I use the following checklist to get writing scores for report card purposes:

- Capitalizes Names
- Capitalizes beginning of sentences
- Capitalizes the word I
- Uses end punctuation
- Writes complete sentences
- Writes on the assigned topic
- Makes sense
- Follows topic through entire story
- Writes neatly
- Spells word wall words correctly
- Goes beyond the required



Student Writing Checklist

"This is the checklist I use with my grade two students. In the beginning of the year, I guide them through it. By the end of the year I will hand them back their paper and tell them they missed something on the checklist. They have to fix it before I will accept it. I check each assignment before they are allowed to had it in. With 23 kids, it makes writing very hectic for me, but they learn."

Name _____ Date _____

Check all that apply.

1. My name, the date, and a title are on my paper.

2. My sentences start with a capital letter.
3. My sentences end with punctuation. (. ? !)
4. I capitalized "I" and names.
5. All Word Wall words all spelled correctly. (I circled unknown words)
6. My words have spaces between them.
7. I used a paragraph shape (indented).
8. I wrote 4 or more sentences.
9. My story has a topic sentence, 2-3 detail sentences, and an ending or feeling sentence.
10. I read my story to myself and it makes sense.
11. I read my story to a friend. _____

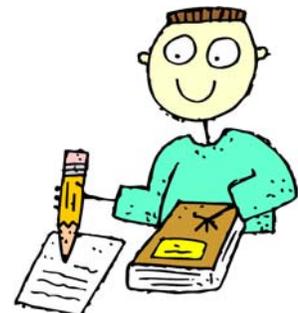
Evaluation of Writing at the End of Grade Two

Have the children write freely for 40 minutes.

Mark the product by giving the paper 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 for each of the following:

Writing Skills:

1. Printing - Is the work neat and legible, words spaced, letters made correctly?
2. Fluency - Will the student try to write as much as possible without help? 4 marks for over 100 words; 0 for under 15 words.
3. Phonics - Is the student able to encode words so they can be read by others? How phonetically accurate is the spelling?
4. Sight vocabulary - Does the student have an adequate number of words he can spell from memory?
5. Reading - Is the student able to read the story to others with accuracy?
6. Conventions of writing:
 - Writes in sentences:
 - Begins sentences with a capital letter:
 - Ends sentences with a period:
 - Uses other punctuation - question, exclamation and quotation marks:
7. Prints a paragraph on one subject:
8. Uses imagination when choosing a topic:
9. Uses interesting vocabulary:



More Ideas for Writing



The "Daily Scribe"

"Our 'Daily Scribe' has the task (at about 20 minutes before dismissal time....when everyone else is cleaning up) of writing on a piece of paper for that day his/her favourite activity of the day. When the room is all tidy and everyone is ready to go home we sit around the calendar again and the scribe shares his writing with us, and perhaps a picture that he has drawn. We collect them for the month and it makes a nice way to look back on the month and reminisce about all the fun things we have been doing"

"I take pictures of my students while they are busy with activities. After printing the pictures I lay them out and students choose one to write a story about. It seems to be a good visual for a personal story. The writing looks cute displayed with the pictures. And, I think it is a nice souvenir for the parents."

"I have one of those double sided cut outs from Carson-Dellosa put up with a magnet on my board. The one I have is the fish and I named him Simon- but that doesn't matter! Anyway - I have it on the board and I draw a cartoon bubble coming out with one or more sentences inside the bubble with grammatical and punctuation mistakes. Underneath the bubble I put the number of mistakes they need to find. We call this 'Simon's Sentences'. On the first day of school I introduced Simon and told them that he missed Grade One and so his spelling, grammar, etc. needed help. His messages are usually pertinent to what we are doing, or a birthday message, etc. I always make sure to make two of the mistakes be the capital at the beginning of a sentence and the punctuation at the end. It's a great way to introduce new grammar and punctuation items, commas, contractions, quotation marks, etc., and since it's daily (or should be) it's an interesting way to reinforce older concepts as well. At first I do it all orally with the children, but after they understand what to do they copy the sentences EXACTLY the way they see them into their composition books - mistakes and all! Then they have to try to fix the mistakes using a coloured marker (to make it stand out) in their books. I give them a couple of minutes to find as many as they can and then we come together to discuss it. It's an evolutionary thing - but it REALLY works and it's fun for them!"

Writing a Paragraph

"To help get my students to write a paragraph, I found a book called 'Writing using the Four Square Method' or something like that (it is not Four Blocks). Basically it is filled with many mini lessons on how to write paragraphs, stories, descriptive paragraphs, persuasive paragraphs etc. I have not done all the activities, but I did start at the beginning of the book with some of the basics.

"The children use a graphic organizer that looks like a piece of paper divided into 4

squares. In the middle of the four squares (at the intersection) there is a rectangle that has the topic. Depending on the lesson, different things go into each square. My students now use the center rectangle to write a general sentence about their topic. This becomes the opening sentence in their paragraph. In the first three squares, they write supporting sentences that go along with their topic. In the final square they write a feeling sentence about their topic. This becomes the closing of the paragraph. The paragraphs they are producing are getting better and better all the time.

"The student's paragraphs may not win awards, but it has given them a format that is easy to follow which allows my low students to succeed and my higher students to excel. They realize that everything they write has to be about the center rectangle and that the things they write in each square must go together. (My higher students will write 2 or 3 sentences in each square)."

Writing

I have typed journal ideas/sentence starters into a grid, printed copies, cut apart the squares, and will place the squares into a coffee can (there will be more than one copy of a journal idea). As students enter the classroom, they will draw a square from the can; this will be their topic for the day. Students are free to add to the journal throughout the day, or even the next day, in addition to sharing with the class, or a buddy."

"In regards to finding time for writing - I found an idea that has turned our writing around. I have never done show and tell....I feel I have never had time for show and brag. Now, if children want to bring show and tell they have to write about it first. I frequently model what items need to be included in the writing. Sometimes we do a word web and then write. Three days a week we have show and tell. The children can not talk about their item to anyone until they have written about it. I have seen nice progress in the children's writing. After the children present their writing - that they read to the class while I hold their show and tell - they file them in their writing folder. I keep all the folders in a large filing tub. I have taught them to file their page at the back so it is in sequential order. They also date and head their page 'Show and Tell'. If I see that there are people that are not writing on one of those three days than I give them a writing topic to write about. Most of the children regularly write for show and tell."

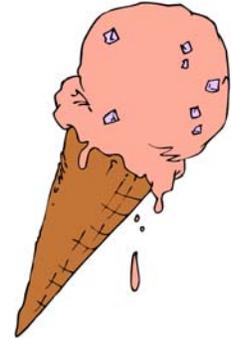
A Writing Center

"Here's an easy center idea that I use to tie in with a theme, holiday or other topic of discussion. We call it 10 Things. I have typed the following sentences in big print on cardstock, cut them apart and laminated them. (You can also just write them on index cards.) To use the center, I just pull out a card that relates to our topic and they write their 10 Things on blank paper. (No standing over a copy machine for this center!!)

Continued....



- 10 Things that make me happy.
- 10 Things I am really good at.
- 10 Things I want to learn to do.
- 10 Things I learned about oceans. (pioneers, space, weather, etc.)
- 10 Things I can do to make the world a better place.
- 10 Things I would like to buy my mom for Mother's Day. (dad for Father's Day)
- 10 Things I love to eat.
- 10 Things I learned at school. (or learned in grade two)
- 10 Things I hope to do over the summer.
- 10 Things I like to do with my friends. (with my family)
- 10 Things I am thankful for.
- 10 Things that make a good friend.
- 10 Things I saw on our field trip.
- 10 Things I can do instead of watching TV.
- 10 Things not to say to an angry shark, bee, mother, teacher, friend.



"I have used some of these topics to make into books after they did the center. Sometimes I have them write their sentences into a little book and illustrate it. I have also had them type their 10 sentences at the computer center the following week. Then I print each page and put together a class book. (very popular in our library!)

"To encourage my students to do more at this center, I add a little sign under the main sentence that says 'Can you write more than 10? For younger kids, you can call this 5 Things and have them illustrate their ideas. You can have the children brainstorm their own ideas for topics."

Writing Ideas

"I do a modeling lesson at the beginning of each writing period. My kids have two basic kinds of writing. Journals tell about their daily life - true experiences. Their Journals must be corrected perfectly every day. When they finish their entry, they bring it to me and I underline any errors and then they go back and correct. We discuss any problems at this time. They don't re-write, they erase and correct. The other kind of writing is free writing where they may write fiction. Free writing can occasionally be edited and published but most days is just for writing fluency.

I require a certain number of words each day in the Journals, rather than sentences. If you ask the kids for a certain number of sentences, there are always children who will make the shortest sentences possible. Asking for a number of words prevents this and the quality is better."

"Each child has a writing folder. I glue the checklist on the outside and on the pockets inside. Then they are laminated. I use 5 colours for my 20 students. Yellow folders read from the author's chair on Mondays, Reds on Tuesdays, etc. This year I included: Entire sight word list (Dolch list). Lists of other words often requested during writing (Barbie, Nin-

tendo, Disneyland, grandma, soccer, etc. There is also an upper/lowercase handwriting guide and an alphabet to help with sounding out.

Editing checklist: 1. Read to see if it makes sense. 2. Punctuation 3. Capitals 4. Spelling."

"My favourite activity is very simple, and also helps with correct form in writing questions. The kids find a magazine picture that they like. Then they think up a 'Why' question about the picture. They glue the picture on the front of a folded piece of paper, and write their question above or below the picture. I insist on correct punctuation, capital usage in the question. I often use legal size paper for this. They unfold the paper and write an answer to their question on the inside. Using the word 'because' in their answer sentence seems to help them direct their thoughts.

"For example, one child found a picture of a boy wearing a raincoat and boots and playing in the rain. His question was 'Why is the boy wearing boots?' On the inside of the 'booklet', his answer was, 'He's wearing boots because it's raining'.

"Another thing that I think helps with cause and effect is jokes and riddles....my kids love to read and solve them."

Up C Daisies

"Sometimes a silly saying helps the children to remember to edit their stories.

U = understanding

P = punctuation

C = capitalization

The S on the end could stand for spelling."

"I've used an editing 'Helping Hand'. Each child traces his/her own hand. From left to right they print R C P S W ...one letter on each finger.

R = Reread

C = Capitals

P = Punctuation

S = Spacing

W = Word Wall

I then laminate their hands and tape them onto their desks (or put them into their writing folder). It's a very visual reminder close at hand...no pun intended!"



"During modeled writing, we always say 'End of a thought, a polka-dot called a period.'"

"I often will read their story and 'act like' I am out of breath - because there was no place for me to stop and take a breath. Then we re-read 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 will do this by themselves."

"When my students are writing, I walk around the room and I tell them that if I tap their desk with my finger, it means that I see a place that needs fixing. It causes them to stop and look for themselves. I have them write a sentence over 3 times if they turn in a story that has a sentence that lacks a capital letter at the beginning or punctuation at the end. I also dictate a sentence every Friday as part of the Spelling test and I take off points for capital letters and punctuation."

The British call the period a 'full stop'. Perhaps our kiddies would find that useful, too!

Webs

"The children should be able to show some kind of web (pre-writing), as well as staying on one subject. I am helping them really distinguish between WHAT kind of writing they are doing. It goes like this:



1) Journal Writing

** This web would include: Who, What, When, Where, Why
(I have a big hand with those words written on each finger)

2) Story Writing (fictional)

** This web would only have 4 lines which would include Setting, Main Characters, Problem and Solution.

3) True Writing (non-fiction)

** This web includes 1 subject and 4 lines to write down 4 facts. This will be done later in the year."

"I recently changed my writing workshop and today my kids didn't want to go out to recess!!! They wanted to stay in and keep writing/publishing! I recently read a book by Jim Henry (published by Scholastic) called *Fresh Takes on Using Journals to Teach Beginning Writers Five-Minute Mini-Lessons, Skill-Building Strategies, and Irresistible Activities That Inspire Children to Write*.

"I've been using his routine for 2 weeks now and I love it. He takes 5 minutes and writes his own journal entry on the overhead. (He sets a timer and sticks to it.) During this time he reviews a writing skill like capital letters or main idea. Then the kids have a block of time to write independently. He walks around and helps where needed. At the end of this block, then it's sharing time. The kids walk around and read to each other or to class pets. Or he lets them continue writing if they choose. He suggests several ideas for kids who don't know what to write about. One idea is to do a story rewrite. Take a book like *Yuck Soup* and let the kids write their own version. 'In go the shoes. In go the toothbrushes. In go the this-tles. In go... In go... Yuck!' My really low kids and non-English kids love to do story rewrites. It's a safe way for them to write and feel successful. The thing I love best about his system is that the kids write in a spiral notebook. This keeps all their papers together and in order by date. I use to have writing folders for my kids. What a mess! Drove me nuts! The kids feel

very official with their notebooks. I think that most of the kids writing should be about something they are interested in. A topic of their own choice. I find that my kids write more if they get to choose what to write about. Sometimes I give them a topic, but very rarely!"

Writing Ideas

"Writing research is pretty clear that kids write best what they know...prompts just don't produce a child's best writing and I don't think formulaic writing does either. Writing instruction is tough because it is usually the only subject we teach that we don't do....few teachers I know are writers, write everyday, write personal narrative or memoir.

"It is a great idea to get 'real' writers in so you and kids can find out what authentic writing is all about. Certainly it would be nice if kids could organize their thoughts before they write, but that is not how the professionals do it...they draft and redraft and revise and revise and revise and then edit and edit."

"I did a lesson that went great. I asked the kids to create a vacation destination for their very tired teacher. We looked at brochures and they circled the adjectives, then they created their own for their created vacation destination. They had to use lots of adjectives to describe the destination for me. This might be especially fun right before Easter Break. You could also extend the lesson to include a budget. You know: how much to get there, what to take along, etc."

"The *Step Up to Writing* class uses colours to help children learn about the different part of a paragraph (green strips for the topic sentence, yellow for detail sentence, and red for descriptions) - I used it with a paper that my kids did on one of their Math Labs (we have *Trailblazers*) and they did a wonderful job. It also explained how to introduce the idea of *transition words* (first, next, then, etc.). This first experience was pretty 'guided' (we brainstormed ideas of how we could say what we wanted to write and then they decided what to write - sometimes sentences that were completely new ideas too, though). I plan on doing more with them and getting them more independent. This program will hopefully give all our kids a common "language" and focus in their writing no matter what grade they are in."

Reluctant Writers

"We have used a spinner that I made with important story elements on it (i.e. characters, setting, problem and solution). I have also used, with at risk kids, different kinds of books for them to make. Make flip books that tell the beginning, middle, and end of a story. Rewrite a story and turn it into a spiral, lots of teachers books have this, you write the words around in a circle and then cut it into a spiral. We've made story wheels and story cubes and then they use their books to retell the story to a friend or to someone at home. You can also give them the pictures from the story and have them write the words to go with them (this one's also good for sequencing). Having them act out the story is fun, too."

A Whole-Class Story

"In my class, we wrote a whole class story. First we brainstormed some Hallowe'en words (they love doing that). Then I began the story by writing on the chalkboard:

On a dark night, a spooky black cat.....

and then the kids offered ideas. I continued to write down their suggestions, ones which we agreed upon as making an interesting story. Then when we were done, they all copied it from the board on cute Hallowe'en writing paper. The next day, we broke into groups and made impromptu costumes, and each group acted the story out. Again, they just loved this, too! (I cut up some black garbage bags and made capes and tied them around the kids that were vampires). We chanted the story and acted it out, and discussed it. Then about four days later, they wrote their own Hallowe'en stories. After we edited them, they did their final copies and made covers, and I laminated them and bound them. This next week, the children will read their stories to other classes, and they will go to the office to share, too. They did a good job and felt very proud. I was impressed how much many of them wrote. Some wrote 4 pages, others, 2, and a few wrote one page. I felt that writing the first class story really helped give them the 'push' to enjoy writing their own stories. We will do this once a month, besides doing other writing assignments."



Graphic Organizers

"I did a social studies writing lesson about our walking field trip through town. We used a graphic organizer to show the main idea and details about the parts of our community we saw:

Downtown: stores, buses, cars.

Neighbourhood: houses with yards, apartment buildings, parks, school.

Park: playground, sports field, picnic area.

Farmer's Market: farmers/vendors, customers, produce.

It was a simple introduction to using graphic organizers."

"Today I was just planning a writing lesson using a graphic organizer that looks like a house. The main idea is the roof. The sideboards of the wall are the details - they support and hold up the roof. They tell the parts of or the ways to, or the kinds of, describe how it explain why`, and support the main idea.

I have also seen this done with a skeleton - main idea is backbone, details are ribs."

"I start off teaching the main idea as an umbrella and all the rain drops are the details."

"A friend of mine shared her way of teaching summarizing in her class. She first asks the kids if they know what a TV guide is. She shows examples and they discuss how one or two sentences tell about the program but don't give the ending away. Then she leads them into a discussion of how summarizing is like the TV guide entry. She said it worked great."

"When I do writing with my students, I write each stage of the Writing Process on the board and the students' names who are in that stage under it because they may all be in different stages. It helps me know where they are and helps them as well. Ex: Stage 1: Prewriting: Kate, Becky, Jacob Stage 2: Samantha..... etc."

"I have used both the 'four blocks method' and 'the hand' method to teach elements of a paragraph. Four blocks method: divide a sheet into fourths. In the middle of the page, kids write the topic sentence. In each of the first three boxes kids write supporting details. In the last of the four blocks, students write a concluding or wrap-up statement. The hand method: students make an outline of their hands. I have them make a very loose outline so that their writing fits inside. In the thumb, they write the topic sentence. In each of the next three fingers they write 3 details or supporting statements. In the last finger, they write the concluding sentence."

"I use the hamburger idea to write a paragraph. The bun (first and last sentence) is important and tells what is in the bun and ends it satisfyingly. There should be a number of yummy details in between."

Writing Tips:

Write a Journal Entry

Pick one interesting thing to write about. Picture it in your mind before you write.

Use words that will help readers picture what happened.

Tell why the event was so much fun.

Check your spelling and handwriting.

Write a Thank-You Note

Start the letter with Dear and the name of the person you are thanking.

What are you thanking the person for? Tell what the person did for you.

Tell the person why you are glad that person helped..

Write a List

A list is a group of words. You do not need to write whole sentences.

Decide what you will have for lunch, for example. Keep it simple!

What do you need to make each part of your lunch? Write each item on the list.

Write a Description

Think about the place you will describe. Picture it in your mind before you write.

Tell what you can see in the place, what you can hear, and what you can smell, taste, or touch.

Write what makes this place different from other places.

Tell why you like the place so much.

Write an Explanation

Think of a game you like to play. Explain how to play it. Try to use a word from your spelling list. Decide what game you will explain. Think about what you need to do to play the game. Put the steps in order from first to last. Use words like first, second, and third to help readers understand the game.



"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."

"My students wrote simple autobiographies. They wrote a sentence or two for each year of their life. Then I copied and put them into the Memory Book for the end of the year."

<http://www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/1867.html>
Mimi-Lessons for Grade Two writing lessons.

http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/outline_for_writing_mini_lessons.pdf
This a great link. Print it off for a checklist of mini-lessons.

Writing Prompts

Writing Prompts

Think about your best holiday celebration ever.

Think about how you spend Saturdays during the school year. Pick out a particularly memorable Saturday, and explain exactly what you did that day and why it was especially memorable.

Remember the best school assembly ever. Tell what happened and why it was important.

Write about a special time you have had with a family or friend.

Pick your favourite animal, draw a picture and tell why it is your favourite.

Plan the perfect playground, tell what it would include and where it is.

Describe a crowded place.

Here is a wonderful list of writing prompts:

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html>



What if.....

- ... there were no colours except white?
- ... we had three arms?
- ... children were the parents?
- ... there were no stoves?
- ... we had no pencils?
- ... there were no clocks?
- ... we had no policemen?
- ... we went to school at night?
- ... there were only adults in the world?
- ... there were no school at all?
- ... there was no such thing as breakfast cereal?
- ... it never stopped raining?
- ... we had no cars?
- ... insects were as big as people?
- ... there were no books?
- ... our only form of transportation was horses?
- ... our parents never said no?
- ... we were never hungry?
- ... we all looked the same?
- ... we didn't have holidays?
- ... smiling was against the law?
- ... every wish came true?
- ... the world was flat?
- ... we never recycled anything?
- ... people could fly?
- ... there was no gravity?
- ... no one had manners?
- ... all people were selfish?
- ... there were no teachers?
- ... our shadows were alive?
- ... there were no telephones?
- ... we could only eat pizza?
- ... we all acted the same?
- ... water didn't freeze?
- ... trees grew candy?
- ... we never slept?



- I look best when
- People hurt my feelings when
- I need to improve in
- A good friend is someone who
- If I were a giant I would
- School would be better if
- I would like a great big
- If I had a magic ring
- An important thing in my life is
- I wish I could
- When I want attention from my parents, I
- When I want attention from my teachers, I

Write about:

- ... one of the five senses
- ... your house
- ... a hamburger's ingredients
- ... the best kind of pet
- ... how a turtle protects itself
- ... why your proud of your school
- ... favourite things about your school
- ... the parts of a tree
- ... your favourite animal
- ... something you did over the weekend
- ... an event to remember
- ... things that quench your thirst
- ... the benefits of watching television
- ... your favourite book
- ... your favourite movie
- ... a visit to the doctor or dentist
- ... why you like skateboarding, skiing, bicycling, etc. ...
- ... places to go in your city
- ... things to do when you are sick
- ... your grandma or grandpa
- ... your favourite toy, or video game

In school I do my best when
If I were a teacher I would
I don't like to eat

If I were five years older I would

If I had a million dollar I would

I get angry when

On Saturdays I like to

My family likes to

I love to eat

Something I do well is

At school I like to

I feel silly when

If I could be invisible I would ...



An important person to me is ...
When I become a parent I ...
I once got hurt when ...
I'd like to solve the problem of ...
I don't like it when ...
I love to give ...
I like going home because ...
If I were very small I would ...
I get attention by ...
I would hate to lose ...
As a friend, I can be counted on to ...
Once somebody helped me by ...
Over the weekend I ...
I wish people would stop ...

What is something about yourself that you are proud of?
What is something that your parents say they like about you?
What is your favourite holiday? Write the reasons for your choice.
Write about your favourite pet - one you have now or would like to have.
What do you like and dislike about where you live?
Write freely about the bravest thing you have ever done.
Do you worry? Write about the thing you worry about the most.
If you could be a super hero, what extraordinary powers would you give yourself?
Would you rather be a dog or a cat? Why?
Would you like to live to be 100 years old? What would it be like?
If you could be a superstar in any sport when you grow up, what sport would you choose?
Who or what makes you laugh? Explain why you think this person or thing is funny.
Imagine that all the television stations stopped broadcasting for one week. What would you do?
What is your most prized possession?
What makes you special or unique?
Based on what you now know about yourself, make five predictions about your future.
Who is a hero of yours? Explain why this person means so much to you.
Retell a compliment that someone recently gave you. Explain how that compliment made you feel.
If you could be someone else, who would that person be?
Invent the best dessert in the whole world.
What is the best present you ever received (or gave) and why?
If you could decorate your room any way possible, what would you do?

Who would you like to hang out with for a day and why?
If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?
If you could choose your name, what would you be called? Why?
Tell where you would like to go with a friend.
What is your favourite book? Why?
Tell about something that made you very happy.
Tell what you like best about (fall, winter, spring, summer).
Tell the reasons you would NOT like an elephant for a pet.
What day of the week is your favourite? Why?
Finish this thought: The Principal of our school

Write about some things you like to do in the snow.
Tell about some things you do at home to help your family.
When you grow up you'll need a job to earn money. It should be something you like to do.
What do you think that job would be and why would you like it?
Tell all the things you would do if you were the one making dinner tonight.
Tell what would happen if you really saw a bear in the woods.
Write a story about a dragon that was in a cave near our school.
Write about three things you think I do at home at night.
Describe something that always makes you laugh.
Tell all the good things that you can think of about your mom.
If dinosaurs came back to our town, what would happen?
Tell the ways you have changed since you were little.
How can we help to keep our Earth clean?
Tell how you would make your favourite sandwich.
You accidentally get locked overnight in TOYS-R-US. Tell about your night.
Design a piece of playground equipment that you'd like to have. Write a paragraph to describe it.
You are home sick with an unusual illness. It is called the "lime-green" disease. Tell about it.
Your teacher has eyes in the back of her head. Tell how this helps or hurts you.
Write about the day that all cars turned into airplanes.
Write your principal a letter.
Write a letter convincing your parents to buy you a pet elephant.
Write about the day you spent in the jungle.
Write a recipe for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Number the steps in the correct order.
Write a letter to an imaginary person politely asking them not to burp at the lunch table.
Write a letter to your parents that will convince them that spinach (or any other food you don't like) is bad for you.



Using Poetry

"I had attended a *Grade Two Reading and Writing* conference about 4 years ago. One of the suggestions was to use poetry on a daily basis and I have been using poetry in my room ever since. During the summer, I make each child a Poetry Book - it is made with oaktag covers and different coloured construction paper pages (about 15 pages). I also have a collection of poetry for the children. Most of it has been collected from different websites that I have found. The poems are about school, holidays, silly poems, weather, science, etc. Each child receives a copy of the poem, cuts off the extra paper and glues it into his/her book. We recite it several times for one or two days, as a whole class, or front of the room, back of the room, etc. Then the children volunteer to recite it from memory (help is given when needed for missed words or phrases). When the poem is recited, I put a stamp on the poem and the class applauds after each child recites his poem. After a few weeks, the children select their favourite poem and recite it. The children are thrilled to be able to take their poetry book home at the end of the year. Many times this year the children learned a new poem every three days. This informal public speaking helps cover one of the standards - public speaking. I've had parents tell me about how their child love to recite the poem at breakfast, at dinner and to grandparents. The children have even invited the principal to one of the poetry reviews. It's fun and learning takes place!



You can also use the poems to review vowel sounds, language arts lessons of compound words and contractions, discuss science, etc."

"I use poetry on a daily basis as part of my opening routine. My students have a 3 ring binder and they add a new packet of poems each month. I try to use some poems that tie into our current units (dinosaurs, rain forests, etc.). I also use them to teach specific skills like compound words or contractions. Sometimes they do a scavenger hunt for word wall words or spelling words that can be found within the poem. We always do a choral reading of some variety after the poem has been modeled. They love to read in small groups (boys/girls, by rows, or numbering off) to see which group can read with the best expression or fluency. It takes about 10 minutes a day, but I consider it part of my reading time. Once a month, they take the poems home to read to their parents as a homework assignment. The kids really like the variety, so it is well worth it."

"I use poetry journals in my classroom, which are small three ring binders. You can easily substitute these with folders that have three holes in them. Just insert brads into the holes and punch holes in all poetry for insertion. When I introduce a new poem, generally I read it aloud the first day. I like to copy the poems onto chart paper for all to see. I have

used a lot of poems, and especially love Shel Silverstein's work. The first day (shared) I would read the poem aloud to let them hear the flow of the language. I model some strategies for figuring out an unknown word using the rhyming pattern. During repeated readings we do rhyme roundups, followed by some type of word activity. My class loves to highlight in different colours the words we are focusing on.

"For guided reading, I would preview the vocabulary in the poem and introduce words they might have difficulty decoding. I then would build some background or make predictions based on title. Then they go into groups with a purpose and read the poem. Some days they round up rhymes on their own. Other days they work to add a verse to the poem following the pattern, compare/contrast to another poem, etc. During the final share portion of this block, we read the poem again using some time type of oral reading activity. Be creative here, they love it. The poem is then glued into their journal and they illustrate. These poems are brought home for reading to their family. The children love to read and reread these poems, and the journals are a favourite during the SSR block."

Do you need poems for every occasion?

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems.html>

Iram has a great website with a wonderful poetry collection.

<http://www.dmarie.com/asp/poems.asp?action=queryform>

Hunt for poems that contain a key word or subject.

<http://www.teachingheart.net/>

'Teaching is a Work of Heart' website has poetry under the subject headings.



Using Poetry

"Here are some ideas that have proven successful. I don't always do the same thing - it depends on the poem and the purpose. Make poems on charts and give each student their own copy.

- Look for rhyming patterns and locate words that rhyme with _____.
- Do vocabulary study - look up word meanings.
- Review phonics - vowel searches, blends, digraphs, diphthongs, contractions, suffixes, compound words, etc.
- Look for spelling changes.
- Discuss synonyms, antonyms, homonyms for words in the poem.
- Discuss word families and rhyming words.
- Illustrate the poem.
- Write a response to the poem or several sentences related to the poem's topic.
- Use poems to introduce content areas.

- Echo read.
- Do choral reading.
- Do partner reading.
- 'What do you notice?' (just ask kids this question - the kids do notice a lot!)
- Reflections... write at least five sentences about what is the relevance of the poem to the children, what it reminds them about or why they liked/disliked it.

Poetry for your classroom!

If you teach poetry in your classroom, this website is a must! This is a collection of absolutely wonderful poems on a variety of subjects. It is 'water poetry', but the poems are useful on many topics.

http://www.k12.hi.us/%7Eshasincl/poems_prop_cycle_weather.html#weatherpoems

Some concepts taught and skills readily reinforced through poems daily:

- love of poetry and language
- increase memory skills
- develop concepts
- rhyme scheme
- rhyming words
- word families
- endings
- contractions
- antonyms/synonyms/homonyms
- little words within big words
- vowel sounds
- figurative language (metaphors & similes)
- parts of speech (nouns, verbs, etc.)
- identifying facts (especially in Meish Goldish's poems!)
- types of poem (couplet, etc.)
- handwriting lessons
- alliteration
- quotation marks
- vocabulary
- sequence
- counting skills
- dictionary & thesaurus use
- poet studies

Poetry and Song Books

"My students love their poetry and song notebooks. I add poems or songs whenever I start a new unit, or find a poem or song that is pertinent to what we are doing. I add songs often, too.

We highlight parts of the poem or song for word families, parts of speech, rhyming words, etc. I could usually pick out teaching points for entry.

I put 2 blank table of content pages at the beginning of the notebook for easy reference. We number and enter the titles as a class."

"I use poetry notebooks and my students truly enjoy them. I use a spiral notebook. At the beginning of the week I introduce the poem or song on a chart or overhead transparency. Each day we read or sing it together. One day we may highlight rhyming words. One day we may circle nouns - whatever we've been working on in class. By Wednesday or Thursday I give them a half page size copy of the poem. They glue it in their notebooks and illustrate it. On Friday, the students get to request a poem or song to do together or they may read one for the class individually. Sometimes I only do one poem or song a week or sometimes more if they fit into science or social studies units. The poetry notebook was a favourite with my kids."



Read Alouds

"I always read *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*! When I am reading it they are constantly begging me to read on. Here's an idea I love to do when reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* aloud: hide **one** 'gold ticket' in a Hershey candy bar and pass out enough candy bars for everyone in your class. As you approach the part in the story where Charlie finds the golden ticket, have the children open their candy barssome rip it open and some open it slowly. The one that has the ticket is just thrilled...this activity really shows them how Charlie feels when he does find the ticket and how he felt when he didn't. Children then eat their chocolate bars with new meaning while I continue to read aloud. Have FUN!"

"My students always love the *Magic Tree House Series* by Mary Pope Osborne. They sit in a trance, listening to my every word as I read. They always ask for more."

"*Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little* by E.B. White are favourites of mine! I read *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* - boy, do they love that one!"

"Last year I read *Mr. Poppers Penguins*, a big hit!"

Other favourites.....

James and the Giant Peach (Dahl)

Magic Tree House/Dinosaurs (Osborne)

Flat Stanley (Brown)

The Littles (Peterson)

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Be a Perfect Person in 3 Days

Sideways Stories from Wayside School - Louis Sachar

A Mouse Called Wolf - Dick King Smith

Bunnicula - Deborah and James Howe,

Poppy - Avi,

The BFG - Roald Dahl

The Secret World of Og - Pierre Berton

Fantastic Mr. Fox - Roald Dahl

Runaway Ralph and *Ralph S. Mouse*



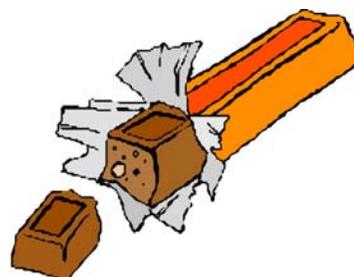
"I also read Louis Sachar's *There's A Boy In The Girl's Bathroom*. We talk about the main character and why he does the things he does and the kids love it. My kids feel that 'Bradley', the main character, is still around after the book is read and they continue to talk about him long after the book is done. I've used it for several years now and kids come to me expecting to hear it. There are a lot of opportunities to discuss why people do the things they do."

"We just did a reader's theatre for *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins. The story has two children ready to share a batch of 12 cookies. Then more children come and they share the cookies by dividing them evenly. Then even more come and they continue to divide the cookies. It is easy to act out and the dialogue is directly from the story. I made some paper cookies, and there were about 12 parts (though not all speaking) for the students to play. It is very easy to do and incorporates fractions for math!"

"Read *My Father's Dragon!* To make it really special get a backpack and fill it with the many things that are used during this adventure ... like a pair of rubber boots, chewing gum, etc. And, of course, share the lollipops. They anticipate what would come out of the backpack next. There are two more books in the same series that my kids love." (*Elmer and the Dragon*, and *The Dragons of Blue Land*)

"My absolute, all time favourite is *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis."

"I love to read the Roald Dahl books! *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is wonderful - you will enjoy it as much as the children. *The BFG* is a hoot and the kids will roll on the floor laughing. I always read *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. I edit it as I read to take out the alcohol references, but this is a story that shouldn't be missed. I like *Danny, the Champion of the World* - although I did have one parent highly complain about the poaching (she said the 'glorification' of poaching). *James and the Giant Peach* is a great read, too, and then you can show the film and do a comparison. Read *Matilda*, *The Enormous Crocodile*, and *The Giraffe, the Pelly, and Me.*"



"I like to read *The Secret World of Og*. You may want to discuss this with the intermediate teachers - sometimes they study this book and want it to be fresh. It is a wonderful read - and Canadian, of course."

Read *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White.

"We read *Charlotte's Web*, and, as we read, we do several activities like friendship poem webs, character comparisons, and spider research, which recently expanded to include research on the Web (no pun intended). After reading the story, we watch the video and do a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting both."

There are several books of *Sideways Stories From Wayside School* by Louis Sachar. These are put into very short chapters, so you can read a chapter in a few minutes of spare time. The kids love these - they are very funny!

"*Sideways Stories From Wayside School* has been a read aloud favourite in my classroom for over five years now. I always read it and the sequel, *Wayside School is Falling Down*, to my grade twos. Year after year the enthusiasm for these books is exceptional, although I always have to close my door when I read about Mrs. Gorf in case people in the hall think that's really the way I talk to my kids!"

Mr. Popper's Penguins is always a favourite. It is very out-of-date, but it is still very charming.

Read some of the old favourites. Read The Secret Garden, The Wind in the Willows, and others. Have your children ever heard the original Winnie the Pooh books?

At Christmas read The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.

Books by Beverly Cleary are always favourites. The Ramona series is fun.... read them in sequence. Read the Henry Huggins series, too.

"Read The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch. We draw a picture of the princess. We use a piece of brown paper bag and cut it out for her dress and glue it to the picture. This turns out very cute!"

The Wizard of Oz by Frank Baum - compare the book and the movie.

And for Canadian content - Mordecai Richler's *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* (a bit grim in parts but the kids like it),.

Fairy Tales

"Two things I love doing are building a castle with cardboard, toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls. We go all out with a draw bridge and moat full of alligators. The other is reading as many tales as we can find time for and comparing the differences of all the Snow Whites, Cinderellas, Three Bears, Three Pigs, and so on. I love sharing the silly, the serious, and different country's versions. Plus they're fun to read! We sometimes do a play or puppet show."



"We usually do plays with fairy tales. The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, The Mitten, The Three Bears, etc., all can be made into short plays, and it isn't hard for the students, even those with reading difficulties, to memorize the lines."

"We write about 'If I Were a King/Queen'. After writing, the children draw a picture of themselves as a king or queen. We use large manila paper to draw a picture of a castle. The kids LOVE this because they are able to draw huge moats with alligators around the castle. We use a book (I believe from Usborne) that has a picture of a castle in it to help the kids draw one.

"A take home project: Students create their own coat of arms. The children use a variety of materials, such as aluminum foil, poster board, markers, ribbons, glitter, bells, etc. The sky is the limit!"

Author Studies

"I use author studies in my class. I have a 1/2 multi-age class. I focus on a different author each week. I make a poster with the author's name, and display it with various books by the author standing around it. I introduce the author on Monday, read about him/her from an inside cover of one of the books, and then introduce the activities that we will do in our literacy centers around the author. I will have a listening center activity in which one of the author's stories is on tape, (most of the time I tape the stories myself). After they listen to the story they do a comprehension activity with the story. I also have an A.R.T. (author related task) project in a center. It is an art project that comes from one of the books. During the week we read the various books during story time."



"Author Studies are a powerful teaching tool. The goal of an author study is to make a connection between a book and an author's life. This shows children that authors are real people, develops motivation to seek out other work by the same author and hopefully inspires children to write.

When beginning an author study you should set up a corner in your room that represents the author. Place a large photo of the author along with information about their life. I like to make a poster and have the children decorate it. Also, I place objects that represent the author's life. For example, for Patricia Polacco I place a miniature rocking chair because she like to rock as she writes. This corner creates the special bond and let's everyone who enters your room know you are conducting an author study."

Make posters for your classroom from the websites.

Robert Munsch

Study Robert Munsch. He is a great storyteller, who tells a story to classes of children for years before writing it into a book and publishing it.

And..... he is Canadian, of course.

<http://www.robertmunsch.com/>

Go to "Robert's Poems" and then look through the poems. This is a very small sample.....

*Oh the great Canadian Winter
Is not so very cold.
I once knew a kid who didn't freeze
Until he was ten years old.*



You can listen to books on-line, too.

He encourages students or classes to write to him and will send replies, so this is a good exercise to teach letter writing skills.

<http://www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/1518.html>

This website has a Robert Munsch author study all mapped out for you.

Jan Brett

For December, do a Jan Brett author study.

Begin with "The Mitten", a favourite with all ages. Have the children study her artwork.

<http://www.janbrett.com>

Her website has 1000 pages of activities and artwork that you can download. There are oodles of activities to do and ideas for teaching her books.

There's "The Night Before Christmas" and "The Gingerbread Baby" and others that fit with Christmas and December.

There are printing and cursive alphabets.

She says:

"If you're a teacher or librarian, I have a teacher's pack just for you. You can write to me at:

Jan Brett

Post Office Box 366

Norwell, Ma., USA 02061

Marc Brown

When Marc Brown was a boy, his Grandma Thora told him stories, making them up as she talked. When he grew up, he began telling his son Tolon stories, just like his grandmother had done for him. At the time, Mr. Brown was an illustrator of children's books. He told his editor about the aardvark story he was telling his son. The editor said he should put it in writing. Since then, Marc Brown has written and illustrated more than thirty books about the aardvark boy, his family and friends.

"I know several teachers have already started planning for a big celebration in May with Arthur's Birthday. Some of my fellow teachers and I have been working on planning some reading, writing, and math activities to go along with several of the Arthur books by Marc Brown. We have completed nine books so far. We are planning on adding some of the chapter books too.

Roald Dahl

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

The famous candy maker, Willy Wonka, is opening his doors to the 5 lucky finders of the Golden Tickets. The 5 very unique children face temptation as they venture through the deliciously amazing tour of the factory. This is a favourite read-aloud book by Roald Dahl, and your children will love it! - and you will, too.....

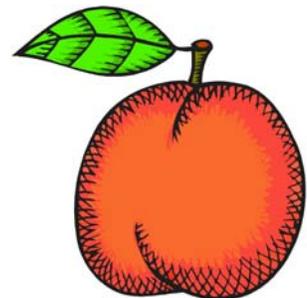
"I LOVE THIS BOOK! I read it each year either at Christmas or Easter and give my kids a Wonka Bar each year before the break. I do not show the pictures (they are so small and it slows the reading down). I stress to the children how good the writing is and how the reader (listener) can create their own pictures in their head. There are a few key points in the book when I have them illustrate an event. (One that comes to mind is when Violet Beauregard turns into a blueberry.) I give them Hershey kisses and talk about solid and liquid forms in science, then we do a taste test and graph what kind we liked best. We also write descriptive sentences about the chocolate. I also have them write responses to certain happenings and what it would be like if they found a golden ticket. Finally after we have finished the book we watch 'Willy Wonka' the movie. We compare and contrast the movie, discuss if it 'looked' like they imagined, and also decide which we liked better. Each year I have a pretty even split but the book usually 'wins'. Last year I had a little guy that was very disappointed in the movie because he liked making his own pictures in his head. Have fun!"

- Create your own Golden Ticket! Have each student create what they think a Golden Ticket would look like. Use glitter, paper, glue, markers, or whatever you want.
- Make chocolates! You can buy the molds and chocolate pieces at almost any art supply store.
- Watch the movie. Have the students compare and contrast the movie and the book.
- Students write descriptive paragraphs about one of the characters. Other students must guess who it is.
- Research a candy factory! The students can research the history of a local candy factory. If there isn't a local one, they can research Hershey or another well known factory. They can also write letters to the factory telling them what they like about their candy. Who knows, maybe you'll get some free samples!

James and the Giant Peach

- People We Know - Roald Dahl used the technique of **personification** (giving human characteristics or qualities to nonhumans) in this story. Many of these human characteristics are exaggerations. Yet, some of your students may recognize these traits in people they know or in characters from another book.

- Some students may be squeamish about the insects in this story . You can help them



to learn more about these critters by assigning research projects.

- Show your students the video version of *James and the Giant Peach*. Discuss and/or create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the movie with the book. Which one was better? Why?

- Roald Dahl developed fantastic images in this book. Have your students create a mural of the places the peach visited - a timeline of the book's main events that runs along the bottom of an extra-wide piece of paper will help orient them.

Dr. Seuss

March 2nd is Theodore Geisel's birthday! Celebrate his wonderful books. There are more Dr. Seuss ideas in the special days section.

The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins

Count to 500 by ones, twos, fives, and tens. Create math problems to see which combinations make 500. Bring a collection of hats to graph. Discuss hats worn by people in various occupations. Design and make your own hats. Using tally marks, count the number of: girls in your class, cars that go by the school, pencils in your class, etc.



Bartholomew and the Oobleck

Make oobleck. Discuss your favourite kind of weather. Make a weather graph. Practice reading thermometers. Brainstorm 'weather' words and then categorize them. Make a Venn diagram of differences and similarities of real and imaginary weather patterns that are depicted in the book.

The recipe of Oobleck is 4 boxes of corn starch to about 6 to 6 1/2 cups of water. If you want to add green food colouring, it works best if you add the colouring to the last cup or so of water.

"I had never made Oobleck before and I did it in front of my class. Oh My Goodness!!! At first I did not think it was going to work. I was making a terrible mess and really didn't know what to expect. The corn starch and the water was not mixing, my bowl was too small and I had to scramble for another. We got the green food colouring in and I couldn't figure out what was going on! (Those of you who have made it, know what I am talking about) so, I figured it was what it was supposed to be and I started slopping spoonfuls of it in the hands of my children. They played, they oohed, they awed. It was outstanding! We laughed all the way home. I sent home a baggy with each of my students. To date I have not received a phone call from an angry parent, but the weekend is young so, have fun, enjoy and experience Oobleck! P.S. I vacuumed the carpet before I left school just to make sure it would come up, and it did"

The Lorax

Discuss the importance of trees for people and animals. Design a poster to discourage the destruction of the rain forest. Plant a tree. Discuss good forest practices and renewable resources if you live in a forest industry community.



And 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'. After reading 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 all on _____ Street!'

This can be done with a story form like the one below.

As I was on my way home from school, I saw a _____.

It couldn't be a _____. No, no. What I really saw was

And to think that I saw it all on _____ Street!

Green Eggs and Ham

After reading, go over the rhyming words. Have the students brainstorm more pairs of rhyming words. Now have the children make up their own at their seats. Using story paper, have the children write their own pairs of rhymes. For example: 'A ghost ate some toast.' Have the children draw pictures to go along with the rhymes. Make your own green eggs and ham! In the room, have the children help make scrambled eggs with green food colouring.

Read as many Dr. Seuss books as you can! Have green eggs and ham for lunch. Play a silly rhyming game. Someone say a word and see how many words everyone can think of to rhyme with it. Have birthday cake for a snack! Learn more about Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel).

Also read *The King's Stilts!*

Read Around the World

"Each day we read a book or two that relates to a particular country or continent. We locate and colour that place on individual maps and list the place, book title and author in a photocopied 'passport' booklet. I sometimes add sticker 'stamps' of flags or animals related to that place on each child's page. Here's my list:

England....Hedgie by Jan Brett, The Prickly Hedgehog by Mark Ezra

France....Mirette on the Highwire or Madeline stories

Egypt....The Day of Ahmed's Secret by Heide and Gilliland or Tut's Mummy (I think its a Step-Up Book in Random House series)

Africa....It Takes a Village by Jane Cowen-Fletcher, Anansi stories or any African folk-tale by Mwenye Hadithi, Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe, Whistling Thorn by Helen Cowcher, Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema

Vietnam....The Lotus Seed, Angel Child, Dragon Child by Michelle Maria Surat

Italy.... Strega Nona stories by Tomie DiPaolo

Japan....Yoshi's Feast or The Faithful Elephants (very sad - have tissues ready! It may be too sad for lower grades), Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say

China....Ming Lo Moves the Mountain by Lobel or Tikki Tikki Tembo by Arlene Mosel, The Most Beautiful Thing in the World by Barbara Walker

Australia....Katie No-Pocket

Indonesia...Bushbaby by Adrienne Kenneway

S. America....The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

India....One Grain of Rice

Russia.... Babushka Baba Yaga by Patricia Pollacco

Ukraine....Rechenka's Eggs by P. Palace

The Caribbean Islands... The Calypso Alphabet by John Agard

Mexico... Erandi's Braids by Antonio Hernandez Madrigal,

Antonio's Lucky Day folktale by Joe Hayes

Finland... The Maiden of Northland: A Hero Tale of Finland
by Aaron Shepard

Sweden... Annika's Secret Wish by Beverly Lewis

Korea... The Trip Back Home by Janice S. Wong

Philippines... Rockabye Crocodile by Jose Aruego



and of course,

Canada!... It's really difficult to pick just one book, however I always love reading The Hockey Sweater by Roch Carrier".

"I also found a great big book you might want to use with your geography unit. As the Crow Flies - A First Book of Maps by Gail Hartman (McMillan/McGraw Hill big book)."

Words, Words, Words!

Contractions



The Contraction Song

Sing to Mary Had a Little Lamb

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,
The rest will stay the same.

Apostrophe will fill the space,
Fill the space, fill the space,
Apostrophe will fill the space,
one word will remain.

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.

"When I started contractions I sang this song (leaving out the word 'contraction') and had the kids guess what we were going to learn about. After they guessed, I passed out the song. We read the poem, then sang it. After talking about what a contraction was I had them highlight the contractions. We read the contractions a stanza at a time. Counted them, compared the number of contractions, which stanza had the most, why did the author put more in that stanza, etc. Then we sang the song again. After this we listed as many contractions as we could. We started an on-going list. As kids are reading even now they come up and show me a new contraction or one that's already on the list. They are excited, as if they just discovered something very interesting. I think it's that they are relating what we studied to real life reading."

"I used the song and also large letters (with students holding them) to spell out the words and then change them into contractions. I also used the overhead for them to read sentences and change the two words into the contractions. We finished by doing a cut and paste page where they cut out the contractions and put them under the two words."

"I did a power point of contractions. On the first slide I have the two words with spaces between, they come closer on the second, and so on until they collide. The next slide has some letters falling out and an apostrophe falling in place. I finish it by repeating slide one, and the last slide. It takes maybe 8-10 slides to get the full effect."

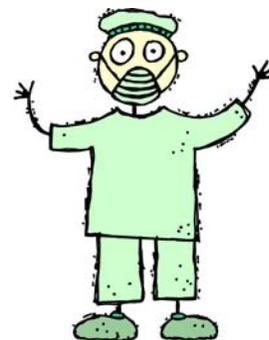
"I demonstrate and have the kids, in tongue twister fashion, say, 'I am' fast again and again. It starts to turn into one word. Try a few of them ...i.e. they are, he is, etc. (Some don't work.....)"

"Point out that, because contractions need to be taken apart, an apostrophe drops in - like a bookmark, to show from where the letters were removed. It saves the place of the missing letter(s) in a line just as you (children) save a place in line for your friend."

"The children had one letter each.....we made two words such as 'can not'. I also had a child waiting off to the side with an 'apostrophe' card. We decided which letters (children) had to leave and then where the apostrophe would stand. When the apostrophe came in, the letters moved together to make one word...."

"Another idea for chanting contractions that my kids absolutely love is saying 'whoop' for the apostrophe. For example, 'can't' would be clap clap clap whoop (and draw one with your finger in the sky) clap."

"I tell my students that they are going to become word surgeons. I even put on rubber gloves like a doctor. Then I cut the words apart and add the scar (apostrophe). They love it!"



"Last year another teacher showed me this. The kids loved doing it. You write the two words on a sentence strip. Then you fold the paper so that it makes it turn into the contraction because the extra letters 'disappear' when you fold the strip just so."

"The kids DO love to go and search for contractions with that see-through highlighter tape. We do a lesson and then I give them the tape and they search through books for contractions and we make a master list. I also do a little hand movement where I put up one hand (in the 'stop' position) and said 'can' then I put up my other hand and say 'not' then I bring them together and say 'can't!' The hands seem to reinforce the idea that two words turn into one."

"I just did a lesson on contractions where I had the children frame contractions in the story we were reading, and then at the end of the story, I gave each of them a card. There were sets of four cards for each contraction. For example, the first card said 'couldn't', the second card said 'could not', the third card said 'could' and the last card said 'not'. Each child had to go and find the other three children in the group and then the groups made up a story using the words on all their cards. Each group presented their story to the class. They loved it!"

To get their attention, blow up a balloon and ask what happened. (It expands). Let the air out - what happens? (It *contracts* - which means to get smaller).

Learn the word 'apostrophe'. Give all students elbow macaroni to use for apostrophe.

"When a muscle contracts (use your biceps and let them use theirs) it shortens and pops up like the letters pop up (and out) of a contraction.

When you squeeze your hands together in the tub with a bar of soap in between, the soap goes flying into the air as do some of the letters in two words being contracted to form one word...(for words involving 'not', the 'o' is always the soap so that is where the apostrophe goes.

In contractions an apostrophe drops in, like a bookmark, to show the place where the letters were removed. It saves the place of the missing letter(s) in a line just as you (children) save a place in line for your friend."

"I did a power point of contractions. On the first slide, I have the two words with spaces between, they come closer on the second, and so on until they collide, next slide has some letters falling out and an apostrophe falling in place. I finish it by repeating slide one, and last slide. It takes maybe 8-10 slides to get the full effect."

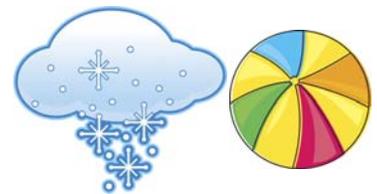
"For a demonstration, have the kids , in tongue twister fashion, say , 'I am' quickly again and again. It starts to turn into one word."

"I had children standing in a line, each child holding a letter of the two words. We made two words such as 'would not'. I also had a child waiting off to the side with an 'apostrophe' card. We decided which letters (children) had to leave and then where the apostrophe would stand. And when the apostrophe came in, the letters moved together to make one word..."

"An idea for chanting contractions when you are spelling word wall words that my kids absolutely love is saying 'whoop' for the apostrophe, for exampl, 'can't' would be clap clap clap whoop (and draw one with your finger in the sky) clap."

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. Have all the kids with the first part of the compound words to come to the front of the room and all the kids with the second parts of the compound words to go to the back. Have them make a ball with their papers and have a snowball battle. When you think you have disturbed the rest of the school enough, have them each pick up a snowball. Have them silently walk around the room to see if they can find a word to go with theirs to make a compound word. It can be a new one or one that was made previously. Make lists of the words."



Possessives

"Brainstorm a list of nouns with the children. Be sure to include lots of nouns which are typical subjects for a sentence (Tom, the boy, a dog, the witch, the hippo, my mom) as well as everyday nouns. I encourage the students to look around the classroom, think about things in their bedrooms, things they see outside, etc. Later I type up the list spreading it out over two pages and print it out on two different coloured papers, one which has all the 'subjects' plus some regular nouns, and the other which has just regular nouns. I cut all the words apart and put them into two different baskets. The students choose one word from each basket and create a sentence. I tell them that the word from the first basket is the subject and must contain the 's and the word from the second basket is the thing that belongs to it. They come up with really silly sentences like "I see the hippo's hat". We do some orally, then they write them down. You can have them illustrate them and display them on a bulletin board for fun."

"I begin by writing sentences/phrases using the children's names in the classroom. They really pay attention because they love to see their names used.

For example - This is Danny's book. Here is Melody's Journal. Katelyn's snowflake is on the bulletin board.

The children can see the apostrophe 's'.

Then the children write sentences about themselves, using macaroni for the apostrophe. They put these sentences on strips and glue the macaroni on. Then they trade sentences and share."

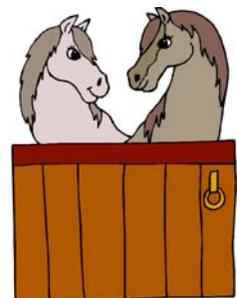
"I use two ways to introduce possessives:

1. We draw a picture of a favourite possession and write underneath it: "This is _____ 's (name of toy).
2. We do sentences on the board first thing in the morning Monday to Thursday. Then on Friday we find capital letters, sight words, punctuation, etc. and colour them with different colours (green for go, red for stop, yellow orange etc. for sight words). When we are doing possessives, each child dictates their sentence when it is their turn and tell about something that is theirs. (e.g. Sarah's sister is in fifth grade.) When we do the Friday corrections we often use macaroni to glue on the possessive."

Plurals

Plural Rules

1. The plural of most nouns is formed by adding s. (boys, desks, horses)
2. Nouns ending with the sounds of s, x, z, ch, sh or 'j' form their plurals by adding es. (fox es, bush es, boss es)
3. Nouns ending in y after a vowel form their plurals by adding s. (monkeys)
4. Nouns ending in y after a consonant form their plurals by changing y to i and adding e-s. (puppies)
5. Most nouns ending in f and f-e form their plurals by adding s (belief / beliefs); some change f to v and add es. (wolf /wolves, wife /wives)



"I always make a chart shaped like a stoplight. In the red part, I write the rule about changing y to i and adding es. In the yellow, I write the rule that says any word ending in s, x, z, ch, or sh gets an es on the end. In the green section, I print examples of other words that don't have special rules - they just add s. This is somewhat difficult for Grade Two students but with a bit of drill and practice they will get it."

The following website has an on-line game where the child chooses a gnome and goes fishing for the correct ending and the correct spelling. It is British and the auditory bits have a British accent, but it is good for reviewing the plural rules.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/quickfind/search?keywords=plurals>

Synonyms

"One thing I've always done with my students is to tell lots of stories about my Auntie Nym... she always gets confused and says the opposite of what she means. There was a book about Auntie Nym and the Syn O'Nym twins that I won as a reward when I was in grade two approximately 20 years ago. I embellish these stories a lot, and the kids look forward to hearing another story about her. Pretty soon, I don't finish the stories, the kids tell me what Auntie Nym really meant... the opposite. Ex. The socks are in the top drawer... so I look and look and can't find the socks... of course Auntie Nym really meant the bottom drawer! You get the idea! After a few days of Auntie Nym stories, I introduce the term antonym..... the kids remember with no problem!"



Hunt For Synonyms!

Grade Two students need to be exposed to a variety of words to replace the simple vocabulary so often used in their writing. Make collections of synonyms. Every day for perhaps a month give the children a simple word. All day - in breaks and between subjects and at any time of the day where you have a minute free - write the synonyms on a chart. Some are especially important. 'Said', for example, has dozens of words that can be used in its place with a more exact meaning. Find more interesting words to replace happy, like, big, little, see, nice, pretty, etc.

When the children use the original words in their writing, ask them to go to the chart and see if they can find another word that would be more exact and more interesting.

"One activity suggested at a workshop was to pick a topic(the presenter made us do 'our family') and write 10 sentences on it and NOT repeat a word. Well, talk about making you think of different words! I have done this with my class - we do it together - and they love it. They catch one another reusing a word and help each other come up with other words. Then I challenge them to try it when they write in their writer's notebooks. I say, even if you do 2 sentences, that is super. Even the average writers come to me and say 'I did three!' and they have!"

"Open a book to a story the children are reading. Have them copy one sentence from their story onto the right side of a large index card. The teacher collects all of the index cards and underlines one word in the sentence. The teacher underlines a word that he/she wants the students to come up with a different word that means about the same. For example, The house was made of stone. The teacher underlines house and the student has to come up with another word for house like dwelling, home, etc. and write it on the left side of the index card. Then, the student or the teacher can cut the cards in half, using a zig zag cut. Then, the next day you can pass out one half of each card to the students and they have to find a match."

Said is Dead!

"It really makes a difference if kids have alternative words to use instead of said. One interesting thing to do is to have a burial of the word said. I actually have our class dig a hole and bury the word said. Then we make a RIP sign (like a grave marker) and post it in our class. The kids get the point.

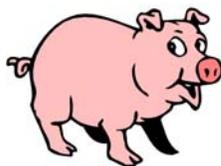
RIP

"SAID" Died (today's date) from overuse. Verbs to Use Instead of "Said"

accused declared moaned scolded added demanded mumbled screamed admitted denied
murmured screeched answered dictated muttered shouted apologized exclaimed nagged
shrieked argued gasped ordered sighed asked giggled panted snapped barked grinned persuaded
sneered bellowed groaned pestered spoke blurted out growled pleaded stammered bragged
grumbled praised stated cackled grunted prayed stuttered called guessed promised suggested
chanted hinted pronounced talked chatted hissed questioned taught chattered hollered quoted
teased cheered howled recalled thanked chuckled hummed remembered thought commented
insisted repeated told complained instructed replied wailed concluded interrupted reported
whimpered confessed joked requested whined continued laughed responded whispered cried
lied roared whistled dared listed sang wondered decided mentioned yelled

Synonyms are almost the same,
Synonyms are almost the same,
Come, let's play a matching game.
Sing two words that mean the same.

*(alternate following lines teacher
with students or boys with girls)*
When I'm happy,
I am glad.
When I'm naughty,
I am bad.



If it's large,
It's also big.
A hog is
Also called a pig.
See me hurry,
See me rush.
To be quiet
Means to hush.
If I want,
I also wish.

A plastic bowl
Is still a dish.
Practice or
Repeat a song.
If you miss,
You go far wrong.
If you end,
You stop the game.
They have like meanings,
Much the same.
Synonyms, almost the same.

Homonyms and Homophones

homophones, homonyms and homographs —designate words that are identical in pronunciation, spelling, or both, while differing in meaning and usually in origin.

Homophones ("same" + "sound") are different words that sound alike, whether or not they are spelled alike. Thus pair "two of a kind," pare "cut off," and pear, the fruit, are homophones because they sound exactly the same, even though each is spelled differently.

But bear "carry or support" and bear, the animal, are **homophones** that not only sound alike but are also spelled alike.

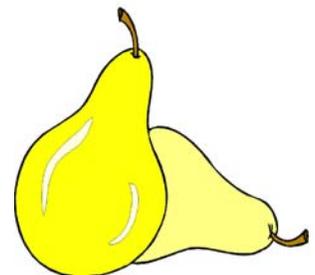
Homographs ("same" + "writing") are different words that are spelled the same but may or may not have the same pronunciation. The homographs sound "noise," sound "healthy," and sound, "a body of water," for example, are spelled and pronounced the same way. However, words with the same spelling but different pronunciations are also homographs.

"We make homophone booklets. After a week of studying homophones, I have paper made up with a short line at the top for the homophone, a blank space in the middle for the picture, and two lines at the bottom for a sentence with the homophone in it. On one page is one homophone, for example, pear (picture). 'The pear is ripe and juicy'. The other side would have pair, (picture) 'Look at the pair of brown shoes'. I would suggest having the children only do just a few of these, and do the first one together with them on the overhead or board. My lower level students only do one page. My upper level students do more. In studying the homophones, I read the books, *The King Who Rained* and *A Chocolate Moose for Dinner*, both by Fred Gwynne. There are homographs and homonyms, plus some sayings in these books. Some are hard, so I skip those, but most are pretty funny (especially the picture of Santa Claws.....instead of Claus. I may even play 'Sparkle' using homophones this year, since they love it so much. For homographs, I usually read some of the Amelia Bedelia books and have the children make their own pictures to go with the homographs. They have fun with this."

"I did a homophone activity today that turned out cute and the kids enjoyed it. They each picked a different pair of homophones and wrote a sentence using each word. Then they glued each sentence on a mitten that they had coloured. We connected the pair of mittens with yarn. I hung them on our big bulletin board outside our room."

Pear, Pair, Pare Tree

"In the new year I put up the 'Pear, Pair, Pare Tree'. This is just a tree cut-out about 3-4 feet tall on my wall. Every time we come across a homonym I write them on a pear cut-out and put it on the tree. The kids love finding them and noticing they are spelled differently. Usually my tree is so full of 'pairs' that some are placed fallen on the ground under the tree!"



M & M's

"I drew a large 'jar' shape on a white piece of chart paper. I coloured a lid on it and wrote 'M & M Jar' on it. M & M stands for 'Multiple Meaning' and any words we put in the jar must have more than one meaning. We write the word on round coloured papers (the same colours as the candy M & Ms) and they glue them 'in' the jar. They get a reward of 4 real M & Ms. The kids love this activity and each day I get a few new words. They even have their families trying to come up with new ones. Our jar is almost half full!"

Teaching 'there, they're and their'

They're - Teach the contractions, and make sure the children understand that it is 'they are'.

There - Re-read *Green Eggs and Ham* and have them raise the left hand whenever they hear the word 'here' and the right hand when they hear 'there'. This puts the association of these two words in place. You could also have the word 'here' on a card and a letter 't', and the children show the word 'here' when it is said and put the 't' with it to make 'there' when it is said. 'Here' and 'there' are opposites, and they are spelled the same way.

Their - 'Their' is about people. 'I' am a person, and this word has an 'i'.

Spelling 'they', 'there' and 'their' is easier if the students remember to begin with the word 'the'.

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!



More Homonyms

You can use the clapping rhyme:

A Sailor Went To Sea
A sailor went to sea, sea, sea,
To see what he could see, see, see.
But all that he could see, see, see,
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea!



"I always refer to myself and my two sisters...."

"I tell the children that when I was younger I lived at home with my two younger sisters. When people would call on the telephone they couldn't tell who they were talking to because on the phone we all sounded the same. But, when you looked at us we didn't look the same. We were each our own person on the inside.

"I then share several sets of homophones with children. We talk about how they sound the same, but don't look the same and don't mean the same thing.

"After telling the story the kids understand the definition of a homophone pretty well. Then anytime we run into a word that is a homophone, I put my hand up to my head as though I am talking on the phone. This triggers their memory of the word homoPHONE and its meaning."

"I taped up a piece of paper the length of the board and a foot wide. Whenever we ran across a homophone

(sometimes the kids would hear one at home and share it) we would write it on the paper. Needless to say, we had to add more paper because the students really looked for them! They could then refer to the paper when they needed one of these words!"

Homophones: I have a large list of 70-some homophones. I let the kids sign their name by a pair. They take home a copy of the two circles that they wrote the homophones on, and have to use each in a sentence at the bottom of the circle, and illustrate each. When they return it, they make the dimensional display as I mentioned before, and put it in a basket. Then they cross out their name and that homophone, and choose another one. I go through the basket and read them to the class every few days, and make sure they are correct."

Antonyms

Antonyms: I have a copy paper with 3 circles on it. In one circle they write a word and illustrate it, then do the same in another circle with the antonym. One circle remains blank. Cut out all three circles. Fold the two written-on circles in half, top to bottom, so the fold runs vertical. Glue the back of the two folded circles together, the left half of one with the right half of the other. The remaining half of each will make a circle to glue onto the blank, unfolded circle. Put the back of the blank one up on a wall or BB. Then by looking at one side or the other of the two outside circles, you see the antonyms.

Antonyms

"My bulletin board is titled: Match these ANTONyms. I have red and black ants with words written on them. They need to match the ants that are antonyms. I keep the ants in a box covered with sand paper which is made to look like the anthill. On the bulletin board I have put velcro dots so the kids can velcro the ants to the board. In the opposite corner, I have a plate of plastic food that they can 'march' towards. I also put a folder of 'ANT-swens' by the bulletin board so that they can check if they matched them correctly."



Parts of Speech

"Give students or groups a ziplock bag of words. Have the students classify the words by parts of speech. (Nouns all together, Verbs all together, etc.) After classifying the words, have the students create sentences by putting the parts together. Challenge them to see how many of the words they can use."

Teaching Nouns and Verbs

"I divide the children into groups. Each group has a piece of chart paper with 3 columns. One is labelled people, the next is titled places and the third column is things. Each group gets ten minutes to record all their nouns. Then we go over the lists and they cross out the matches. For each one they had that no other team had they get a point."

Nouns

Oh let's look around
for some naming words
for persons or places or things.
Oh, a noun is a name
Yes, a noun is a name
For a person or a place or a thing.

It's a noun
It's a noun
It's the name of anything
Any persons,
Any places,
Anything from hats to laces
It names a person or a place or a thing.

Verbs

"In the Spring, I like to do a little game I call 'Verb Eggs...' After I've introduced the concept to the kids that a verb is a 'doing word', I have a basket of coloured plastic Easter eggs...each egg has a verb in it (written on slips of paper) that can easily be acted out...kids take turns choosing an egg, reading the verb written inside, and acting the verb out....and we

guess each other's verbs. Just helps them remember that a verb shows ACTION."

"To learn verbs: Have your children play 'What are you doing?' Someone goes up and performs an action (riding a bike, running, etc.). Another person goes up and asks 'What are you doing?' The actor then says something different from what they're doing like 'Doing jumping jacks'. The person who asked the question then has to do what they said."



"We do verb charades. The children pick the verb they will act out without words in front of the group."

"I had the students make a nouns collage. I gave them a piece of construction paper that had three columns: 'Person, Place, Thing' on it. The students had to find pictures or words to put under each. They enjoyed doing it and looks great in the room. I put them on a bulletin board titled: 'Nouns, Nouns, All Around'."

Allot a certain amount of time for each student to write as many common nouns as they can. These nouns must be located in the room somewhere. Divide students into groups. The group will compile the nouns alphabetically. Students take turns naming their 'A' nouns, etc. This could take a while, but the kids begin discussing nouns especially if someone comes up with abstract nouns (love, trust, etc.).

"I play hot potato with verbs. Students sit in a circle. I turn on music. Students pass around a Kush ball or Nerf Ball. When the music stops the person holding the ball has to act out a verb. The others try to guess. Can be noisy but they learn verbs!"

"We always do pantomimes to review verbs. Kids go up and act something out, the rest of the class tries to guess what they are doing... the verb. I give them three guesses, and then the 'mime' can tell what they were doing. The first ones are usually easy, but they do get more creative."

"Take a bucket or hat and fill it with examples of action verbs on note cards or pieces of paper. (i.e. laugh, run, pounce, hiccup, etc.) Pass the bucket around the room and have each student pick a verb. Students take turns coming to the front of the room and acting out their verb, without telling the class what it is. Give the class the opportunity to guess the action verb.

I also have them make a verb alphabet which is a rather laborious process but fun. They must find a verb for each letter of the alphabet, write it in a sentence and illustrate it. Many times they have to go to the dictionary so it helps their dictionary skills, too. Then we can talk about how some words can be nouns and verbs, x-ray, for example. Verbs are fun!"

(You could do this very easily for adjectives, too.)

Silly Sentences

"This activity will show your students why nouns and verbs are an important part of speech. After reviewing nouns and verbs, write a student generated list of both parts of speech on the chalk board (enough to have one noun and verb per student). Then have each student choose a different noun and verb from the list and write them on separate cards. Collect the cards and place each card into the correct container labelled 'Nouns' or 'Verbs'. Have each student draw a card from each container and write and illustrate a silly sentence using the words on the cards. Have volunteers share their sentences and illustrations with their classmates."

Adjectives

"I usually have a design of a cone and 4 ice cream scoops on a piece of the paper copied and ready for the kids to cut out. (Or they could design their own.) Have the students write a NOUN on the cone of the ice cream cone. After that on the 3 scoops they write 3 different adjectives that describe that noun. After that they can decorate the cone and glue it all together with the 3 scoops piled on top (so that you can see the words.)"



1. Write their words on a chart or life-size sketch of yourself.
2. Have children listen for describing words while you read a story to them.
3. Write sentences on the board, or on sentence strips and add describing words.
4. Bring in objects and have class brainstorm adjectives. (rings, fruit, gift-wrapped box, etc.)
5. Have a contest - be word detectives looking for describing words. (with a partner or group)
6. Play hangman using only adjectives for the mystery word but give them the noun.

Delicious descriptive adjectives

"Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Have one student be the secretary for their group. You will need enough food items for the class. I use M&Ms, potato chips, marshmallows, and pickle slices. These cover all shapes, colours, tastes, and textures.

Pass out each food item. When I give the signal, each group must come up with as many adjectives as possible to describe that item. I will give three to four minutes for each one. Once time is called, the secretary stops writing, and the groups await the next item. Once all have finished, the group with the most adjectives will win an additional prize.

Amazing adjectives

Adjectives are words that are used to tell you more about nouns. Adjectives are of many different kinds. Sometimes they are kinds that we often do not think of as adjectives.

For example: A **red** house **One** man

There are two ways to use grammar with adjectives - before a noun or after a verb.

For example: A **big** ball The ball is **big**

Adjectives can tell what kind: slimy fish pretty girl

Adjectives can tell how many: three bears several students
Adjectives can tell which one: that teacher this book

Communicating effectively involves expressing yourself to the best of your ability, in writing and speaking. The adjectives 'good' and 'bad' are too general to paint a clear picture of what is going on.

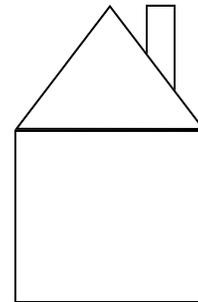
Assignments:

- Write a simple story on the board and leave spaces to accommodate adjectives. Have the kids fill in the adjectives, allowing them to be as creative as possible.

- Pass out a list of sentences and have the students identify the adjectives, noting what kind of adjective it is.

Prefixes and Suffixes

"I use three shapes of paper to make a house. Here are the pieces I use: for the chimney, put the prefix **re**, **un**, and **dis** each on a rectangle piece, with the longer sides running up and down. The base words go on an equilateral triangle (the roof) each, and the words I have are: **wrap**, **kind**, **play**, **taste**, **harm**, **happy**, **like**, **cheer**. The house is a square, and these suffixes are on each piece: **ness**, **est**, **less**, **ful**, **ly**, **able**. I do it in groups, and have the kids write down all the words they can make, and then we compare the lists made by each group. It is possible to make a three part house... like the word, **distasteful**, or words with no chimney... like the word, **playful**."



Suffix Rules

1. All, till and full are usually written with one l when added to another syllable. (almost, until, careful)
2. The past tense ending 'ed' says /d/ or /t/ except after words that do end with d or t. After d or t the 'ed' forms a second syllable. (hated)
3. At the end of a word, change the 'i' to 'y' and add the suffix (except when the suffix begins with 'i'.) (cry, cries, crying)
4. When adding a consonant suffix, silent final e words usually keep the e (safe ty, shame less, move ment), but not always. (wis dom, tru ly, ninth)
5. When adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, silent final e words are written without the e. (time, timing, timer)
6. When adding a vowel suffix to a one-syllable short vowel C-V-C word, double the final consonant. (hopping)
7. When adding a vowel suffix to a two-syllable word ending with one short vowel and one consonant, double the final consonant if the accent is on the last syllable (admit, admitted)

Dictionary Skills

"After I have taught the skills I always practice by playing a game. I call out a word, (they have their dictionaries closed) and choose someone to spell it. If they spell it correctly, the class gets the whole word to look up. If the person doesn't spell it correctly, I stop at the last letter they got right and the class has to look it up using what they know. When I say begin, they will find the word and say their name when they have found it. I write the first 4 names I hear on the board. When most have found it, I let the first person tell the page number (this helps those who haven't quite found it yet), the second person tells the first guide word, the third tells the second guide word and the fourth person reads the definition. They seem to like it and it has really helped with our dictionary skills."

"I build dictionary skills into my daily routine all year long. I created a form for the week. Each day the children look up one spelling word. They record the page they found it on, and write the first definition. Then they are done. The next day they do it again. I start out at the beginning of the year assessing prior knowledge...What is this book? What is in this book? Why do people use this book? etc. Then I spend a week teaching about alphabetical order, guide words, and demonstrate how to use the weekly page. This is a whole class activity and I teach it all on the overhead. We also have races..... They begin with their dictionary on the floor. The children are sitting in a circle, legs crossed and hands on their head. I'll say a letter, and GO! They get to the letter in the dictionary ASAP and stand up. Sometimes I time them to see how long it takes the entire class. They love beating their time. After the first week, they begin on their own. At first it always takes them quite awhile, and many need help using the guide words, but at this time of the year, all are doing well. I rarely need to help a student find their word."

"I tell my students that quotation marks are 'The Twins'; you can't have one without the other. I have twin boys myself, so we've named the quotation marks after my boys, Matt and Sam. We always say, 'Oops. I see Matt. Where's Sam?' Silly, but my students laugh and rarely forget."

"You don't need a fancy writing program. Just use the word processor that you already have, insert digital camera pictures and you'll have the best type of authentic writing ever!"

Dictionary Races

"We love to do Dictionary races. After we explore the dictionary and discuss the use of alphabetical order, we close the book, put both hands in the air, I write a word on the board, explain it, and then say "Ready, Set, Go!" First one to find it gets to read out of the dictionary. The kids love it and ask to play many times. Have fun!"



"After I taught alphabetical order to the second letter I started them on the dictionary. As part of their reading group I wrote a story with them, and I said, "There is a word that I can't spell. What ever will I do?" The children told me to find the word on the word wall. It is not there! Is it in the room on a poster? No, it is not there. We must look in the dictionary. We talk about where in the dictionary the word would be and we find the word. The next step is for them to write a story at the table in their journal. They had to show me that they check the word wall and around the room. I sit with them and watch them look in the dictionary. Once they understand it they can use the dictionaries at their seats. When they bring a story for me to look at that is finished I look at it as they read it to me. I put 'WW' over the words that are misspelled and on the word wall. I put 'D' over word they need to look in the dictionary for and 'PD' over the words that should be in their Personal Dictionary. I help them look up the word in my large dictionary and then write it in their Personal Dictionary for them to look at in the future. The word wall words are also put in their PD."

"I made a worksheet from our classroom dictionaries that had a page number and part of an entry word next to it. e.g. Page 74 ___ a ___ t The kids had to go to the page, and find the entry word that would fit and fill in the missing letters. If you wanted, you could have them write in the definition or example sentence, or some other piece of information they would find."

"I always play a competitive game after I've introduced entry words. I have the kids sit in two parallel lines (equal lines, the 'odd' person can keep score). Each team has one dictionary to use. The first two children have to find the page # of a the word that I give them. They discover that it works much faster if they use the guide words! Those children then pass the dictionary to the child behind them and they go to the end of their line. Now two new people are competing with a brand new word. This can also be done within a group or with the full class."

Dictionary Skills

"I photocopy a couple pages from a dictionary and pick a word from them. I show my kids how to use the guide words at the top to help them narrow down where exactly the word would be. I show them everything that the entry contained. After that, I throw them to the wolves! I give them three words each week. I pick ones from our science book. They have to give the part of speech, definition, guide words from the page and the page number they found it on. They have to finish it before they go to centres, and it is amazing how quickly they catch on!"



Syllabication Rules

1. All syllables have a vowel sound.
2. A compound word is divided between the words that make the compound word. (shot gun, sun set, air plane)
3. Divide between two consonants (hap py, per haps) unless the consonants form a digraph and are sounded together. (ma chine, e le phant)
4. When a word has an suffix, it is divided between the root and the suffix. (re run, soft ness, cry ing)
5. When a single consonant comes between two vowels, it is usually divided after the consonant if the first vowel is short. (clev er, lem on, rob in)
6. When a single consonant comes between two vowels or vowel sounds, it is usually divided before the consonant if the first vowel is long. (mu sic, po lite, pa per)
7. Divide between two vowels when they are sounded separately. (di et, cru el)
8. Vowels that are sounded alone form their own syllables. (dis o bey, a live, u ni form)
9. When a word ends in l-e preceded by a consonant, divide before the consonant. (tur tle, ca ble, this tle)

Grammatical Sins

May I....

Spring and Summer is a time for new activities, you are going to want permission to do and use things with your parents, teachers and friends. Let's remember to be polite. When you ask use May I...

For example:

May I go to John's after I clean my room?

May I borrow your book to read?

Look at the situations below and write how you would ask the question using May I...

Borrowing a friend's toy. Going to a friend's house. Going shopping with your friends. Staying up late at night. Having a sleep-over. Asking for more time for a homework assignment. Playing outside a little longer. Watching TV. Getting your allowance early. Going to your favourite fast food place.

Me and my friend

Every day for a week I do a lesson on this - and by Friday most of the children have 'got it'! First, I write what one child says on the board. "Me and Mom went to the park..." I ask them what would happen if Mom didn't go.... would you say "Me went to the park"? It sounds like baby talk! Then, would you push your way so you could go first? It is polite to mention the other person first, so you would say, "Mom and I went to the park." Then Mom could stay home and the sentence would sound right.

I pick out two kids and tell them they are going to the store together. What will each of them say? Then another two are going to the beach - or to play ball, or..... They soon catch on!

'Like' is another word that children use badly. Remember when we made a list of words that are synonyms for 'said'? Like is not one! "And she went, like, "....." is annoying!

Words in Words

This is a very handy website - go to:

<http://www.wordles.com/getwordsinwords.asp>

Amelia Bedelia and Other Literal Translations

"Make a list of all the things that Amelia Bedelia misunderstood. Illustrate the favourites. This can be a lead-in to teaching homonyms. Have the children collect homonyms and make a chart of all the ones they can find."

He let the cat out of the bag. Don't count your chickens before they hatch. To get up on the wrong side of the bed. In one ear and out the other. Sitting on top of the world. Blow one's top. She was in the doghouse.

"We make a list of sayings Amelia might not understand and draw pictures of the literal translations. For example, a fork in a road, draw a fork lying in the road, etc. They can draw T-shirts decorated with T items, golf tees, tea bags, etc. I love Amelia!"

"I like to use the Fred Gwynne's great books, *A Chocolate Moose for Dinner*, *The King Who Rained* and *Little Pigeon Toad*.

"The kids take a while to get it, but there are great illustrations, i.e. 'My dad said a convict escaped from the pen' (picture of convict sneaking out of a giant fountain pen), 'Now he's on the lam' (picture of convict riding a lamb.)"



Handwriting

"At our school cursive writing can be introduced in Grade Two. I begin by grouping similar letters and teaching the lower case letters first. Once those are completed, students can begin to write a few things in cursive. Instead of three times each for homework they write each spelling word once in cursive. When they alphabetize their spelling words they can write them carefully onto their handwriting paper. (They number their list first and skip lines in case they leave out a word and it prevents lots of erasing.) I will teach them capital letters while gradually practicing the lower case letters."



"I love to teach cursive and find that my kids are excited about learning it. They love to write in cursive, even if it takes them longer, and practice it every day. I think they feel it's a grown-up thing, so they really want to learn it. I don't have any problems with kids choosing cursive. As I teach new letters, they can gradually use cursive in their writing. They are not permitted to write any letters that I have not taught them (to prevent bad habits being formed). I find that my kids make many mistakes in the correct formation of letters in their printing. Kids who have fine motor skill difficulties find cursive to be easier than printing.

I believe everything takes practice and with practice, the students' writing will improve. I've also been teaching typing skills this year. Like cursive and everything else, with practice the speed improves. All of my kids are now typing with their fingers on home row keys at least 12 words per minute. I have one student typing at 28 words per minute!"

"I teach the undersweep letters first - i t l e h b f j k p r s u w , and then the oversweep letters - c a d g o q. There are some other letters that have a similar beginning to the oversweep - n m v x y z . The students can only write words using letters they have been taught. I find that my Grade Two kids just love to learn to write!"

From a Middle School Teacher

"Please, please work hard on teaching the students to hold their pencils correctly. I realize that many of today's teachers feel and say, 'What difference does it make?' Actually, it does make a difference. In the upper grades, I have to work hard to overcome the bad habits, incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation the students bring with them to my class.

Second, please convince them not to grip their pencils so tightly, not to press down so hard. Ever notice that if you grip the pencil tightly with your fingers you will automatically press down very hard also - and vice-versa?

The first days of school I do this demonstration with my kids. I have them hold their writing hand out in front of them as though they were going to write on the blackboard. Now, have them move their hand in a circular motion as though they were drawing a circle on the blackboard over and over again. They will see that this makes a pretty smoothly rounded circle. Now, with their arms in the same position, ask them to flex the muscles of the forearm, as hard as they can. Keeping the muscles flexed, have them repeat the circular motion. Ask them if the circle they are forming is still smoothly rounded. It isn't, because the muscle tension is interfering with their gross and fine motor skills. Explain that the same thing happens when they increase finger tension by gripping the pencil too tightly.

Finally, have them follow the same demonstration at their desks, by lightly drawing a continuous circle on paper. If they grip the pencil lightly, they won't push down so hard, their fingers and wrists won't hurt, and the circles they are drawing will be relatively round and smooth.

When I show them how to grip the pencil, I show them that the end of the pencil lies easily in the crook between the thumb and first finger. I don't have to grip it tightly to keep it from falling. The pointed end of the pencil is lightly nestled between the tips of the first and index fingers., and then the thumb is laid on the pencil tip to keep the pencil from falling out. I actually have a student stand next to me while I am writing to demonstrate that I am gripping the pencil so lightly that the student can very easily slide the pencil out of my grip.

The final part of the demonstration is to let the kids write in their normal grip and their normal (tight) tension. Have them write their name 25 times. Ask them how their wrists and their fingers feel. Now, have them very carefully follow your directions, grip the pencils lightly enough that someone can easily remove them while the kids are writing, and write their names 25 more times. They are amazed at how much more smooth their handwriting looks, but are even more amazed at the fact that there is no pain in their fingers and wrists.

Those are my suggestions. Your kids will thank you eventually - and so will some upper grade teachers!"

Note: there is another benefit to writing lightly with pencils. The children can erase without a mess



Good Handwriting

If you are wise
You will organize
Your handwriting always
To be the right size.
The shape is important
Round and neat
Using your hands
Not your feet.
Keep the right pace
You're not in a race

Or your poor little word
Will fall on its face.
Be careful of your spacing
Because like racing,
If you don't heed it
You won't be able
To read it!

Handwriting

One, two, look at you.
Three, four,
are your feet on the floor?
Five, six, pick up your stick
(pencil)
Seven, eight sit up straight.
Nine, ten, ready? Begin.

Math

Beginning of the Year Assessment

Here are some ideas to assess the math skills of your new Grade Two students.

- Have them print the numbers to 100. Look for children making numbers incorrectly - bottom to top or reversed. See if there are children who have difficulty sequencing numbers.

- Take the children individually or in small groups and give them manipulatives. Show one addition question ($4 + 5 = \underline{\quad}$) for example. See what children do not need the manipulatives and have the answer memorized or can do the sum mentally. Watch the children to see how they use the manipulatives. Children who show the 4 and the 5 with manipulatives, and then count 1, 2, 3, 4 - 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 may be having difficulty with understanding, or need to be shown 'conservation of number' as they don't need to count out both numbers, of course.



- Give the children manipulatives and the question $8 - 5 = \underline{\quad}$. Watch the children's methods of reaching the answer.

- Give the children a number line and a similar addition question. Do the children count out the first number and then the second or go directly to the first number (or, better still, the largest number) and then count on the other number?

- Using the number line, give the children a subtraction question. Again, do they count out the first number or go directly to it? Are they counting down correctly?

- Give the class a drill page of addition questions to 6. Give them 2 minutes to complete it. Then try a page of subtraction questions to 6 and again, give them 2 minutes. Then do a timed sheet of addition questions to 10 and then subtraction questions to 10. Give the children 5 minutes to do each.

- Give the children a ruler and have them measure a pencil. Do they know the word 'centimetre'?

- Can they tell time to the hour and half hour?

- Have them estimate the number of objects in a jar. Put approximately 25 objects in the jar.

- Ask each child privately how he feels about math. Does he feel he does well at it or does he think it is difficult? If the child feels he has a problem, can he explain why? Sometimes children have a very accurate description of their abilities.

Review of Addition and Subtraction to 10

"The first couple of months in Grade 2 I want to get the children adding and subtracting to 10 quickly without using manipulatives. I show them 'tricks' to use. Here are some of them.

- adding 1, 2 and 3 by counting on
- subtracting 1, 2, and 3 by counting down
- doubles and doubles + 1
- '4 stories' showing that addition and subtraction are related - using a 'mental' number

line"

Review of Grade One Math

"For September and October (and sometimes into November and December) we learn the combinations to 10 so that the children can do them backwards and forwards, quickly and with ease. They need to have these understood and memorized before they go on to the Grade Two math. Here are some of the things that I do to accomplish this:

- Have the children visualize patterns of the numbers to 5. A few children won't be able to do this, but it really helps if the children make numbers with counters and then visualize the patterns with their eyes closed.
- Let the children use counters at first - the double sided ones are useful - but encourage visualizing the numbers rather than using the counters so that the children soon put them aside and don't need them.
- Do a lesson each day giving the children clues of how to add certain numbers - e.g. doubles, + 1, + 2, + 3 by counting on, subtraction by counting backwards, etc.
- Do a drill practice sheet every day, graphing these scores.
- Once a week see how many questions the children can accurately do in a set amount of time and graph the weekly results.
- Especially work on the combinations of 10. The children should know these perfectly before you go on to the combinations of the 'teen' numbers. If they are completely confident of the combinations to 10, you can teach the 'magic 10' - for example, $7 + 5 = 7 + 3 + 2 = 12$, and this makes teaching the combinations to 18 much easier."

Addition to 18

The 'Magic Ten'

"Spend time every day drilling the combinations of 10 until the children are very confident with them. When you begin to add numbers with sums over 10, find the 'magic ten' hiding in the question.

$$6 + 5 = 6 + 4 + 1 = 10 + 1 = 11 \quad \text{and} \quad 9 + 6 = 9 + 1 + 5 = 10 + 5 = 15$$



Teaching Doubles Plus

"I first teach a game called 'SNAP!' where you roll a die and then the child snaps his fingers and says the double of the number rolled:

Roll 3 - *SNAP*6!

"Then I progress to playing 'SNAP 1' where a child rolls the die and this time says 'SNAP 1!' and proceeds to tell you the double plus 1 more:

Roll 4 - *SNAP 1*9!

"Finally, I show on the their whiteboards how $6 + 7$ is really a double plus one more!"



Adding with the Number Line

"Number lines are wonderful and easy to use, but the children must know that they are not to count out the largest number. They should be aware that addition questions can be turned around; that $2 + 7$ is the same as $7 + 2$. Go directly to the largest number. Stand there and then step out the smaller number, not counting until the first step has landed on the next number. Students should never step out both numbers on a number line and, of course, it is much more practical to go to the largest number and step out the smaller one when adding. When using the number line for subtraction, the students will again go to the largest number, of course, stand there, and then step out the smaller number going down the number line. Make a large number line on the floor and have the children physically step out the questions."

"To help the students remember to start counting on the number line with the first step, I say, "Remember you're not there until you have left home and arrived at the next place. Putting your finger on where you start from (home) is not a step to Billy's house!" I do a 'live demo' for this one they love my antics as my foot slowly rises and I try to count it as a step, until it almost touches but not quite makes it to the floor...still not a step!"

Addition Strategies

If you have children who are still counting out both numbers when doing addition, it means that they do not understand 'conservation of numbers'. Frequently these are children who have some disability in math, and do not 'see' patterns or short-cuts.

It is important that they know that they already have the first number when they are adding, and that they should use the largest number. For example, if they are adding $4 + 8$, they take the largest number (8) and do not need to count it out. Then add the 4 to it. Practice this concept until they thoroughly understand and use it. Practice 'counting on' from numbers every day. One teacher suggests having the kids 'pour the first number into their heads and then count up from there'.

Teach the 'Magic Ten' strategy. First, make sure they all have memorized the combinations of 10, and can produce them in a variety of ways: $6 + 4 = 10$, $10 - 3 = 7$, $8 + 2 = 10$

10, etc. They also must be able to add numbers to 10..... $10 + 4 = 14$, etc.

Then, practice finding hidden 10's. $8 + 6 =$ has a hidden 10. 8's partner for 10 is 2, so we take the 2 out of the 6. We can write it

$$8 + 6 = 8 + 2 + 4 = 10 + 4 = 14$$

This is only good as a strategy if you practice it every day. Show the children that they can use the *Grade One* easy addition and subtraction to do difficult questions. We want the children to be able to do this procedure in their heads, thinking through each question and 'seeing' the patterns.

"I have a 'math fact a day' calendar that I use to get the kids to learn their facts. I think it helps them. Each day is a fact and the turn around fact ($8 + 5 = 13$, $5 + 8 = 13$, and $13 - 8 = 5$ and $13 - 5 = 8$). We also do a Mad Minute several times a week."

Subtraction to 18

Fact Families

"This is a favourite activity: Fact Families are 3 numbers that are like family members. No one else (another number) can be in the family. I draw a big 2 story house on board. In the attic I write the 3 numbers (such as 7, 13, 6). Together we think of the two addition sentences and two subtraction sentences that can be made with these numbers. We role play and practice with several number families. Kids write addition facts in two upper windows and subtraction facts in two lower windows. This makes a great bulletin board display too."

"Make a triangle. On each one of the points of the triangle write one digit in the fact family; ex. 7, 8, 15. On the triangle, have the child write the 2 addition and 2 subtraction facts for that family. You could duplicate tons of triangles, with lines for the facts. Then you can 'customize' each triangle! Of course, this works for multiplication facts as well."

<http://www.mathcats.com/explore/factfamilycards.html>

The math ladder

"If the problem was $15 - 8$: draw a ladder with 3 rungs. The bottom rung would be labelled 8, the middle 10 and the top 15.

The children know that it is 2 steps from 8 to 10, and 5 steps from 10 to 15, so $2 + 5 = 7$.

One more: $12 - 7$ bottom step 7, middle step 10, top step 12 $3 + 2 = 5$

The key is building off of the steps from 10 which they knew. It really works and easily transfers to a mental strategy."



Or....

$$13 - 6 =$$

$$13 \text{ equals } 10 + 3$$

Subtract the 6 from the 10..... $(10 - 6) + 3$

$$4 + 3 = 7$$

Or.....Students can use their ability to add to solve subtraction problems.

$13 - 6 =$ How many numbers are between 6 and 13?

$$6 + 4 = 10 \text{ and } 3 \text{ more} = 13$$

$$4 \text{ plus } 3 = 7$$

Or....

$$6 + 6 = 12 \text{ and } 1 \text{ more equals } 13 \quad 6 + 1 = 7$$



Addition and Subtraction Facts

"I think that rote memorization is a necessary evil. Successful students have to automatically associate a correct, immediate response when they see or hear a multiplication problem. In other words, when they see or hear $8 + 7$, 15 should automatically pop into their head. To attempt to reach automatic recall, I use a variety of devices. The first is the dreaded 'flash card', but with a specific twist, which I teach to my students and to the parents of the students who are deficient. The method I use involves three modalities - sight, speaking and hearing. I tell the parents to drill their child, for about 15 minutes per night, on one set of math facts, and to stay with that set until the child demonstrates instantaneous recall. Have them start with an easy set of facts so that they can have a chance of early success.

1. Begin with the flash card that has both the fact and the answer. Flash the card, and have the student say what is seen - '5 plus 6 is 11' - in a slow, rhythmic (chanting) manner. Go through this step 2 - 5 times. The student is **seeing** the fact, **hearing** it in his own voice, and **saying** it.

2. Now, turn the cards over and flash the side that has just the fact (no correct answer). Have the student chant what he sees and give the correct answer as part of the chant. Any card that the student hesitates on, put aside; those that are known automatically, put aside in a separate pile (assume those are known).

3. Now, take the hesitation pile, and begin again with the answer showing and the child slowly and rhythmically saying the equation. Do this 2-3 times.

4. Repeat step 2 with just those cards.

5. Repeat step 3, if necessary.

6. When the student seems to grasp all of them, go through step 2 with all the cards for that fact.

7. Continue doing this for a single fact set each night until instant recall is achieved, then begin again with a new fact set."

Double Digit Addition

Re-grouping

"We used to use unifix cubes to teach regrouping at first. Kids can put them into stacks of 'tens' and have the extra 'ones'. We always keep our cubes in stacks of 10 when they're put away. Even if the kids play with them for indoor recess, they must be put away this way. Also try using dimes and pennies. This works great, especially for subtraction because it shows how you must change a dime into pennies in order to do $42-18$. They know they have enough money but it's just in the wrong form. They seem to get the idea!

Re-Grouping for Addition

"I am teaching grade two this year, and found that my kids really hooked into this trick for 'carrying'. When doing traditional carrying, when it came to putting the extra ten onto the tens column, we solemnly refer to putting the number in its 'place of honour'. They now call this method the 'place of honour way'!

"Another little thing that helps the kids to remember to start with the ones place is by saying... 'The ones (or units) are the little guys - they get to go first!'"

"Our series, *Math Trailblazers*, uses many different strategies for adding large numbers. We work with lots of manipulatives, especially ten sticks and ones (skinnies and bits). They have the kids use tally marks, draw the objects, draw the ten sticks and bits, and add the groups of tens and ones separately ($54 + 38 = 80 + 12$). Learning it all these ways really cements it for the kids!"

Addition With Re-grouping

In our school we would:

1. teach the traditional way
2. expand it out $(90 + 8) + (60 + 9)$
3. mental math $98 + 70 = 168 - 1$ or $100 + 70 = 170 - 3$

$$\begin{array}{r} 98 \\ + 69 \\ \hline \end{array}$$



"When the children are learning addition with re-grouping, be careful not to refer to what they carry as a 1. If the teacher before me has referred to it as a 1, then when they get to me in grade three they don't understand that it's one ten."

"We write it on paper this way for a little while:

$$\begin{array}{r} 28 \quad 2 \text{ tens } 8 \text{ ones} \\ + 45 \quad 4 \text{ tens } 5 \text{ ones} \\ \hline 6 \text{ tens } 13 \text{ ones} \\ 6 \text{ tens } + 1 \text{ ten and } 3 \text{ ones} = 7 \text{ tens and } 3 \text{ ones} = 73 \end{array}$$

Or another way:

$$\begin{array}{r} 98 \\ + 69 \\ \hline 17 \\ +150 \\ \hline 167 \end{array}$$

Double Digit Subtraction

"You could illustrate borrowing/carrying by using the pennies and dimes. 'Trade 10 pennies for a dime' is a familiar saying in my room-and vice versa. Here's a chant that I do with my students when we are focusing on trading 1 dime for 10 pennies:

More on the top 25
No need to stop - 14

More on the floor, 25
Go next door, - 19 and get 10 more.

Number's are the same 25
Zero's the game. - 25



"The kids love it, and we do the chant constantly. I send home a copy to parents so that they can reinforce this as well. When you are demonstrating, be sure to have lots of dimes and pennies on hand. Also, I use 2 pieces of coloured construction paper (different colours) taped together to show the kids where the pennies and dimes belong. We also practice this with partners, then individually."

"What I used for many a year is a story. I would talk about an apartment or houses side by side. People visit but you don't have enough cookies. i.e. 7 people visit and you only have 4 cookies. You open your door (the crossing out in subtraction) and knock on next door and borrow some cookies but cookies come in boxes of 10 so you have to add the box onto the plate because some people may wish for more than one cookie. It is a corny story but it worked for me - especially the prompt 'Cookies come in boxes of.....'"

BBB

"Also in borrowing I use the 'BBB' method. This means if the Bottom number is Bigger you Borrow. We practice this every day by repeating the meaning and discussing. A lot of modeling and practice goes with it."

And don't forget "Bigger Bottom, Better Borrow!"

"I have found that my students catch on to this very quickly. I use this trick to teach the students to always begin two-digit questions in the ones column or the left side. I keep it very simple. I just teach them to draw a line to cut the problem in half. We also use this little rhyme... Right is right and left is wrong. For a while we say that out loud every time we work a problem. Finally, when we start regrouping, they realize why we start with the ones. I don't try to explain regrouping until they have mastered simple adding."

The Homes of the Tens and Ones Families

two teacher-created, construction paper houses (one house should be labeled 'ones family' the other 'tens family'. I drew little people outside the door of each house. The ones family person had a jersey with #1 on it. The tens family representative had a #10 on his shirt.

Base 10 blocks (or substitute with individual beans and Popsicle sticks with groups of ten beans glued on) 2-digit subtraction problems involving regrouping.

When I teach subtraction with regrouping to students, I walk them through the process using the tens and ones 'family' houses. I explain that the ones family keeps single cubes (or beans) in their house. The tens family keeps only groups of 10. For each problem, I place the appropriate number of tens manipulative (Base 10 rod or Popsicle stick with beans) on the tens house. I place the appropriate number of ones manipulative (blocks or beans) on the ones house. So, the problem 57-29 would require 5 tens and 7 ones.

As I walk the students step by step through the problem, they use the houses as a place value mat. The ones family 'borrows' a ten from the tens family. The students can count how many tens are left and then record on paper (slash previous number and record 1 less ten over it). Then, they can count how many units/beans the ones family now has and then record it in the ones column on their paper.

"I draw a cookie jar on the board. I put 0-9 ones cubes in the jar. They are 'cookies'. I then put 10's strips to the left of the jar. Those are packages of cookies. There are only 10 cookies in a package. If you need more cookies than are in the jar, for the ones column, you have to open a new package and add them to the cookie jar. The kids seem to catch on."



"There is no magical way. I usually show them the concept by using base ten blocks. This helps some and confuses some. I then proceed by teaching the steps and writing them on the board. I then have them practice at their seat in pairs working actual problems and have them come to the board and explain it out loud so the whole class can hear it over and over. I then let them peer tutor each other. We have been working on this for the last month."

"I am not a fan of the typical algorithm. I use a lot of place value and tens/ones recognition. For example, to add two digit numbers, students pull apart the tens from the ones and add. $36 + 48$ - my students see $30 + 40 = 70$ then $6 + 8 = 14$, After that it is very automatic to add $70 + 10 + 4$. I reference a 100 chart a lot! My students are so efficient at this that they solve them mentally now.

As far as subtraction, I HATE the reference to borrow! You are not borrowing, you are regrouping the tens, therefore, I never refer to it as borrowing. I start with: if you can subtract $8-5$ then you can subtract $80-50$. From there we play a game called 'Race to 0'. I give each student 50 in base 10 blocks (not snap cubes). Students roll one die and begin subtracting that number. They will see on their first roll that they have to REGROUP one of the tens into

ten ones and continue on rolling until they reach 0. After that they will understand the re-grouping concept better. I've taught subtraction both ways in the past, with the algorithm and without. When I have taught the algorithm without, my students would build the first number in tens (for example: $34 = 10\ 10\ 10\ 4$). After that they start to subtract by crossing out numbers. They subtract 22. They cross off two of the tens. Cross off the 4 and make it a 2 and there is 12 not crossed off. It isn't super efficient always, but students understand it. I have also had them solve it by $34 - 20 = 14$, $14 - 2 = 12$. Try it! You'll be pleasantly surprised how they can solve these mentally."

"I usually talk about a neighbourhood of numbers. Each number is a person. We talk about how when you cook, you sometimes have to go to a neighbour to borrow something that you don't have. We apply this same concept to the numbers. We name our numbers Mr. Ones (he's not very wealthy, so he only has dollar bills, Mr. Tens has \$10 bills, and Mr. Hundred is rich! He has \$100.00 bills. Then to solve the problem we say, '7 - 9, oops, I don't have enough so I go next door and I get TEN more. We do the same chant for the hundreds. They love it. At first, they say 7 take away 9. This helps them hear the problem and not reverse the numbers."

"Give the students \$10 and \$1 bills (just run them off on the photocopier). Each child needs 10 - \$10 bills and 25 - \$1 bills.

Have them put 1 \$10 in front of them and have them exchange it for \$1's at the bank. (The bank is the rest of their money.) Hand out tens/ ones chart (simply drawn on a half piece of paper or have them draw it.)

Using their bills, have them put 2 - 10's and 3 - 1's in their chart and ask them for the total (\$23) Teacher writes this number in the tens and ones column on the board as the students place the bills on their charts.



tens	ones
1	1
1	1
	1

Ask them to take away \$4. Can they do it? (They will have to exchange one of their \$10 bills for 10 1's first. Tell them that you're going to keep track of the numbers on the board. (Teacher crosses out the old numbers and writes the new numbers as the students discuss the exchange.) Ask them how many \$10's do they now have once they have exchanged them? (1) How many ones? (10 new + 3 old = 13.) Ask them to count up this money. Do you still have \$23? Is it still the same amount that you started with? How is it different? (Same amount of money, the types of bills are different.) Now can you take away 4 1's? How many 1's do you have left? (No recording is done at this point.)

After lots of practice with the steps above, put the following problem on the board.

$$\begin{array}{r} 36 \\ - 7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Have them use manipulatives to solve it while you do the work on the board. Have them say, 'I

have 6 \$1's can I take away 7? No, so I'll have to go to my neighbour to see if he has some money to borrow. You can draw a rectangle with a roof around each of the columns so they look like townhouses. Have them actually knock on their desks to knock on their neighbours' doors. Have them say, 'Neighbor, do you have some \$1's I can borrow?' The neighbor answers, 'I only have tens, but you may have one of them.' The \$1's answers, 'Thank you, I'll take it. I'll go to the bank and exchange your \$10 for 10 \$1's. (Teacher crosses out the 3 as the students hand the 1 10 over to \$1's, asks the students how many \$10's are left, and then writes a 2 above the 3. Next the students go to their 'bank' (left over money) and exchange the \$10 for \$1's. Teacher crosses out the 6 and asks the class, 'How many \$1's do you have now, you had 6 and you just added 10 more?' Teacher writes 16 above the 6. Now can we subtract the ones? (Yes) How much is left? (9) (Teacher records on the board.) What is left when we subtract the tens? (2) Teacher records on the board.

Next have them use manipulatives along with paper and pencil as they solve problems that you put on the board. (This is an important step.) They should knock on the door and say the conversations above aloud. After much practice with manipulatives along with paper and pencil, have them solve problems only using paper and pencil and the conversations including the knocking on the door. Saying 'I have' really helps them to remember that they may need to sometimes borrow (or regroup).

I also stress crossing out the tens column before crossing out the ones column. (So many kids forget this!) I explain that it's impossible to take something from someone unless they give it to you first.

It seems like a long process, but if you build the foundation first, they will remember it longer. Also, when they progress to subtracting fractions in later grades and they need to borrow, the concept will have already been learned.

Multiplication

Tired of the usual math and want to have a break in January? Teach beginning multiplication skills! The children will think they are very grown-up! The following is from the "Math Success" program, much trimmed to fit this page! Each step will take 1 to 3 days, depending on your class.



Step 1: Give each child a ziplock bag containing a 'handful' of counters (approximately 20 - the bags should have some different amounts so that the next day they will receive a different amount). Tell the children to put the counters into 2's or groups of 2. Have them put the counters out so you can see the pairs (not with the counters on top of one another), with spaces between the 2's. Some children will have "Leftovers" - one counter left. Have a special place for leftover counters - in the child's hand or on the baggie.

You should be able to look around the room to see if everyone has the correct groupings. Ask the children how many 2's they have made. They count the groups, not the individual counters,

and the "leftovers" if any, are not counted, of course. The children say, "I have ____ 2's." Now have the children make 3's, or groups of 3. Again the counters in each group should be close together and the groups separated. Ask the children how many 3's they have made. They count the groups, not the individual counters, and the "leftovers" if any, are not counted, of course. The children say, "I have ____ 3's."

Do the same for 4's, 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's and 9's.

Now ask the children to make 1's. (Some children will look at you blankly!) All the counters are to be separated. The children say, "I have 20 1's."

Put the children into pairs and put their counters together so they have approximately 40 counters. Have them see how many 1's, 2's, 3's, 4's, etc., they have together. See that they are putting the groups in neat rows so they are easy to count. Also see that they are putting the "leftovers" away from the groups.

Step 2: Repeat the above and then have the children put all their counters neatly on the baggie on one upper corner of the desk. Ask the children to make just 2 '3's'. This will take some time. Model it on the chalkboard, ask what groups they are to make, and count the groups by saying, "one '3', two '3's', three '3's", putting their hands over each group as they count. The rest of the counters should stay on the baggie.

Have the children make 3 2's, 7 1's, 2 4's, etc. Stress the **grouping** number. Have the children make some of the groupings using other children or objects in the classroom.

Step 3: Make 3 2's. Ask, "How many counters do you need to make 3 2's?" Do the same with other groupings - 2 3's, 5 2's, 1 7, etc. Stress the number in each group. Have the children make some of the groupings using other children or objects in the room - books, chairs, etc. Ask how many objects were needed to make that number of groups. Add the = sign. 3 2's = 6 5 2's = 10

and some that will surprise the children 1 7 = 7 and 3 1's = 3

Discuss the 0 in groupings (we can't make any groups!) and the 1.

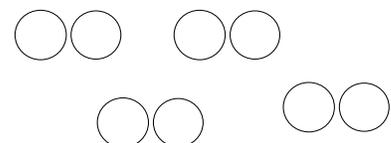
Step 4: Now, add the multiplication sign! The children will be delighted.

But..... still read the questions the same way. $4 \times 2 = 8$ is read and spoken as 4 2's = 8 .

Step 5: Relate multiplication to addition. Show the children that 4 2's is $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 =$ Give them some questions, have them make the groupings with counters and then give an addition question that means the same thing. Show that $2 \times 5 = 10$ is the same grouping as $5 + 5 = 10$.

Step 6: Go through the other doubles. (2×3 , 2×4 , 2×6 , 2×7 , etc.) Have the children make the groupings with their counters as you put the questions on the chalkboard or state them orally.

Ask the children what the difference is between 2×4 and 4×2 . Elicit that the answer is the same, but the picture grouping is different. If you have a question that asks you to



make 2's , what can help you find the answer?

Put the $\times 2$ questions on the chalkboard - 0×2 , 1×2 , 2×2 , 3×2 , 4×2 , etc. To answer these we can count by 2's. Practice answering some $\times 2$ questions. You can count by 5's. How can this help you multiply

$\times 5$? Put the 5 times table on the board: 0×5 , 1×5 , 2×5 , 3×5 , etc. If the question was 5×5 , how could you answer the question? Continue with 3's, 4's, etc.

Step 7: Use the word 'times'. Mix the questions and use manipulatives to answer a variety of questions to 25.

Multiplication Ideas

"I have really been working on the concept rather than the facts. My kids actually understand what multiplication is! It is the first time I have tried this approach whole heartedly. They all are developing strategies for figuring out word problems and regular facts. I am using the 'Investigations' series. We have talked about things that come in groups, drawn many pictures, written riddles, coloured patterns on the hundreds charts for each number that they need to learn, written about everything and used manipulatives to illustrate different problems. I am finding they are learning facts faster this way!"



"I begin by leaving out the \times sign, and having the kids say 3 5s or 2 4s.

$$3 \text{ 5s} = 5 + 5 + 5 \quad \text{and} \quad 2 \text{ 4s} = 4 + 4$$

When they understand this, then add the \times (times) sign, $3 \times 5 =$, and $2 \times 4 =$."

"I saw a teacher doing a really great activity. She gave each child about 3 cards to place in front of them. They lined up on both sides of the teacher, sitting on the floor with their cards. The teacher sat in a chair at the front of them with an eraser on each side of her chair. She had multiplication cards in her hand and when she would hold one up, the student with the correct number on his or her card on each side runs up to get the eraser. The first person on each side with the correct number gets a point for his or her team. The kids really seemed to enjoy it! This can be played with addition and subtraction facts, too."

"We play circles and stars for early multiplication skills. Have each student make a booklet - fold notebook paper into 4ths and staple in the corner - cut folded edges. Pair students, give them 1 die, a pencil, and their booklets. To play - roll die - draw that number of circles. Roll again - draw that many stars in the circles. Write the problem and answer on the bottom of the page. Then the other student takes a turn. Keep score and the highest wins. e.g. If you first roll 2, you draw 2 circles. For the second roll - if you roll 3, you draw *** in each circle. You write $2 \times 3 = 6$ at the bottom. The score is 6."

"To help the children remember what the multiplication question means, they say '3 x 4' as '3 4's' with the emphasis on the '4'. So they make 4's..... XXXX XXXX XXXX They count the fours by touching each group and saying, "One 4, 2 fours, 3 fours". Then they do the same thing by changing it into an addition question: $4 + 4 + 4$. There are 3 4's, or $3 \times 4 = 12$."

Problem Solving

ACE

A - what is the ANSWER to the problem

C - CITE the strategy you used to figure out the problem (doubles, 10's, multiplication, etc.)

E - EXPLAIN how you used it

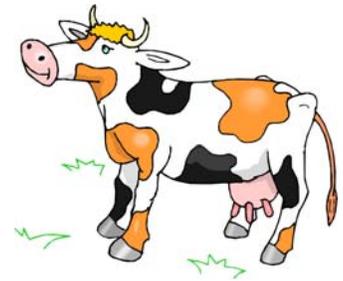
You might want to also try **COWS** -

Copy? (Did I copy it correctly?)

Operation? (did I choose the appropriate operation?)

Work (Did I show all of my work/thinking?)

Sense (Estimate the answer. Does this answer to this question make sense?)



"I am strict about how to read math problems. The children read the problem through and then say, "I start with (a certain number) and I (add, subtract, etc.) (this many). When I am done I should have ??????" I use the same format for all problems. This can be said with the question marks in a different place - "I start with (a certain number) and I (add, subtract, etc.) (??????). When I am done I should have (the total). The children shrug and gesture with their hands when they come to the question marks."

Problem Solving Strategies

Math is all about problem solving. One of the best ways to help children learn math is to present them with a problem in which they have to devise their own strategies to find the solution. There is usually more than one way to solve math problems and children need the opportunity to discover shortcuts and their own methods to determine the appropriate solution. They should also justify their solution and be able to fully explain what they have done and why.

There are certain key words used in problem solving that help determine what operation a student can use to solve the problem.

Addition - sum, all, together, total, in all, altogether

Subtraction - difference, left, less than, fewer than, greater than, more than, how many more?

If children have difficulty with problem solving, it often helps to make the question personal using the children's names.

The problem-solving method consists of four basic steps:

1. **Look carefully at the problem.** What does it tell you? What information does it give you? What facts do you have? What is it asking you to find out?
2. **Choose a strategy.** Will the answer be larger or smaller than the numbers in the facts? Can you visualize the problem? Can you estimate the answer? What do you think you will do to find the answer?
3. **Do the math.** Use the strategy you chose and work the problem.
4. **Look back.** Re-read the question. Did you answer the question that was asked? Does your answer seem reasonable? Can you put the answer into a sentence?

Money

Money, Money, Money.....



"One of my favourite things is to put a number of coins in a small metal or plastic container. I tell the kids how many coins are in the container but not which coins. As they take guesses at which coins are in there we get lots of practice adding a variety of coins as we total each guess. This is very simple and much more fun than just counting money.

"Another thing I do is attach triangle shaped construction paper to straws. On each one of them I write the value of a coin - 1 cent, 5 cents etc. I have the kids sit in a circle and pass the coins out to various kids starting with the largest value coin. We start counting with the largest coin value - each child says that amount until we reach the child with the next pennant. Example 25, 50 ---Reach pennant that says 10--- 60, 70 pennant that says 5--- 75, 80 reach pennant that says one-- 81,82, 83. Then to change the activity I just take up the pennants and re-distribute."

"After you have gone through all of the characteristics for each coin (colour, picture, ridges on the edges - for blind people to recognize the coins, value, etc.), introduce your students to a game of 'Collect 25 Cents'. Students work in groups with a bag of coins. One student rolls a die and collects the number that was just rolled and must always be trading for the least number of coins possible. The person to collect the quarter wins. Move onto to collect 50 cents and 2 dice after they get proficient."

"I have found that using overhead money is the best way to model the concept of money. We also request that each child bring in a bag of money so he/she can do the activities in a very hands on way!"

"Take today's day in school number. If it is 82, find all the ways to make 82 cents. Make _____ cents with your change. Organize the coin combinations so I can tell that you have shown all the possible answers."

"Use the real or play money and let them practice with it. You might try a hundreds board and have them lay the coins on it to help them count it. I always start biggest coin first....."



For example: put the quarter on the 25. Another quarter 50. Dime? value? 10. put the dime on 60. Nickel....65. 4 pennies put one in each spot 66, 67, 68, 69. Total is 69 cents.

This is also great when they have to count back to make change."

"Every morning we do calendar. I have a magnetic blackboard. Right next to the calendar I drew 3 circles about 7 inches in diameter stacked on top of each other. I have quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies with pieces of magnet glued to the back on the board next to the circles. Then each day 3 different children count money for us. For example, today was March 16, so 3 children showed us 3 different ways to make 16 cents, on Monday they will show 19. The second grade teacher across the hall took the same idea and adapted it for her class but instead of counting the day of the month they have to show the number of days of school, for example today was 124 so they showed \$1.24 three different ways. The kids love it and they don't even realize they are learning about money. By the time we get to the money unit in our math book they already know everything they need to know."

"One of the activities my kids loved last year was working with coins and dice (1 or 2). You put a pile of coins in the middle of the table. Each child in turn rolls the dice, and takes that many pennies. If they have more than 5 pennies, they exchange them for a nickel, then a dime, etc. The first one to have one dollar is the winner. You can choose which coins you want them to work with. You can do the same with \$1 and \$2 coins."

Smart! from *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein ISBN: 0060256680

<http://www.fi.edu/pieces/knox/smart.htm>

"This poem provides the perfect opportunity to teach youngsters that more can be less when it comes to coins. Have overhead props ready when you introduce this poem: dollar, 2 quarters, three dimes, four nickels, five pennies. As you reread the poem have a student go to the overhead to show the boy's first trade. Then enlist the class's help in determining the amount of money lost during the transaction and record this amount in the third column. Repeat this activity after each stanzas. Have the students calculate the total amount of money the young boy lost."

Learning the Coins

"How about having the kids come up with their own DIFFERENT facts about the coins? Each child could illustrate and you could run off copies for everyone. Some examples of pages:

The penny is the only copper-coloured coin.

The quarter is the largest coin. (unless you are working with the Loonie and the Twoonie!)

The nickel is the only silver coin with smooth edges.

Dimes have bumpy edges and they are the smallest coins....etc.

Have the kids notice things about the coins...really look at them...you will get GREAT sentences.

Do coin 'rubblings' to study the differences between different coins.

The Money Rap

Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Well a penny is worth one and a nickel is five,

A dime is worth ten and a quarter twenty-five.

Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Five pennies make a nickel. Two nickels make a dime.

Two dimes and a nickel make a quarter and it's mine.

Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.



A Coin Combinations Graph

"This shows the coin combinations to equal 25 cents. Talk about the different combinations of coins needed to make 25 cents. Then, graph the combinations by marking *how many* of each coin is needed.

The horizontal graph 4 rows and 13 columns. It has quarter, dime, nickel, and penny labelled down the left side. There are 13 columns, as there are actually 13 different coin combinations that equal 25 cents. Using the book *Quarter From the Tooth Fairy* you will read about 4 of those combinations. Graph them on the graph first, then daily add one more combination, until you have them all. Later, this can be changed to 35 cents or even 50 cents. Coin combinations that equal 100 cents numbers over 300."

Counting Money

"I teach my children the 'five method'. Draw circles to show a quarter, a dime, a nickel and a penny. Put a Q on the quarter, a D on the dime, a N on the nickel and a P on the penny. Then put a 5 for every five cents. Quarters get 5 5 5 5, Dimes get 5 5, nickels get one 5 and pennies don't get any. Then they simply count by 5's. Count the pennies by 1's at the end."

"Always begin to count money by starting with the largest in worth. Practice counting by 25's before you begin. It is 'counting on'. For example, if you have 2 quarters, 3 dimes, 2 nickels and 3 pennies, it would be counted like this: 25, 50, 60, 70, 80, 85, 90, 91, 92, 93."

"Every morning we do calendar. I have a magnetic blackboard. Right next to the calendar I drew 3 circles about 7 inches in diameter stacked on top of each other. I have quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies with pieces of magnet glued to the back on the board next to the circles. Then each day 3 different children count money for us. They must show the number of days of school in money. For example, if today was day 87, they would show \$.87 three different ways."

In the real world when you buy something, the cashier doesn't say, 'Okay, that'll be 1 dollar bill, 2 quarters, and a nickel,' right? What do they say? (\$x.xx) Then you have to figure out what to give them. Does anyone remember how we count our money? (Start with largest bill or coin, then work your way down. It's easier to keep track that way.- give example) Try to use the smallest number of bills and coins. (If you spent \$1.00, would you give them 100 pennies? What would be easier to give them?) Explain that they'll be working with a partner to buy and sell items from an advertisement. When they choose an item, they should record the price, then fill in the boxes to tell how many of each bill and of each coin they used.

Telling Time

"Minute hand - the long hand goes with the long word Hour hand - the short word goes with the short word. I've been lucky that the Grade One teachers do a great job teaching foundation skills for time but I still have a few that don't get it. My kids see that the minute hand actually is the longer one because it has to touch the minute on the clock. The hour hand is shorter because it doesn't have to be quite so exact. This seems to have helped a bit."

"I have been teaching my students time to the minute only. Each day we practice setting a clock with only one hand. Everyone seems to understand how to do this. I haven't yet added the hour hand, but I think the transition will be easier than the traditional way of teaching the hour hand first."

The children made clocks out of paper plates and hold up the clocks after they have put the correct times on them.



Have the kids work in pairs to see the passage of time. For example: How many times can you tie your shoes in one minute? The children write their estimation. Now one child tries this while the other child times their partner. Then the kids switch positions.

A few more sample questions: How many times can you jump in one minute? How many times can you say the ABC's in one minute? How many times can you hop on one foot?



"I worked with a teacher who had a great idea - buy or recycle a kitchen clock to keep in your classroom in addition to the one you already have on your wall. Take the cover off of the face first and remove the minute and second hands. This will leave you with a clock that only shows the hour hand. When the hour hand is pointing straight to the 9, it is exactly 9:00. When the hour hand is between the 9 and 10, it is between 9:00 and 10:00, etc. I introduce this at the beginning of the year and we talk about it once or twice a week during calendar. This way by the time we get to our official telling time unit, the kids have a good understanding of what the hour hand does and how it moves around the face of the clock. You could do something similar with another clock leaving only the minute hand on it."

Fractions

"Distribute a variety of coloured strips of paper (2 cm. x 6cm.) Have students arrange the coloured strips of paper onto another paper to look like a rectangular rainbow birthday cake. They can glue it into place and decorate the cake with candles. Below they write the fraction of each colour in their cake. Example: My cake is $\frac{1}{6}$ orange, $\frac{3}{6}$ blue and $\frac{2}{6}$ red."

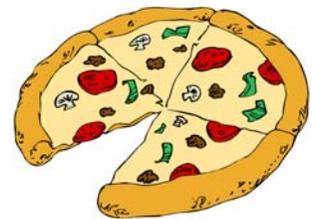
"I made them each a little seven page book. They decorated the front and put the title 'Real Fractions' by _____. Their assignment was to find a real life fraction in their lives each day. They had to write a sentence using the fraction and explaining what it was and then draw the fraction in a picture. For instance, someone did one like this: I had a coke and I drank $\frac{1}{2}$ of it. Then they drew a glass half empty. Another child wrote that she had 20 pieces of candy and had eaten seven of them. $\frac{7}{20}$ and then drew 20 pieces of candy with seven of them crossed out.

After they had the books for an entire week and they had written one a day, I collected them. The next day I split the board in half and handed one boy and one girl a marker. The boy had to draw the picture and the girl had to write the fraction. I read each page of each book (changing the ones which made no sense or were incorrect.) When all the boys and girls had come up and done one, we switched and boys wrote while girls drew. I thought this would be boring, but the kids had a blast. They love anything that allows them to use the markers on the board. It was an interesting way to find out if they could apply the fraction lessons we had done with their real lives."

A Fraction Book

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that this is creative, but the kids liked it. I made them each a little seven page book. They decorated the front and put the title 'Real Fractions' by '_____'. Their assignment was to find a real life fraction in their lives each day. They had to write one or more sentences using the fraction and explaining what it was and then draw the fraction in a picture. For instance, someone did one like this: I had a coke and I drank $1/2$ of it. Then they drew a glass half empty. Another child wrote that she had 20 pieces of candy and had eaten seven of them. $7/20$ and then drew 20 pieces of candy with seven of them crossed out. After they had the books for an entire week and they had written one a day, I collected them and took them home to grade them. The next day I called them up to group. I split the chalkboard in half and handed one boy and one girl a marker. The boy had to draw the picture and the girl had to write the fraction. I read each page of each book (changing the ones which made no sense or were incorrect.) When all the boys and girls had come up and done one, we switched and boys wrote while girls drew. I'll be honest. I thought this would be boring, but the kids had a blast. They love anything that allows them to use the markers on the board. It was an interesting way to find out if they could apply the fraction lessons we had done with their real lives."

"I always use food when I'm doing fractions. I start with the concept of 'fair shares' - If I'm going to share an apple between two friends, how would I cut it so each has a fair share? They all relate to that! Then divide pies between four people, pizzas, etc. I bring in apples, round cookies and graham wafers but I don't go as far as pies and pizzas!! They all seem to get it if you start with this."



"We call them: 'fractions of a whole' - and 'fractions of a set'. I teach my kids both - but on separate days - and explain that there are 2 ways. The top number always shows how many parts you've chosen - the bottom number is how many there are in all - whether individual items or a set. I haven't experienced confusion with my kids. I don't use the words numerator or denominator. For fractions of a whole I emphasize that the sections must be the same size - fair shares. For fractions of a set it is easy to use kids in the class. $3/4$ of these kids are wearing jeans - etc."

"I also do the fair shares. I start by not having enough cookies to share so I tell the kids I'll break the cookies into two pieces and share them that way. Then I make sure the pieces are obviously not the same size. I tell them they cannot eat their piece until I've handed out a piece to everyone. It doesn't take them very long to get into the it's not fair. Then we each get a whole cookie to make things fair in the end. They love this lesson."

"Our math specialist uses oranges and plain Hershey bars for fractions. They are easy to divide into fractions and fair shares."

"To introduce fractions, I put $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ on the board, and let the kids write down on a piece of paper how much of an orange (or apple) they want to have. I have them do it on paper so they don't choose what someone else said. Then when math class begins, I cut up the fruit and give out according to what they each wanted. This gets their attention!"

"This isn't an introductory activity, but it is fun and looks neat as a display. We used folded 12 x18 paper into rectangles and then wrote one letter of our name in each of the spaces in marker. If the kids had long names you might have to cut another piece of paper. The kids then chose 2 colours that they liked and coloured the vowels one colour and the consonants another.

On another half sheet of paper I asked these questions: What fraction of your name is vowels? What fraction of your name is consonants? What fraction of your name is 'tall letters'? What fraction of your name is below the line? What fraction of your name stays in the middle?

My kids started making the connection that fractions are everywhere! They wanted to make fraction books. We brainstormed ideas for the books: boys vs. girls in the class, adults/children in the family, boys/girls in their family, people liking red/green/yellow apples, clean/messy desks (messy won!), etc. Another fraction activity we did was as a patterning activity. We used cheerios and fruit loops on yarn to make patterns. As an extension to the activity they had to find the fraction of Cherrios and Fruit Loops in their pattern."



"I like to first introduce the whole concept of equal parts when discussing fractions. Grade Two students don't have a real grasp of the idea of anything but whole numbers. So, I get a candy bar, like a Hershey's chocolate bar, and hit it on the desk. It breaks into various sizes. I then give everyone a piece randomly. As I go around we talk about the size and I ask them to compare their piece with their neighbour's piece. This usually gives way to 'I got a small one...' or 'His is bigger than mine', etc. That leads to the concept of 'fair share'. I then read 'The Hershey Bar' book. After reading, I take out more chocolate bars and we talk about a way to break a bar so that everyone has a fair share. As they enjoy their treat, I assign a writing task. I give them this: I used to think (they write in sentences what they thought fractions meant) but now I know (then they write sentences to tell what they learned about fractions). I also ask for an illustration to go with the lesson....many times children will draw first and then write giving an opportunity for comprehension through drawing... I like the insight on their thinking.

A follow up lesson uses the book, 'Eating Fractions'. The very simple text and photo illustrations show the whole, half, thirds, quarters terms well. I also make a poster on the board to help them understand that the top number is the number in question and the bottom number is the total of equal parts in the whole. After understanding of fractional parts of a whole, I move on to fractional parts of a set."

"Read fractions by saying '___ of the ___ parts'. For example, in $\frac{3}{4}$ we are talking about '3 of the 4 parts'."

Estimation

The Popcorn Ghost

"Cut out a ghost shape from a posterboard. Show the ghost and have kids estimate how many pieces of popcorn it will take to cover the ghost. Record their answers and discuss the numbers...for example, which numbers are even; which are odd; which number would come next in this pattern: 25, 30, 35, ___; which estimate is the largest; which is the smallest; which estimate has 3 tens; etc. Allow each child to take out a handful of popcorn. Give each child a blank piece of paper to count their popcorn pieces into groups of tens. The children circle each group of ten pieces of popcorn and leave the leftover 1's uncircled. They then write the number that tells how much popcorn they had by writing the tens and then ones. The children then take unifix cubes and make groups of ten to match their circles and have loose unifix cubes to match the ones. The children take their popcorn to the ghost and glue it on. This works best with an adult using a paintbrush to smear the glue around a small area at a time. The children put their unifix cubes together... all the tens in one group and the ones in another. After the popcorn ghost is complete, the children watch as the teacher takes the loose unifix cubes and puts them together to make as many groups of ten as possible. Then the teacher takes the groups of ten and makes as many groups of hundred as possible. When it's all complete, the children easily see the number of popcorn pieces on the ghost.... the hundreds, tens, and ones. I usually go back and glue eyes and a mouth on top of the popcorn pieces. The kids love this activity and the finished ghost is so cute."

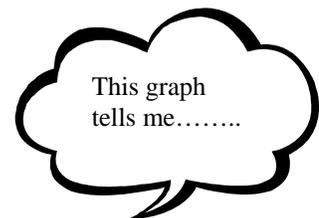
Graphs

You can make many class graphs telling about the children...the colour of their eyes or hair, number of people in their family, how they get to school, how many older siblings, how many went to this school last year, how many know how to swim, etc.

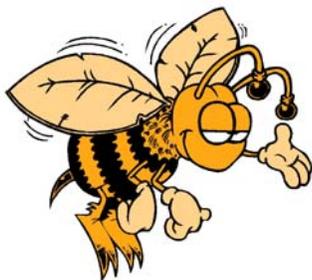
Have the children count the letters in their name...graph the numbers, find some manipulative in the room to represent the letters in the name. Make up math stories about who has more or less letters than a specific name.

The Talking Graph

"Another favourite twist to graphing is our 'talking' graph: I have a little guy who peeks over our graph... we call him Grady Graph. The graph question is written in a speech balloon pointing towards Grady. When the graph is complete, the children interpret the graph and each child is given a speech balloon to write down one fact. (It can be something like: 'Most people chose ___' or it could be a math sentence like: $6 + 7 = 13$... anything they get from looking at the graph.) The speech balloons are attached around the graph as if Grady is talking."



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).

Partners for 10

When reviewing the '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).

The Hidden Partner

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.

Musical Numbers

Another game I tried today (this one I made up ~ I guess I could call it 'Musical Numbers'): Every student gets 1 card from a deck of playing cards (face cards have been removed). They hold it against their chest, number side in. I turn on some music and everyone walks (or dances) around the carpet. There is no talking. Music stops and everyone quietly stands beside a partner. After I've checked to make sure everyone has a partner I say "Add and subtract". The partners show each other their cards. One person adds the two numbers, the other person subtracts. They trade cards. I turn on the music and the whole process repeats itself. We did this for about 10 minutes. I did a 'thumbs up' evaluation afterwards and most of the kids liked it a lot.

Addition War

And then there's 'Addition War' (2 separate games) from the book *Boxcars and One-Eyed Jacks*. Each pair of students has a deck of cards between them (face cards removed). They each pull two cards and place them on the table face side up. They both add their cards and the highest sum wins. Winner takes all four cards. If there is a tie, then the players go to 'war'. Each player lays down 3 more cards. Then they play another round to see who is the winner. Winner takes all 14 cards. You can vary this by having the lowest sum as the winner. It can also be played as Subtraction War.

Place - Value Scramble

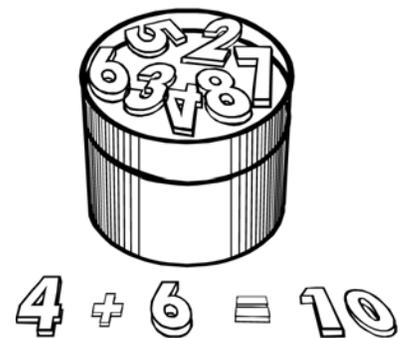
- 1.) Write three single digits on the board.
- 2.) Ask students to rearrange the numerals to make the lowest possible number, the highest possible number, a number with the largest number in the tens place, and other similar placements.
- 3.) Complete the activity by asking students to help you in arranging the resulting numbers in order.

Around the World

"I play 'Around the World' with my students almost daily and it really helps them to learn the facts. You start with one student standing behind another student's chair and you call out a math problem. These two students try to answer the question as quickly as possible. The first student to answer moves to the next child's desk and you call out another question. (If the student standing doesn't answer first, then he sits in that chair and the student that was sitting down now moves on.) They enjoy competing against each other and ending up in different seats. We do two or three rounds a day to begin the math class."

A Magic Trick

"I learned something like this as a magic trick when I was a child. In the classroom it can be used as a drill for combinations of 10. Have someone take out one card from the deck and keep it hidden. The person with the full deck turns over 8-10 cards face up. Constantly cover the combinations of 10 - like 2 and 8 or 3 and 7. Ace is a one. Remove the face cards from the deck or.....if you have a J, Q, K exposed cover all three but you must have all three. If you get stuck just make more piles until you get a 10 combination or J, Q, K. Cover all tens. When all cards are used pick up the piles that are combinations of 10 and you should have one pile left. The number missing to make ten is the card the other person has. For example, if a 6 is left then the other person has a 4. (All cards are being played face up.)"



Race for 100

This game is simple, but it strengthens student understanding of place value and trading. I question students a lot and have them count often (before and after trading).

Materials: place values boards with a column for ones, tens, and hundreds; dice Base 10 blocks
Students roll one die. They take the number of one cubes indicated on the die. When they can trade for a tens rod they do so. The game continues until one student trades up to 100. That student is the winner.

Variations:

Play the game backwards. This will provide a foundation for subtraction with regrouping (or a strengthening of basic knowledge for older students). Use Place Value boards with a thousands column to play 'Race to 1000'. Make the connection between money and place value. Call the game 'Race for A Dollar' (or ten dollars, etc.)

The \$1.00 Word Hunt

"The \$1.00 word hunt is where you write out the alphabet and then assign a value to each letter. A=1, B=2, C=3 ... Z=26. After you have figured out the value of each letter, try different words to see how many points they are. (I think it would be easiest to pick out some letters that equal 100 and try different combinations with those letters to get 100.) This is tricky! See which of your children (and/or their parents) can find a word first or who can come closest.

The example I gave - the word **Presley** works like this:

P=16 R= 18 E= 5 S= 19 L=12 E= 5 Y= 25

Then add the numbers up: $16 + 18 + 5 + 19 + 12 + 5 + 25 = 100$

Find a \$1.00 word!

Here's a little math that might prove helpful:

H A R D W O R K

8 1 18 4 23 15 18 11 = 98%

K N O W L E D G E

11 14 15 23 12 5 4 7 5 = 96%

But.... check this out..

A T T I T U D E

1 20 20 9 20 21 4 5 = 100%

So, it stands to reason that hard work and knowledge will get you close to the top, but attitude will get you there.



Subtraction War

Play as for Addition War except that they subtract the two numbers.

Money Marathon

a poster with the following poem on it:

Five pennies, trade a nickel. . .

Two nickels, trade a dime. . .

Two dimes and a nickel,

Trade a quarter anytime!



laminated 4-column board with the following headings for each column (respectively from left to right): Quarter, 25 cents; Dime, 10 cents; Nickel, 5 cents; and Penny, 1 cent; dice; quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies

Students take turns rolling a dice and taking that number of pennies for their board. As the students collect coins that can be traded, they should do so. Saying the poem is a great way to help students figure out the trades on their own.

The first student to get any designated amount (75 cents for example) is the winner.

Addition Top It

"My students love this game! It's called 'Addition Top It'. You need a deck of cards - a regular deck is fine, but remove the face cards. Have the children play in pairs. They are to deal out all of the cards in the deck evenly between themselves. Each child then places his pile face down. Together, they say, '1,2,3, Top It!' and then flip one card over (one card each). The first person to say the correct sum of the two cards wins both cards. For example, if the two cards that have been flipped up are 5 and 9, the first person to say 14 wins both cards. Place winning cards face up next to your pile of face down cards. Continue until all cards are used, then count your 'face up' pile to see who won the most cards. You can also play 'Subtraction Top It' (play the same way but subtract the cards, rather than add them), or for earlier in the year an easier 'Top It' where whoever flips the card with the higher number wins both cards. These games can get noisy, but the kids love them and it's a great way for them to practice their facts!"

Where's My Buddy?

"We have a fun game we do either to pair up for an activity or just to practice the =10 facts. I give each child a number from 0-10 (duplicate some pairs to make sure you have enough for your class size.) The children have to hold their numbers on their foreheads or another designated part of the body and try to find a buddy to give them a sum of 10. They love it. We have to play it over and over!"

Hot Potato

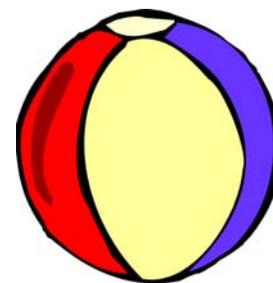
"We have been practicing double facts with a 'hot potato' type game. We sit in a circle and pass a ball. Students repeat a double fact (we go in order- $1+1=2$, $2+2=4$ etc.) when the music turns off, the person with the ball is out and sits in the middle of the circle until the next person out takes his/her place."

Honest Farmer

"We play 'Honest Farmer', and I haven't a clue why it's called that, it's always been called that since I was a kid. It's on the order of Higher/Lower. I think of a number (actually, I write it down... my memory has periods of malfunction) between 1 and 100, and they guess, but I say the next number lower than their guess if my number is lower, and I say the number one higher if my number is higher. Example: My number is 53. Someone guesses 17. I say 18, meaning my number is higher. If someone guesses 78, I say 77, so the student knows the number is lower. They win if they force me to say the number. So if someone says 54, or if someone says 52, I have to say 53, and I lose. If THEY say the number, then I win. After we have done this awhile, I let the kids take over. They really have to keep thinking about which they have to say, one higher or one lower. I have also done this with numbers in the hundreds... for example, I write down a number between 400 and 499."

Beach Ball Math

"I have a beach ball game I play with the children whenever we have a few minutes to 'kill'. I simply throw the beach ball and say a math equation and the catcher says the answer and throws the ball back. I also do this 'counting by' - each child giving a number in the series as they catch the ball. The kids seem to love it!"



Around the Block

"I play a variation of 'Around the World' that I call 'Around the Block'. I set up a row of 3 or 4 chairs and have 1 student sit in each chair and 1 student stand behind (6-8 kids in the group). I then have a group leader that faces the row and shows a flash card to the first pair of students (one is in the chair and one is behind). The first one to respond correctly gets to sit in the chair and the other has to stand behind. When we have gone down the row of pairs, the standing students shift to the left and the one on the end comes around to the other end and we begin another round. I set up as many groups in my room as I need and I group kids according to the facts they are working on. It is noisy but the kids love it."

The Place Value Game

"I play what we call the Place Value Game to reinforce addition facts and tens and ones. We set up the desks so that they form a long table. One student sits in each seat with a partner standing behind them. Each pair has a place value mat and two number cubes (dice) and approximately 20 counters.

The first player rolls the number cubes and gives me the sum, then asks for that number using ones and tens. For example, the child rolls a 5 and a 6 and says 11. Then he asks for one ten and 1 one. The next person goes until you've gone around the whole group. Then the partners change places. It is in the second round that the partner pair decide if they will need to regroup when it is their turn. When it is their turn, they answer the question as be-

fore and asks for that number, in a ten (if needed) and ones. If they must re-group, they must ask, 'May I regroup ten ones for one ten?' If they forget, they lose the ones.

If the student gives the wrong answer when it is his turn, the teacher says 'partner?' and the partner can give the correct answer. If the partner is incorrect, I say, 'For Sale!', and I call on the first person to raise their hand. The students may not raise their hands until I say 'For sale' so the partner doesn't feel pressure.

The students are able to stand and sit quietly because they can lose ones for talking or playing with the cubes or ones on their mats. They also know that they could get a chance to answer and get some ones. Last week we started with 3 number cubes. By the end of the school year I will be using four or five number cubes. This game is played throughout our school system at different grades. Other grades use multiplication or two digit addition. My students love to play this! I also play it using pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters!"

Forehead Math

"This game is used to practice addition facts. You need two sets of cards with one digit numbers, one number on each card. Three kids are needed to play. Two kids each pick a card from the pack and without looking at it, hold it on his/her forehead so that the third child can see both numbers. He gives the answer and the other two have to tell what number is hidden on his/her own forehead.

"Here is how it goes. Jan picks a card with a 6 on it. She holds it on her forehead (without looking at it) so that Bob can see the 6. Bob picks a card with 7 on it. He holds the card on his forehead (without looking at it) so that Jan can see the 7. Sally adds the two numbers together and says 13. Jan looks at the 7 on Bob's forehead and figures out her number must be 6. Bob figures out that his number must be 7 by looking on the number on Jan's forehead."

"I learned something like this as a magic trick when I was a child. In the classroom it can be used as a drill for combinations of 10. Have someone take out one card from the deck and keep it hidden. The person with the full deck turns over 8-10 cards face up. Constantly cover the combinations of 10 - like 2 and 8 or 3 and 7. Ace is a one. Remove the face cards from the deck or.....if you have a J, Q, K exposed cover all three but you must have all three. If you get stuck just make more piles until you get a 10 combination or J, Q, K. Cover all tens. When all cards are used pick up the piles that are combinations of 10 and you should have one pile left. The number missing to make ten is the card the other person has. For example, if a 6 is left then the other person has a 4. (All cards are being played face up.)"



Money, Money, Money!

"One game that my Grade Two students enjoy playing uses dice and play money. You determine the amount of money they play to, say \$.50 or \$1.00, or your set amount (for fun, the number of days you have been in school). The partners play against each other. Player 1 rolls two dice and adds the amount on the two dice and takes that much money. Then player 2 rolls

to determine how much money he takes. They continue to take turns doing this until one player reaches the target amount of money. They are to trade in their money as they go along, for example, their 5 pennies for a nickel and so on. There are many ways to adapt this, and I have found that my students really look forward to playing it."

I Have... Who Has?

"We play 'I Have, Who Has?' A simple game card needs to be made, and then reproduced. It looks like this: I Have _____. Who has ____?"

The cards are programmed so the game will start at 1 card and end at another. Here is an example: I have 8, Who has $6 + 6$?

The person with the card that says 'I have 12' reads his/hers. 'I have 12, who has $10 + 5$?' This continues until all the cards have been read. I have my students stand UP at the beginning of the game and sit down when they have read their card. That way we can see who has read their card."

Coin Count

2 players. You need real or punchout money: 3-5 dimes, nickels and pennies, a paper cup or container

Player 1 puts the coins into the container. Player 2 shakes the container and spills out the coins. Player 1 counts the value for all the coins that show tails. Player 2 counts the value of the coins that show heads. The player with the greatest total wins. Switch heads and tails and play again.

Beat the Calculator

"We play 'Beat the Calculator'. It can be played with the whole class or in small groups of 3. When played whole class, divide your class in half - one half uses calculators and the other half uses their whiteboards (they can use paper). I act as the caller of facts. When I finish giving a fact, like $8 + 7$, the calculator people have to actually do the problem on the calculator by pressing $8 + 7 =$ to find the answer (even if they know it). The brain group writes the sum on their whiteboard. When someone gets the answer, they call it out and raise their hand. The object is to give tons of practice in mental math and to demonstrate that it really is quicker to use your brain, not the calculator. Once the children are used to the game, they work in groups of three, with one being the caller, one on a calculator, and one with a whiteboard. They take turns doing each role."



Bang!

"My kids love a game called Bang. I put 15 or so flash cards in a covered/decorated Pringles can, along with one card that has **BANG!** written on it. The children take turns drawing a card (no peeking!) and giving the answer. If they draw the BANG! card, they have to put all their cards back. I do it with addition and subtraction facts, as well as Dolch words."

Counting Coins

"Gather up a collection of coins (whatever values you are working with at the time) and one die. Decide on an amount to play up to. Players take turns rolling the die and taking that amount out of the 'kitty' in the middle. The catch is that you have to make all the trades possible on each turn. For example, if you have 5 pennies, you must trade for a nickel. If you have 2 nickels, you must trade for a dime. Whoever gets to the final amount first is the winner. You can also play it by counting backwards. For example, start with a \$1.00 'Loonie' and then roll to take money away. The larger coins must be changed to smaller ones to subtract."

Make the Biggest Answer

Draw on the board three parallel lines then two intersecting lines. Place a "+" or "-" sign next to the second parallel line. What you have made is a grid of empty boxes, with three boxes in each of the three rows. Have the students copy this onto their papers.

Explain to the students that you are going to roll a die and the number that is rolled is to be placed into one of the squares in the top two rows. The bottom row is for the answer. The die will be rolled until the empty boxes in all the rows, except the bottom row, are filled.

They are then to work the problem. The object of the game is to get the highest number if adding or the lowest number if subtracting.

While the students are putting their numbers onto their paper you are also playing by putting your numbers into the squares on the board. Then ask if anyone beat your answer. The best answer is written on the board and anyone with that answer receives a point.

Create smaller or larger grids to adapt to your students level.

Students will be able to explain that the value of a number increases when digits farthest to the left have greatest value.

Predetermine the number of digits in the mystery number. Begin with three digit numbers and increase number of digits as student skill increases.

On scratch paper, have students draw lines so that there are the same number of lines as digits:

I am the greatest!

Have teacher made number cards, one for each digit, 0 - 9. Shuffle 'deck' of number cards.

Select the first card and students must write this digit on any one of the lines. Continue this process until all lines have been filled in.

Select a student to arrange all the selected number cards from greatest to least. All students having this number declare, 'I AM THE GREATEST!'

Reshuffle the number cards and repeat the game. As students become more proficient add digits to the mystery number. Eventually older students could use a double deck of number cards. Because of the element of chance, even your lower math students will sometimes have the opportunity to declare, 'I AM THE GREATEST!'

Math Word Walls

"I did utilize a math wall in my classroom this past year and found it to be very successful.

I devoted a section of the wall that is above my alphabet line to math words and definitions. Like the word wall, the cards I put up were chosen carefully and introduced as they appeared in the curriculum. I made sure that the word was large (could be seen from the back of the room), and that in some cases, a short definition was written under the math vocab word.

Some of the terms included were data (information), graph, axis, volume, area, column, row, increase, decrease, etc.

I also put certain labeled shapes on the wall, such as hexagon, triangle (irregular-shaped triangles, not posted "straight and orderly" on the wall), square (also labeled as a "special rectangle"), and octagon (with a little 8-armed octopus pictured on the shape).

We also put up reminders of strategies we used--"counting on", "plus 10's" and "near 10's", etc.

My children used the math wall a lot. They especially used it to recall info and to spell the vocab when they had to respond to tasks that required them to provide a written explanation of their thinking. Since my children are so tuned-into our word wall, they readily adapted to using the math wall."

"Your word wall should include the language you use in math: addition, subtraction, equal, sum, etc. We need to integrate our subjects instead of teaching them in isolation and this is a major focus at our school. I list the math vocabulary we are currently using on the board and eventually it finds its way to the word wall, and the same for science vocabulary. All these words crop up on spelling bees, which the kids really love."

"I went to a marvellous math workshop this summer put on by Kim Sutton. She strongly advocates having the language of mathematics used in the classroom. Along with this concept is, of course, a math word wall. We've got it on a felt board and I've put Velcro stickies on the back of the word cards. There are the number cards and the printed names for them, words or the ordinal numbers, geometric shapes and the printed names for each, addition, subtraction and equal signs and their words, greater than, less than, etc. Put on words such as sum, difference, product, addend, graph, digits, numeral, data, length, width height, weight, odd, even, metre, millimetre, centimetre, kilometre, gram, kilogram, cube, cone, etc."

"Your word wall should/can include the language you use in math: addition, subtraction, equal, sum, etc. We need to integrate our subjects instead of teaching them in isolation. This is a major focus at our school. I list the math vocabulary we are currently using on the board and eventually it finds its way to the word wall, and the same for science vocabulary."

Odds and Ends

Favourite Lessons

"My two favourite math lessons come from Marilyn Burns. The day after Labor Day I tell this big story about how my husband and I were driving down a farm road near my home and I see a farmer standing in the middle of the road. I beg my husband to pull over and finally he does. I go to the farmer and ask Mr. Farmer why in the world he is standing in the middle of the road. He explains he has a problem. There are 3 cows and 4 chickens up on the hill and he wants to know how many tails and feet there are all together. I tell him I have a super smart class of children who would love to help him. Then the class tries to answer. I get some very interesting answers. I have done it with 2 grade two classes and a grade one class. We also wrote the farmer letters.

"The other comes from the same book. It is a patterning lesson that takes 3 days or so. Day 1 we make ziti noodle necklaces in a growing pattern. 1 white, 1 red, 1 white, 2 red up to 6 red I think. We look at the growing pattern and the repeating pattern. I do this lesson very early in the year and use growing and repeating all year after that. I demonstrate mine, then we look at the bags of ziti and determine which one will be less and why. They have NO idea! Then they make the necklaces.

"The next day I tell them they are going to make their own necklaces. I have them vote on a colour of necklace they would like to make. We graph and discuss results. Then we dye the ziti. They watch me do it.

"The 3rd day they are to make the necklace, but they must first tell me how many coloured and how many white they will need. They do the work and it is amazing the numbers they come up with. I always have one or two who get it right!

"To dye the noodles put a tablespoon of rubbing alcohol and a few drops of food colouring in a ziplock bag, put in the noodles and shake. Lay them out to dry. I do them at night and use them the next morning.

"Put a little glue on the end of the yarn to make it easier to string and use piece of masking tape to keep the noodles from slipping off and for their names. DO NOT LET THE NECKLACES GET WET LIKE AT THE WATER FOUNTAIN. THEY STAIN. Experience is talking!"

Question Table

"During my math time, the kids work independently. This is a hard time, because the kids are really needy. They have a lot of questions or don't understand. I have the question table where I have 4 chairs open. Kids come to the table when there is a free seat open. We brainstorm what they can do while waiting (i.e. skip questions to the next, ask a friend, read a book...) I have found that many kids have the same questions. I explain it to a small group of kids with the same question so I don't have to repeat myself many times."



All About Me Math

Have the students make a math 'All About Me' book.

They can include measurement...height, weight. They can measure the length of their feet or fingers.

Teach centimetres, metres, grams and kilograms.

You can make a counting 'All About Me' book by having each page a different number, and writing the following:

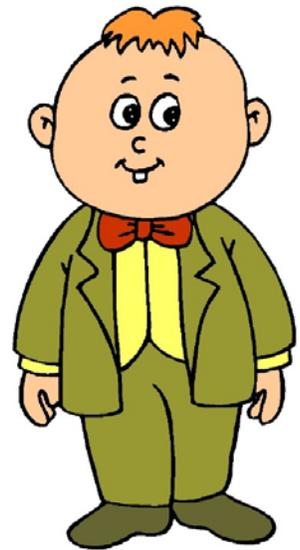
I have one _____. (mouth, family, school, bicycle)

I have two _____. (eyes, parents, cats, hands)

I have three _____. (notebooks, favourite TV shows)

I have four _____. (friends, grandparents, pencils) etc.

Have them expand on each idea.



Homework Bingo

"I have a 100 square grid (write and wipe kind). On the top I wrote 'Play Homework Bingo' and on the side I numbered each row. Once a child brings in their homework they write their initials in an empty square. Once they are all filled I pick a letter and number. That person that is in that square will get a prize."

Odd and Even

"I taught my children that they could look at ANY number (or string of numbers) and determine if it was odd or even just by looking at the last digit! They LOVED this trick and we would call in various teachers or kids to amaze them with this trick.

Me: "Casey, Is the number 1,267,988 odd or even?"

Casey: "EVEN!"

"Kids love 'tricks' and anything that makes them look really smart!"

Class Discussion - What's your house number? Is it even or odd? On most streets, houses with even numbers are on one side; those with odd numbers are on the other side.

Animals have an even number of legs. Which animals can you name that have two legs, four legs, or eight legs?

Think about wheels - What things have an odd number of wheels?

What things can you think of that always come in even numbers or odd numbers?

Activities

1. Read the book, *Even Steven and Odd Todd* by Kathryn Cristaldi
2. Discuss the book and what makes a number even or odd.
3. Give each student a big piece of construction paper, paper containing little squares, and writing paper.
4. Each student will write each letter of his/her name in a square, cut it out, and glue it on the top of the construction paper. They will then determine if they are even or odd by the num-

ber of letters in their first name. (Debbie - even, Karen - odd)

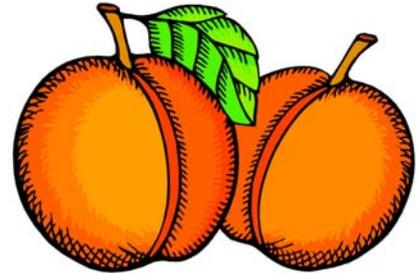
5. On their writing papers they will write a story using themselves doing things that go with either their odd or even character depending on their names. Finally they glue their story on the bottom of the construction paper.

Odd and Even

If you're an even number, You always have a pair. So if you look around, Your buddy will be there.

But ...

If you're an odd number, You'll be a lonely one. You may look for your buddy, But you're the only one.



Periods of Time

To go with both the 'Me on the Map' sequencing and the concept of time in the dinosaur unit:

In a second I can _____.

In a minute I can _____. A minute is sixty seconds.

In 1 hour I can _____. An hour is sixty minutes.

In 1 day I can _____. A day is 24 hours.

Then 'A week is _____, a month is _____, a year is _____.'

More difficult - 'A decade is _____, a century is _____, a millennium is _____.'

Then 'An era is _____.'

The 'Keys to Math Facts'

"I found 3 different key shapes that are 15 cm. long. I wrote on the diamond shape key, 'addition facts', on the circle key, 'subtraction facts' and 'wild key' on a square key. I copied them onto construction paper.

"For 10 days, we are having a 5 minute 100 facts test. The first 5 days are the addition days, and the next 5 are the subtraction day. Each time they score over a 70% they receive a corresponding key for that test. From the second day on, if they score higher than the day before, they get a wild key. The wild keys are also given if they beat their previous score, even if they scored below 70%. They also get a wild key for each time they top their own high score. If a child scores 100% they also get a wild key each time they get a 100%.

"We are attaching the keys to their desk by a pipe cleaner that I bent into a circle. They hang it on the bottom 'rung' of their desk, so it is not distracting to them during the day.

"The reason we choose 70% is to keep the children who don't do so well on time tests motivated to get a key. I have about 5 children who really struggle with this and just didn't study their number facts in the past. But now, they are studying, because they can beat their own score and receive a wild key for their effort.

"I am amazed at how excited my children have been over this activity! They are really working hard at this!"

Probability

Describe the likeliness of an outcome using terms such as *likely*, *unlikely*, *fair chance*, *probable*, and *expected*.

Choose possible-chance questions that are of interest to this age group. Give students cards with words on them such as *likely* and *unlikely*. Have them hold up the card with the most appropriate answer as you ask questions. For example: How likely is it that someone in our room: has on a Band-Aid? plays an instrument? has travelled to another country? came to school on an airplane? has a soccer game next week?

Use weather for a daily question - Will it rain by lunch time? Will the sun come out today? etc.



Math Terminology

"I think it is time we teach the parents that 'trading' is the acceptable terminology so that we can use terms that make sense to the children. To the parents, and to those who have taught for many years, the terms 'borrowing' and 'carrying' may make sense; however, they are not sound mathematically and may in the long run confuse the students.

"I have seen so many ways to add larger numbers and I try to keep two things in mind - one is the mind of the child....that is where I use all the manipulatives, and cute words and ideas, (we call them families that grow and can't fit in their houses anymore and then even have to move out of their neighborhoods into different towns) ...that is for the child; but I always use the correct terms as well.

"The one's place is called 'units'. That is the groundwork for allowing math to be more flexible. Units could be balls, castles, people or actually numbers themselves. Children should be taught that large numbers are added in a variety of ways using lots of strategies, but for the child who doesn't understand easily we also all memorize the 'safest' way to get it right... adding one's or units, then tens, hundreds, etc.

"For the sake of future math learning, it is important for the students to see that you can add the hundreds first, then tens then ones, and then tens again if need be, etc., otherwise we will have another generation of inflexible math students who cannot think for themselves because they are locked into only one way of doing math."

Moving Math

"This is something I've done with older students but I have modified it for my grade 2 kids. It's something of a review but with a twist. You need index cards, at least one for every student. Write a different problem on each. It could be multiple choice, a word problem, basic facts, etc. Number each card and place face down at each desk. Each child would get a sheet of paper numbered to match the number of index cards. Where they begin on the sheet depends on where he/she is sitting. On a signal, each flips over the card, solves it (on own paper), and writes the answer on the sheet. After 2 minutes (use a timer) they are to stop working on the problem if not done and move to the next seat to do the next problem. You continue until everyone has been at every place. Kids like this because it's timed, they get to move around, and it's different from what they usually do. Have fun!"

Timed Math Tests

"I do timed math tests. When I started out I gave 50 problems (example +1's) and said 'go'. As the children finished I wrote their time on the test. We waited for everyone to finish (they drew on the back of the paper as they finished). The goal was to beat the time of the day before. Now I give 50 problems (we're on +4's) and give them 3 minutes and then take up the papers. Everyone in the room except for 2 finished in 3 minutes or less. My fastest is 1 min. 30 sec. The kids love it. Our benchmark test is 50 problems in 3 minutes with 85% correct."

"Here is a math exercise that can be made into a Christmas tree decoration. Cut paper chain size pieces of construction paper. I used many colours but you could use red and green. Write an equation (can be written at any level) on one piece. Each child gets his/her own equation. I tailored the questions to the child. I had math questions ranging from $4+3$ to $36-27$. The children then make a paper chain to show the answer to the equation. I told them we wouldn't count the math sentence but to start to count after that. I put a ribbon on the equation rung and hung it from a tree. It looks beautiful (AND the principal was impressed that I integrated math, art and Christmas)!"

Rounding Numbers

Mark the place and look to the right.

Four or less are out of sight.

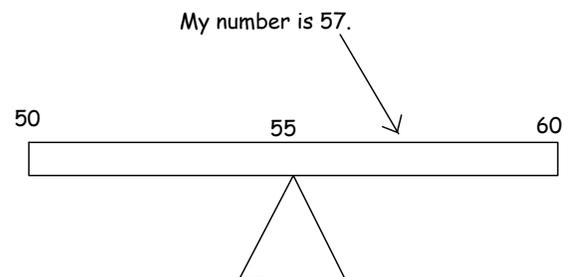
Five and up will buy one more

Before they too are out the door.

In those empty right-hand spaces,

Zeros keep the proper places.

"I use a straight number line that I call a see-saw or teeter-totter. The halfway mark looks like the centre post of a see-saw. The markings are unnamed so we can fill in the number we are rounding. I can use the number line for 10's, 100's, 1000's. I made up this open format worksheet so eight number lines fit across a regular sheet of paper. We put the number we are rounding above the see-saw and write the two tens (hundreds, thousands) that the number fits between on either end of the teeter-totter. Then we label the halfway number and write it at the centre point of the teeter-totter. Next we write in the original number. Finally we decide which way the teeter-totter will tip and record the rounded answer."



When we round 57 to the nearest 10, we would round it to 60.

A temperature poem..... 30 is hot. 20 is nice. 10 is cool. 0 is ice!

Math Facts

"One of our schoolwide goals this year has been to increase memorization of math facts. The following is done schoolwide, but you could do the same thing in your classroom on a small scale. We have various tests with 100 problems each that are timed. They start with addition facts with answers between 0-5 and have 10 minutes to do 100 problems. We started at the beginning of the year and gave the test 2-3 times a week. Most mastered this test quickly. Then they do the same test, but only have 8 minutes, then 6 minutes, and finally 4 minutes. Then they start working on addition facts with answers between 0-10 for 10 minutes, then 8, then 6, then 4 (you get the idea). After this test we work on subtraction 0-5, subtraction 0-10, addition 0-18, subtraction 0-18 using the same format.

In order for the kids to work on their own level, they all test at the same time using the various tests they are trying to master. I just keep copies of each test in a paper divider tray. I write the names on them and the amount of time they have to complete the test. When I begin the time I call out '10 minutes begin'. Those with 10 minutes start and the rest wait until I call for 8 min, 6 min, then 4 min. It works pretty well and I have found most students to be very honest. They enjoy working toward the shorter time goals and cheer when they meet goals. It's not really competitive because everyone is working to improve their own time and most aren't really aware of where everyone else is working.

Since this is schoolwide we award buttons as they reach a new goal and add stars for meeting each shorter time. They wear them proudly and really encourage and congratulate each other."

A Good Idea!

"You know the sounds that manipulatives make on desk or table tops? It can be really nerve racking when the whole class is involved. Well, I have cut the cloth shelf liner material into 12 inch chunks and we use those to soften the sounds. It also makes a convenient way to define the space in which the manipulatives belong. So whenever counters, pattern blocks, number cubes, etc., are needed the students know to get out their 'math manipulatives work space.' And they can just be thrown in the wash when necessary."



Math Centres

- File Folder Games
- Play 'War' with number cards. Play 'Adding War' - Child A has a 2 and a 3 ($2 + 3 = 5$); Child B has a 4 and a 6 ($4 + 6 =$ total of 10). Child B wins. Play 'Subtraction War': Child A has a 3 and a 2 (total of 1); Child B has a 6 and a 4 (total of 2). Child B wins. They can play 'Add the Dice' or 'Add the Dominoes' (same as 'Adding War').
- Estimation Station: Have a jar of something and student estimate how much is in the jar.
- Add 2 sides of dominoes and write a number sentence.
- Number words with flash cards. Example: students gets the card ' $4 + 3 = 7$ ' and forms 'four plus three equals seven.' with word cards.

- Addition and Subtraction dot-to-dot pictures
- Play 'Addition Concentration': Example - flip a '3' over and a '2 + 1' over to match.
- Play 'Subtraction Concentration': Example - flip a '3' over and a '4 - 1' over to match.
- Make geometric houses out of paper. Students are given a certain number of each shape.
- Measure using unifix cubes
- Create patterns using unifix cubes or tiles

Trivia!

"A grade four teacher wanted her students to understand the number one million, so they started counting popcorn kernels. Do you know how much one million kernels of popcorn is? It fills up a child's 6 foot diameter wading pool with 12 inch sides TO THE VERY TOP!"

Summer Math Activities

These were written for the children to do during the summer, but many can be adapted for use in class.

Fractions: Figure out how to divide a pizza, bag of M&M's, etc. equally for a given number of people.

When eating a hot dog, divide it into $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, or $\frac{1}{4}$ before eating.

Do a jigsaw puzzle. If it is 100 pieces, how many pieces would you have to have figured out, when you are $\frac{1}{4}$ done? $\frac{1}{2}$ done? $\frac{3}{4}$ done?

Addition/Subtraction Facts: Use a deck of cards and play "addition war" only the first person to give sum gets the cards.

Make up story problems using addition and subtraction.

Make up worksheets with all sorts of addition and subtraction problems.

Multiplication/Division: We didn't formally work too much on division, but work with problems like the following.

$$4 \times \underline{\quad} = 28 \quad \text{and} \quad 6 \times \underline{\quad} = 42$$

Play Yahtzee~A great game to sharpen addition and multiplication skills.

Play 'multiplication war'. The first person to get the product gets the cards.

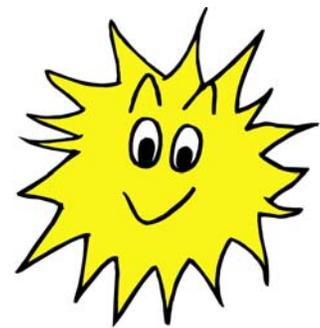
Use your flash cards we made in school.

Create your own worksheets.

Time: Come up with some real life situations to solve, such as: If we leave for the cabin at 1:00 and it takes 3 hours to get there, what time will we arrive, if we stop for 45 minutes to eat lunch?

If you have to be home by 5:00, and it is 3:45, how much time do you have left to play with your friend?

Money: Count money. Figure out change due when paying for something at the movies, zoo, or



mall. Use sale ads to find out the total cost of some items you would like to purchase. Set up a lemonade stand to see how much money you can earn. Try to find some dollar words, giving each letter a value - A=1, B=2.....Y=25 and Z=26. Estimate the cost of a list of items. Figure out the "better deal" on products. Sale ads are great to use.

Symmetry: Find objects in nature that are symmetrical. Draw a picture with only one line of symmetry.

Find pictures in magazines with lines of symmetry.

Measuring: Figure out how many inches deep a puddle is after a rain storm. If you have a garden, measure the growth of a plant or flower throughout the summer. Figure out the perimeter of your bedroom. Find the area of your pool, garden, backyard, deck, or driveway.

Graphing: Collect the temperature for a month and graph it. Graph the amount of rainfall during a week. Ask your friends and family a question and graph the results. (Some questions you might want to ask: What is your favorite summer activity? What do you like to do on a rainy day while on vacation?)

Measurement

"In our daily lives we estimate measures frequently. We can tell how tall a person is with fair accuracy. We can estimate the weight of an object by lifting it. We can estimate the length of a small object and be reasonably close. I know my hand has an 20 centimetre span, so I often measure things using my hand. Children need to be taught this skill and this takes practice. A centimetre is about the width of a finger. A metre is the distance they can stretch their hands. Estimate in measurement every day, and then give the children a minute to test their informed guess."



Math Minute

"I believe that the quick drills are good, and help children learn their math facts. But it is important to remember that kids do not all write at the same speeds. Some are willing to go really fast and write sort of sloppily, and others, as you know, care that their numbers and letters are 'just right', no matter how much you try to emphasize that the look doesn't matter on this particular task. I have a hard time with the notion of having the same expectation for all kids, for example, doing a certain number of facts per minute.

So, I do the drill sheet all together. I time them for a certain number of minutes, and when I say, 'Stop!' the children highlight the last answer they gave. Then they finish the sheet. (I always have some extra bits for early finishers to do on the back of the sheet while they are waiting.) The children mark their own papers - I read out the answers and they mark them. Then they count up their score in the timed portion of the sheet and graph the results. Their goal is to beat their own score. For me it is important that the kids compete with themselves, not with each other. If the graph goes up, that's good. If it flat-lines, or goes down, that's not good and the kids should do some practicing at home."

More Than - Less Than

"I have taught many methods, and the children are still confused, and I, who never was confused, am now confused! Now I ask, 'Which number is bigger?' It gets two dots. 'Which number is smaller?' It gets one dot. Now connect the dots. The sign goes the correct way. Once they do this a few times (if the numbers are the same they both get two dots, equal sign) they can understand the sign easier."

"We discuss the size of a whale and the large amount such a big animal must eat. We always point the whale's mouth towards the largest number."



Roman Numerals

I = 1

V = 5

X = 10

L = 50

C = 100

D = 500

M = 1000

When you complete your math program, it is fun to teach Roman Numerals. Begin by brainstorming places where they may be found.

When a letter is repeated one, two, or three times, add up the value that many times.

XXX = 10 + 10 + 10 = 30. MM = 2000.

V, L, and D cannot be repeated. I, X, C, and M can be repeated up to 3 times.

If you want to repeat a letter 4 times, instead use that letter preceding one of the two next larger values:

For 4, don't use IIII, but instead IV (I subtracted from V).

For 9, don't use VIIII or VIV, but instead IX (I subtracted from X).

Similar rules apply for 40, 90, 400, 900. Write the resulting groups in descending order.

$$\begin{aligned} 794 &= 500 + 200 + 90 + 4 \\ &= D + CC + XC + IV \\ &= DCCXCIV \end{aligned}$$

To read a numeral, reverse this process. Start at the left, and read off groups which either consist of repetitions of a single letter, or one of the groups IV, IX, XL, XC, CD, CM (representing 4, 9, 40, 90, 400, or 900, respectively). You can recognize when these groups occur because the letters are not in descending order.

Add up the values of those groups.

$$\begin{aligned} MCMLXXXVI &= M + CM + L + XXX + V + I \\ &= 1000 + 900 + 50 + 30 + 5 + 1 \\ &= 1986 \end{aligned}$$

100 Day!

100 Day Activities

- See if the children can collect 100 signatures during the day.
- Make a 100 necklace by stringing 100 Cheerios or Froot Loops.
- Have a penny drive for a local charity or to buy classroom books. Count them in 100's, of course.
- Do 100 math problems. Teach percentage.
- Do puzzles with 100 pieces.
- Have the children trace their feet and cut them out until you have 100 feet. Discuss putting them heel to toe in a long line and estimate how long the line would be in the hall. Put each child's guess on a piece of tape and then lay the feet out to see who wins!
- How long is a line of 100 children?
- The whole school can assemble at the 100th minute of school on the 100th day! Stand in the outline of 100 on the playground and take a picture of the living 100.
- The Principal could make a speech of exactly 100 words. Will anyone realize this?
- Eat 100. Eat 100 pieces of small food bits - peanuts, small marshmallows, raisins, M&M's, etc. - or eat a hot dog and 2 doughnuts.
- Skip 100 times, bounce a ball 100 times, do 100 jumping jacks, etc.
- Write a story with 100 words.
- Read for 100 minutes. Do five 20 minute reading times throughout the day. Can the class read 100 books in this time?



Make a 100 Book

Have each student make one page.

- I wish I had 100 _____ because _____.
- If I had 100 _____ I could _____.
- If I had 100 _____ I would give them all to _____.
- I would never want 100 _____ because _____.
- Having 100 _____ could be a problem because _____.
- When I am 100 _____.
- Here are 100 _____!

And Silence.....!

Have 100 seconds of silence - a good 100 Day activity when things get too wild.

100 Days In Grade Two

sing to The Brady Bunch

Here's the story of the grade two students
Who have been in school this year for 100 days.
We've been working very hard in our classrooms.
We've learned in many ways.

On this very special day at _____ Elementary
Our whole grade joins to help us celebrate.
We've been learning for 100 days so far
And they've been really great!

One hundred days, one hundred days,
We have been in school for one hundred days!

100 DAY

"We do things in the classroom and activities school wide. We have someone dress up as Zero the Hero and bring us goodies. We also have the older students lead us in 100 exercises (10 groups of 10). In the classroom we bring in 100 collections, we make a goody bag with 100 items, we write stories, what I would do with 100 dollars, I can hold 100 _____, I'd like 100 _____, I could eat 100 _____, we lay 100 objects side to side to see how far they measure (non standard), we measure 100 mm, 100 cm, and 100 m."

"Here are some of my favourites. Lay 100 students head to toe in the hall and see how far the line will go - estimating first. In the gym we join several classes, group children by 10s and count to 100 by tens (then 5's, then 1's), write a 100 day book by brainstorming 10 categories (i.e. colours or countries or teachers, etc.) then the kids work in 10 groups to write and illustrate the book, have kids bring in collections of 100 things, have the kids trace 100 hands - cut out and shape into a heart. We write 100 things we love about our school, list 100 things/ people the class is thankful for this year, give the kids a copy of a hundred dollar bill and lots of extra catalogues - they need to spend \$100 by cutting and pasting, read for 100 minutes, start now read 100 books by 100 day and keep a list perhaps dividing them by genre, make 100 day t-shirts with 100 of something on it (pins, glue on eyes, dots, etc.). These are just a few of my favourites! I usually run out of time before we run out of ideas. Have a great 100 day!"

"We used a blank 100 grid to make 100th day name art. Each letter of the name went into a box and then was repeated to the end of the grid. Some children had great looking art!"

One Hundred!

Count your fingers one to ten
Count them up and back again.
If you count them ten times then
You will reach one hundred.

One hundred years is awfully old.
One hundred degrees is hot, not cold.
One hundred pounds will squish your toes.
That's a lot, one hundred.

A hundred is a lot of things
We see from day to day.
And if I had one hundred friends,
Then we all could say:

Count your fingers one to ten
Count them up and back again.
If you count them ten times then
You will reach one hundred.

"Make 100 day hats. We use a sentence strip and give the kids 10 \$10 bills run on construction paper. (Lavender? What colour are our bills?) They cut them out, then glue them to the sentence strip in a vertical fashion. These are very cute and the kids always get comments on their hats."

"I like making a 100 chain - like the Christmas tree chains. Each day, write one thing the class has studied or a book read, etc. It's a nice visual for students to see how much they have accomplished. This must, of course, be started on the first day of school."

"We bring in collections of 100 things in zip lock bags, compare the space they occupy, weight, etc. We count to 100 by 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, and 10's, see how many times we can write our names in 100 seconds, play dot-to-dot with 100 dots, make a circle of 100 children."

"I made a chart for my students to find a \$1.00 word. 'A' was 1 point, 'b' was 2 points, 'c' 3 points, etc. We came soooo close. We had 99¢ words and \$1.01 words. But one of my students, working with his mom and dad, found one that night! It was the word 'practicing'. To hear this child tell how they found the word was just priceless! He was bound and determined to find a word so I could share it with all my Grade Two teacher friends!"

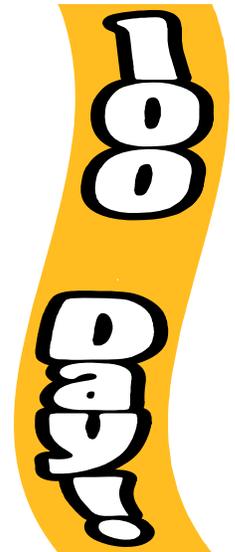
"I do yearbooks for all of my students. Last year I created a two page spread of our 100th day activities. I also made pages for the writing we did. Each child wrote: 'My mom (or dad or teacher) has told me 100 times to.....' We also wrote poems called Hundreds of Things:

Hundreds of pizzas at Pizza Hut,
Hundreds of pencils in our classroom,
Hundreds of cars at Wal-Mart parking lot,
Hundreds of shells at the beach,
But only one of me!

"What would you buy with \$100.00? I gave each child a piece of paper, which we designed to look like a \$100 dollar bill. Then each of the students got a catalogue and a calculator. They cut the items out that they would buy, entered the price in and then glued the items that they purchased on their bill."

"For Language Arts we wrote the words one hundred and made a word for each letter. Along with that, for interactive writing we wrote about what we would look like when we are 100 years old. They draw their 100 year old faces on another piece of paper then they crumple up the paper with their drawing on it so their faces will look wrinkled."

"I always do a puzzle race. Put your class into small equal groups and then give them each a 100 piece puzzle... the first one to finish wins... I usually just give out stickers as prizes."



"We are making hats, having an autograph signing time... The students have to try to get 100 signatures by the end of the day, and with the other classes we are having a 100 day snack party. Each child had to bring in 100 of a certain snack like peanuts or chocolate chips. We dump it all in a bucket and divvy out the tasty 100 day trail mix."

"It's fun to give them individual hole punches... let them punch holes in 100 small pieces of paper...and put on a string for a 100 day necklace...Sounds very simple, but they really get into the punching and counting! You can also string 100 Cheerios or Froot Loops on a piece of string that they can nibble on throughout the day."

"We make little books. The students fill in the blanks and illustrate each page..."

- page 1 I wish I had 100 _____.
- page 2 I would NOT like to have 100 _____!
- page 3 I'd like to eat 100 _____.
- page 4 I'd like to touch 100 _____.
- page 5 I would NOT like to touch 100 _____.
- page 6 I would NOT want to eat 100 _____!
- page 7 I'd like to smell 100 _____.
- page 8 I would NOT like to smell 100 _____!



100 Day Math Ideas!

1. What can you do in 100 seconds? Time yourself and let us know. e.g. How many times can you skip in 100 seconds?
2. What 100 objects could you fit in a cup? 100 beans? peanuts?
3. How tall is a stack of 100 pennies? 100 nickels? The coin of your choice?
4. Make number sentences that equal 100. e.g. $5 \times 20 = 100$ $82 + 18 = 100$ $(3 \times 33) + 1 = 100$
5. Where would a 100 step walk take you from your house? From your classroom? From your bedroom?
6. Find some people whose ages total exactly 100. e.g. Mom is 32, Dad is 35, sister is 9, brother is 3, friend is 11, cousin is 10 ----- total 100
7. Toss a coin 100 times and graph the results... heads and tails.
8. List what \$100 will buy. Get as close to \$100 as you can.
9. Create word problems where the answer is 100

More Ideas!

- ◆ Write 100 words in your journal!
- ◆ Be quiet for 100 seconds!
- ◆ What are examples of 100? 4 quarters, 10 dimes, 20 nickels, 100 mm = 10 cm, 100% on a test score, etc.
- ◆ Have each child make a collection of 100 words that are interesting.
- ◆ Give certificates for students with 100 days perfect attendance
- ◆ How far would 100 students reach if we laid them end to end?
- ◆ Cut out 100 feet, how far down the hall will they reach?
- ◆ How far could you travel from your house if you travelled for 100 minutes, hours, days?
- ◆ How far could you travel from your house if you travelled for 100 minutes by foot, car, train, plane, space shuttle?
- ◆ Everyone brings 100 items and weighs them
- ◆ Bring 100 things in your lunch (include packaging if you want to)
- ◆ Close your eyes for 100 seconds. Stand when you think the time is up.
- ◆ What happened 100 years ago? What will happen 100 years from now?
- ◆ Listen to 100 minutes of music
- ◆ Walk 100 metres with the class
- ◆ At 1:00 p.m. the entire school can sing a song about 100 days

"One year we collected hundreds of pennies. As the children brought them in each classroom counted them, tallying each set of 100. As the pennies were collected, they were put on display in a large aquarium in a display case where the entire school community could watch its progress. We collected pennies for a week. As one of the ways to get Grades Three + involved we encouraged students in those grades to keep track of the progress of the penny project and to submit their estimates of the total number of pennies collected. The child whose estimate was the closest was recognized during announcements and given a prize."

For P.E. count 10 sets of:

- ◆ sit-ups
- ◆ touching the toes, then the shoulders, the waist etc.
- ◆ jumping on both feet
- ◆ jumping jacks
- ◆ wiggles all over
- ◆ hops on one foot, then on the other
- ◆ bounces of a ball
- ◆ claps
- ◆ shrugs
- ◆ crab steps



Have the students illustrate and write about each of these four topics: 100 miles, 100 dollars, 100 pounds, 100 years. Share with the class. It is very interesting to see the perceptions the students have!

"Every year we have the Museum of One Hundred. The kids bring 100 items in a ziplock baggie and I attach them to a bulletin board and we compare the different ways that 100 can look. I make sure I explain that kids don't buy anything, their collections are put together from something they have at home: cereal, pennies, pieces of paper, pieces of foil, paper clips, rubber bands, etc. I make sure to label each bag and return them to the kids. It turns out to be a lot of fun."

100th Day Magic Cake

cake mix - chocolate or white

a can of cherry pie filling

small package of mini-marshmallows

ingredients necessary to make cake according to directions on box

9x13 cake pan, grease and flour on bottom and sides

"Count out 100 mini marshmallows and place evenly in the bottom of the cake pan. Prepare cake mix according to the directions, including preheating the oven to the indicated temperature. Carefully pour the cake batter over the marshmallows. Then, spoon onto the top 100 cherries from the cherry pie filling. Bake according to the directions on the box.

MAGIC! The marshmallows come to the top and the cherries sink to the bottom! No frosting is necessary!

Ask the children to tell you why this happened"



More Ideas from Teachers:

- We tried to receive 100 emails from around the world.
- Make a list of 100 ways to be a friend.
- Work 100 piece puzzles.
- Do 100 math facts.
- Write a story with 100 words.
- have a 100 word spelling quiz.
- Be quiet for 100 seconds.
- Estimate the distance of 100 steps, and then test.
- Do creative writing, 'If I Had a Hundred Dollars', 'If I Were 100 Years Old', etc.
- Have the students dress up to look 100 years old.
- Race to see how many times they can write their names in 100 seconds.
- Measure 100 inches and then guess how many blocks that would cover.
- Brainstorm lists of 100 animals, 100 names, 100 foods, 100 books, 100 toys, etc.



- See how many words students could make out of the words 'One Hundred'.
- Write how the world will be different in 100 years.
- After exercising 100 times, (10 jumping jacks + 10 times touching toes, etc.), I take out a stop watch and we have 100 seconds of silence. I really enjoy that 100 seconds!

- I hold a school wide contest entitled 'Guess which jar has 100 pieces of candy'. Each student is given a ballot prior to coming into my classroom and after they view my students 100th day projects (collections of 100), they get to guess which jar has the 100 pieces in it by dropping their ballot off in a basket next to that particular jar (and there are 3 jars of candy.) Then they go out into the hallway and walk on the 100 footsteps that are laminated on a roll of paper and taped down to the hallway floor. They count the footsteps and they walk on the roll as they return to their classrooms. At the end of the day, I announce the winning jar number of candy, and distribute one piece of candy to each winner. Their name and room numbers are on the ballots.

- We always try to get all of our students to bring in 100 pennies for the 100th day of school. After we finish doing activities with the money we donate it to a local charity.

1/2 Day

Teachers usually celebrate 100 Day, but near the end of dull January we have another landmark date! Celebrate 1/2 day! This is usually day 90 on your 'days in school' chart, if your district and province has 180 in-school days in the school year.



Here are some ideas for this day!

- Do 1/2 of your math in the morning and 1/2 in the afternoon and the same with reading.
- Do 1/2 of a math page.
- Write 1/2 of a story.
- You could dress in 1/2s - wear makeup on 1/2 of your face and not the other, or put a pony-tail in 1/2 of your hair.
- You could talk about the top 1/2 and bottom 1/2 or left 1/2 and right 1/2.
- Draw the rest of a picture from half that is already drawn.
- You could have the kids walk halfway to someplace and run the other half. Or run to end of gym and walk, hop, skip, jump the other half back to make a complete circle.
- Use pattern blocks to complete the other half using the same kind of pattern blocks as the original.
- Have a snack - perhaps 1/2 a bagel on 1/2 of a plate....

- Read half a book in the morning - half in the afternoon.
- Jump for half a minute.
- Write half a word and brainstorm what the other half might be.

- Prepare half of a math problem - give them the answer, and have them create the problem.

- Write half of a sentence/story and have partner complete the other half.

- Give them half a magazine/book picture and have them draw the other half.

- We celebrated the summer birthdays on 1/2 day. The kids drew wonderful half pictures to give to the half birthday children.

- The children came dressed in 1/2 clothing such as unmatched shoes, etc.

- Do an activity for 1/2 hour.

- How many math questions can they do in 1/2 minute?

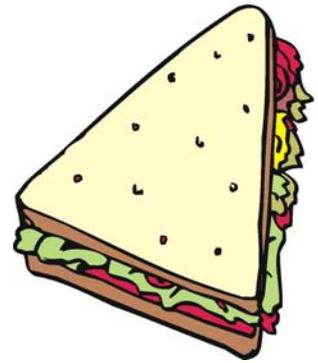
- Run a race half way across the playground.

- Fold a paper in half. One student draws 1 half of the picture and then trade with a friend and they draw the other half.

- Read 1/2 a book and have the kids come up with their own endings.

- Ask the children to count by 10s to 100, and you stop at 50. Then they can do different countings and stop halfway.

- Discuss how to cut different shapes in half. You can use the old saying - 'You cut it, and I'll get first choice....' - to make sure the pieces are the same size and the halves are equal.



Let's only do half
Of our work today.
Sing half of our songs
Do half of the play.

Then at lunch time
Without any fuss
We'll go outdoors
And catch the bus

We came to school in September
The beginning of a long year.
But now it's fun, we're halfway done,
And one half day is here.

We have learned half our math,
Half our reading, too.
It has been fun, now we're halfway done,
And soon our year will be through.



Opening Exercises

Almost all *Grade One* teachers do an involved opening each morning. There is still a great amount of valuable learning that can be accomplished in the first half hour in the *Grade Two* classroom. Here are some ideas!

Attendance

We want to spend as little time on this as possible. Have the children do it as they enter the classroom, by putting their name on a graph. You would need their names on a card with a velcro spot on the back, a can lid with a magnet on the back, a card that can be slipped into a slot, or a clothespin that can be snapped onto a box edge. Each morning have a "Question of the Day", and as the children enter the classroom they move their name from a 'ready' area to their answer to the question. You can use many different kinds of graphs for this. After all the children are in the classroom the names still in the 'ready' area are the absentees.

If you have lunch choices, this can be the graph. They can also move their names to show homework or library books returned.

The Calendar

Have the completed calendar up for the month, with important days labeled. After today's date has been discussed, ask the class questions such as, "How many days until Mike's birthday?" "How many weeks until Christmas?" "What was the date one week ago?" "What will the date be two weeks from now?" etc.



Learn the days of the week, months, seasons. Learn to spell the words.

Use today's date for "Incredible Equations". In a determined length of time, see how many equations the children can tell you with the date as the answer. Encourage more difficult equations.

Days In School

Counting the days in school gives more practice in place value for the children who need this. Mark the days on a grid chart (10 spaces x 10 spaces). Use straws or popsicle sticks and bundle them as you count. Have a 100 Day celebration!

Discuss 'odd and even' numbers. Decide which numbers are prime numbers.

Count by 1's (forward and backwards), 2's, 3's, 4's, etc., to the multiple of 10. This is an important skill in *Grade Two*. Pattern counting leads to multiplication skills.

Teach the number in Roman Numerals.

Do a parallel exercise, counting down the days left in school this year.

Use either the calendar day or the days in school number and make the amount of

the number in coins. This can be done with magnets on the back of real coins placed on a metal board, or velcro on the back of real or paper coins. Have the children make the number several ways and show how to write the number in money.

Other Exercises

Time - Have the schedule for the day with clock faces. Match it with the digital time.

Math Problem of the Day - Do one problem each day. Model the steps in problem solving. Do estimation, probability or addition, subtraction, multiplication, etc. Use real classroom problems.

Daily Message - Have a message to your class each day, discussing the happenings, etc.

Weather and Temperature - keep records. Use for prediction and probability.

Birthdays

And memorizing poetry, introducing your spelling words and daily spelling review, learning manners, brainstorming practice, helpers list, etc.

The Days of the Week

"I sing this to the tune from The Addams Family. You cross your forearms at your chest (just like what's done on the show), and sing:

Days of the week - snap, snap Days the 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 there's 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.

Calendar Math

"For our calendar math activities we have the children count the number of days we have been in school and then we do various activities with that number. So for example on day 52 we:

- write the number on our number a day chart that we do everyday.

- add a penny to our board and then write the amount 52 cents and if he/she can exchange any of the coins they do so.

- add a popsicle stick to our ones/tens/hundreds bin to make 52 (if it falls on a tens day or hundreds day they have to make the exchange).

- make 'incredible equations' - equations equaling the daily number.

- answer questions such as, 'How many days until John's birthday?', 'How many weeks until Hallowe'en?', etc."



"I do a 15 minute calendar every day as the last 15 minutes of math. Each month the days go up one by one and we try and find the pattern. The kids do a picture identification of the pattern and an alphabetic identification. Ex: (Flower, flower, cat, cat) would be (a - a - b - b). The pattern gets harder and longer as the year goes by.

"After the new day is up the child says the date. 'Today is Tuesday, October 15, 2001'. We keep track of the day of the school year. Every ten and hundred days are bundled (Math Their Way style). I use a commercial pocket chart with straws. We talk about place value at this time. Someone gives a roman numeral for the day of the year. We learn them all the way up to 180. I use a post-it note and stick this up on my number line or just stick up the current day's number on the straw tally chart. We do odd and even activities and they give me the day of the year in money several different ways.

"On the first day of the new month...taking down the calendar is the most fun. I pick a number and the children give me combinations of numbers that equal that number. Number is 15... $7 + 8$, $16 - 1$, etc. As they give them to me, I take them off. Soon only the big numbers are left and I get great thinking! $17 - (23 - 21) = 15$. When there are no more combos, I ask for cards that are even or odd, whose digits equal a certain number. The kids love this!"

"I have one student get the calendar ready for the day, put money in the money chart to equal the day of the month in as many ways as they can, and add a straw to the 1s, 10s, 100s pockets for each day of the school year. Another child is in charge of the magnetic Judy Clocks. The child sets the hands to the time of our special for the day in analog and digital time (later in the year we add another clock to show pick up time from the special)."

"I ask my children to tell me the name of the day of the week for a specific date: 'What was the name of the day of the week on the first day of the month?' or 'What will be the name of the day of the week on the last day of the month?' or ask for 'the name of the day of the week on the 15th, or 23rd day of the month?'"

"My kids have a new calendar and weather graph each month. They keep it in their Morning Math folders, which they work in every morning. On the calendar we always write the number and a weather symbol for the weather. We also put birthday cakes and other symbols for holidays or other special days. At the end of the month, I give them a sheet that asks how many school days in the month of _____; how many sunny days, partly sunny, etc. I also add: How many days above 0 degrees, at 0 degrees, below 0 degrees - or other appropriate number. They use their calendars and weather graphs to fill in the information for the month. I ask questions, such as: how many Fridays in the month? How many sunny days? What were the dates of the sunny days? The kids take their calendars and weather graphs home monthly, but I keep the monthly informational sheet. We will use them at the end of the year to add up the total number of school days, sunny days, rainy days, etc."



"I do pattern math with calendars and the kids in a group. Things like 'If today is Tuesday the 4th what date will it be on Wed. two weeks from now?' I have lots of blank calendars available for them to use but they can't just fill in all the dates in order.

So it's $4 + 7$ (that's the first week) $+ 7 + 1$ (second week) = 19 or $4 + 8$ (Wed.) $+ 7$ (Wed.) = 19

Students have to know patterns of plus 7 and plus 8 on the calendar.

There are others that are very cool - kids love finding them. If Saturday is May 4th, what date will the last Tuesday in May be?

Why Tuesday? Go diagonally from Sat back to Tues., always adding 6. 4, 10, 16, 22, 28 so last Tuesday is 28. Kids get blank calendar, colour in first Saturday, colour in diagonal boxes ending on a Tuesday, fill in numbers. Some smarty usually gets answer without the paper work. You can start anywhere - backwards diagonals always are plus 6. Going the other way, add 8."

Note: This is confusing! They can make patterns going vertically adding or subtracting 7 - or diagonally adding 6 or 8 depending on the diagonal direction.....

School Pledges

"My former school's pledge was:

We want to learn. We want to grow. There is so much we want to know."

"Here's a school pledge that the children recite during morning announcements over closed circuit TV.

I am somebody. I am special. I can be anything I want to be. I can learn anything I want to learn."

I will respect myself and others by the way I speak and behave.

I will not fight or be unkind.

I will act in such a way that I will be proud of myself and others will be proud of me too.

I come to school to learn and I will learn.

I will have a good day.



Morning Five

"The 'Morning Five' is what the students do when they first arrive in the morning. 1. Unpack their book bags. 2. Leave their homework folder open on top of their desks. (I check book logs on Mondays also so they have them out on Monday. On Wednesday they have out their poetry notebooks for me to see the current poem decorated.) 3. Put their name on the lunch count. 4. Check in their home reading books. 5. Hang their book bags in their cubbies. They then begin working in their math boxes while I quickly check homework, notes, lunch money, etc."

Birthdays

"One activity I have done at the beginning of each school year is a birthday graph. I have a large cake representing each month on the wall and hang their little cakes that they decorate with their name on it above their birth month. They fill in a bar graph with the information.

"What I really like about this is then I give them homework to complete the same bar graph but with birthdays of their friends and family. They have to ask their parents or make some phone calls and see how many birthdays they can find for each month. They colour a box above the month every time they find someone with a birthday in that month. They even write the name of the person in the box or an initial. Some kids just do their immediate family which is fine but others really ask around. Their grandparents love getting the phone call asking them when their birthday is.

"Then in school the next day we make a Friends and Family Chart. I have the months written down and we go around the room and find out how many birthdays everyone has found for the months. We tally the amounts. This could get boring but it actually doesn't because the kids are ready to yell out their number and I quickly place the tally marks down. They are so excited to see which month has the most birthdays of our friends and family."



Daily Oral Language

Daily Oral Language Grade 2: 180 Lessons and 18 Assessments by Gregg O. Byers
Carson Dellosa Pub; ISBN: 088724646X; (July 2001)

"Each day I use an overhead projector to display two sentences that have grammatical errors in them. The students write the sentences and make corrections. Then I ask for volunteers to correct the sentences and also tell me why they made the particular correction. The students make sure they have all the corrections on their paper."

"We work with Daily Oral Language sentences every morning at our class meeting. There is a book of these available; it presents 10 sentences for each week (two sentences per day). The sentences are written around a specific theme each week and help students practice using a variety of conventions (capitalization, punctuation, etc.) and also grammar.

"The DOL is a great daily activity but we've found the sentences and themes to be less than interesting, so this year we are writing our own DOL sentences and coordinating them with our social studies/science units."

Sharing

"The children are invited to bring in things anytime that relate to what we are learning in social studies. Once each term the children decorate a lunch sized paper bag and these are sent home. The children are to put an item in the bag that tells something about themselves.

We have a 'sharing day' and I hope all children will take a turn. For each sharing turn, three questions or 'kind comments' are taken from the audience. The child sharing chooses the friends to ask questions. I find that the items brought in get more interesting as the year goes on."

"I do a rotating schedule, with two children sharing each week on Tuesday and Friday. The students know in advance their share days for the rest of the year, and they then prepare something special to teach the class. It can be something they know how to do or make, or something they've prepared, or a special collection with a real explanation. Some things we've seen have been: one child brought in and played his keyboard, another made an exploding volcano, one did a little research report on Egypt, one taught us how to do finger weaving and we all made belt-like things, one taught us all about coin collecting and had a book w/coins and showed how to research each kind of coin. This week the share was a book of poetry a girl had written - the kids are so intrigued and listen intently and ask questions and give compliments and then the 'sharing' child gets to be famous for something, like being the 'Egypt expert' or 'volcano maker' or whatever. It has been so great. and it is only two days a week, and each child gets a turn every two or three months."

"I have one child share each day. I give out a calendar a calendar at the beginning of the month with each child's sharing date for the month. For October, the kids were asked to share the spookiest thing that ever happened to them. Each child received a piece of paper to draw about the scary event, so they had a bit of focus and planning when they spoke. For December, they had to speak about their holiday customs. In January, they will be asked to share their favourite winter sport or activity, and in February they will research and talk about an odd animal. By Grade Two, I find that sharing time needs structure or the time is wasted. I try to inspire good habits of public speaking, too."

"Every year I have my class send in a Family Treasure to share with the class. It cannot be something of monetary value, but something that is special to them,, Many children bring in their baby blankets, pictures, etc. The children must know the story behind the object and can share it with the class. It ends out being a wonderful activity. You get to learn so much about the children and their families."

Brainstorming

"I do a short brainstorming as part of the Opening Exercises. It helps the children to become familiar and fluent with this and now I rarely get children asking what to write about or wondering how to make a story longer. Here are some ideas for Spring: List many things that are warm, hot, cool, cold. List things that are yellow. List creatures that are born from an egg. How many different insects can you name? List signs of Spring. What things can you do now that you couldn't do in the winter? What can you do on a rainy day?"



Science

Winter Science

'Matter' in the Winter

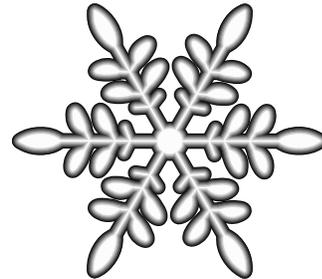
"I do a combination of weather and matter units during January.

- I put 2 containers of water outside, one with salt and one without. We observe every morning for freezing .
- We melt an ice cube on a hot plate and watch the water evaporate. (I usually hold a glass above so that they can see the condensation.)
- We fill one cup with snow and another with ice cubes. The kids estimate which will have more water. After letting both melt, we then see how many days it takes for each to evaporate.
- I mix crushed ice and rock salt in a coffee can and watch for frost to form on the outside of the can.
- When we talk about snow being a crystal, we look at other crystals through hand lenses (salt, sugar). Then we make a crystal garden. (They always love that!)

Borax Crystal Snowflake

Grow a snowflake in a jar! You will need:

- * string
- * wide mouth jar
- * white pipe cleaners
- * blue food coloring (optional)
- * boiling water (with adult help)
- * borax (available at grocery stores in the laundry soap section)



With a little kitchen science you can create long lasting snowflakes as sparkly as the real ones. Cut a white pipe cleaner into 3 equal sections. Twist the sections together in the center so that you have a 'six-sided' star shape. If your points are not even, trim the pipe-cleaner sections to the same length. Now attach string along the outer edges to form a snowflake pattern. Attach a piece of string to the top of one of the pipe cleaners and tie the other end to a pencil (this is to hang it from). Fill a widemouth jar with boiling water. Mix borax into the water one tablespoon at a time. Use 3 tablespoons of borax per cup of water. Stir until dissolved, (don't worry if there is powder settling on the bottom of the jar). If you want you can add a little blue food colouring now to give the snowflake a bluish hue. Insert your pipe cleaner snowflake into the jar so that the pencil is resting on the lip of the jar and the snowflake is freely suspended in the borax solution. Wait overnight and by morning the snowflake will be covered with shiny crystals. Hang in a window as a sun-catcher or use as a winter time decoration.

Snow Experiments

- Take an old clear plastic soda pop bottle and cut off the top half. Mark the outside in centimeters with a permanent laundry 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?
- Make your own glacier. Fill a bowl with snow and bring it inside to partially thaw, then add more snow on top. Keep doing this all winter long. You will then have the 'layers' of ice and snow like a glacier.

Keep Some Snowflakes

Freeze a piece of glass and a can of 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!

A Science Fair Outline

1. Selecting a topic:

Pick a topic that interests you. Narrow this topic down as much as possible.

BE VERY SPECIFIC.

example:

How will _____ affect _____?

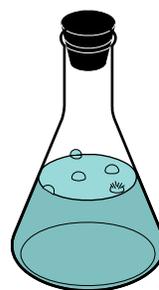
_____ on _____.

variable result

variable result

Will _____ when _____?

variable result



The effects of

2. Definition of terms:

THE VARIABLE is the one factor you wish to change (or use in different amounts) in the experiment. Everything else is controlled. In a controlled experiment everything is given the exact same conditions except for one factor. This factor is your variable.

THE RESULT is the outcome of your experiment. It is what happens because of your variable. You must have measurable results, something that can be counted or measured in order to provide you with DATA

Example: Which colour of bird seed will birds prefer?

The variable is the colour of seeds.

The result is the number of seeds eaten. (Seeds can be counted to provide data).

3. Definition of a Good Science Fair Topic:

You have a good topic if you can answer YES to these questions:

1. Is my topic realistic? Is it something I can do?
2. Is my topic interesting to me?
3. Can I investigate my topic by experimenting and collecting data?
4. Can I afford what I will need to investigate my topic?

4. What your Science Fair Project should include:

1. Title - This must be in question form. ex: What objects are attracted by magnets?
2. Report - Use encyclopedias, electronic resources, books and /or magazine articles to find background information about your topic. ex: Explain magnetism; what it is, how it works, what kinds of materials are attracted to other kinds of materials
3. Materials - List of the things you used to do your experiment
4. Hypothesis - This is an 'educated guess' or a possible answer to your question.
ex: If I put an object made of metal within two cm. of my magnet, then the objects will be attracted to the magnet.
5. Procedures - List step-by-step what you did to test your hypothesis.
6. Results - Tell what happened when you tested your hypothesis. You should do your testing at least 5 times to make sure your results are valid. Keep these results in a logbook used only for this project. Graphs, charts, tables photographs, or other visual aids may be used to present the results.
7. Conclusion - What did you prove or find out? Was your hypothesis correct? Compare your initial hypothesis to your actual results. Make a statement on how your interpreted the results.
8. Bibliography - Use the proper format to list books, encyclopedias, and articles you used in **your report**.

5. Display:

Sturdy cardboard or plywood or foam board make good display boards. In your display you need to state your title, hypothesis, procedure, results, and conclusions. Charts, graphs, tables, or photographs make your display more appealing.

When people (parents, other students, the judges) come to our science fair, be prepared to answer any questions they may ask about your science fair project.



The Science Fair

"I don't like handing out lists because parents choose what's easiest or what they want to know. The best idea is to ask the kids what they want to know about. I also like to look at what they are interested in already. One bright grade two student with several lizard pets did his on 'the economic advantages of florescent over incandescent bulbs' off a list and dad learned a lot. I talked to dad and noticed the next year his shy son flourished as he explained to the judges about the different climates his different pets needed. He was interested in the topic and read and studied the subject. He can take these skills and apply them to other things later.

"I have had students graph the distance travelled by their matchbox cars (which goes farther and why). Expand marshmallows with air pressure. Raise meal worms (these take months). Which candy bar melts fastest. Which playdough dries fastest. Which dog food their dog likes best. As a class project we looked at how long it would take ants to eat a 2"x2" piece of pizza. Whose feet are larger, boys or girls. Worms, forming clouds, . . ."

The Science of Plants

1. Do plants need air? Use an actively growing plant. Cover the tops and bottoms of several leaves with a thick layer of petroleum jelly. Cover tops of a few and bottoms of a few leaves. Take care of your plant in the usual way. Check daily to see what happens. Stomates are openings on the under side of leaves that take in air.

2. Plants need water. Use two identical plants. Draw some raindrops on a card and place it in front of the one you will water. Do not water the other one. Keep a record of how the plants look for 14 days.

3. How does water get to the leaf of the plant? Water enters through its roots, travels up the stem through veins, and into the leaves through veins. Use a white carnation or a celery stalk. Put it in a glass of water with food colouring. Water is pulled up the stem into the leaves. For variety, split the stem two inches up from the bottom and put half in one colour and the other half in another colour.

4. Parts of a plant. Bring a potted flowering plant to school. Behind it make a picture chart of the parts of a plant: root, stem, leaf, flower, and label each part.

5. Can a plant grow new roots? Use a sweet potato or carrot top. Put 3 or 4 toothpicks around



the middle of the sweet potato. Balance the potato on the rim of a glass jar and add enough water to cover the bottom part of the potato. Keep in a warm, dark place until roots begin to form. Then move to moderately sunny window. Keep a record.



6. How long will it take for a sunflower to grow 6 inches? Plant 3 pots of sunflower seeds to insure that one of them will grow. Keep them in a warm place to sprout. Keep a chart of how much it grows every 3 days. Measure.

7. What's inside a bean seed? Use a clear plastic cup filled with potting soil. Plant 4 bean seeds in cup by pushing them into soil along the side of glass so you can see what is happening. Water. When you notice sprouting beginning, remove one of the seeds and open it up to see how there is a new embryo inside the seed.

8. Do plants need light? Get 2 small plants. Place one in window light and one in a dark closet. Water regularly. Every three days draw a picture of each plant and write under each plant what you observe.

9. Do plants need roots? Purchase two plants that are identical. Water, and then remove one plant from pot to observe the roots. Cut the roots off of one plant at the stem. Put the plant back into the pot. Care for both plants in the same way. Every 2 days, draw both plants and write down what you observe.

10. Will a plant grow towards the light? Grow bean seeds. Once the plant is 4 inches high, cover it with a box. Cut a hole about the size of a 50 cent piece in the side of the box. The hole should face a sunny window. Only remove the box in order to water the plant. Watch the hole and see if the plant will grow out of it, or towards it. Draw a picture of the box every 3 days and write under the picture what you saw.

11. Make seed matching charts. Collect between 8 and 10 fruit seeds for one chart, and 8 to 10 vegetable seeds for the other chart. Glue the seeds on one side of the chart and number them. On the other side list the names and picture of the plant that matches the seeds in a mixed up order so others can try matching the seeds. Provide an answer key.

12. What parts of a plant do we eat? We eat seeds, tuber and roots, leaves, fruit, and stems of a plant. Have 4 different children bring in a sample from each group and display it in the proper section. Each child in the group should also sprout one kind of fruit or veggie to show what they look like when they're first growing.

Seeds!

"One neat thing that was part of our FOSS 'New Plants' kit was to plant a seed in a straw. They included wheat and oat seeds. You take a straw, mark it with a permanent marker about 3 inches from one end. You cut a piece of very absorbent paper towel 1 1/2" x 3". The students then twist the paper towel and insert it into the end of the straw (up to where the black mark is).

The seed is dropped into the other end, after a discussion about the seed placement, up or down. We did still get one that is growing with the stem and root down into the paper towel. Makes for an interesting discussion though. The straws are then placed with the paper towel end down (acting as a wick to draw up the water) into a cup of water with about an inch or less of water.

Within a few days they will start to sprout roots and stems. We are making observations on a sheet from the time we planted it. We glued on a seed in the first column, then each time we observe we draw what it looks like and date it.

It is really cool! You can see the roots reaching further down each day and the stems getting longer and longer."

"How does a plant begin? Ask students for thoughts and predictions. How does a seed turn into a plant? Tell them that scientists make predictions and study things to find answers to their questions. *Today you are going to be a scientist.*

Give each student a seed, lima bean, that has been soaked in water so it is easier to open. Show them how to open the seeds carefully. (They fall apart, so you must be gentle!) Ask students to see if they can find out how a seed turns into a plant. After looking on their own, have them help friends find out why. Have them talk about it with their groups as they look. Make sure every child sees a baby plant.

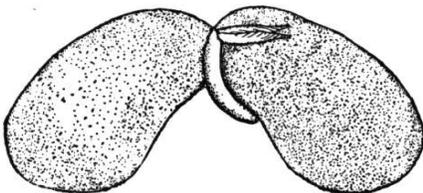
Come back to the carpet and have students discuss their conclusions. Show the illustration of the parts of a seed including the baby plant, seed coat, and plant food.

Now that we know where a plant begins, can it grow where we left it? What does it need to grow? What are some things that you need to grow? Water, food, sunlight - we don't know for sure, so we are going to be scientists again to find the answer to our 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."



"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!"

"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. The interest level is high when the seeds are so close to them and they have the surprise every day as the seeds sprout."

The Water Cycle

Are you drinking the same water a dinosaur drank? Could you be drinking the same water a sabre tooth tiger lapped up? What do you think? Is the water we have on earth today the same water that was here millions of years ago? Discuss this with a partner. Write what you think on a sheet of paper and explain why you think that it is true.



Water on earth moves in a continuous cycle called the Water Cycle. There is about the same amount of water on earth now that there was when the dinosaurs roamed our planet. How is this possible? Water travels to many places in many different ways. Where does it go and how does it get there?

To find the answers to these questions you will be carrying out a number of activities that will help you understand the water cycle on earth. Then you will think about and do some activities to find how the water cycle is related to the rain forest

Teach your students the 'Water Cycle Boogie'. This is a song that teaches the terminology of the water cycle with hand movements.

THE WATER CYCLE BOOGIE

Evaporation, Condensation,
Precipitation, Saturation.

And the water cycle boogie goes 'round and round,

And the water cycle boogie goes up and down. *REPEAT twice [or your*

choice]

After teaching the song, have a class discussion to explore students' prior knowledge of the water cycle. Use the following questions to determine what concepts the students understand and to identify misconceptions.

The objective of these introductory activities is to build interest in the water cycle. This activity will allow students to use their prior knowledge about the water cycle and to spark their interest so that they want to learn more.

Discussion questions

1. Does the earth have more or less water now than 1,000 years ago? Explain.
2. From where does water that is on the ground come?
3. How does water get into the oceans?
4. What are clouds?
5. What are clouds made of?
6. How does rain form?
7. What do you think all those words meant that we used when we sang the "Water Cycle Boogie"?

The Water Cycle Bracelet

The beads are threaded in this order:

1. blue (stands for the water that is being heated up)
2. yellow (sun that heats up the water that is here on the earth)
3. clear (evaporation into the atmosphere)
4. white (forms white clouds of condensation)
5. blue (precipitation that falls from the clouds) then it goes to yellow again, clear, white, blue, yellow, clear, white, and then I stop on blue.



And a different one.....

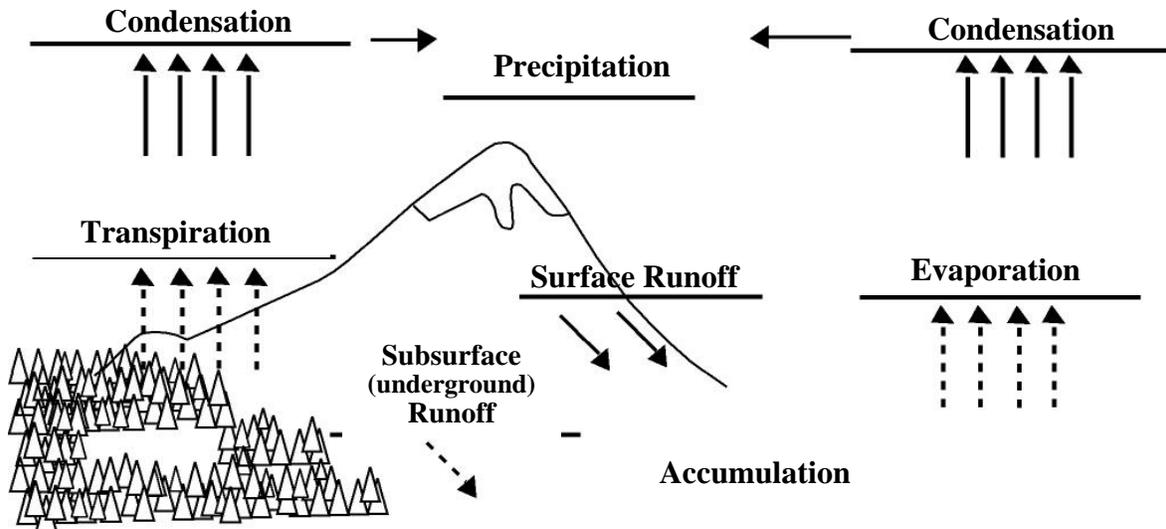
"The idea is to make a water cycle bracelet. Each child will need a piece of rawhide or string and six beads (light blue for rain, green for grass, dark blue for a puddle, yellow for the sun, clear for evaporation and white for a cloud).

"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)."

Don't forget to sing the water cycle song sometime in your unit. My kids loved it!

Water Cycle Song (she'll be coming around 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!

Water Cycle (Clemantine)
 Evaporation,
 Condensation,
 Precipitation on my mind.
 They are part of the water cycle
 and they happen all the time.



Weather Experiments

Evaporation: Use two identical clear containers, one with a top that closes. Fill both containers with the same amount of **water** (you may want to use a measuring cup to be exact). Close the top of one container and leave the other open. Place a piece of masking tape on the side of each container. Mark and date the **water** levels. Predict what you think will happen to the **water** in each container, on each day, for a week. Write whether the **water** level in each container will be lower, higher, or the same each day. Include how the **water** levels in the two containers will be similar or different. Use the chart below to list your predictions.

"I have it 'rain' in the classroom. I put a hotplate on the floor with two student chairs on either side of it. I balance a large metal tray (I borrow it from our kitchen) on the seats of the chairs. On the tray I put a large bag of ice. Then I put a pan of water on the hot plate and turn it on. I explain how the hot plate represents the heat from the sun (which would be coming from overhead). They see the evaporation, the condensation (on the underside of the tray) and then the 'rain'. I draw a diagram on the board showing it with the sun and we talk about it. I have them draw the water cycle the next day as a check to see if they understood it. They love this and most get it."

"If you are studying about tornadoes you could demonstrate them by putting some dirt in the bottom of a glass and then filling it with water. Then use a spoon and stir it up causing a tornado effect.

Make a 'Cloud In the Classroom' by putting warm water in a 2-litre plastic pop bottle -1/3 full. Tape black paper to back of container. Light a match and drop in container. Immediately cover with a zip-lock bag of ice. Watch for a cloud. (The paper just helps it show up better.) Clouds form as water evaporates and forms drops on small pieces of dust in the air - match smoke."

"Make a rainbow in the classroom Have a glass container with a large opening and fill 1/2 with water. Set a mirror in the water in a sunny window. Move the mirror until a rainbow forms on the walls of the room."

Learning About Matter

Make up set of four zip-lock bags and place them into a paper grocery bag. First, a flat, empty bag, then one filled with air, one filled with coloured water, and last, a large block or rock. One by one pull them out of the bag. Compare the differences. Have the children describe the items. Have the children describe the items.

Do the 'Know' column of a KWL chart to see what the children know about the three states of matter. Keep the chart available so items can be added. Brainstorm a list of solids and liquids.

Discuss the three states of matter. Make a chart titled "Matter" with 3 columns - solids, liquids, gases. Have a 'Mystery Box' filled with objects. As you produce these objects from the box, discuss their properties and draw a picture or print the words into the chart in the correct column.

Determine which substances are solids, liquids, or gases. Place the class in groups. Each group can be given an ice cube, baggy, and each member is given a paper divided into three sections. In the first section they will observe their piece of ice in its solid form, then draw what it looks like. Hang the baggies in the window, look at the clock to see what time it is, and observe how long it takes for the ice (solid) to turn into a liquid, making predictions on how long it will take for it to change, as well as what it will become. While waiting for the ice cubes to change into water read a book about Solids, Liquids and Gases. After the book has been read, most of the ice cubes should have turned into water. Then students pick up their baggies and observe them, and draw a picture in the second section, showing what they observe. Stimulate conversation - 'we call this a liquid'. Hang the baggies up again. It will take several days for the water to evaporate... 'we call this a gas'. 'Gas' is a very abstract concept, and some children may have difficulty with it. (They may think of 'gas' as a liquid that is put in a car) After the water evaporates, have them draw a picture of that phenomenon in the third box. Discuss what they can draw to illustrate this.

Ask each child to bring to school a wrapped present containing something that is a solid, liquid or gas. For gas you could use pictures, for air an empty box. Each child must also have a tag on his or her box giving three clues as to what is inside. All sit in a circle, and each unwraps one box at a time. Use the clues to guess. Play a game like 20 questions to figure out what is inside.



Teach this saying: 'Matter has mass and takes up space.' How can we prove a gas takes up space?

List the properties of solids, liquids and gases. For the end of the unit, read *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* by Dr. Seuss to the class. Then make Oobleck! Oobleck is a non-Newtonian fluid. (Do a web search for the recipe.) This means that when a small amount of force is used, it acts like a liquid, but when more force is applied, it acts like a solid.

Put the class into groups. While students are present, blow air into the baggies for the groups and seal. What's in the baggie? Does it take up space? Does it have weight? (accept either answer). Does it have its own shape? Let the air out of a baggie. Where did the air go? Did it keep the shape of the baggie? Explain that this describes the properties of a gas. Give each child a balloon and ask questions as they handle it. To test for air, have each student feel air coming out of a balloon. Have students 'scoop' air into cups. Go outdoors and feel air on a windy day. Blow up a balloon and hold the neck under water. Watch the air come out in bubbles. Have the students catch air in a plastic bag.

Changes in Matter

Some changes are temporary and some are permanent. You can melt ice and re-freeze it, or melt chocolate by heating it and then it will become a solid again as it cools. Steam will change back to water.

Some changes are permanent. If you boil an egg it changes permanently. You can make permanent changes by mixing substances together, by heating or burning, and by passing electricity through some substances.

See how things change when you bake. You mix liquids and solids and bake, and a different substance is produced.

Describe useful materials that are made by combining solids and liquids: a drink made from crystals and water, a cake made from cake mix and water, glue made from flour and water. Explore to determine how water can be made to change from one state to another and back again.

Learn the water cycle. Distinguish between solids that dissolve in water (sugar) and solids that do not (sand). Solids remain solid when broken; liquids remain liquid when poured, but may change in other circumstances (liquids may freeze when the temperature drops; solids may melt when heated). Discuss solids that float in water and others that sink - and why.

Solids, Liquids and Gases

All things are made up of matter. Matter exists in three states: solids, liquids and gases. All matter has mass and takes up space.

Solids

Solids have size, shape and are visible. The molecules of a solid are very close together and cannot move out of their places, therefore solids keep their shape. Examples of solids include rocks, pencils, trees and books.

Hold up a solid object such as a rock. Have each group describe the rock and report to the class what the group has observed. Ask: Does it take up space? Does it have weight? Does it have shape? This describes a solid. Ask the students to name other solids.

Students can explore collections of objects such as buttons, bread tags, etc. They observe and compare objects on the basis of their properties - colour, shape, size, texture, hardness, weight.

Liquids

Liquids have weight, take up space, and have the ability to change shape, depending upon what they are contained in, while not changing in volume. For example, water poured into a square container will appear square and the same water poured into a round container will appear round. Most liquids are visible. The molecules of a liquid are not as close together as those of a solid. They are free to move, which explains why they take the shape of the container which they occupy.

Put the children into small groups. Pass each group a zip-lock bag containing water. Ask the groups for descriptions. Does it take up space? Does it have weight? Does it keep its shape? Pour a zip-lock bag of water into a different see-through container. Does it take the shape of its container? Explain that this describes a liquid. Ask the students to name other liquids. Compare the properties of liquids with those of solids to determine which materials take the shapes of their containers.

Gases

Gases are invisible and are able to change shape easily. Gas molecules move about freely. They fill all available space in a container. The molecules of a gas are spread very far apart from each other.

A solid is a solid,
And it always takes up space.
It has some weight and has a shape,
A ball, a book, your face.

You are a solid,
And so is your chair.
Just look in your classroom --
Wow! They're everywhere!

A liquid moves smoothly.
We say that it flows.
From one place to another.
How quickly it goes!

We know that most liquids
Are easy to see.
With no shape of their own,
They're not like you and me.

Air is a gas.
We can't see it, that's true;
But often we feel it
In things that we do.

It keeps up a kite.
Air fills up a bubble.
Without it to breathe,
We would be in BIG trouble!

Matter Really Matters

Matter is very important;
It makes up the things that we see,
Without it, all things as we
 know them
Would simply just not even be!

We wouldn't have fish in the ocean;
We wouldn't have clouds in the air.
No people in houses, no grass
 on the ground
Why, the ground wouldn't even
 be there!

Matter is very important---
Especially to you and to me.
Everyone's made up of matter---
Without it, we just wouldn't be.

What's the Matter?

What's the matter, do you ask?
I'll tell you right away.
It's everything around you,
As you work or sleep, or play.

A chair is matter, a table, too,
And so is a rock or tree.
A cloud, a star, a blade of grass,
A raindrop, a bumblebee.

The earth is matter, so is the sea,
And the sky is matter, too.
(Of course what matters most of all
Is the matter that is you!)

There's matter almost everywhere,
Except in one special place --
The vast, black, lonely emptiness,
That we call outer space

Matter Always Matters

Stone, as solid as can be,
Can't fit in a smaller place.
Liquid from a lake or sea
Takes the shape of any space.

But the gases of the air
Can't be seen by human eyes.
They can slip in anywhere
Change to any shape or size.

What Is Matter? *(Three Blind Mice)*

What is matter?
What is matter?
A solid, liquid, or gas.
A solid, liquid, or gas.
It takes up space and weighs something, too.
It's everywhere - that includes me and you.
Did you ever think such a thing could be true?
That is matter.



See page 255 for Ooblick.

Space - The Planets

Planet Parade

Amazing Mercury is closest to the Sun.
Hot, hot Venus is the second one.
Earth comes third, it's not too hot.
Freezing Mars awaits an astronaut.
Jupiter is bigger than all the rest.
Sixth comes Saturn, its rings look best!
Uranus and Neptune are big gas balls.
Tiny Pluto is the last planet of all.

Planets

Here are nine planets that we know.
Round and round the Sun they go.
Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars,
These are the planets near our star.
Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, too.
Neptune, Pluto, we can't see you.
These are the nine planets that we know.
Round and round the Sun they go.

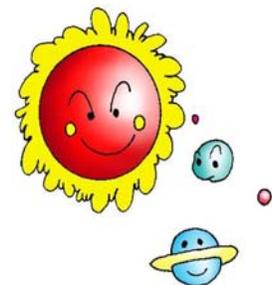
Leave Pluto out now, I guess!



"I made paper mache planets with my class last year. They turned out great. I used balloons and standard paper mache instructions. The students blew up their balloons according to the size of the planet they were doing. The students painted them to resemble photos we had of the planets. On each planet I attached a writing that the students did ...a postcard to Earth...talking about different features of the planet. We then cut out a large sun, put it on the wall, and hung the planets in their order."

"I did this, too. They turned out great. It is very messy! I covered the floor with old sheets and had groups of students work on them rather than the entire class. If you have parent helpers this would be a great activity for them to help you with. One thing to remember is to be sure each layer is completely dry before adding a new layer. Otherwise it takes even more time to dry and they may collapse when the balloon is popped."

"I made paper mache planets with my class last year. They turned out great. We did this project in June, so we did it outdoors. I used balloons and 2 beach balls (Jupiter and Saturn). We used butcher paper strips on the balloons in the planet's colour, and then sponge paint over to achieve colours of our pictures. They turned out great and it dries faster no waiting between layers and not as much painting involved... Another awesome thing we did was used a wire wreath to make the rings of Saturn. We put clear heavy tape on one side of this wire thing and sprinkled confetti that had stars and thick glitter...and then another piece of clear tape on top.....it looked great hanging as it looked like a band of particles surrounding Saturn."



http://cse.ssl.berkeley.edu/AtHomeAstronomy/act09_imagecards.html

Here are cards that show the planets and the relative sizes - very useful!

The Family of the Sun

Refrain:

The family of the Sun,
The family of the Sun,
Here are eight planets in
The family of the Sun.

Mercury is hot
And Mercury is small.
Mercury has no atmosphere.
It's just a rocky ball.

Venus has thick clouds
That hide what is below
The air is foul, the ground is hot,
It rotates very slow.

We love the Earth, our home,
Its oceans and its trees.
We eat its food, we breathe its air,
So no pollution, please.

Mars is very red.
It's also dry and cold
Some day you might visit Mars
If you are really bold.

Great Jupiter is big.
We've studied it a lot.
We found that it has 16 moons
And a big red spot.

Saturn has great rings.
We wondered what they were.
Now we know they're icy rocks
Which we saw as a blur.

The family of the Sun,
The family of the Sun,
Here are two more planets in
The family of the Sun.

Uranus and Neptune
We don't know much about
Maybe you will study them
And then we'll all find out.

The family of the Sun,
The family of the Sun,
There are eight planets and
Now our journey's done.

Show the sizes of the planets:

Mercury - thumb tack
Mars - dime
Venus - bottle lid
Earth - bottle lid
Uranus - coffee can lid

Neptune - coffee can lid
Saturn - 10" paper plate
Jupiter - 12" paper plate
Sun - 2.86m
Moon - hole from punch

The Moon



The Changing Moon

Moon in the sky.

Some nights you're big and round.

Some nights you're very small.

Some nights you're only sliver size.

Some nights you're not at all.

Each student will need a light coloured sphere of some sort. Ideally it can be placed on the end of a pencil. Try 5 cm. or greater white styrofoam balls. Get a larger sphere (15 cm. or so) for your use as leader. You need a light source to serve as the Sun. A lamp with a bright bulb and the shade removed works fine. A dark room is also required.

With the lamp in the center of the room have each student place the ball at arm's length between the bulb and their eyes. They should hold the pencil in their left hand. The bulb is the

Sun, the ball is the Moon and they are Earth. The view from their eyes is the same for both this exercise and for observations of the real sky.

At the start, the 'Moon' is blocking the 'Sun'. (This is actually demonstrating a total solar eclipse which is very rare for any given location on Earth.) Usually the Moon passes above or below the Sun as viewed from Earth. Have the students move their moon up or down a bit so that they are looking into the Sun. As they look up (or down) at their moon they will see that all of the sunlight is shining on the far side, opposite the side that they are viewing. This phase is called 'new moon' (like 'no moon').

They should now move their hand towards the left, about 45 degrees (1/8) of the way around counterclockwise. Have them observe the sunlight on their Moon now. They should see the right hand edge illuminated as a crescent. The crescent will start out very thin and fatten up as the Moon moves farther away from the Sun. (Note: although the Moon is closer to the Sun during new and crescent phases, it is still 400 times closer to Earth; i.e., the Sun is VERY far away in reality.)

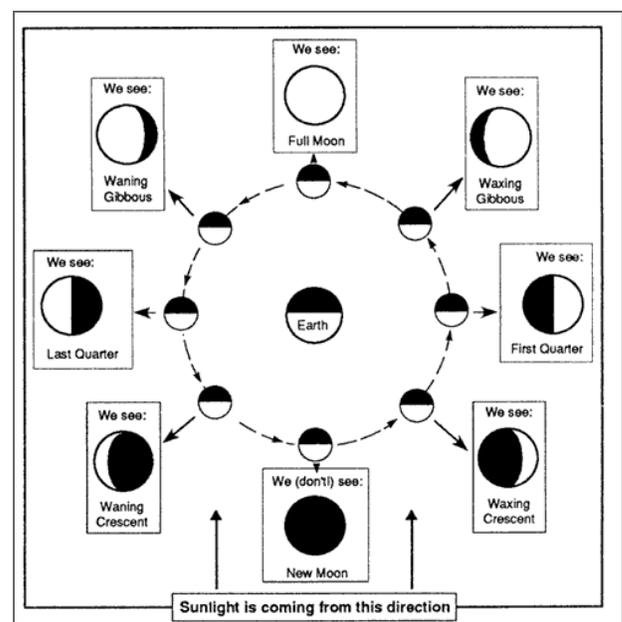
When their Moon is at 90 degrees to the left students will see the right half of the Moon illuminated. This phase is called 'first quarter'. Remember that fully one half of the sphere is illuminated at all times (except during lunar eclipses) but the illuminated portion that we observe changes as the Moon changes position.

As they continue to move counter-clockwise past first quarter, the Moon goes into its 'gibbous' phase (more than half but less than fully illuminated) which grows as the Moon moves towards 180 degrees.

When the Moon reaches the position directly opposite the Sun, as viewed from Earth, the half viewed from Earth is fully illuminated (unless the student's head is causing a lunar eclipse). Of course only half of the Moon is illuminated. It has taken the Moon about two weeks to move from new to full. This growth in illumination is known as 'waxing'. The Moon chases the Sun across the (day and night) sky.

Students should now switch the pencil to their right hand. Starting with the Moon at full, students should continue the Moon's counterclockwise motion. They will observe the reverse of the Moon's phases seen so far with the left portion of the Moon illuminated.

After the gibbous phase diminishes, the Moon will reach the 270 degrees position, straight out to the right. This is 'third' or 'last quarter'. It is followed by a thinning crescent and a return to new moon. From full to new the Moon has been 'waning' and leading the Sun. The phase cycle takes 29.53 days. Be sure to observe the real Moon! Most newspapers give the Moon phases along with the weather data.



Oobleck

Oobleck is a non-Newtonian fluid. This means that when a small amount of force is used, it acts like a liquid, but when more force is applied, it acts like a solid. For instance, one can slowly put a spoon in Oobleck, but it is impossible to stir it quickly.

Recipes

Make about a litre for 25-30 students, but the amount really doesn't matter.

1/2 litre of water

about 2 boxes cornstarch

food colouring (green?)

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!

Or:

Measure 375 ml of cornstarch and place it in a pie pan or other container. To colour Oobleck, add the colouring to the water first. Then gradually add approximately 250 ml of water to the cornstarch. Stir well (this will take some time). Add small amounts of more water or cornstarch until you get a mixture which 'tears' when you quickly scrape your finger through it, then 'melts' back together again.

You will need to leave time for the students to play with this substance.

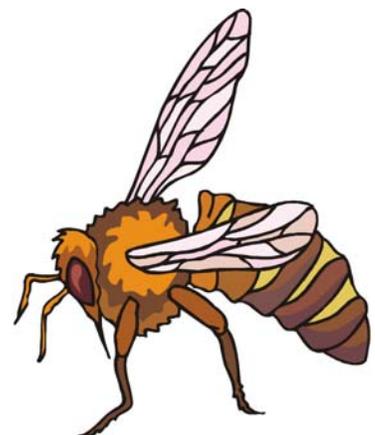
Make observations. In what ways is it like a solid? In what ways is it like a liquid? Actually, it is both in some of its characteristics. Make a chart of the properties.

Insects

Prepare your classroom for a unit on insects by collecting books, magazines and pamphlets on insects, entomology, etc.

Brainstorm to see how much students know about insects by putting an idea web on the board and letting the students give their ideas while you write them down. Have them copy the web into their journals. At the end of the unit, have them complete and contrast what they've learned.

Identify the most common insects local to your city or province.



Pair the students up and have them draw the name of an insect out of a jar. Have the teams conduct research on each insect throughout the unit to be shared at the end of a unit in a five-minute oral presentation.

Brainstorm the names of as many insects as the students can. Are all of these really insects? How can we tell?

Use these insects and do a Venn diagram **Helpful or Harmful?** Some help us, harm us, or do both.

Discuss the characteristics of an insect using a diagram to illustrate. All insects share the following characteristics:

- three body parts:
1. Head; contains a mouth, eyes, and a brain
 2. thorax: the locomotion center, full of muscles that move the wings and legs
 3. abdomen: contains the heart, digestive organs, and breathing organs

All insects have six jointed legs attached to the thorax.

Insects have no internal skeleton. They have a tough outer covering called an exoskeleton.

Insects have two antennae for smell, touch and sometimes hearing attached to the head.

Insects breathe through holes in the thorax and abdomen called spiracles.

Many insects have 2 pairs of wings

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/butterflies.htm>

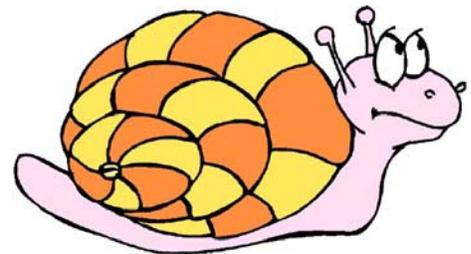
This is a good site with lots of information.

Moth or Butterfly?

Make a Venn Diagram showing the differences and similarities of butterflies and moths.

A Snail Study

"A project that we find extremely successful and fascinating is a 'Snail Study'. Each child has his/her own snailery (plastic cookie container from Safeway bakery - which I save and recycle) and 4 or 5 snails that they or others have collected. We feed and look after the snails, clean their snaileries and try some experiments with them. For example, the children try to determine whether snails like marigolds or cucumbers the best or if they can pull a few uniflex cubes across the desk or up an incline. We gather information about them and write snail booklets complete with illustrations. Our snails even lay eggs and we see the tiny baby snails hatch. After our study we return the snails to their outside habitat. We find lots of snails towards the end of April."



For a unit on energy or machinessing this song!

When I was just a wee little lad, full of health and joy,
My father homeward came one night and gave to me a toy.
A wonder to behold, it was with many colours bright.
And the moment I laid eyes on it, it became my heart's delight.

Chorus:

It went zip when it moved, and bop when it stopped,
And whirr when it stood still.
I never knew just what it was, and I guess I never will.

The first time that I picked it up I had a big surprise,
For right on its bottom were two big buttons
That looked like big green eyes.
I first pushed one and then the other, and then I twisted its lid,
And when I set it down again, this is what it did:

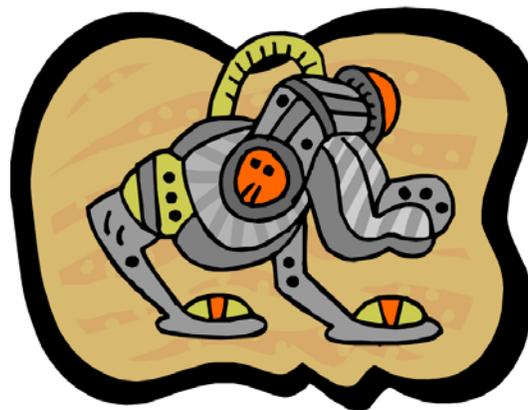
Chorus

It first marched left and then marched right
And then marched under a chair:
And when I looked where it had gone, it wasn't even there!
I started to sob and my daddy laughed, for he knew that I would find, When I turned around, my marvellous toy
chugging from behind.

Chorus

Well the years have gone by too quickly it seems;
I have my own little boy,
And yesterday I gave to him my own marvellous little toy.
His eyes nearly popped right out of his head and he gave a squeal of glee.
Neither one of us knows just what it is, but he loves it, just like me.

Chorus



Magic!

Try Alka Selzer rockets...they're so much fun! Give every student/parent pair a Fuji Film canister (they are the white ones with the lids that fit snugly inside the canister...as opposed to the black ones) and ask them to make it into a rocket any way they see fit. If you provide them with paper and tape most of them will add a cone to the top and small wings to the sides of the canister. Remind them that the lid of the canister should be at the bottom of the rocket and it needs to be opened to put the fuel in. Once everyone has their rockets, go outside and launch them. This can be messy so if you do it inside do it on a tarp in the gym. Take the rocket, open the lid and put in a full Alka Selzer tablet, add 1/3 canister of warm water and QUICKLY put back on the lid and place the rocket on the ground. Count backwards from 10 and it should shoot up...sometimes they go as high as 25 feet! It's lots of fun!"

More Magic!

"My students have always been amazed when we colour carnations. You put white carnations in a glass/vase with diluted food colouring. To make it more scientific, you can slice open the stem and actually see the colour in the veins of the flower. With the carnation you can also split a thicker stem and put one half in one colour and the other half in a different colour. The carnation will have two colours exactly in half!! You can also do this with celery stalks. The kids can actually see the 'straws' that suck up the water."

Soil Discovery!

"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. This is a great activity!"

Compare a moth and a butterfly

Moth

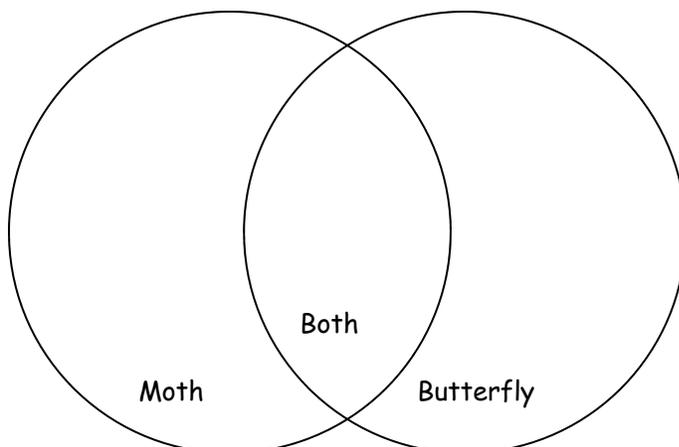
Moth's antenna are fuzzy
Plump, fuzzy body
Moths are active at night
Hatch from a cocoon
Rests with wings open

Both

Lay eggs
Undergo a complete metamorphosis
Have scales on their wings

Butterfly

Butterflies usually have thin antenna
Thin, smooth body
Butterflies fly during the day
Hatch from a chrysalis
All butterflies have clubs at the end of their antenna
Rests with wings closed



Social Studies

Community Places and Faces

"Here are some ideas I have used successfully with grade two students:

Mapping

Give the students an enlarged map of the school and then have them work together to fill it in according to which teacher is in each room (give them a list of all of the teacher's names and rooms (e.g. gym, office) that you want filled in. Let them go into the hallways in pairs to locate the rooms and fill in their maps. My students loved this!

"Take them outside and have them walk together around the school, stopping to draw pictures of what they see in the N, E, S, W. This is another favourite!

"Work together to draw a map of the surrounding neighbourhood and have the students draw where their house is. If you do a wall-sized map they can draw, cut out and paste their house onto the map."

Community

"We started by studying about our school. We made a booklet describing things we do at school, what we like/don't like about school, what types of schools are around, the people who work in our school, etc.

"We also discussed our roles and responsibilities in the home, school, and community. We read a book called 'A Job for Jesse' and Shel Silverstein's 'Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take The Garbage Out' and talked about the various jobs we do and what we happen if we did not do them. Then the students had to complete a chart, describing a job that is done at home, at school, and in the community. They had to identify who's responsibility it was to do that job, and why that job was important.

"Take walks in your neighbourhood/community. Draw and write about what you see and do. Have students brainstorm favourite places to visit in their community. Each of them chooses one and draws a picture and then you can compile them into a book (with captions) or into a class quilt."

Community Helpers

"Have students discuss what they would like to be when they grow up. They can draw a picture of themselves as that person and write a sentence 'When I grow up I would like to be a _____ because _____.' Or, this year I used a poem as a basis for more extensive writing.



I Wish I Were The Principal

I wish I were the principal,
That's what I'd like to be.
I'd make each day a weekend,
And all the kids would be proud of me.

I wish I were a _____
That's what I'd like to be.
I'd _____
[something they would do in that job]
And _____
[something else they would do in that job]

We used this poem to write our own.
These turned out really well.

"Invite parents in to talk about their jobs. I asked the principal, the school nurse, the SPCA, and one of my relatives to come in. The kids enjoyed the presentations and learned how to ask questions rather than always sharing personal stories (we brainstormed questions ahead of time and had them posted during each presentation). We also recorded the visit in our learning logs by writing down the name of the presenter, their occupation, and two sentences describing their job.

"Visit some local businesses to see what they do. I have taken the students to the public library and to Safeway.

"This year I made up sentence strips with the names of different occupations and an accompanying picture. We then played Charades where the student had to act out the job on the card and the others had to guess. Really fun to do!

"The students chose books to read about community helpers and then filled out an information sheet about their job: What they do, where they work, what equipment they use, and how they help the community.

"We drew and cut out drawings of each staff member in the school. We then put them on a bulletin board outside the room, with the person's name and position (grade 2 teacher, secretary, etc.) This was a HUGE hit among staff and students, and provided many laughs for all of us after school! The pictures were so funny but precious at the same time, and most did capture some essence of the person. It helped my students to realize how many people it actually takes to make a school run."



Community Helpers

In the last year, community helpers have been in the news a lot. We have heard stories about firemen, police officers, paramedics, medical personnel and construction workers. All of them have been helping the community. Community helpers include many more than these people, though. To know what a community helper is, first you need to know what a community is.

A community is made up of different groups of people who live and work together. The community has a specific location (it is in one place), it has rules and laws that people must follow and the people work together to solve their problems. The very smallest unit which could be called a community is your family, then comes your neighbourhood, and finally the town or

city that you live in. So what is a community helper?

A community helper is anyone in the community who helps others by providing a service of some kind. The easy ones to think of are the Police Force, the Fire Service and the Emergency Medical Services. There are many, many more, though. Brainstorm people who help in your community.



"These are some of the ideas I used with my community helpers unit last year with my Grade Twos. I loved teaching the community helpers unit.

"First of all, we asked the parents to come and speak to us about their occupations. We worked with another grade 2 class so we were able to get quite a few parents to come in (although they were pretty nervous talking to 46 grade 2 students!). Before the first parent came in we brainstormed questions to ask them, and the students really did improve in their abilities to ask a question rather than 'tell a story'. At the end I allowed them to ask me questions about becoming a teacher and they were able to stay on topic and all of the questions related to me. I was very impressed with their progress and it was something that we had not even thought about when we began the unit. After each parents' presentation we wrote a sentence or two about their occupation and compiled our information into a little booklet.

Other ideas included:

'What I want to be when I grow up': - the students decorated a paper doll cutout to look like them in their chosen profession and wrote a few sentences about what they wanted to be and why.

Field trip to the local library and Safeway store - it went over very well with the kids and the parents.

Reading books about various occupations.

The students gathered pictures of people involved in various occupations and we created a bulletin board together.

I gave the students pictures of workers and they had to discuss their thoughts about the different jobs in small groups - what do you think this person does for a living? Do you think you would enjoy this type of work? Why or why not? What might be some interesting or exciting things that could happen to a person doing this job? What might be some things that a person might not like about doing this job? What might be one of the best parts of doing this job? What might be the worst part of doing this job? etc.

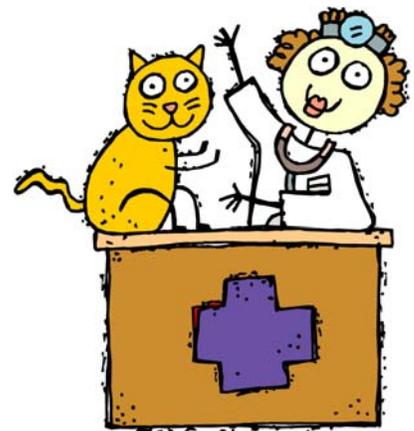
The best part of the unit was when the students worked in groups of six to create their own communities. I got a large appliance box from an appliance store and cut it into large squares. Each group was given this cardboard base to work with. They planned everything out before beginning to work on the actual model. First, they drew out the roads, park areas, etc. and painted the base. Then they brought in boxes of numerous shapes and sizes to use as buildings. They painted the boxes to look like the type of buildings they were trying to represent.

I also brought in some playdough, twigs, toothpicks, etc., so that the students could add the finishing touches (stop signs, trees, fences, etc.) The models turned out beautifully and they really demonstrated the students' understanding of what a community is and how the people (through their occupations and in other ways) help to make the community a safe and happy place to be. We even had other classes come in to see our models and to ask questions of the students. They were very proud of their accomplishments. It took us about four days to make the models, working several hours each day. The students even worked through recess one day they were so excited about the project. In the end they wrote about the process and the different things that they had included in their models. They also completed a self-evaluation based on criteria that we had selected as a class. As a little memento I took pictures of each group with their model and had them laser copied so that each student could have their own picture to take home (since the models were too big for the students to take home. We decided as a class to take them apart at the end of the unit because there was simply not enough space to keep them.

"I loved doing this unit, and I hope you find some of these ideas useful."

Occupations

"We made occupations dioramas this week and they are wonderful. Each child had a shoebox. The shoebox was painted as a 3D environment for their occupation. For example, if you want to be a soccer player, then paint a soccer field. If you want to be an archaeologist, then paint an outdoor environment. They planned their environments, using bits of nature if it was to be outdoors. Then we brainstormed for what other materials they would need. The students brought in fabric scraps for clothing and coverings; they brought in toy people and cars and furniture. We used plasticine to create inside the diorama and to keep the toy pieces intact. They cut fabric to dress the figurines. We had talked about what changes there would be in the future, so the hair salon had an automatic hair washing machine. We had many environments with robots doing familiar chores. Then to make them think and to create an environment that could lead to storytelling; each diorama had to have a problem; for example; the policeman had a bad man escaping from the police cruiser; the soccer field had a goal post that was missing; the hair salon had hair all over the floor; the mechanic's garage had oil spilled all over the floor. The results were awesome, showed an understanding of changes over time; showed an understanding of problems and were very individual. We will now write a series of paragraphs about these creations. For example: Paragraph 1 will tell what I am when I grow up and how I got to be that; paragraph 2 will be about the kind of environment I will work in and the people I will work with.....etc. This was a wonderful extension of the Grade 2 unit on 'Changes in Me' over time; social studies."

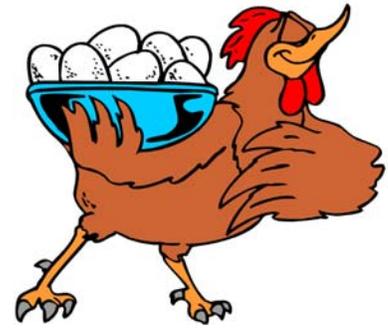


We Are All The Same

"The purpose of this activity is to 'prove' that just because something looks different on the outside, it doesn't mean that it is different on the inside and don't judge anyone by the colour of their skin and the outside of them.

"I boiled one dozen white eggs and one dozen brown eggs. I put my kids into groups of 4-5 and gave them 2 brown eggs and two white eggs. Then I let them take the shells off and crush them in their separate bowls. Then they made egg salad with their eggs by using mayo, paprika, salt and pepper. They still never mix the different eggs. Then they taste them both on crackers to prove that just because they are different on the outside they are no different on the inside!

"The children love it and even comment on it being one of their favourite activities of the year. They didn't seem to forget it."



Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow

(Sept./Oct.) *Our Community Today* - Includes the study of communities today, community workers, and fire prevention. We study the present to be able to compare it to the past when we travel back in time.

(Oct./Nov.) *Communities of the Past* - Next we travel to the past to study the explorers, the arrival of the settlers and their experiences, and studying First Nation cultures.

(Dec.) *Christmas Celebrations* - The class begins the Christmas season by studying how pioneers celebrated Christmas and compare it to present day celebrations.

(Jan./Feb.) *Prehistoric Times - The Age of the Dinosaurs* - Our class will travel to prehistoric times, before humans lived on the Earth and dinosaurs ruled the world. Students study these amazing animals.

(April) *Back to the Present - Save the Earth* - After studying the extinction of the dinosaurs, students will discover that other animals on Earth have become extinct and compare it to the dinosaurs' own extinction (geological changes, human interference, etc.). Students will learn how people can help save the Earth and the animals that inhabit it.

(May/June) *Off to the Future - Space Exploration* - It's off to the future to study the solar system. Students will become space pioneers and explore the sun, planets, and moons that are found in our solar system. The space pioneers will make flight plans and preparations for their trips and discuss how pioneers of the past survived in unknown areas.

Mapping Skills

Mapping Activity:



1) Introduce cardinal directions:

- explaining the four cardinal directions
- writing the words north, south, east and west on cards
- placing the cards correctly in the classroom
- having the students stand and practice facing in the cardinal directions

2) Give each student one sheet of 8 x 11 paper and tell them to write the four cardinal directions on their paper following your instructions. Write the word north at the top of your paper, west on the left edge, east on the right edge and south on the bottom edge.

Instruct the students to listen carefully and follow these directions:

- Draw a river from the north side of the paper to the south side of the paper.
- Draw a tree on the east side of the river.
- Draw a house on the west side of the river.
- Direct the students to add the elements necessary to make the drawing a map.

(scale, compass rose, key, border)

3) Draw a sketch of the school grounds. Put in the various buildings and have the students add other features.

(restrooms, playground structures, lawn, etc.) The students could even number the classrooms if you added those details on the map.

4) Go outside and mark off the shape of the classroom. Ask the students to find out where they should be. Create a Human Map by having students wear signs that are labeled with the different parts of the classroom.

5) Read Hansel and Gretel to the class. Allow students to retell/reenact the Hansel and Gretel story. Discuss why Hansel and Gretel used pebbles and breadcrumbs to find their way through the forest. Draw a map of the forest from the route the characters took.

1. ***Me on the Map*** by Joan Sweeney. Read the story, ***Me on the Map***. Check to see if everyone knows the difference between their left and right. If not, use the mnemonic device. (Have the children put their hands out in front of them with the palms of their hands facing away from them and their thumbs pointing to each other. Have them put all their fingers down except the thumbs and pointer fingers. The hand that makes an L is their left hand, and the one that does not is their right hand.) Explain what a compass is - a device used to show north, south, east, west. Have the children become compass kids. Ask one child to come up to the front of the room to model the cardinal directions. (Have children stand up with their arms straight out to each side. Everything to their left would be to the west, in front of them would be north, etc.) Label the volunteer with cards that say north, south, east, and west. Look at the map and explain to students that everything above a certain point on the map is to the north, everything below is to the south, everything to the left is to the west, and everything to the right is to the east. Review what a map is. Show a map of the classroom and discuss where things are on the map.

2. Show the class a map of our neighborhood. Point out and label (with pictures) local landmarks on the map (our school, churches, grocery stores, etc.) To tie in with other grade levels on the unit, we will also locate some local industries.
3. Name streets on the map and have children stand when you say their street name. Place a small house with child's name and address on the street.
4. Take a walk around the immediate neighborhood and plot landmarks on the map.
5. As a homework assignment, children will create a floor plan to their house to share with the class. When the maps are brought in, discuss the differences and similarities in the children's maps. (This is also a good way to find out more about the children. What was important enough for them to put on their maps?) Select a book, story, or poem that you know is a class favourite, and help the students create a simple map that shows the movement of the story's plot in geographical terms. Students can draw their own maps at their desks, work together in cooperative pairs, or contribute ideas as an entire class to help you draw one large map on the chalkboard or bulletin board.

Map Introduction

"Put a large compass rose on the floor. Have students use North, South, East and West to give directions of how to get to an area in your room. We also do the hokey pokey put your hands west, now put your hands east... do the hokey pokey and turn your self around. Jump to the north, now jump towards the south... you get the picture.

"Lay a map on the floor (not a real map but sheets of paper). To do this have children lay out sheets of paper starting at the door out of your room. Each time you change directions change colours of paper. How many papers does it take to get to the bathroom from your room? How many to get to the next room or the gym or whatever you choose? These help your children really see the results of maps.

"Now the children can move on to drawing a map of their desks and the teacher's desk. Your favourite part of the room is where? (Give them paper with the door in the right spot and windows already in the correct spot and they label parts of the room).

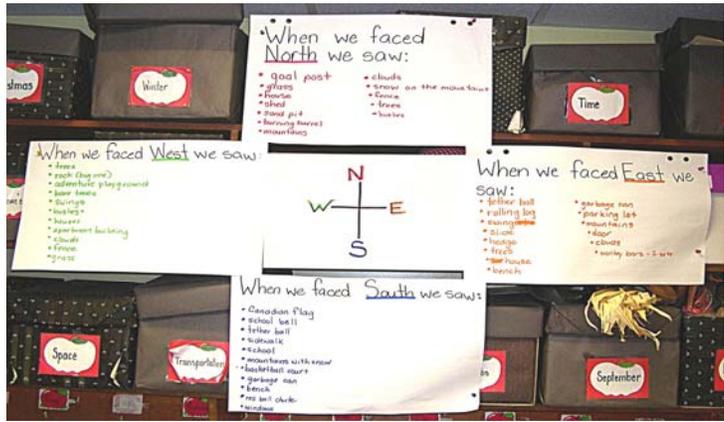
"If you can get some maps of zoos or amusement parks these are lots of fun! Maybe even make some up on the computer. 'Go from the entrance to see the lions.' I love maps!"

The Compass

"For starters we get out compasses and talk about why they always point to North. We try to use the compasses a little then we play a game. We put an 'N' on one wall, 'S' opposite it, 'W' and 'E' on the other two walls and then you call out a compass point and they run to that wall and say the name. Some people have the children remember the phrase 'Never Eat Soggy Wieners' to remember the order starting at North and going clockwise."



"Stand in the middle of the playground and make lists of what you see when you face each of the directions. The photo came from Sooke Elementary School, Sooke, BC.



"I made a huge map of Canada (with provincial boundaries drawn) that more than covered one bulletin board. Each day I read to the class about one of the provinces or territories. After reading the children made a list of things that were 'unique' about that province (eg. B.C. animals - bears, cougars, beavers...industries - ranching, mining, forestry...land features - forests, lakes, rivers...etc). After their list they drew, coloured and cut out things from their list and glued them onto the huge wall map. When they were done they had a visual representation of our country."

Mapping Skills

Around the World in 180 Days

September

We made a map of our classroom and the children used KidPix on the computer to create very simple maps of their bedrooms.

October

We went for a walk up and down the street and then created a map of our street, but this time we made it 3-D, adding construction paper houses, trees, people, traffic lights, cars, etc.

November

We talked about our province and our country. Each child was assign a province to do a simple report on and also they were given a pattern to place on top of a cake and to cut out so we could create an edible Canada. (This is always a big hit everyone!). Pairs of children ice a province or territory and add an m and m for the capital. We add upside down Bugles for the mountain ranges and then we eat! We learned about continents and learned about animals in North America. We had a class tadpole that turned into a frog and we learned about puffins, butterflies and bears.

December

Each child was issued a passport because now we were leaving North America and traveling to Europe. We studied reindeer, and learned about Christmas traditions in Sweden. We did an

author study on Jan Brett. We baked cookies and dressed up with paper hats for the boys and paper candle wreaths for the girls and served cookies to all the faculty for St Lucia Day.

January

We traveled to the South Pole and Antarctica to learn about Penguins. We created a 3-D map of Antarctica. We tried to walk balancing an egg on our feet and we drew life size penguins around the room to see how tall they really are. We read *Mr. Popper's Penguins* and after completing KWL charts each child wrote a report about penguins.

February

We were off to Africa where we once again created a map and each child made an African style house. We drew a full size baby giraffe to compare to the size of our penguins. We learned about giraffes, hippos, lions, elephants and ostriches. Several parents who had either lived in Africa or had traveled to Africa visited with lots of artifacts, pictures, food, and dress. The children began making African flags from the pictures they found in the atlas. Soon our hallway was a parade of flags.

March

We were off to Asia where we zeroed in on India and the Philippines because the class had students from both of those countries. Again parents visited with lots of artifacts, money, tasty treats, traditional dress, and samples of money. We read about the banyan tree so we decided to create one from cardboard and the tubes from inside a rug. The children added the leaves and soon we had created a coconut tree complete with a stuffed monkey! We added paper coconuts but did get to see and taste the real thing. The children continued to create flags now including the countries of Asia as well. We studied the monkey, the Asian elephant and the water buffalo.

April

We arrive in Australia and plan to create an eucalyptus tree. We will learn about the koala bear and the kangaroo. We will learn about islands and the children will get to create an island map again using KidPix. We will definitely be drawing a full size kangaroo to join our penguins and giraffe. One child has a relative in Australia so we will be e-mailing them during the month to ask questions. At the end the kids will get to pick to write a report about the koala or the kangaroo.

May

Last stop will be South America where again several parents will be visiting and I am planning a piñata and a party for Cinco de Mayo. We will learn about the rain forest and the animals that live there.

June

We will blast off for space!

Each time we leave a continent we stamp our passports, draw a picture of the place we are leaving, write about something we have learned and get a sticker related to that place. At each stop we compare the weather thanks to the internet.



Me On The Map

"We make individual books. I use some of the cute notepages that you can buy at the Teacher supply store and they add words and or pictures to make it special. They must be able to find where they live on each of the maps.

Cover page: Me on the Map... Picture of the Earth and a picture they drew of themselves or a photo.

Page 1- I live on the planet Earth. Picture of the Earth.

Page 2- I live on the continent of North America. Map.

Page 3- I live in Canada - a map of Canada

Page 4- I live in the province of _____. Map of your province.

Page 5- I live in the city of _____. Map of the city.

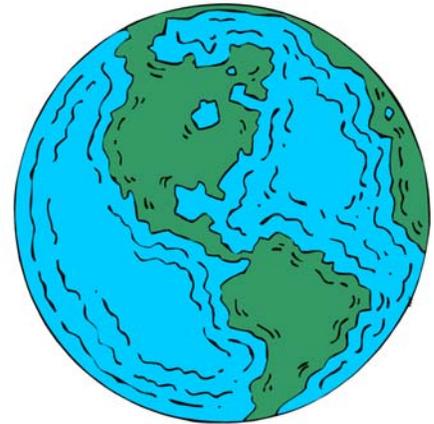
Page 6- I live at (address of the student). Neighbourhood map

Page 7- This is my room in my house. The children draw a map of their house.

We staple these together and put out for open house."

"I happen to be the class at the beginning of a hall with lots of unclaimed wall space. What I usually do is: Map of the universe, showing the sun and the planets, next - moving right, a map of the world (earth), then a map of North America, then a map of Canada, then a road map of our province, then our area, then our city map, then a map of our school. Then they draw maps of their homes, then their bedrooms, finally showing themselves sleeping in a bed, and these are put up in our classroom.

What has worked out well is that the maps in the hall can be used by any class. The maps that would be personal to my children are in the classroom."



<http://www.hawaii.edu/hga/Lessons/mapmake/MeonMap.html>

Here is a lesson on the 'Me on the Map' skills.

Plotting Points

"Try using the 100 board for cardinal directions! I usually emphasize this around our 100 day celebration. You give each child a hundred board with numbers on it. Then you play a game of guess the number. You give directions such as go north 2 spaces, east 1 space, south 3 spaces, west 5 spaces. Then you ask, what is the number? Another great one is the 3 little pigs grid. One student is the wolf and 3 children pick points on the grid and plot them. For example A-1, B-3, C-5. It is played similar to Battleship. The object is for the wolf to locate the three little pigs' house."

Continents

"I have a great activity for continents. My students love it. They blow up white balloons. Then, using a permanent marker, they draw the continents, north and south poles, equator, etc... on the balloons. (Keep in mind most of the time the continents don't actually look accurate, but they are in grade two and they give it their best.) I demonstrate first as always.

Then I take a small thin stick and run it carefully through my sample from north to south pole. If you slide it through gently, it will not pop; but the students are covering ears, etc. Be sure to leave a bit of colour (thickness) at each end: near the tip and where the balloon is tied. Because of the thicker layers of balloon the small pointed stick will slide through easily. Practice first! Then you have an axis to demonstrate to the class. Air will eventually leak out of the balloon you use, but the activity is always very enjoyable."

Continent Song

We've got the whole globe in our hands.
We've got North and South America
In our hands.
We've got Europe, Asia, Africa
In our hands.
We've got Australia and Antarctica
In our hands.
We've got the whole globe in our hands.

The World

Tune: Row Row Row Your Boat
Seven continents on the globe,
Count them now with me.
North America, South America,
Africa makes three.
Europe, Asia, Australia,
Are three more I know.
Don't forget Antarctica,
That's seven - way to go!

The Seven Continents

(tune: The Muffin Man)

Oh, do you know your continents?
Your continents, your continents?
Oh, do you know your continents?
All around the world?

There's Asia and Africa,
North and South America,
Europe and Australia,
and Antarctica.



"We just finished a continent project this week. We used paper mache over a balloon to create a globe. Students then painted it blue. We taught the following activities to go along with the globe.

Probability and prediction - Land versus Water. Does the earth have more land or water? Each student predicts before the game begins. Toss the globe to each student. They check under their right thumb to see if it is on land or water. Discuss results. We also did a

flip chart with the *Me on the Map* book. This was a great way for them to understand different maps, sizes and relationships.

After painting the globes the students attached cut out outlines of the continents with the names. We said a poem as each child handled and pointed to continents on their own globe."

"Play 'Where Am I?' Have a large map of whatever you are studying hung in the front of the class. This can be a world map for continents, a map of Canada for the provinces, or a continent map for countries. Begin the game by saying, "I am on a continent. Where am I?" A child is chosen to guess. He comes to the map and says, "Are you in North America?" (for example), and he touches North America as he guesses. Say either, "Yes, I am in North America!" or "No, I am not in North America.". If the child guesses correctly, he becomes 'it'. Have him whisper his continent to you before he says his question so there can be no changing his mind as the game is played. Have the children say the full sentences using the continent names and always be able to touch the continent they are guessing.

This is a very simple game, but the kids love to play it and it teaches map skills."

Learn About Canada

Canada Day is July 1, but you could celebrate it on another day in June or on Victoria Day in May.

Learn the names of Canada's provinces. Play the map game as above, but with guessing the provinces.

Make the Canadian flag by using:

- whipped cream and strawberries
- hand print for the maple leaf
- pressed red maple leaf and trace it onto the flag
- splatter paint - positive/negative

Relevant Facts: Discuss points on the maple leaf - each one stands for a province or territory. Discuss the history of the flag.

Learn about your Provincial Flag - Relevant Facts - discuss the significance of the symbols.



"We're having Diversity Day in May. We sent a letter home asking for parents to send in artifacts from their heritage. The kids are making posters to decorate and we have a huge map that will be hung. We are marking areas on the world map showing where our families came from."

Continents and Oceans

North America (Hold up left hand)
South America (Touch left knee)
Europe (Nose)
Asia (Right hand)
Africa (Middle- equator)
Australia (Right knee)
Don't forget Antarctica (Feet)
North Pole (Top of head)
South Pole (Touch feet)
Equator (Hands around waist)

The Continent Song

(Take Me Out to the Ball Game)

Let's name all of the continents.
There are 7 on earth.
There's Europe and
Asia and Australia,
North and South America.
Now don't forget about Africa
And Antarctica, too.
For there's 1...2...3,4,5,6,7 continents!

Continents and Oceans

(Tune: Love and Marriage)

North America, South America (clap)
Europe, Asia, and Africa,
Don't forget Antarctica,
Or way down under in Australia.
Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean
Indian, Arctic they're all oceans.
North Pole, South Pole, Equator
I know all about maps and globes.

Continents (to Three Blind Mice)

Continents, continents,
There are seven.
There are seven.
North America, South America,
Antarctica and Australia,
Asia and Africa,
And Europe too.
That's all seven,
That's all seven.

The Oceans

The Pacific's the name of an ocean,
Atlantic and Indian, too.
The Arctic is often forgotten
I know my oceans, do you?

ZEBRAS live in Africa
LIONS and ELEPHANTS, too.
Australia is down under,
Home of the KANGAROO!
Clap your hands for Asia!
It's the largest one.
Antarctica is covered in ice.
The PENGUINS sure have fun!
North America is where I live.
It's where I work and play.
In Europe you'll find England,
Where the queen rules every day.
South America is home to Brazil.
It's the largest country there.
The world has seven continents,
And I've just named them with care!

Oceans

(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)
The earth is all covered with oceans.
The earth is all covered with seas.
The earth is all covered with oceans,
More water than land don't you see.

Chorus

Water, water,
Water all over the world, the world.
Water, water,
There's water all over the world!
So salty and cold are the oceans.
So salty and cold are the seas.
So salty and cold are the oceans,
Too salty and too cold for me.

Chorus

Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic,
And then there's the Indian, too.
These oceans almost cover our planet.
I named them now can you?

Chorus



I Can Name All the Oceans

(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)
Oh, I can name all of the oceans.
Oh, I can name all of the seas.
Oh, I can name all of the oceans.
Now why not sing them with me?
Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, and Indian, too.
Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, and Indian, too.

Earth is the Name

(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)
Earth is the name of our planet.
It's shaped like a ball or a sphere.
It's covered with land and water.
A globe makes this picture quite clear.

Chorus

Seven continents, four oceans, on our
planet, Earth...
Seven continents, four oceans, on our
planet, Earth!
On Earth there are seven continents,
They're the largest masses of land.
Four large bodies of water are oceans.
In fact, there's more water than land!

Chorus

Continents

(Tune: Pop Goes the Weasel)
Asia, Africa, Antarctica
Australia, Europe, too
North America
South America
Seven continents for you!

Seven Continents (to: Row Your Boat)

To learn the seven continents
Think of the letter A,
And when you're down to only one
An E will save the day.
There's Africa, Antarctica,
Australia, Asia, too;
The oceans run between them
With their waters deep and blue.
There are also two Americas--
North and South, you see.
Now we're coming to the end.
Europe starts with E!

P.E. Ideas

"It is wonderful to train our students how we can give a compliment and positive feedback to our classmates. Brainstorm and write on a chart all the encouraging things they can say to one another. Some examples could be: Good job, I like the way you..., You are good at..., Way to go on..., Nice job when you..., That was fantastic when..., Super, Excellent, Superb, Great, etc. This can be used at other times of the day - not just the gym time!"

"Sometimes it is necessary and appropriate to allow kids to get a drink. To do this I give them to the count of 3 to get the drink and then they must stop the drink. I practice this with the kids at the beginning of the year and count it out for them. If there seems to be any problems, then their privilege is taken away."



"This is a co-operative version of musical chairs. Most children have seen the movie 'Monsters, Inc.' If not, explain to them that today they are going to be 'monsters' hiding in 'closets' Scatter the hoops about on the floor, leaving enough space between the hoops for the children to move freely. At the signal they will be 'monsters' wandering about looking for a closet to jump into. The students may perform any type of locomotive skill during this activity. (Hopping, skipping and jumping work well.) At another signal, they must jump into a 'closet' (hoop) and give their very best monster growl. (They love doing this!) Once they have completed this, take away 2 or 3 of the hoops and repeat the activity, until there are only about 2 hoops left. You'll be amazed at how many children can stand in one of these hoops!"

"This is a good opening activity to practice having a personal space. The children are in scattered formation facing the teacher. The teacher says in loud voice, 'I see.' The children answer in chorus, 'What do you see?' The teacher responds, 'I see everyone hopping on one foot without touching anyone.' Children do this until the teacher again says, 'I see....' The children stop and answer, "What do you see?" The teacher responds with a new challenge-locomotor skills, bend and stretch, animal movements, and/or twisting actions."

"Ask the children to find a safe self-space in the gym. Beanbags have been scattered throughout the gym prior to their arrival. Remind them not to touch the beanbags. To begin the activity ask the students to begin walking throughout the general space at a signal. They are to avoid the beanbags as they are moving. When the music stops, the teacher will call out a body part (e.g. elbow, tummy, back). The students are then to touch that body part on **five** different beanbags as quickly and as safely as possible. The last one they touch will be their 'home.' They are to sit by that beanbag, and wait for the next signal to start and the game will be repeated."

Field Day

"Here are some things we usually do for P.E. field day. If your school doesn't have a field day, use some of these ideas to make your P.E. lessons interesting in May and June."

sack race
football throw
frisbee toss
run the bases
obstacle course
relay race
musical chairs
cup of water relay (try to fill up container first)
balloon pop (sit on the balloon, be first one to pop)
marbles in a swimming pool (kids take off shoes and fish them out with feet while sitting in chairs)

teddy bear relay
long jump
bowling
soccer kick
tire race
dunking booth
shuffle board
basketball shoot
tug of war

"We get lots of volunteers. We have them sign up for times throughout the day. The game stations are set up all around the outside of the school and P.E. field. The children can purchase popcorn and soda. This is set up as an event so each group has a turn to buy items. We have a map of the events, and each class has a particular place to start. Then we continue in order in 15 minute intervals. Lunch is usually a little crazy, but over the years we've eliminated some of the problems. Every grade goes into the classrooms at the same time. Then, we all go back outside at the same time and start with the next game on our map."



"My favourite was 'Pennies in the Hay.' I would find a parent who could donate a pick-up load of hay...and then ask my kids' parents to donate pennies. All I had to do was throw pennies in the hay and rake it up a bit...and let a group of about 6 kids hunt for all the pennies they could find. (Best to let kids of about the same size hunt together so as not to have the big kids trampling all over the little ones!) Their 'prize' was getting to keep the pennies!! Very easy...but the hay does stir up allergies, so asthmatic kids need to stay away from this event. "Our kids wore a punch necklace with a series of numbers on it....after they did an event the teachers or helpers at that event would punch the necklace...every time the kids had done a certain number of events they could get a cup of kool-aid...donated by parents.

Other things we used to use - hula hoop contest, bubble gum blowing contest, tug of war, sack race, 3-legged race, jump rope contest, shoe-mixup...(big circle of kids take their shoes off and the shoes are scrambled in a pile in the middle...kids then have to try to be the

first one to find their correct shoes and put them back on.) We've done musical chairs, too.

"Now for Play Day, our present principal charges the kids a certain amount of money (a few dollars) and then uses our school's activity fund (comes from fundraisers) for the rest....and we hire a company for a day that brings in those inflatable activities...there is a giant slide, lazer tag, several mazes, some climbing activities, a moon walk, and lots of others...grades 4-6 get to play in the morning, and the younger grades get to play in the afternoon...we show a movie projected on a wall in the cafeteria for the group who is not at that time playing.

"Teachers do not stay with their classes. We've never done it that way. Bunches of parents and volunteers are involved, and each teacher has to 'man' one of the activities. Also, the kids are really good about buddying up with each other...kindergarteners maybe with a grade two friend or sibling, and that helps. We do have an outdoor detention for the kids who are causing problems, but usually very few have to go there. The kids want to spend their time playing and are almost always very well-behaved on this day."

Santa and the Reindeer

"Prior to class, make sure the children can name Santa's eight reindeer. Set up the area by using cones to form a large rectangle. Make sure to set up the cones a good distance away from any walls in the activity area. Have the students in groups of two or three (you want 9 groups, so make the groups as equal as possible). Choose one group to be 'Santas' (they could get red pinnies). Have each of the other groups choose which reindeer they want to be (i.e., Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, or Blitzen). Have the Santas go to the middle of the rectangle, while the reindeer line up in between two of the cones.

The goal is for the reindeer to make it across the 'North Pole' (the centre of the rectangle) without being tagged by a Santa. To begin, the Santas huddle together and choose a reindeer they would like to capture for their Christmas sleigh ride. They count to three and call out a reindeer. (It may be best to have the teacher do this but that is up to you). If they say, 'Blitzen', all of the students in that reindeer group would try to move across the North Pole without getting tagged by a Santa. If they are tagged, they join Santa's sleigh by sitting down (or you can have them stand frozen in place) where they were tagged in the North Pole. These children can help catch other reindeer with their arms only. The Santas would then call out a different reindeer group to catch. If at any time, the Santas call out 'North Pole', **all** of the reindeer who haven't been tagged attempt to cross the North Pole together. The teacher has the choice to call this out at any time so as to make sure the game is fair. Play for a few minutes and then change to a new group of Santas."



Skipping Rhymes

Practice skipping to the same rhymes their grandmothers skipped to!

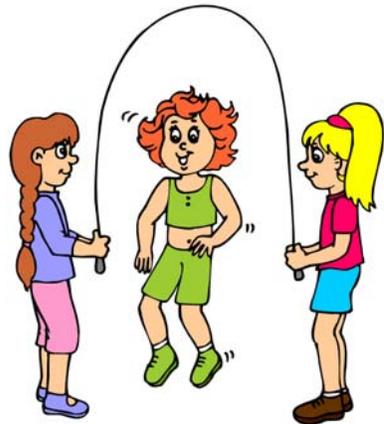
A my name is ALICE, my husband's name is AL, we live in ALBERTA and we bring back APPLES.
B my name is BETTY, my husband's name is BEN, we live in BRITISH COLUMBIA and we bring back BUGS.

C my name is CAROL, my husband's name is CARL, we live in CALGARY and we bring back CRACKERS, etc.

(Each child comes into the turning long rope and says the next letter.)

"I like coffee, I like tea, I like (name of next person in line) to come in with me." Then the two jump together, the second person saying the rhyme. When the rhyme is done, the first person runs out, and the new person comes in and jumps with the second person.

I had a little puppy
His name was Tiny Tim
I put him in the bathtub, to see if he could swim
He drank all the water, he ate a bar of soap
The next thing you know he had a bubble in his throat.
In came the doctor, (person jumps in)
In came the nurse, (person jumps in)
In came the lady with the alligator purse (person jumps in)
Out went the doctor (person jumps out)
Out went the nurse (person jumps out)
Out went the lady with the alligator purse (person jumps out)



Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs-
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers-
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the lights-
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say good-night!

*This rhyme was for beginners who could not jump in while the rope was swinging over and over (Swing the rope back and forth, not over)
Blue bells, cockle shells
Easy ivy over*

The children jump rope while they sing this rhyme, they act out the actions as the words come up in the rhyme. An example: when they say go upstairs, the child pretends to climb the stairs.

Music

"As we learn songs I hand out a song sheet with the words. The children can illustrate the sheets, and then they put them into a binder (or duotang). There are lots of sites on the web where you can get the words to songs - try <http://www.kididdles.com/> and then go to the 'Musical Mouseum' for almost 2000 songs. The children can add each song to a table of contents so they are easily found in singing time. The children will love this book, and often take it out to read and sing at other times, too."

"Most children are not familiar with classical music. Classical music can become a favourite if it is played often as background music. You can play a Mozart tape, for example, in silent reading time, in art, or as transition cues. Play a classical tape in the mornings as the children come in. You may be surprised at which children enjoy this most! Remember that different music creates different moods. Tell the children the name of the selection you are playing and the composer so that they become familiar with the different composers and the different music."

"I am not musically talented at all, but feel that I am using music to help my students. I have worked with the music teacher at our school and she has been a wonderful resource person. She teaches the students the basic concepts of music. I have purchased classroom percussion instruments, rhythm sticks, and handbells to use in my room. Sometimes we use the instruments when reading a story. Students decide which instrument would be most appropriate for the sound effect. We also use familiar tunes to write new songs. Students have written songs about space, nutrition, etc. I started out letting the students write songs for the informational stories in our reading series. This is a great way to see if students have comprehended the story. Students have begged to write songs for other stories too. We have also written songs for some of Dr. Seuss' books. We have used the rhythm sticks when reading poetry. Most of the students love the music additions in the classroom. It has been a great way to allow students to express themselves. I feel it is important to allow students the opportunity to use music in the classroom. My students will leave grade one with more exposure to music than I had during my entire elementary/secondary education."

Sing, Sing, Sing!

"You may not be able to carry a tune in a bucket, but you can still have a great music program. Buy a couple of good CDs of suitable children's music, download from the internet, - or check around your school or library for music programs. If your kids haven't done much singing, you will find that it is a bit rough for the first month or so. Once they get into it, they will carry the tunes and



sing together much better. Sing to the recorded music, and teach the words. You may wish to put the words on a chart when you first teach a song to your class - reading practice as well as music! The children may not have been exposed to the old songs, for example, 'You Are My Sunshine', 'She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain', 'This Land Is My Land', 'Down By the Bay', and hundreds more that are a part of our heritage.

"Every time you teach a new song, put the title on a chart. Then when you have collected a number of songs the children can look at the list and decide what songs they want to review. Spend time every day, if possible, or at least three times each week in order for the children to improve, and improve they will!

"Singing makes a good filler - if you have five minutes before the bell, singing is wonderful. Singing together is co-operation. Singing makes people feel good. Singing is a part of our lives and should be an important part of the curriculum."

"One reason I teach music and singing is that it makes the Christmas concert and other productions easier! If I sing with the kids every day, by concert time they easily learn the material and are able to sing (mostly) on key. An important skill!"

Great Music

"Give the children some musical knowledge. Begin on Monday to play the music of one composer, such as Mozart, in quiet times. Show a picture of the composer and tell a few important things about him. Then all week play different selections from the same composer adding other information as the week goes on. It takes only a few minutes a day, and by the middle of the year the children become very knowledgeable and opinionated. They know who they like, who they don't like, and lots of information about the music and the composers."



"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!"

"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 greatly increases the learning potential."

"A good first lesson is having the kids colour to symphonic music. Later, have them pick out instruments they're hearing, then have them march to marching music, so they can participate in the 2/4 feel of that music. As the grades progress (even possible in the younger grades), teach them art in the style of famous artists that lived during the time of famous composers, and play this music while they practice the art."

Music or Muzak?

"I use classical music (usually Mozart or Beethoven) as background in my classroom when I am not specifically teaching. I find that the children work more quietly and stay on task better. It is supposed to improve brain connections - although there is some contradictory research. I guess it is difficult to prove!

To read more on this, type in 'Mozart Effect' to your search engine and you'll get tons of information - brain research, too about the effect of classical music on children's academics."

"In some ways, this annoys me. I love classical music, but to use it as 'muzak' playing constantly in the class is no more effective than using any calming background.

First, many classical pieces should be actively listened to, not made into background noise. Second, there are times when it is important to actually be quiet without any distracting noises even very pleasant ones. Third, the Mozart effect has been debunked in recent studies.

By all means use music - classical, jazz, world music, anything that the children can appreciate. Use it in your lessons, paint to music, dance to music, play instruments with the children, talk about how specific pieces of music make you feel, but for the love of music, don't make it into constant 'noise' that is not being paid attention to and don't expect subconscious effects from it in terms of children's abilities."

"ADHD students and others with sensory problems need quiet. There is a great difference in the behaviour patterns of these children between a quiet classroom with little movement that is neat and sparsely attractive, and their behaviour in a busy classroom with movement and 'busy' untidy walls and shelves. Children with sensory overload, too, will become agitated in the latter type of classroom. Perhaps some adults can relate, too - it is difficult to concentrate and maybe irritating to be in a 'busy' environment."

"We have to try it, I think. Is music soothing or irritating to children with ADHD? Perhaps different children react differently!"



Assessment

Simple Sight Word Tests

Each list has 25 words. If a child is able to read **20** words on a list, go on to the next list. If the child reads less than 20 words on any list, stop. The grade level scores are approximate, of course.

List A
1.4 level

a
and
the
I
in
see
said
you
for
can
my
to
me
here
come
not
play
red
look
run
blue
is
we
yellow
it

List B
1.7 level

she
want
are
ride
out
like
did
away
little
get
big
something
what
this
today
funny
help
with
ball
good
animals
girl
yes
fast
boy

List C
1.9 / 2.0

live
may
after
were
any
from
going
once
walk
could
ask
him
old
please
where
know
who
wanted
let
every
of
put
around
there
was

List D
2.9

first
always
those
many
replied
write
found
pull
shall
right
before
does
properly
invented
which
place
world
strong
liquid
fourteen
learning
eight
knock
never
collecting

List E
3.9

imagination
laugh
alive
complained
bread
noticed
wonderful
weather
properly
listen
definitely
proud
received
protection
dictionary
developed
champion
crawling
beginning
sounded
disappeared
invitations
powerful
creature
construction



Quick September Reading Quiz

Tape record the child's oral reading (without pre-reading) and after, mark a list of every error the child has made. These will give you insights so you can discover the problems a child may be having.

To score the reading passages:

- 95% to 100% of vocabulary in the passage read correctly - the passage is at the child's independent reading level.
- 90% to 95% of vocabulary read correctly - the passage is at the child's instructional level.
- The child is able to read less than 90% of the vocabulary in the passage. The child is reading at frustration level and needs to be reading easier material.



Story #1 -level 1.4

"Come with me," said Bob. "I have something for you to see."

"What is it?" asked Pam.

"You will see. It is a surprise," said Bob.

Pam and Bob ran to Bob's house. "Hi, Mom," said Bob. "We have come to see the kittens."

"Kittens! I like kittens! said Pam. "Here they are. I see five kittens. One, two, three, four, five. I see five little kittens!"

Story #2 - level 1.7

"It is time to go to school," said Mother. Ben got his books and Tammy got her skipping rope. They went out the door. The dog, Big Red, was sitting on the steps.

"You can't come with us, Big Red," said Ben. "Dogs can't go to school."

Tammy and Ben went down the street. They saw friends playing in the school yard.

Tammy's friend Pat came running up.

"Look!" said Pat. Tammy looked back and Ben looked, too. Oh, no! There was Big Red!

Story #3 - level 1.9/2.0

What a day! I got up too late this morning and I had to eat cold ham and eggs. I got dressed quickly and ran out the door. When I got to school, my friend Sally looked me up and down.

"Why do you have one red sock and one blue sock?" she asked.

"Oh, dear," I said. "What a day!"

The teacher came into the room. "Who did the homework that I gave you yesterday?" she asked.

"I did," I said.

"Where is it?" asked the teacher.

Oh, oh! "It is still at home," I said. The teacher was cross at me. Oh, what a day!

Using the Dolch lists

"I have a few students who do not know the first three lists of Dolch Words very well and as a result are struggling. I have one student who can read only 29 of the pre-primer list, 20 on the primer list and 9 of the 40 words on the first grade list. As you can imagine, he is having a great deal of trouble in Grade Two reading and writing.

"I always 'test' the Dolch Words before the end of the first nine weeks. I then report this information to parents at our parent-teacher conference in November. This year I will send home the complete list of words to all parents. I would like to tell them how important it is for their child to know these words on sight because they are such high frequency words in all writing.

"The students should read the words with 90% accuracy within 3 seconds."

Running Records

"This is how I score my running records - it may sound complicated, but it really is very simple. Once you do a few, it will come easier.

"The child reads with the book down flat so I can see the words he/she reads.

"I use lined loose-leaf paper. For each word read correctly, I simply put a check mark. I write the page number, then the checks for the words on that page. So, let's say the page said... 'The mother rabbit hides her babies in the grass.' I would write p2 >>>>>>> (pretend those are check marks). Then on the next line, I would do page 3, etc.

"For each word read incorrectly, I make a 'word fraction'. I put the word they said over the actual word. If the child self-corrects, I make a circle with SC in it right next to the word. If they repeat a word, I make a circle with an R next to the check mark for the word. If they go back and repeat a whole portion of the sentence, I make an R in a circle and draw an arrow to however far back they went. If a word is skipped, I make a word fraction again. This time, though, I put a dash over the word from the story. If a word is added, I put the word they said over a dash. If I have to tell them the word, which I try not to do but sometimes you just have to...then I make a T in a circle next to the word.

"To get a score, count ONLY the errors - repeats and self-corrects don't count. Put the number of words read correctly OVER the number of words in the book. Divide the bottom number into the top number to get a percentage.

"I use the same books for a certain level called benchmark books. I have already counted the number of words and written the number on the book so I don't have to re-count every time. I keep a calculator in my basket so I can just do it up real quick. It only takes 2-3 minutes to do each child.

below 90% = Frustration level

90-94% = Instructional level

95-100% = Independent level



"I take notes while they are reading, too. Maybe they are ONLY trying to sound out, or did they look at the pictures, whatever you might find interesting or helpful. I sometimes note comments that the children say....'I don't know this word', 'I know b-l-u-e is blue, so this word must be SUE', 'That doesn't make sense', 'That's really funny!', etc. It helps you remember later what strategies they might be using or what information they gleaned from the text."

"I type out the selection I am going to use for running records, with a good space between lines and using a fairly large font. Then I can write errors between lines and have room to make notes. This makes it easier to follow the passage being read and to see what the child has done after they are finished."

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.

Anecdotal Notes

"I have a computer file for each child for anecdotal notes. Once a day I try to make handwritten notes on what I see at least five students doing, in a variety of subjects. After school I pop these notes into the computer files, with the date. These notes are hugely valuable when I am doing report cards or having parent conferences.

I also have class databases (I use the old Microsoft Works - easy to use) - where the names are down the side and I can put in math scores or spelling test results. Databases are very good to use, as you can get totals and sort by scores in any column."

Running Records for Reading Assessment

This website gives clear instructions for assessing your students by using running records.

<http://www.readinga-z.com/newfiles/levels/runrecord/runrec.html>

When you have a percentage score of the Accuracy Rate, you can determine whether the text read is easy enough for independent reading, difficult enough to warrant instruction yet avoid frustration, or too difficult for the reader.

Easy enough for independent reading..... 95 - 100%
Instructional level for use in guided reading session..... 90 - 94%
Too difficult and will frustrate the reader89% and below

Running Records

"Running records are probably my favourite, and easiest, way to check on a student's reading level and what types of errors he/she is making. I have made up my own template. Just use a regular sheet of paper horizontally. Draw lines so there is a space at the top and 10 or so blocks going down and 10 going across. As you read with the child you make a check in each block for every individual word that is correct, and write the word that the child says with the correct word under it when they make a mistake. If they self correct, I put a little SC in the corner. If I have to tell them the word I write 'T' for told. There are more marks, but those are the key ones. I get them to read 100 words or more and the scoring is really easy: 93 words right = 93%, etc. At the top of the page I draw a line for the child's name, the book title, the level, and the score. 90-95% is instructional; higher than that is independent reading level, below that is too challenging. When the child gets a few 95 type scores, we move up to the next level."



Testing Reading Fluency

Procedure for calculating words correct per minute:

One-minute reading: Total words read minus the errors = words correct per minute

Select two or three brief passages from a grade-level basal text or other grade-level material. Have these at different levels.

Have individual students read each passage aloud for exactly one minute.

Count the total number of words the student read for each passage. Compute the average number of words read per minute.

Count the number of errors the student made on each passage. Compute the average number of errors per minute.

Subtract the average number of errors read per minute from the average total number of words read per minute. The result is the average number of words correct per minute (WCPM).

Repeat the procedure several times during the year. Graphing students' WCPM throughout the year easily captures their reading growth and the improvement in fluency.

Compare the results with published norms or standards to determine whether students are making suitable progress in their fluency. For example, according to one norm, students should be reading approximately 60 words per minute correctly by the end of grade one, 90-100 words per minute correctly by the end of grade two, and approximately 114 words per minute correctly by the end of grade three.

Using Miscues

"I have enough years under my belt to be pretty good at 'backing up' to discover a child's reading level so that I know what he or she needs next. One of my favourite parts of teaching Grade Two is analyzing commonality in errors or problems a student is having and then trying to remediate. We use the HBJ Treasury of Literature end of the book tests. If a student makes a certain number of errors or has cluster errors, I sit with him or her and first have the student read the paragraph or question to me aloud.

I am checking here for plain old reading skills. I watch the mouth to see what the child is planning to say; their finger to see if that strategy is being used. I take notes. I watch and listen to see if the skills are applied for decoding, chunking, etc. I interview the student about what he or she was thinking and why the particular answer was chosen if it is not obvious to me. I separate the students with word errors from those with errors in the comprehension section. Most children are able to do sequencing or predictions; more often they don't understand the finer points or the specific skills and strategies used to answer less obvious questions.

For example, one student had a cluster of errors in comprehension, not vocabulary or language. He read the story out loud with few errors so 'reading' was not an issue. I then went to the comprehension questions and he read perfectly. Then we looked at the choices of answers available... all correctly read. I asked him why he picked the answer he did. His answers reflected the fact that he did not observe the details provided in the story. He is reading with expression, but not with active thought involved. I showed him how to tally some of the details. I had him reread the piece and interpret it in his own words, tell me what had just been expressed in each sentence, one sentence at a time and predict what seemed to be happening. By the time he finished that, he immediately spotted the correct answer. His problem was finding and focusing on details. Sure enough, his other errors all involved attending more closely to the details provided and thinking about the information given. It lines up perfectly with what Grade Two writing expands upon - using relevant helpful details to provide necessary information to the reader so he or she will have a clear picture of what the writer is trying to say. I couldn't have asked for more! Every error involved details. So next I asked him if he knew what he needed to be working on when he was reading for tests or workbook pages and his answer needed to indicate to me that 'he got it'. I will now closely monitor work he does that will employ this skill.

Another last student was slightly unique, but nevertheless could be analyzed. She gets confused (or that is how it appears) and seems to be a careless reader. The truth is that she is a very insightful child. Her spelling is poor even after she studies, so I know she does not have a good memory for mundane details but she is extremely perceptive. She focuses on the deeper meaning in stories... and is not an accurate reader. A reading error (*from / for*) caused her to misunderstand a given detail. Her oral reading showed she did that, but it was not until she read a question that depended upon getting that detail correct, that her error in reading began to cause a problem. You really need to know the student. I know she has a poor memory, still works at reading, and misreads words at times. She was not remembering the finer, necessary details to answer questions of a test nature. She is not remembering that

'Mike' was the person with the birthday so when she misread the present being *from* Mike instead of *for*, it made perfect sense to her. It made her think the gift was from a friend named Mike, not for Mike.... already mentioned eight times in the paragraph! For her, I suggested underlining the character's names and in a test piece, consider all the information important. She was told to reread the piece immediately, before answering the questions. The second time she would be less focused on the vocabulary and a little more mechanical about her reading. It might not work, but in each case, the cause for errors and suggested strategies for the child were written on the outside of the test booklet and reviewed with each child. I will make a note of it as well in the comments section of the report card and explain to the parent when we meet. I feel like Sherlock Hemlock when I do that and it is so gratifying for me as a teacher. It is also a chance to help the children feel very at home with errors, for it is from our errors that we learn to excel, not our successes.

That is long winded, but that is how I do it. I'm pretty good at knowing what a kid needs before he/she gets testing for Sp. Ed. and already have many of the adaptations in place. It certainly helps to know what makes all my little learners tick."

Student Portfolios

"I will start out with the organization and management of it. If you aren't organized, you'll go nuts! First, I have a cubby for each child. After grading their work, they place the papers in the appropriate cubby.

"Each Friday, we do what we call a 'Portfolio Pick'. I have modeled this process over and over again. I can't say enough for modeling exactly what you want a process to look like. Believe me, I learned the hard way, and during our first few Portfolio Picks I had papers flying (literally) everywhere! What the children do is gather their work out of their cubby and find their own special spot to work in where they go through their pile one paper at a time. After going through them once, they go through again and make their pick, something they are particularly proud of.

"I suppose I should take a step back here! Before we choose anything for our portfolios, we create a rubric as a class. This rubric changes each term. One of our classroom rubrics looked something like this:

1. I got the correct answers.
2. I thought carefully about my answers.
3. I worked neatly.
4. I did an interesting, well drawn picture.

I wouldn't have more than 5 things on your rubric. The rubric is a nice thing to refer back to when the children are busy working.

"When the children are making a pick for their portfolio, they keep one of the reasons in mind from our rubric for the reason why they picked that piece. Once they've made their pick, they fill out a form that I made on the computer. It's just a fill in the blank that looks



something like this:

I am proud of this because _____.

They just choose a reason from the rubric (we have talked about what each rubric means) and write it in the blank. They staple the form to their paper and place this pick in a hanging file folder that each child has. This is where their portfolio picks go (different from cubby). The rest of their work goes in their Friday Folder and home.

"Last year, I had the children decorate a large piece of construction paper and make a folder. This year, I'm thinking of using duotang folders. We use our portfolios in our Student-Involved Conferences, and the papers were a little hard to manage in the decorated folders.

"Sometimes I have something specific in mind that I want the children to put in their portfolios. For example, I have writing samples at the beginning of the year, middle and end. I want them to include this. Autobiographies that they wrote...these are a definite keeper. If it is something that I picked for them, I hand out a form that says, "Miss G has chosen this piece because _____". They staple it to their piece and include it in the portfolio.

"Portfolios are such a powerful tool. There was a noticeable change in the quality of my students' work after keeping portfolios. They take such ownership in their work and work toward more quality work with the thought in mind that this may be something that they can include in their portfolio and show off at Student-Involved Conferences later in the year."



Organizing Evaluation

"I have found the best way to organize evaluation and assessment is to get a binder and have a section for each child. I get dividers and label with the child's name and have sheets of foolscap (you could make up templates if you wanted but I don't) behind each divider and write notes on that about each child. If I don't have time during the day to open the binder I just write a note on a post-it and stick it in later. At the beginning of the binder I have all the checklists I am currently using and at the end I have a section for charts on reading levels, etc. I also have a section in the front on 'information' -- phone lists, etc. After every reporting session I clean it out and put the notes in files I keep in my desk, and start again. Works for me!"



End of the Year Ideas

The last 2 weeks of school can really drag if you don't have lots of exciting things planned. Here are some of the things I am going to do:

1. Review the Word Wall. Instead of the usual Friday Spelling Test we will do games using the Word Wall.
2. In Math we are singing Multiplication Songs (I have records) to learn some of our tables.
3. Writing in each other's autograph books. I've made each student one. Some pages are fill-ins like: My favourite book this year _____; my favourite field trip; the best thing about my teacher; etc. Other pages are blank for the kids to sign (also teachers).
4. Lots of self-selected reading time.
5. Dictionary work. My kids like this. But we don't just look up words, write page numbers and definitions. I have questions like: What would you do with a sampan...eat it or ride in it?
6. Reading with partners and in small groups and doing simple projects with the stories (make a mini mural; write favorite character descriptions, etc.)
7. Word games: hink-pinks; Elevator Down; etc.

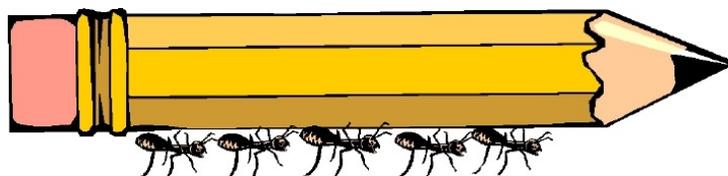
Celebrate the Word Wall

"I would encourage everyone to celebrate the word wall and make a ceremony of taking the words off the word wall at the end of the year. This is what I did last year. Each child chose a two letter word. We reversed the snapping and clapping of putting it up originally. Everyone said goodbye to the word, and then the child got to put it inside the front cover of their journal. I kept a list on the computer which we then printed and hung up. The whole thing was cute and the kids were really excited. I figure we will have them all down by the next to the last day of school."

"I can't say enough about the effectiveness of 'doing' the word wall through the year. I've completed all of our end of the year assessments and the results have been outstanding in all categories." Carroll

"Students bring t-shirts they can write on. Provide permanent markers, like the jelly roll pens, for students to sign each other's shirts. And you, too!"

"Make an ABC book of the year's experiences. Brainstorm with the alphabet on the board. To get something for each letter, you may have to turn things around, or misspell slightly. x-tremely good students, for instance. Then have each student take a letter, write the words and illustrate the idea."



Autograph Books

"On the front cover of the book, I have an alligator head that says 'See you later, Alligator!' The back of the book says 'After while, crocodile!' I typed each poem and under each poem I have a line for signing autographs. We read one poem, sign the book you're holding, then pass the book to the right. Here are the poems:

Hit 'em in the head.
Hit 'em in the feet.
We've got the class
That can't be beat.

Bread and butter,
Sugar and spice.
Lots of girls
Think you're nice.

U R
2 nice
2 B

4 gotten

I love you, I love you
With all my heart and soul.
If I had a doughnut,
I'd give you the hole.

2 Y's U R
2 Y's U B
I C U R
2 Y's 4 me.

Remember A
Remember B
But C that U
Remember me.

Remember me now,
Remember me ever.
Remember the fun
We had together.

YOURS TILL THE TREE BARKS.

Do you love me?

As years roll on
And roll they will,
Remember you friend
Who wrote uphill.

YOURS TILL SODA POPS.

Or do you not?

You told me once,
But I forgot.

Pals we are,
Pals we'll be.
Pals forever,
You and me.

**There are gold ships
There are silver ships
But there's no ship
Like friendship.**

I am a nut,
I am a clown,
That's why I signed
Upside down.

As long as two nickels make a dime,
You'll always be a friend of mine.

Remember the fork,
Remember the spoon,
Remember the fun,
We had in homeroom.

Pigs love pumpkins
Cows love squash
I love you
I do, by gosh.

Ashes to ashes,
Dust to dust.
You're the friend
That I can trust.

I like coffee.
I like tea.
I like you.
And you like me.

Tell me fast
Before we faint.
Is we friends
Or is we ain't?

I
I did
I did this
I did this to
I did this to take
I did this to take up
I did this to take up space.

Read see that me.
up will I like
and you like you
down and you and

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
R U 4 me?
I M 4 U.

Yours till mgat balls bounce.

I think this book I'll gladly sign
Right upon the dotted line.

"I love the last few weeks of school! What I do for the last 10 days of school is have fun theme days. For an hour and a half each day we have a special theme. Baseball Day, Strawberry Day, Watermelon Day, Ice Cream Cone Day, etc. Each day the children receive a contract that has an art project, a writing activity, a food activity and something else relating to the theme. They complete the contract in any order, they have a great time and they love the end of school. One day is movie day and the last day is games from home, free drawing, free reading and passing out Memory Books, etc. It is very relaxing, the children are under control and sometimes parents will come in to help out. I plan everything out ahead of time and ask for donations for the food items."

Memory Books

"For the past few years I have done simple scrapbooking with the kids. I give them a 'Bare Book'. These are pre-bound hard backed books. I get the small plain ones. They're quite inexpensive.

The first day is spent designing the cover. I've let them do it themselves and I've tried directed drawing. Either way works. I always make a sample in front of them. But, I tell them that a goof is an opportunity to 'make it into something else' because felt pens do not erase and they cannot get a second book. I also model making a title page complete with dedication. I also tell them to bring in a load of stickers to help decorate the pages and to trade with friends.

By this time, I (or a parent volunteer) have sorted the year's photos. I make sure each child has the same number of photos (about 10). Those who have enrolled late in the year get group photos thrown in with their bunch to bring their numbers up. I also ask parents for copies of photos they've taken in the year that they would be willing to donate to the cause.

Then I teach 'page layout' by demonstrating how to make a page more interesting by cutting around a body placing it on a page in an unusual way. I also show them a variety of ways to add text including how to make the words follow the outline of the body as well as fancy lettering. Many students are trying out fancy lettering or typing in different fonts on the computer.

Once, I made the mistake of giving out all the photos at once (duplicates and all). I had thought the project would take about 3 days. Wrong. Some (mostly the boys) finished in 1/2 an hour. Last year I gave the photos out a few at a time. They all took more time with each page and I could stretch the project out to my heart's content. The coloured pens helped a lot. I hadn't used them in previous years. The last day was spent trading their duplicates with friends and adding those photos in the bunch. If any child finished early, they could use the felt pens to draw pictures on the remaining pages or getting autographs of their friends.

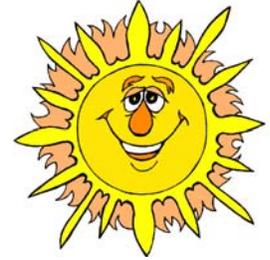
The end result was a child-made memory book. We then took the time to share our books. It was a fabulous last week of school activity as it could be started and stopped as needed for the various end of the year assemblies and activities that we all seem to get involved in."

The first page of our memory books have the student's vital statistics - name, address, age, height, weight, etc. Other pages include:

- My favourite author and my favourite book (not necessarily the same)
- Math: My favourite game,
- Social Studies/Science: I really liked learning about.....
- In grade Two I really liked
- My Best Friend in grade two is _____. I really like _____ because...
- This is my teacher (they get to draw me) They write one or two sentences about me.
- Autograph Page



More Memory Books



"This year for the end of the year I'm creating a class memory book using pictures I took with my digital camera. To save on cost I'm printing the pictures in black and white, but each child will have a book with a photo of every child in the room, along with some sort of comment made by each student about the year in Grade Two. I'm not finished with it yet, but I took in a couple of pages to show the class and they are really excited! And I'm having fun, too!"

"Here are some of the ideas I have for the yearbook I am creating for my class. Most of the graphics are done on Print Shop. I use lots of decorative frames and create a neat seal for the front page. Some word processing programs should be able to do some of these things, too.

Cover page: - Memories Of Grade Two - year Name _____

Page 2 - Memories of My School

The name of my school is _____.

The Principal is _____.

I like my school because _____.

Page 3 - Memories of my Teacher

My teacher's name is _____.

I like my teacher because _____.

My teacher likes _____.

Page 4 - Memories of My Friends

My friends this year are _____ and _____.

We like to _____.

Page 5 and 6 - Small individual pictures of the students will be photocopied on this page. There should be room beside each photo for the children to have their friends autograph it.

Page 7 - Photocopy of the class picture. Also pictures of the principal and any class aides.

Page 8 - Throughout the year I have taken pictures of the children doing special art, on field trips or other activities. Try to evenly divide any pictures and allow each child to have 'the real thing' on this special page.

Front and back Covers - One idea is to laminate the front page and use construction paper laminated for the back. The only problem is the binding. You can use a binding machine or the other option is to get inexpensive report folders. Then glue the memory book cover page on the front.

A class memory!

"I give the students an extra large piece of construction paper, and give them a 4x6 patten to trace. Then I have them decorate around it, like a frame. I have a digital camera and I took a picture of the class on a sunny day. I had 25 copies made, one for each of my students. They then placed the picture in the frame and let everyone sign around it!"

Another Memory Book

"The cover says 'Grade Two at _____ Elementary School, 2004' by _____

The other pages are as follows:

1. My name is _____. I am ___ years old. Here is a picture of me: (space to draw a picture or glue a photo)
2. I go to _____ Elementary school in (city, province). Here is a picture of my school. (Space to draw a picture and or a photo.)
3. My teacher's name is _____. Write two sentences about my teacher. (Picture of teacher)
4. These people are my good friends - _____. (Photos)
5. The think I liked most about grade two is _____
6. The most important thing I learned this year is _____.
7. This summer I plan to: _____ (picture)
8. autograph page (class picture and signatures)

On the front of mine I make a collage of pictures...on the inside the kids pick pictures from those I have taken all year and they glue the pictures in and they write about them. I also give back little things that we have done that may have their name on it (like a nametag in the shape of a heart used during a Valentine activity) and they glue that in...They pretty much get to make and design their own book. At the end they have a couple of autograph pages. It is great busy work for those last days of school."

Memories of the Year

"Go over the calendars for the year and all the special events. Talk about the things they learned, the themes you taught. Photocopy or scan the pictures taken through the year. Let each child make a book of the favourite things that happened during the year. They can talk about the teacher, their best friends, their favourite books, their favourite field trip, etc. Add the pictures. This makes a nice keepsake!"

"Have the students draw a picture of their favorite activity all year. Then have them write a letter to a student in next year's class. Of course, they won't know who the student is. Tell them you will put the picture and the letter on the students' desks next year to welcome them into the class. Ask them to write a letter that will explain what the new students can expect, and that will make them feel less nervous about being in grade two. My students will remember the ones that were on their desks when they came in this year. If you have a couple of quick bunnies, ask them to write extras, in case you have more students next year."



Book of Class Records

"This is an effective way for each of your students feel that they had been special in the class this past school year. Together, we create a 'Book of Class Records'. We brainstorm something that is unique to each student in the class, such as : Nicest Smile, Fastest Runner, Most Freckles, etc. I create a template with 'I, _____, have the most freckles in the class.' They then draw a little picture to go along with it. Then, (to make it official...) it says, 'On Monday, June 3, 2004, we voted that I had the most freckles this year.'

I get copies made for each of them and they design their own cover. They always have fun with this!"

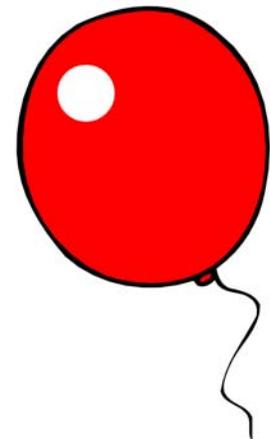
"I get really nice plant pots, buy some thyme and plant it in the pot attaching a card that says 'Thank you for your thyme!' Last year I also did a scrapbook page. I got 8 x 10 frames and put pictures of that person's child in a collage and printed on the computer "Grade Two" (used a cool graphic that said this) and put it on a colourful piece of cardstock, put it in the frame and it was a nice gift. Parents loved it!"

A Summer Basket

"For an end of the year writing activity I filled a picnic basket with various summer items - beach towel, pail, sand molds, mask, swimsuit, apple, shells, juice bottle, toy dolphin, etc. - and had the students pick 10 items to write a story using these items in the story. After I put everything back I asked the students to write as many of the items down as they could remember (20 in all), just for fun!"

Summer Fun

Write a different summertime activity on a paper strip for each student. Roll each strip and tuck it into a balloon; inflate each balloon and tie it. Have each student select a balloon, pop it, and pantomime the activity written on his paper strip. The other students try to guess his activity. Some ideas to write on the strips may be - swimming in a pool, eating ice cream, riding my bike, surfing, laying in the sun, playing volleyball, helping dad barbeque, eating a hotdog, playing ball.



End-of-the-Year Literacy Scrapbook

"This is a activity that is similar to a portfolio. You need to do some planning and start this early in the year. One end-of-the-year idea that is similar to a photo scrapbook is to make a 'Literary Scrapbook'. All of the kids put their favourite writing pieces together in one book. This is especially nice to see writing growth from the beginning of the year to the end. After gathering all of the pieces, have the students decorate a cover, make copies for each student, and then bind their individual copies. You can also laminate the cover for durability. (This may be an idea to save for next year and work on saving pieces throughout the year just for this scrapbook.)"

Gift from the Teacher

"At the end of the year I make a calendar for each child to take home. The calendar, which I make on the computer, is compiled with pictures from the year that I have taken, poems, signatures of all our classmates, a picture of our school, and a letter from me. I obtain a copy of the school calendar for next year and I type in all the important dates and the students' birthdays so the calendar starts in July and goes through June of the next school year."

Theme Days

"I have theme days for the last 10 days of the school year. For 1 1/2 hours each day we have a special theme. Baseball Day, Strawberry Day, Watermelon Day, Ice Cream Cone Day, etc. Each day the children receive a contract that has an art project, a writing activity, a food activity and something else relating to the theme. They complete the contract in any order, they have a great time and they love the end of school. One day is movie day and the last day is games from home, free drawing, free reading and passing out Memory Books, etc. It is very relaxing, the children are under control and sometimes parents will come in to help out. I plan everything out ahead of time and ask for donations for the food items."



Great Expectations

It's time to say good-bye.
Our year has come to an end.
We've made more cherished memories
And many more new friends.
We've watched your children learn and grow
And change from day to day
We hope that all the things we've done
Have helped in some small way.
So it's with happy memories
We send them out the door
With great hope and expectations
For what next year holds in store.

You're a very special person,
And (NAME) you should know
How I loved to be your teacher,
how fast the year did go.
Please take the time to think of me
as through the years 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, (Name), you are you!

Bulletin Boards

"I covered the board with road maps. Each student decorated a car. The title is 'On The Road To Grade Three'. I made a large car and put the number of days of school left on it."

I am going to do a 'Hopping Into Grade Three' bulletin board. The kids will write about their expectations and decorate with frogs...."

Moving Classrooms

"We had computer labels printed with our names and new room numbers on them. We also labeled all our desks, chair, etc. with our new room numbers on them. We'd put them on each box we packed. We had people come and move the furniture and boxes to the new school and new classrooms. We found almost everything!"

"Wait until you have packed ALL your boxes. Then label them with numbers ___ out of ___ 1 out of 32 2 out of 32, etc. It really helped. You can also then make a numbered list of each box and write the contents next to the number. This will help you unpack and find things easier."

"I would pack things in such a way that you had all the things you need for your desk in one box. All the things for the math shelf in another box, etc. Then number your boxes on all the sides and make a numbered list that indicates what is in that box. 1. desk supplies 2. teacher's editions 3. blue bookcase, first shelf

Student Teacher Gifts

The class made a book entitled 'How to be a Good Teacher'. Each child wrote advice to my student teacher and then illustrated each of their pages. It turned out really cute and my student teacher loved it!"

"One thing a student teacher at our school liked best was at the end of her student teaching, the principal allowed her to come and observe all of our classrooms. She thought this was very helpful because she saw that here are several ways of teaching the same thing. Also, when she left, we had passed around a blank scrap-book. In the back section, many teachers jotted down some 'words of wisdom'. She loved it! In the front, the class that she taught for drew pictures and put in photographs."



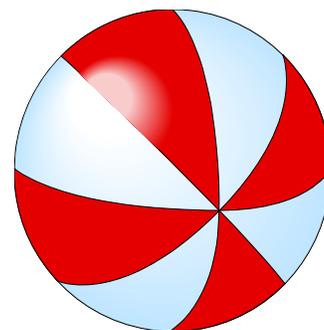
Reading Survival Kit

"Here is a small gift to give to your students! 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: RUBBER BAND - Reading stretches your imagination. MINTS - Reading can open a "mint" of information. BAND AID - Reading can mend the soul. SWEET CANDY - Reading gives the sweet satisfaction of learning something new. CERTS - Reading a good book is like a breath of fresh air. EMERY BOARD - Reading can take the rough edges off your day. Q-TIP - Reading helps open your ears to the meaning of words. GUM - Reading is something you should stick with."

Beach Day

"At the end of the year we have a 'Beach Day.' We go outdoors and the children move through outdoor centers like sink and float, sand art, play with beach balls, read beach books and we listen and dance to the Beach Boys. We're going to make solar hotdog cookers this year out of Quaker Oat boxes. The children bring sunglasses, beach towels, hats, etc."



"Here's some ideas for beach day - have fun!"

1. Make a boat that floats out of plasticene, paper or other materials. See how many pennies your boat will hold before it sinks.
2. Build a sand castle or other sand sculptures outdoors.
3. Writing center: Design and write a postcard from a trip to the beach.
4. Creative and Art: Design a bug/fish/etc. that lives at the beach. Could be drawing, clay, junk art etc. Make a beach picture and glue sand to it. Design a beach towel. Design a sail on a sailboat. Make a sailboat. Make a sun. One way is to water down white glue. Tear tissue paper and then glue it down on plastic from laminating or overheads in the shape of the sun. When it dries it can be peeled off the plastic. It's like a suncatcher.
5. Science: Examine shells, sort, classify. Wet sand vs. dry sand experiments
6. Sing: Crazy beach/fish songs: 1. She wore an itchy bitsybikini. 2. Slippery fish, slippery fish swimming in the water..... 3. Rewrite... *She'll be coming round the mountain* to a beach theme. something like *Oh we'll go riding on the waves at the beach. (at the beach)* 4. My Bonnie lies over the ocean 5. Swimming swimming in my swimming pool. Think of camp songs you might know.
7. If you're allowed you can have a water fight or water balloon toss outside. Or set up a sprinkler for the kids to run through."

"I bring my beach umbrella in. I've also brought a small tent that I set up for reading. I put my kids into little groups and they rotate around to each center during the day. We do the singing with everyone who is participating - often in the gym. We also have some chants to recite. And I try and find a summery type story to read to the group."

"Take one beach towel per two kids. They hold the corners. Put a water balloon in the center. They try to 'throw' their balloon to two more players who try to catch it in the towel. Lots of fun."

"One fun idea is to put beach towels in your reading area and put your beach related books in a pail or a small wading pool."

"I have a 'beach party' day too. One thing I add to it which I absolutely enjoy (not to mention the kids)...We have a squirt gun battle!"

"Each child can bring a squirt gun to school on that day...everybody is allowed ONE fill-up. Then we establish the rule of no squirting in faces...then go to it. Of course, the kids all are waiting to get me. So I go out covered in a poncho...but armed with my own super-soaker!"

And some more ideas....

"If available, bring in a beach umbrella to read under. Have them bring (or wear) their 'beach wear' - it doesn't have to be swimsuits - and a beach towel. Graph the beach towels according to similar characteristics. If warm enough, play outside under the hose. Play 'Spelling (or sight word, or math) Beachball'. Throw and catch the ball and answer a question, spell a word, etc. Make beach murals with coloured chalk on your chalkboards or use sidewalk chalk to create them outdoors. Using food coloured salt - make 'sand candles'. Use several colours and spoon the layers into baby food jars. Seal with gulfwax and a wick."

Getting Ready for September

"I am packing up my classroom and thinking of long lazy days of summer but I want things to be easy in Sept.

What can I do to make that happen?

1. Have someone sharpen pencils now.
2. Have alphabet up so we can begin the word wall the first day
3. Get books leveled and straightened so kids can begin home reading the first day.
4. Have something that this class has done for the next class.- Individual letters to new students, a welcome sign, etc.
7. Photocopy poems or whatever you will do the first week or so.
8. Gather the first author's books and be ready - I will be using Kevin Henkes. Chrysanthemum is a great starter and is about names."

Honoring Volunteers

"Last year I got gift certificates from a bakery. I put them with a jar of honey that said, 'Thanks for being such a honey to help this year.'"

"I sometimes give my volunteers a small plant, a gift certificate to the local video store or book store, or some little thing I have made myself (if I have time!). This all depends on how many volunteers I have."

"Another nice idea is for tickets to a local attraction, Imax theatre, etc., zoo or museum."

"I usually buy a canvas tote bag at Walmart and silk screen it or a canvas apron and have the children write on it with fabric paint."

The Volunteer is one with a heart so sincere.

No task too large, no task too small,

Who will help with anything at all.



Who will be there in the morning light,
Or help in the dark of night.
The Volunteer, our extra hand,
On whose future our Children Stand.
Never anyone so dear as a <Your School's Name> Volunteer !



What Are Volunteers?

Volunteers are like Ford.....they have better ideas.
Volunteers are like Coke.....they're the real thing.
Volunteers are like Pepsi.....they've got a lot to give.
Volunteers are like Dial.....they care more, don't you wish everyone did.
Volunteers are like VO5 Hair Spray.....they hold in all kinds of weather.
Volunteers are like Hallmark.....they care enough to give the very best.
Volunteers are like Standard Oil....you expect more and you get it.
But most of all,
Volunteers are like Frosted Flakes..... THEY'RE GRRREAAT!!!!

Because You're Special
We sometimes take for granted
In the rush of all we do,
And forget to say a special thanks
To volunteers like you!
So we send this note to tell you
How much all you do means,
Your gifts of time and of yourself
Are special ones indeed.

A school is more than books and desks
And learning two plus two
It's people who share their skills and care,
And try their best in all they do.
Please accept our heartfelt appreciation.
Our school's a better place
Because of your dedication.

Summer Activities

"I'm doing a summer 'Boredom Book'. I provide half sheets (or you can use full sheets) of paper with the words "When there's nothing to do, I can _____" already printed on them. The kids then pick an activity that they will do over the summer and finish the sentence. They will also draw a picture of that activity, using pencil first and then going over it with a fine tip black marker. Next, I will copy and bind them so that each student has a book to take with them. The grade 5 teacher is doing this, and she is kind enough to let me borrow the idea for my grade 2 class since she didn't do it with them last year. I can't wait to see how their books turn out!"

"I give each of my students a folder with lots of 'stuff' in it, including a journal (stapled notebook paper to a cover page.), bookmark and pen. I give them a memory sheet of lots of things we did in class. I give them an envelope with my address on it, and I also include math activities and a 'summer fun' sheet."

They could do a read-a-thon with their friends for a charity. They could keep a summertime log where they write one-sentence 'notices' about what they noticed that day.

They could have one special self-chosen book, or a special self-created topic to become experts on for next year.

They could have a class pen pal to keep in touch with over the summer with in-class created postcards.

They could have an e-mail chat group over the summer where the class can keep up with what's going on in the holidays.

You could have a web page they could go and check out what's happening with you over the summer and you could have suggestions and links there for summer fun and learning.

You could give them one tricky logic problem that they can try to solve over the summer.... and be able to explain how they solved it at the beginning of the year.

You could give them a scavenger hunt of things they can collect by the time school starts again (preferably things they don't have to purchase). This could include drawings of things or photos or actual objects....



"I make up a summer activity calendar. On it I put review-type things to do, places to ask their parents to take them, interesting things to write about, etc.

I also give them stamped envelopes or post cards and tell them to write to me and I will write back. I give them my e-mail address, too. Many of my kids write to me, especially with e-mail.

I also gave them a journal and if anyone brought it back in the fall for me to read they received a little prize."

More summer activities:

- Get a map of your town and find where familiar places are situated. Can you study a map and then tell your parent how to get to a park or other place that you have never visited?
- Make a scrapbook of your summer. Put in stories, drawing and pictures and more!
- Make a collection of things you can find outdoors - pressed flowers, special rocks, etc.
- Make lists of things you see and identify. Go bird-watching and look up the ones you see. Identify insects and make a list of them. If you live near the ocean, go hunting for creatures at low tide and identify them, etc. Go to a local library and borrow books that will help you.
- Save your money and coins that you can collect. Count them every time you add more.
- Organize your bedroom so that everything is easy to find.
- Keep a Journal.

- Learn how to cook or put together your favourite foods.
- Get a map of your province. Find all the towns that you like to visit.
- Get a map of the world! How many countries can you find? Make a list of the countries in each continent.
- Draw a treasure map for a friend and see if they can find the treasure.
- Learn how to use the internet. There are lots of game sites and sites where you can learn interesting things.
- Join the local library, and read, read, read! Make a list of all the books you read this summer.
- Use a calculator until you can do all your math with it - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Print numbers as far as you can.
- Make an alphabet book on your favourite subject. Draw pictures to illustrate it.
- Help take care of a garden.
- Pick any place in the world that you would like to go. Research it at the public library using books and/or the internet.

Photocopy the Homework Calendars for take-home summer activities!



Bulletin Boards

Grade Two is a Picnic!

"Use a red-and-white checkered tablecloth or checkered fabric for the background. I used three paper plates to write 'Miss _____'s Class'. The children could draw their faces on small paper plates. Put a few black ants around the 'table!'"

What-a-melon!

This is the caption above a large slice of watermelon. The seeds are the children's names/ photo.

Blast Off!

Each child's picture is glued to a rocketship. Put cut-outs of various star sizes, along with the little star stickers all over the bulletin board. Caption reads - Blast Off to Grade Two! or Grade Two is Out of This World!



Put Your Best Foot Forward

Have one big foot (or shoe) in the center, and then have the children trace their feet or draw their shoes, cut them out, put their names on them and decorate them.

Author of the Month

Post a picture of the author of the month, photocopy book covers and add any writing, artwork, student comments on the author's work.

I Have a Hunch This Is a Bright Bunch!

"I take a picture of each kid wearing a pair of sunglasses. I mount them on suns that I have made and had laminated. I print the title on banner paper and use sun clip arts on the banner and also cut out clipart suns to add to the bulletin board. I did it last other year and got a lot of compliments on it."

Grade Two is Unbelievable

Give students a bee pattern and pipe cleaner. Have students write something on the bee that they expect to learn in grade two. Colour the bee and attach the pipe cleaner antenna. Add to bulletin board.

The Shining Stars of Grade Two

Each child illustrates special talents, hobbies, favourite things etc. on a star. Add name.

Summer Holiday Preserves

"Make a tracer that is in the basic shape of a canning jar. Have each student trace and cut out their own canning jar. Ask students to think about their best summer holiday memory and draw the scene on the canning jar. When displaying them on your bulletin board write out each student's name on a strip of paper and place them on their canning jar so looks like a lid."

"I'm going to cut out large white paper jars for the students to draw about their summer holidays. To make them look more like jars, after the drawing/writing is complete, I'll cover the glass jar part with a cut-out made of overheads (stiffer plastic film) to simulate the 'glass'. For the rim, I'm going to make paper lids to glue onto the 'overhead jar' piece, using gold wrapping paper pieces. Then I'll use my labels to attach each child's name onto their 'lid'."

Pop On In!

Make a theatre popcorn bag or see if the local theatre will give you one. Put it up on your door with pieces of construction paper popcorn with the student's names on them.

What a Sun-sational class!

I make big sunflowers. I write a different kid's name on each petal with the above heading.

Everything is Falling Into Place!

"One that is relatively easy and appealing is making the door a maple tree. The door is the trunk, and I use large butcher block paper and make big leaves of assorted fall colours. I made them three-dimensional by placing tape on the back and puffing them in all directions. I placed children's names on them and used the title above. It was perfect for the fall months. In October, there were falling leaves and we put Halloween directions up on it. Bats, witches, ghosts, etc.

What a Handsome Class!

"Out of brown parcel wrapping paper make the branches and trunk of a tree just by tearing. Mount on a blue background. Each child dips their hand in their favourite fall colour using poster paint. Make handprints on the branches and some on the ground. When dry each child autographs one of their 'leaves'. The bulletin board is labeled 'What a Handsome Class!'"

Toadaly Awesome Students

"I am making a window decoration for the one near my doorway. I bought border with cute feet in many colours and a pad of matching feet on which to write each child's name. I will title it "Stepping into Grade Two'. Last year I had toads and my title was 'Toadaly Awesome Students'."



Awesome Autumn

This can be the title of a fall or back-to-school board. Decorate with coloured leaves and a rake on one side.

Check In and Check Us Out

"I made a huge checker board using black and white construction paper cut to 9" squares. I bought plastic plates in red and black in the dessert size and placed them on the grid. Welcome Back!. The students drew themselves (only the head) and glued them to the plates."

Cut out big check marks, one for each student. Have them write a biography and take a digital photo of each child. Mount the three items on a bulletin board.



Who's Who in Grade Two

"I take pictures of each child on the first day of school. For the first week I do mini-writing lessons, reviewing the basic skills, and the children write their biographies. I get a story that looks something like this:

Megan Jones

Megan Jones is 7 years old. Her birthday is on June 17. She lives in a house on Maple Street. She has 2 brothers and no sisters. She likes to read. Her favourite food is pizza. She doesn't have a pet, but she wishes she had a cat.

Then I type up the story and print it out. I put the photo at the top of the page and the story at the bottom and put them up on a 'Who's Who in Grade Two' bulletin board. At the end of September I take them down and put the page into a plastic sleeve and put them in a binder. The kids love to look at the book and read their stories."

We Fit Together!



"As a back to school activity that will also become a bulletin board, I am going to do a puzzle and a bulletin board titled *We Fit Together*. I will cut very large puzzle pieces. I will have them outline the puzzle piece in crayon or marker (about an eighth or quarter of an inch or so) to emphasize the 'puzzleness' of it and then allow them to decorate inside with their name and face or doing something to show togetherness or co-operation, sharing, etc.... Number the pieces on the back for easy re-assembly, and put a mark on the front of each piece to show which edge is up so the pictures will all be 'looking' in the right direction. A piece with the picture upside down will spoil the affect. Re-assemble the pieces by gluing them to a large piece of mural paper."

Put the children's names on pencils: *Pencil us in for a great year!* or *Welcoming a sharp bunch of students!*

Put the names on award ribbons: *Award-winning Students!*

Using stars: *Reach for the Stars in Grade Two* or *Mrs. _____ 's All-Stars*

Print the names on feet or shoes: *We're starting off on the right foot!* or *Step into Grade Two*

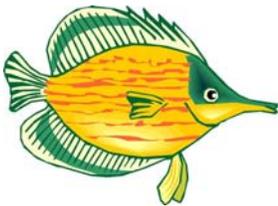
Decorated T-shirts on a clothesline: *Grade Two suits us to a tee.* or *Mrs. _____ 's line-up*

Using apples: *Bushels of fun in Grade Two* or *The apples of my eye!*

Print the names on frogs: *Leap into Grade Two*

Using monkeys and bananas: *We're bananas about Grade Two!*

Put the names on dinosaurs: *Welcome to a dino-mite year* or *Welcome to a dino-mite class*



Blue jeans: *Grade Two jean-iuses*

Using fish: *Welcome to our school!* or *We'll have oceans of fun in Grade two!*



"Have each student trace their bare foot. Then they can draw a picture on the foot with their name. Finally have the students cut out the feet. Place them on a bulletin board entitled, 'We are starting out on the RIGHT foot!'"

"I made a neat Spring bulletin board. I had my kids write Spring poems - S is for _____, P is for _____, R is for _____, etc. The paper I used had a flower border that they coloured with felts. At the bottom I used green butcher paper fringed 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 15 cm. a coffee filter flower."

Who's the Teacher?

"This bulletin board is about you, the teacher. Choose a background and border that represent your personality. Collect pictures, clip art, book covers, etc. that show your interests. Laminate them and post them on the bulletin board. Let your students ask you questions about the items on the board."

Bees Galore

"My name begins with 'B', so I am going to do a bulletin board titled *Ms. B_____ 's _____ Bees*. I have a blue checked fabric and sunflowers for the bulletin board background. I photocopy a bee pattern and attach photos of children. Many words may be placed in the third spot: *Ms. B_____ 's Busy Bees*, or perhaps *Ms. B_____ 's Brilliant Bees* Bright Bees? Beautiful Bees? Best Bees? Big Bees?

"We use bees for other classroom things - there is a bee behaviour chart with a hive of good behaviour and nametags with bees, etc. I also have some very cute fabric...with tiny bees and hives. There is a bulletin board *BEEattitudes* - Be kind, Be safe...and so forth. You will 'BEE' lucky with this name!"

Note: Another teacher suggests: brightest, biggest, bravest, beautiful, brainy, borderline - (her husband was helping generate this list), breathtaking, boisterous (that would be her last year's class), bold, bubbly, brilliant, bedazzling.....

More About Bees.....

An information bulletin board with the headline: *What's Buzzing in Grade Two?*

School or classroom rules titled: *Bee Your Best!*

A large attendance hive with a small Velcro square for each student to attach their own bee when they arrive.

A jobs bulletin board: *Worker Bees* with individual beehives labelled with jobs and the students names.

A classroom newsletter: *News from the Hive*.

A sheet to record homework for absent students that says *While you've BEEen gone*.

A puzzling morning question called *The Bee Stinger*.

A showcase for students work called *Bee-utiful Work*.

Display quotes around the room and replace the word *be* with *bee*.

Student of the week called *King Bee* or *Queen Bee*.

Make *bee* or *beehive* nametags for each student.

Decorate the outside of your door like a large hive with a big banner *Grade Two - A Hive of Activity!*

Make a large honeycomb area to set class goal for books read. Gradually fill in honeycombs as books are read.



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...

Smiley Faces

Work Worth Smiling About!

I'm happy to be back at school!

Doing good work (doing our best, being a good friend...whatever)
puts a smile on our face!

You cannot give a smile away,

No matter what you do.

Every time you give me one

I'll give it back to you!



Ant'sy

"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."

And More.....

Go Wild For Reading - Use jungle animals

Read Anywhere - Use airplane or means of transportation

Books Make Me Hoppy - Use frog

Flip over Books - Dolphin

Take Flight....Read - hot air balloon

Warm up With a Good Book - Snow child

I'm Buggy for Books - Ladybugs

Chill Out and Read - Penguin

Score Big With Reading - Basketball players

All-Star Readers - Baseball player

Chalk One Up for Reading - Chalkboard

Jump Into a Good Book - Frog

Jump into Grade Two - Frogs

Start off on the right foot in Mrs. _'s class - footprints.

Look who buzzed into Grade Two - bees

Look who was spotted in Mrs. Miller's class - with dalmations



Generic Ideas for Bulletin Boards

Using Fabric

"I have used material for years and use prints. If I wanted solids, I would use paper. I have up yellow gingham check. The check is not the smallest, and not the largest, somewhere in the middle. I use a double border on it. I have had sunflowers with a yellow sticking out from underneath the past two years. This year I bought a new flower border and will just have to see about the yellow underneath. I put white paper underneath the material to make the white look whiter. The board is blue underneath so makes the white look gray without it. I have the iron on hemming tape already on it so that it does not fray when I wash it.

"I cover all my boards with black felt. I change the borders to go with the theme. The black looks crisp and provides a visual rest for the eye. It never fades or shows staple marks." *(Try other colours of felt, too...)*

"I have a friend who has a different holiday material for each month. Another has green and white checks with white border and a red and white check with a year round holiday border with matching calender. They all look really pretty. My favourite is the Halloween (pumpkins and trick-or-treaters) material with black border and orange construction paper underneath the childrens' work. It always looks so cute."

"This year I am going with the latest fashion trend and using leopard, zebra, and tiger print - the names go on paws with Take a walk on the wild side or Wild Thing."

"Try putting fabric on your bulletin boards. There are lots of patterns and they last forever. Just staple them tightly. At the end of the year, take them down and wash them and they are as good as new."

"Try backing your bulletin boards with fabric instead of paper. I use a fabric with small print, small polka dots or other small patterns. You can use a stapler to fasten it on. You can also use cotton prints, burlap for texture, felt, painting drop-cloths, sheets, tablecloths, or shower curtains. You can also buy wrapping paper or wallpaper for bulletin board backgrounds. Try children's wallpaper borders for interest!"

"Here's a different twist on the fabric idea: buy themed or seasonal fabric for your display tables to be used like tablecloths. My year is driven by both seasonal themes and moving through the 7 continents and I change the cloth on a large table where we keep supplies monthly."

"I bought seasonal and theme related panels of fabric from Wal-Mart. I use a nice royal blue stretchy fabric on my whole bulletin board wall. It's been up for 3 years without any sign of fading. Push pin holes smooth right out so you never see them. I change some of the borders for seasons or special things but not all that much.

'All Year' Bulletin Boards

"This worked ALL year. In the beginning of year, each student made a cloud out of white paper and glittered their name in the middle of it. I tacked them up with a title: **Proud Clouds**. Throughout the year, the student was in charge of putting up work that he/she was proud of under their cloud. Sometimes, I put something up, but mostly at the end of every week, I would ask if anyone wanted to exchange a new paper for their 'proud cloud'. Simple, but so effective."

"I had two huge bulletin boards in the hall. One of them was covered with blue paper, then I painted on a huge bare branched tree and tore green paper and stapled it to the bottom with some bumps to look 3 D. I stapled green leaves all over it that we had collected on our first week of school walk. You could certainly add student photos and an easy title to tie it all in. I took a broom when they were all dry and dead and it was October and simply swept them all off to the floor and cleaned it up very easily. Thanksgiving time had turkeys on the tree. I then stapled paper plate owls we had made all over this tree for Hallowe'en. I added a touch of white paint to the branches and voila...it was December. January was snowflakes cut from paper and more white paint for snow and mittens, too. February was hearts andI am sure you get the picture. When it was time to have the green paper covered with snow I just tore white paper and added it on top. Then we painted sprigs of green and buds on things as they began to appear out doors. I loved the bulletin board as it was so easy to change."

An Ocean Theme

An ocean full of good work for displaying work samples.

Welcome to our school Each child's face on a fish, some funny ones thrown in, including your own

Make a big shark with lots of teeth - Take A Bite Out Of This! with a book in its mouth.

Use a real net, goggles, flippers and shells, etc. surrounding a board.

Use a real net, starfish, goggles, flippers, surrounding a board.

Catch of the Day: person with a fishing pole for display of good work, writing samples

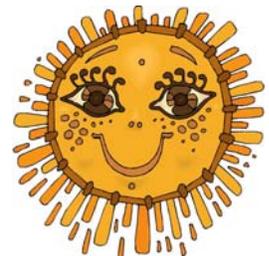
Something's Fishy in Grade (or Room) ____ for your newsletter

Oceans of fun in _____.

We're up to something fishy.

"Have a bunch of fishies (school of fish) with the kids' digital photos on each - maybe an octopus or ray (as in Nemo) with the teacher's photo. The kids could do rest with paper seaweed, shells, etc."

"Our theme this year is sunshine, and my window says, **Time to Shine in Grade Two!**"



For Olympic Games Year

Winners! Put a head photo of each child on a photocopy of an Olympic medal. All gold, of course!

Carry the Torch for Canada Use torches and the Canadian flag to decorate a bulletin board. The children can print a short description on each torch to introduce themselves.

Or.... Use a picture of the 5 rings, symbolizing the continents - Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa and the Americas. List the different events and the countries that participate from the different continents.

Going on a Safari!

"My bulletin board will say Swinging Into Grade Two with vines and palm leaves. The children's names will be on monkeys. I am going to make a sign for the door that says: Warning! It's A Jungle In Here!

A bulletin board will be titled We Are Wild About Writing. The BB will be covered with fabric or gift wrap with animal fur print - leopard skin, zebra print, etc.

To 'Read (or write) the Room' the children can use binoculars, flashlights, or small nets, and wear helmets."

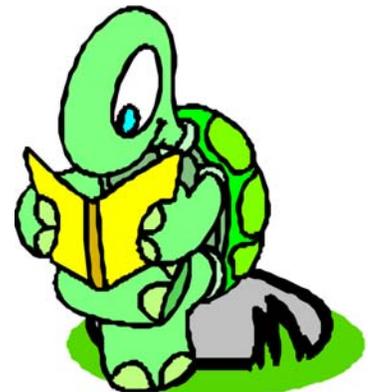
Literacy Bulletin Boards

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 our children the fundamentals of reading and inspiring them to read are the most important things we do. Use some of these slogans on charts or banners around your classroom!

FLY HIGH WITH READING!
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!
READING HELPS YOU TAKE FLIGHT!



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!
BLOWN AWAY BY READING!

Some Thoughts.....

Change your bulletin boards often. A winter bulletin board in April is a disaster!

Make all bulletin boards attractive. If the pieces are supposed to be level, make them LEVEL! If that takes too long, tip all the pieces and make the whole board balance, rather than single pieces.

Use overhead transparencies to enlarge pictures. Project it onto your butcher paper or other background and trace the picture onto the paper.

Use wrapping paper, paint, fabric, markers, crayons to colour the pictures. Use a black permanent marker to outline the figure to make it stand out.

Have interesting backgrounds for old, dilapidated bulletin boards... Paint them; cover them with fabric, butcher paper, gift wrapping paper, newspaper, table cloths, sheets, felt, etc.

Make inspirational bulletin board posters designed by students with sayings and artwork THEY consider inspiring.

Put up the students' writing. Make sure the work is printed neatly, with errors corrected. Then frame it and mount them neatly. The work deserves the effort! Put illustrations with the writing that are well drawn and nicely coloured.

This year I made five bulletin boards in September and will keep them up for the whole year, only changing the information on them. One board has the large title WHO and that lists our jobs/attendance chart. WHAT provides

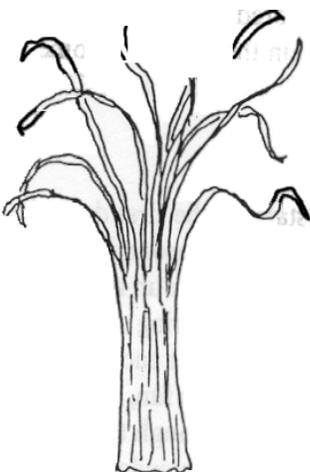


a question of the week that students need to write the answer to and insert in the envelope. WHERE provides a Canadian map that is blank, and I move a marker to various provinces or feature and the students need to guess what it is, write it CORRECTLY and insert the answer in the envelope. We check the envelope once a week. WHEN provides our calendar, and also posts our individual turns on the computer and last I chose HOW (but you may choose WHY instead). I posted charts of 'How to read a map', or 'How to write a friendly letter', or 'Steps of the writing process', etc., whatever goes with what you are teaching at the time. Most of these provide for student use and/or interaction."

"I love to display my students' work in the hall. I found myself constantly making signs that said: "We're working on measurement" or "Studying Canada". Finally, I got on the computer and made a beautiful, colourful banner with a colourful border. The banner said: "Grade Two Studies _____." Then, I laminated it and hung it on the wall in the hall where I display our work. Now, I just have to get my dry erase marker and write whatever we're working on which is displayed in the hall!"

A Tree For All Seasons

This 'Tree for All Seasons' is easy to make and very effective. Cut a strip of brown paper from the large paper rolls 60 - 80 cm. wide and approximately 1 1/2 times longer than you want the tree height to be. Cut 5 cm. strips from one end, ending these 'branches' at the height the 'trunk' begins. Now gather the trunk gently but firmly and crush the paper to make longitudinal wrinkles. Then crush each 5 cm. strip, again to make long wrinkles. Staple the trunk to the bottom of a floor length tackboard, leaving ridges so the trunk is about 30 - 40 cm wide. Staple the branches across one another and weaving in and out so the tree looks full and interesting. Clip off any branch ends that are too long. Decorate the tree with work samples, art projects, leaves and flowers. This



can be used all year by continually changing the tree decorations. This is interesting and has a three-dimensional look. Golden and red leaves in the autumn, snowflakes in winter, and flowers or Easter eggs will make it colourful.

little trick to it - not too much paint, and when you press, rub away from the centre all the way to the tips. Keep the leaves pliable - don't let them dry out. You can mount the black paper onto another larger piece of red, yellow, or orange for a frame.



Themes

Anticipation

"I have never really done much with 'anticipatory set', but last year I used the Halloween penguin costumes I'd made my own children for a display outside my classroom.

"I simply stapled the costumes onto the board with a sign saying "The Penguins Are Coming..." You would not believe the response I got...not only from my first graders, but for the custodian, librarian, 5th graders, etc. Everyone wanted to know...'What does that mean, the Penguins are coming?' Everyone was so excited! It was a wonderful way to kick off the theme.

"I am in a new school this year, so I am excited to see the reaction...You know how things look really 'blah' just before we go on Christmas Break...with all the Christmas projects going home and all? Well, my plan is to put the two penguins up the day before break...they will be standing on an ice berg (white 'scrunched' paper) holding a sign 'the penguins are coming...' That'll get 'em talking...you could do this even if you don't have costumes...if you could find some large cut outs! Try it...it's amazing the responses you'll get!"

Sunflower Fun

"I did a mini-unit on sunflowers with my Grade Two students. Here's what we did:

The first day they all brought in something that had to do with a sunflower - a picture they drew, a book, a real sunflower, etc. We read *This is the Sunflower* (a cumulative book like *The House That Jack Built*) and everyone shared their sunflower items. Then I took their pictures with what they brought for a class book. They completed an activity sheet with a space for drawing and the story frame taken from the book - This is the (big sunflower) that (Mrs. _____) brought to share. (It is over 11 feet tall.) (It came to school in the back of a truck). I typed what they wrote and added the picture and voila! Our first class book - *Sunflower Sharing*.



"We shared the book, *The Sunflower that Went Flop!* It's a great book for the start of the year. I have multiple copies of *Diary of a Sunflower* (from Scholastic), and we talked about fiction and nonfiction, along with fact vs opinion. Then we made a mini-book on sunflowers for them to take home and share with their families.

"We shared a sunflower poem and read it many different ways (I also did a cloze activity first with it.)

"The final thing we did is complicated to explain, but really fun and worthwhile. You can do it with any book. We used the *Flop!* book (which we also used for reader's theater). We brainstormed important events in the story, then sequenced them. Then groups of students

posed for a 'still life' showing those events and I took their picture with the digital camera. (We talked about expression, big hand/arm movements, etc.) Once we did all the important events in the story, I created a powerpoint presentation and we worked together to add text (retelling). They LOVED to see it when it was all done."

Other Sunflower Activities

Bring a sunflower head to school and have the kids estimate how many seeds are in it. Take out the seeds, group in tens and count.

Make large sunflowers with a paper plate for the center. Cut huge yellow petals and glue them behind the plate. Glue sunflower seeds to the plate, make a tall green stalk and leaves.

You could measure VERY small items with both shelled and unshelled sunflower seeds and see what the difference is and discuss why.

You could do some research on the net about different types of sunflowers and compare their sizes. You could find out how many kids tall certain sunflowers are.

Plant sunflower seeds and observe in class.

Show students a sunflower plant (roots and all). Ask them to describe what they see. Identify the parts (roots, stem, petals, and seeds).

Give students a large piece (12x18) of white drawing paper. Instruct them to put their name in the lower left hand corner. Ask them to tell how many petals they think there are. Count how many petals are on the flower. Post it on the board. Estimate the number of seeds. Count how many seeds. Post that number. Do the same for the roots and stem. Have students draw the sunflower based on their observations and data collected.

When the sunflower seeds are dried (in a few weeks) you can give each student several to take home and plant next spring.

Pumpkin Time!

There are so many activities you can do with a pumpkin! This is a great mini-theme.

How Many Seeds?

"Cut the top off. Allow the class to scrape out the seeds. Clean the seeds and let them dry on newspaper at least 2 days.

1. Cut black construction paper into 5cm. x 8 cm. rectangles - approximately 150.

2. Cut a VERY large pumpkin out of orange paper, and put on bulletin board.

1. Show the class the seeds that they removed from the pumpkin. Each child will have the opportunity to estimate how many seeds there are. Write each child's name and their estimate on the board. The person who is closest wins the pumpkin.

2. Show the children how to glue 10 seeds on each rectangle, 2 vertical rows of 5 seeds.



3. After the glue is dry, have the children come up and help you put the rectangles on the pumpkin. Try to get 10 rectangles in each row. Work together to find the final tally."

A Pumpkin Day

"I have a pumpkin day in October when everyone brings in a pumpkin. We spend the whole day with various pumpkin activities.

1. Sort the pumpkins as many ways as you can: size, color, stem or no stem, bumpy or smooth, painted or not, etc.

2. Weigh the pumpkins using a food scale or a balance scale. Put the pumpkins in order from smallest to largest.

3. Measure (using string) the outside of the pumpkins and put them in order from the skinniest to the fattest.

4. After all the comparisons are done, I put the pumpkins in the middle of the circle and we play a game where I choose a pumpkin in my head and the children try to guess which one it is by my clues.

5. I always bring in two pumpkins—one big and one small. We graph which one we think will have the most seeds and how many we think are in each. Bring in probability - use words such as 'likely, not likely, most likely'. I cut the pumpkins and we count by putting the seeds into piles of 10 on a paper that has 10 circles on it. Each time we fill the paper, we know that we have 100 seeds counted. Every year I have done this, the smaller pumpkin has the most seeds!

6. We cook the seeds in the oven or you could send them home with a student to be toasted and we eat them. .

7. Make pumpkin cookies, pie, or bread with the pumpkin or just cook it and add butter or brown sugar.

8. I give every student an award for his/her pumpkin at the end of the day. Categories could be: biggest, smallest, bumpiest, roundest, etc.



Pumpkin Pie in a Baggy

"Have each of your children spoon a few pieces of baked pumpkin (see below) into a Ziplock sandwich bag. Have each child measure 1 tsp. of sugar, a dash of allspice, and a dash of cinnamon into his bag. The children press the air out of their baggy and seal them shut. Then have the children squish their bags to mash the pumpkin and to mix the spices. Cut a corner from each bag and let the children squeeze the pumpkin mixture onto graham crackers. Top with Cool Whip or whipped cream."

Baked Pumpkin

"Cut off the top of a small, washed pumpkin and discard. Cut the pumpkin into quarters. Scrape out the pulp and seeds. Place the pumpkin quarters, skin side up, in a baking pan. Bake at 325 for 1 hr. or until the pumpkin is tender when pierced with a fork. Allow the pumpkin to cool slightly and then remove the skin. Note: I put the cooked pumpkin through the blender, which made it easier for the children to mix in the bag."



Pumpkin Math

1. Estimate the weight of each pumpkin. Graph the pumpkins by weight.
2. Estimate how fat the pumpkin is (circumference). The students cut a piece of string and place it around the pumpkin like a belt. Graph the strings, as too short, too long, just right.
3. Estimate the number of seeds inside.
4. Graph: Where did you get your pumpkin? Store, patch, grew it yourself?

Pumpkin Language

"Make a list of interesting adjectives that describe the pumpkins. Then, as it is carved, find more words for the insides - the pulp, the meat and the seeds. Read books about pumpkins. Write stories about pumpkins - fact and fiction."

"Read the book *The Pumpkin Book* from Scholastic or another book that tells the sequential story of the pumpkin from seed to fruit and back again.

"Make a pumpkin story wheel. The pumpkin's life cycle forms a perfect activity is making a story wheel. Start with a circle and divide it into eight sections. In each section write part of the story. You will have to combine some of the pages. The students illustrate the sections and then cut out the wheel. Fasten the wheel to a paper plate in the middle with a brad. You could use orange styrofoam plates that are available this time of year, but white paper plates work, too, as the children can colour the edges with crayon. Staple a piece of green or brown construction paper to be the stem. Read the story wheel together by reading the section that is by the stem and then turning the wheel so that the next section is on top.

"Make a pumpkin mural. Roll out long sheets of butcher paper and encourage children to draw pumpkin vines, flowers, sprouts, and green and orange pumpkins. You could use light brown paper so the back looks like soil, but the children's work still shows up. It makes a nice backdrop if you want to display the next project.

Paper Pumpkin Patch

Stuff white lunch bags with newspaper and twist the top. Secure with masking tape. Paint the bottom part orange and the top green to look like a pumpkin. Let them dry. You could display these in the hallway with vines cut from paper and the pumpkin mural backdrop. Tip: If you don't paint faces on them they can stay in the hallway during November, too!

Pumpkin Unit Activities

You could start the unit with a mystery box. Decorate a large box and place a pumpkin inside. Have students ask questions and determine what you have hidden.

Have the students estimate the pumpkins weight, then actually weigh the pumpkin.

Have the students determine whether or not the pumpkin will float and test it out with a large tub of water.

Estimate the circumference of the pumpkin by having the students cut a piece of yarn that they think will fit around the pumpkin. Sort pieces by too short, too long and just right.

Estimate the number of seeds in the pumpkin. Open the pumpkin and clean it out. Wash, dry and save the seeds.

o keep the pumpkin fresher longer, wipe out the inside with bleach to retard the growth of mold. If you carve a jack-o-lantern face, rub the edges with petroleum jelly to retard shrinkage.

Count the pumpkin seeds into groups of ten and then put the tens together into hundreds to determine the total.

Soak some pumpkin seeds over night, cut them open and the students can see the tiny plant embryo inside the seed.

Have each student plant a pumpkin seed in a ziploc bag with a little dirt and water. Zip the bags tight, hang them up somewhere and they require no further maintenance. The bags will fog and then clear up and you can explain to your class how it is similar to clouds and rain. The ziploc bag is like its own little world. The other really awesome aspect of the bags is that you can see the seeds open and the roots grow down and the sprout grow up. Send the plants home shortly after they sprout, because they need to be transplanted.

Then we eat! Roast pumpkin seeds by spreading oil on a pan, spreading out seeds in a single layer, adding a little salt and paprika for colour, and roast at 400 degrees until brown. It only takes about 10 or 12 minutes. At a pumpkin recipe web site it said to roast them at 200 degrees for 1 hour. The children can write the steps for this process.

Pumpkin Estimation

- Display the pumpkin.
- Have the students estimate the number of vertical lines on the pumpkin, and record their estimations on chart paper.
- Count all of the lines with the class and record the actual amount. Whose estimation was most accurate?
- How tall is the pumpkin? How many unifix cubes tall is it? (or other non-standard measure)
- How tall is the pumpkin? Have each student record the estimation in centimetres. See who has the closest estimation.
- Discuss the word 'circumference' and trace your finger around the 'fattest' part of the pumpkin.



- Each child cuts a piece of string based on his/her estimate of the circumference.
- Wrap string around the pumpkin and cut it to length. Tape it to a chart. Have each child come up with their piece of string and let them try to wrap it around the pumpkin. The children's strings are now taped in the correct place on a chart labelled 'too short', 'just right' and 'too long'.
- How much does the pumpkin weigh? Weigh several other items and discuss kilograms. Let the children lift the pumpkin and the other objects and estimate the weight.
- Write the predictions in order on a chart, weigh the pumpkin and see who is the closest.
- Cut out the top of the pumpkin and have students come up, look inside, and estimate how many seeds are in it.
- Record estimations.
- Clean out the pumpkin, dry the seeds, and count them the next day with the class. Whose estimate was the closest?
- Let everyone design jack o'lantern faces, using only squares, triangles and circles. Vote for the favourite face and cut it!



Pumpkin Groups

"Each parent has a group of 4 students and 1 pumpkin. The groups do the following.

- Estimate if the pumpkin in their group is the largest, smallest or the in-between size of all of the pumpkins in the room.
- Estimate the weight of your pumpkin.
- Estimate the number of seeds in your pumpkin.
- Do a group writing activity that begins with 'My pumpkin looks like _____.'

- Tell how you would measure around the pumpkin. What materials/tools would you use?

After this is done...they then

- Measure height, distance around, distance across the widest seam of the pumpkin and the length of stem.
- Weigh the pumpkin.
- Cut hole in the top of pumpkin, scoop out the pulp and seeds. Weigh the pulp and the seeds and weigh the empty pumpkin.
- Measure the thickness of the pumpkin meat.
- Estimate the number of seeds after you scoop them out.
- Count the exact number of seeds. (groups of ten)
- Compare estimates to actual measures/counts
- If the pumpkins were donated, write a thank-you note.

This whole process takes about 1 hour give or take 15-20 minutes, depending on the groups. The parents are completely in charge. I just go around and answer procedure questions when needed."

Spiders - A Mini-Theme

Learn About Spiders

Discuss that spiders are arachnids and are oviparous (lay eggs). They eat insects. Arachnids have eight legs and two body segments, a head and an abdomen. (Insects have 6 legs and 3 body segments.) We label body parts and the lifecycle of a spider. I like the children to use the vocabulary we have learned such as arachnid, oviparous, abdomen, etc.



We do sequence cards for the lifecycle of a spider. We glue the sequence cards of the lifecycle of a spider in our journals to write about.

"Last year, I captured a Yellow Garden Spider and took it to school. We put it into an aquarium and I made a frame for it out of sticks. Our spider made webs and laid an egg sac for us. And it did finally die like Charlotte did in the story. It was quite sad, but a very good learning experience."

Observing a Real Spider - It is interesting to observe a real spider close up and in a non-threatening way. Find a spider and place him in a clear jar. The children need assorted magnifying glasses or a magnifying tripod. Let the children freely watch and observe the spider. Stress to the children beforehand the importance of not shaking the jar or harming the spider in any way and that the spider will be let go again after class.

"At the end of our spider unit, we bring 'Spiderman' in and discuss spiders. No, he does not come in a costume, he is a man from a local college who knows a lot about spiders. It has always been an excellent presentation, real spiders and all.

"I haven't tried this, but my principal has. She said that if you find a large spider web outside, you can spray it with hairspray against a black paper and the web will appear on the paper. Sounds like a great idea to try!"

Go outdoors on a short field trip to see if you can find spiders. Take magnifying glasses. See if you can find beautiful elaborate webs, too. Note the difference in the ways webs are formed. How are they attached?

Language Arts

Thumbprint Spiders - I usually have the children do this in their journals and then write about spiders. They make their thumbprint with paint or stamp pad and then draw 8 legs on it. You could put two thumbprints together to make it have two body parts.

Spider booklet - We make a spider booklet with spider facts and our observations on each page.

"Halloween is fast approaching and time to start our spider unit. My partner and I have our Grade Two students do a small research report on the spider of their choice, make a model and do a presentation for the class. They do all of the work at home and take about three weeks. They turn out wonderfully! We video the presentations and show them at parent teacher conferences.



Read "Charlotte's Web".

Spider Art

Egg Carton Spider-Cut cardboard egg cartons into six sections, each having two egg cups. This will create a spider with two body parts. Paint the egg cups and glue on eyes. Using four 12" pipe cleaners, poke the pipe cleaners into the egg cup (you can make holes in the abdomen section with a hole punch) and bend them to form a set of legs.

More Spider Art

Glue spider web- have students draw a web on black paper and then trace it with glue. When it dries it looks like the web from *The Very Busy Spider*.

I have the children trace and cut two circles, fold and glue on 8 thin strips of paper and attach a string and hang from ceiling.

"Paint large styrofoam balls black. Once they dry.....use black pipe cleaners for legs and stick them in the balls. Then glue 'googly eyes' on. Afterwards, take a large needle and thread yarn up through the center to hang them. REALLY cute!"

"Another Spider activity we have done is to read some books on spiders, and then take a sheet of blue or black construction paper and a white crayon to draw spiderwebs after a brief demonstration on the board. They add details such as leaves, and 3-D paper spiders and tiny egg sacs and spiderlings. They always turn out really neat!"

Learn how a spider web is formed and draw a web.

"I like to make a spider web on my bulletin board with string and then have the kids make a spider out of a 2 sections of egg carton with 8 legs. Also with yarn I've built spider webs in the corner of the doorway. Using quilt batting spread thin is another way to get a spider web looking effect. I have the kids make a drawn spider web with a piece of paper to practice using a ruler for drawing straight lines. They connect the 4 corners through the middle and then connect the middle of the paper edges through the middle then they lay the ruler at the middle dot and connect two lines and then rotate the paper and connect each dot using the ruler to stay the width away from the center. Then they lay the ruler along each of those lines and connect the same lines higher up and keep going until the paper is full of an orb web. Then they make thumb print red spiders on their webs."

"Something I did that turned out cute was stuff a paper lunch bag with paper, turn over the top and staple shut. Paint it black. Take 8 strips of black paper and fold accordion style and glue on as legs. Cut out eyes and mouths from coloured construction paper and glue on. We hung them from the ceiling and they looked great!"

Dip marbles in white paint and roll them across a large black paper to make a web.

Other Activities

Make a class web - Have the students sit in a big circle. I start with a ball of yarn and then roll it to a child while holding on to my end. That child then holds the yarn snugly and rolls the ball to another child and so on and so on. When everyone is holding part of the yarn, you have a big spider web!

This is a way to show that spiders must wait for the food to come to their web - they don't go out 'hunting'. Have each student draw a web on a 1/2 piece of paper or on a paper plate. They choose a location to place their web - somewhere on the carpet.

Then I use a hot air popper and pop some popcorn - with the lid off. The popcorn, representing the bugs, flies through the air (though not as far as you'd expect) and lands on some children's webs. Those kids (spiders) get to eat. You can then have them choose another place to put their web - it's not surprising how they all move into the zone the popcorn landed in. You get much fewer hungry spiders this time!

Make spiders with Oreos and licorice legs. The kids love them.

Once Upon a Time

Brainstorm a list of known traditional fairy tales. What makes these stories fairy tales? List these characteristics in chart form. Chart them showing setting, good character, bad character, beginning, ending, problem and solution.

Read some modern fairy tales with different points of view: such as The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, Cinderhazel and Dinorella. Talk about the differences.

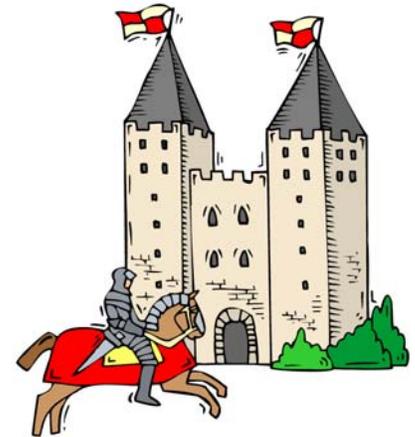
"I have a great activity using several fairy tales. We read the Three Little Pigs and discuss the story elements. Then we read The True Story of the Three Little Pigs and discuss how it is told from a different perspective. We make a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences. I use a poster-making activity to advertise the books and the kids vote on the best one from each book. We also have a trial to determine if the wolf should be in jail. The class discusses the parts we need, the actual way a trial is held, and



the democratic way a jury is chosen. The defence and prosecuting teams get together and plan their strategies, make their witness lists, and research any other pertinent information. One boy actually called the Environment Canada to get the pollen count in our area on the day we read the book to determine if the wolf actually had a reason to be sneezing so much! Finally the trial was held. The judge was our Principal and she got a robe and gavel to play the part. In one class he was guilty, one other class he was not guilty.

The class realized how much preparation it takes for a real trial and they wanted to do another one for the witch in *Hansel and Gretel*."

"Make a Fairy Tale book with pockets. One page holds a letter each writes from one character (or themselves) to another fairy tale character. Another pocket holds a summary of their favourite fairy tale. Still another pocket holds a poem they write about a fairy tale or fairy tale character. Another holds their list of three wishes they would make if they got the chance. Another pocket they write an original fairy tale. Decorate the cover like a castle and title it 'Once Upon A Time...!'"



After reading a fairy tale, map out the neighbourhood to match what's in the book. Include the compass rose and a map key.

Brainstorm threes in fairy tales - Three Little Pigs, Three Bears, etc.

Ask students to close their eyes and think of their favourite **fairy tale**. Give them two or three minutes to think and then ask them a few questions:

- What do you like about the story?
- Who was your favourite person in the story?
- Where did the story take place?
- Did the main character have a problem?
- How was that problem solved?

Choose a **fairy tale** to rewrite. Brainstorm ways to change the original story. Create a story web of the fractured/rewritten **fairy tale**.

List as many heroes and princesses as they can think of (i.e., Prince Charming, Cinderella).

Write a short paragraph on a **fairy tale** character from the first person perspective....What it is like to be _____ (one of the characters). Each student takes on the identity of a **fairy tale** character and describes a typical day.

<http://www.teachingheart.net/f.html> Good ideas for your fairy tale unit!

Dinosaurs

Dinosaur units are still the most popular! Children love to learn the scientific facts of these strange animals.

Introduction: Do a KWL chart. Ask for facts that the children already know about dinosaurs. Have a discussion about colour, size, herbivorous vs. carnivorous, quadripedal vs. bipedal, etc. Let the children have hands-on experience with dinosaur models if available. How long ago did dinosaurs live? Were people alive at that time? How do we know what dinosaurs were like? Where did they live? Let each child select a dinosaur book for check-out and research.

Lesson 1: Long Ago - Time is a difficult concept - especially when talking about millions of years! Use a chart to show the tiny amount of time of human history and the length of time the dinosaurs were on the earth.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/Geologictime.html>

Lesson 2: Fossils - Show fossils, discuss how they are formed. Research fossils. Learn about paleontologists.

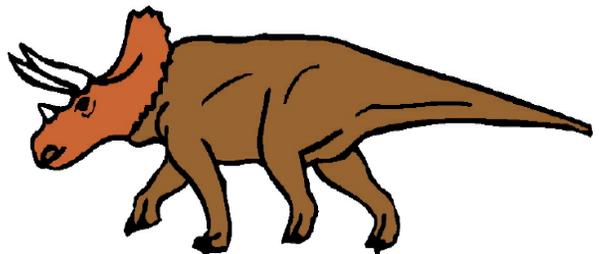
Lesson 3: Types of Dinosaurs

Lesson 4: Meat and Plant Eaters

Lesson 5: The Dinosaur's Life Cycle

Lesson 6: Extinction

Lesson 7: Nature and Change



Research:

Before beginning research, students should choose one dinosaur to focus on. On the worksheet, have spaces for students to describe 'their' dinosaur, including any special characteristics, herbivorous vs. carnivorous, size, bipedal or quadripedal, area of the world where fossils have been located. Let children work in pairs to help one another gather information.

Take turns, as computers are available, to access <http://www.ZoomDinosaurs.com> Let each child read the short entry about his/her dinosaur and perform the 'Unscramble the Picture' activity at this site. Let the student print out the unscrambled picture quiz and the template (to be coloured) for his/her dinosaur. The students may present their dinosaurs to the class in oral presentations, using the facts collected from both the books and the Web. Book pictures and computer print-outs retrieved can be part of each presentation. As a fun quiz at the end of each presentation, use the 'Word-Unscramble' from the ZoomDinosaurs.com .

Activity sheets from ZoomDinosaurs.com can be handed out as a learning reinforcement.

Additional Ideas:

A how-to lesson in drawing dinosaurs will be fun as the unit winds down. Using [How To Draw Dinosaurs](#), or a similar book, present step-by-step for drawing a dinosaur. Colour and add background to the dinosaurs.

Provide students with large paper bags. Have them create a paper bag puppet to represent their favourite dinosaur. Next, have students create skits with the puppet (e.g. a fight be-

tween a meat eater and a plant eater).

Tell students to use the names of dinosaurs to create new names for foods (e.g. fabrosaurus french fries, megalosaurus milkshakes, stegosaurus spaghetti). Then have them write a menu for lunch using these 'new foods'. Allow time for students to share menus. Plan a dinosaur lunch for the entire class.



Scientists have proposed several reasons for the dinosaurs' disappearance (the earth became too cold, there wasn't enough food, etc.). Have students research these reasons and then divide them into groups, each group supporting one of the reasons. Provide time for them to discuss and defend their positions.

Ask the students to pretend they want a dinosaur for a pet. Ask them to identify the dinosaur they would want and tell how they would capture and tame it.

Using a variety of sources, list some dinosaurs and their lengths on the chalkboard. To help students understand how long the different dinosaurs were, measure their exact lengths with a ball of yarn (in which you have previously tied knots every metre). Count the metres as the yarn is unrolled. Go out to the playground and measure out the larger creatures.

Have students become paleontologists (a scientist who specializes in finding and studying ancient fossil remains) by bringing clean chicken or turkey bones to school. Place each bone in wet, packed sand to make an imprint. Remove the bone and pour plaster of Paris into the imprint (or mold). Let it harden and then remove it from the sand. Have students label and display their fossils.

7. Have students pretend they want to move Tyrannosaurus Rex, the largest of the meat-eating dinosaurs, which weighed approximately eight tons and was over 20 feet high, from a zoo in New York City to a zoo in Paris, France. Provide time for a brainstorming session on how this could be done.

Give each student a large piece of butcher paper and have them draw their favourite dinosaur and colour or paint it. Place a second sheet of paper under the first sheet and staple them together loosely, leaving a small opening for stuffing. Stuff the dinosaur with crumpled newspaper and add legs, horns, tails, and so on. Label and display these stuffed dinosaurs.

Have students take on the role of a particular dinosaur. If possible, mime the dinosaur, in addition to giving out one clue at a time: I weight _____. I am _____ tall. I eat _____. Allow four clues. If students haven't guessed the dinosaur after four guesses, have the dinosaur-student provide the answer.

Plan a field trip to a museum of natural history to see dinosaur skeletons. If this is not possible, then plan a virtual trip via the Internet.

Provide students with plastic dinosaur figures, clay, dinosaur model sets, and so on. As a class, create a display or diorama that depicts a prehistoric time when dinosaurs roamed the world. Use real greenery or plastic/silk. A mirror makes a great lake. Don't forget the volcano in the background!

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. And there are so many teaching opportunities!

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 and put sleeping bags and pillows inside. 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. The students will enjoy brainstorming the scene and helping to make the classroom into a camp.

Camping Activities

- Work together to create camp rules.
- Name your camp. Make a large banner with the camp name - like 'Survivor'?
- Each child can make a camp journal.
- Wear clothing suitable for camping.
- Teach camp songs to sing around the campfire.

Science

Learn the names of trees, wild flowers and other plants in your neighbourhood. Make collections and press leaves and flowers. Put them into a book and label the specimens.

Learn the parts of flowers, plants and trees. Be able to label diagrams.

Discuss similarities and differences of trees, etc. Make Venn diagrams.

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. For example, find words to describe how things look, feel, smell, sound.

Learn about soil and rocks. Make a rock collection. There is a great deal to learn - this can be part of an Earth unit.

Make collections of interesting things found on a hike.

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.

Language Arts

Write lists of things you need to take when you go camping.

Practice reading road maps to favourite spots.

Discuss actual camping trips the students have taken, and practice good questioning techniques.

Have the students write a daily journal about the camping days.

Write stories about what they would do if they were in 'Survivor' or stranded on a desert island!

Write letters to parents from 'camp'. Teach correct letter writing form.

Read stories about camping. Find fiction and non-fiction books on the outdoors and use these for the SSR time.

Keep a reading log.

Write instructions for raising a tent or for cooking a wiener over the campfire and making a hotdog.

Learn the vocabulary 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 the students 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.

Mystery hike - follow clues on a map.



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. This is an excellent program, with lots of experiments and ideas for activities to show survival techniques.

Have 'circle time' around the campfire.

Sing camp songs - 'Ten Green Bottles', 'BINGO', etc.

Learn to read a compass.



A Bubble Week

"We had a week long unit on bubbles.

We make a Big Bubble! I buy the rolled plastic for windows - medium weight - this year I used the whole roll (20' x 25'). I just cut off about a 2' strip off one short end to attach fan to the bubble. I double the big sheet over and use duct tape to close one short side and the long side. I put a strip of duct tape where I want the opening to be (on one short side) and then cut a slip through the middle of the tape (this prevents ripping). Along the opened end, I duct tape most of it, leaving an opening just large enough to tape around a square floor fan. This is where I tape the extra piece of plastic around the fan and connect this to the end I left open (this removes the fan from the section the students are). Then turn the fan on and watch it blow up. This year, using the whole roll of plastic, it was about 7' tall. I have the students go inside and we have classes in there. Sometimes I read to them, sometimes they have

silent reading or a project that doesn't take many supplies. It's great on a hot day as the fan keeps everyone cool.

Monday: We had lessons in 'The Bubble'.

Tuesday: The students had free exploration using all sorts of 'things' with holes and the bubble solution.

Wednesday: I set up 7 centres. The students worked in small groups and spent 15 minutes at each centre.

1. Bubble Trampoline - use 3 feet of string and two straws. Thread the string through the straws and tie a knot. Dip this in the bubble solution. This is the trampoline. Have another student blow a bubble with a loop. The first students then 'catches' the bubble on the trampoline and sees how many times it can be bounced before it breaks. Our record for the day was 20.
2. Bubble inside another Bubble - I made a big loop using a coat hanger rounded out and covered with yarn. One student makes a bubble with the big loop while another student blows a smaller bubble into the larger one using a small loop.
3. 3-D Cube - I cut a quart milk carton into cubes, opening the sides (leaving just a frame). They dipped this in the bubble solution. Then they experimented with this using a straw.
4. 3-D Triangle - this was similar to the above, I just ran string through three straws and tied it off, forming a triangle.
5. Free Form - the students used pipe cleaners to make any shape they wished to use with bubble solution.
6. Growing a bubble - the students put a little baking soda into a wide mouth glass jar and added 1/2 cup vinegar. Then, using a small loop, they blew a bubble, caught a small one, and put it into the jar and watched it grow. (This was a difficult one for my kids.)
7. Beach Ball Bubbles - the students used the straw and string loops (similar to the above ones) and made giant bubbles.

Thursday: The students used straws to blow bubbles directly into bubble solution which has had tempera paint added. We used three different containers for three different colours. Once the bubbles were blown the students put a white paper down on top, getting an imprint. They did this three times with three different colours. Food colouring stains, so put on painting shirts!

Friday: Students had free exploration again, with the new knowledge they acquired all week.

Bubble Art

Have two or three separate pans of soapy water each with a different colour made by adding food colouring. Have lots of straws. Have each child blow into a container until the bubbles are nice and high. Add more food colouring. Then have the child place a piece of drawing paper right down on top of the container. When that color dries, go to the next pan. For a different look, don't wait until the first colours dry.

"This is fun, but can be messy! Spread newspaper around the area and wear an old T-shirt. Pour about one cup of bubble solution in each container. Add one teaspoon of paint to each



container. Stir gently until mixed. Take turns blowing bubbles while your partner 'catches' them on paper. As they break, you'll get a design of brightly coloured splotches! For darker colours, add more paint."

The Olympic Games

Every two years this can be an interesting theme.

Learn About the Olympic Games

- learn that the summer Olympics happen every 4th year on the leap year, and the winter Olympics 2 years later.
- learn about the events
- learn about the mascots
- Study the flags of participating nations. Have each classroom (or group of children) make a different flag. Hang for display.
- Learn about the origin of the Olympic games. Make the flag of Greece.



Math for the Olympics

- Graph favourite events
- Predict the number of gold, silver, and bronze medals Canada will win.
- Keep track of the medals won by each country.
- Hold a class or school Olympics competition (track and field events, Math Olympics, Geography Olympics, etc.). Hold at least one event involving measurement, such as the Long Jump. Measure results in meters and centimeters.
- Determine the length and/or width of the various playing fields or courses of Olympic events, i.e., soccer field, Olympic swimming pool, tennis court, running events, etc.

Olympic Art

"Make Olympic windsocks to hang in your room or down the hallway: After learning about the Olympic rings, draw and colour the rings on a piece of 12" x 18" white construction paper laid lengthwise. You can write Sydney 2000 on this also. Turn the paper so that it makes a cylinder. Glue, tape, or staple. Make a hanger by putting a piece of string or yarn through two holes that have been made at the top of the windsock with a paper punch. Give each child one 8" strip of crepe paper streamer of each of the colors of the Olympic rings: blue, black, red, yellow, green. These should be glued evenly around the bottom of the windsock so that they hang down."

"Take a photo of each child. Cut out just the head. The children glue their heads down on a piece of paper. They must draw the rest of their bodies doing their favourite Olympic

sport. Then they write about themselves as if they were a participant in the Olympics."

"Collect pipe cleaners in the colours of the Olympic rings, one of each colour for each child in your class. Begin by making a circle with the blue one. Twist the ends to form a smooth circle. Add the yellow pipe cleaner; form and twist a circle. Add the black, the green, and then the red, in that order. If you hold it up you will have what appears to be a chain, but if you lay it flat, you can arrange the circles to form the Olympic rings."

"I found this great site with work and colour sheets about the Olympics. It give great information on the mascots and games to share with your class. click on 'kids' and then on 'teachers'. I used the junior page for ages 4-8."

<http://www.olympics.com/eng/>

Learn About Canada

If the children know more about Canada, they will enjoy the Olympic games more and understand what they are hearing while the coverage is on.

Learn about:

- our flag
- our national anthem
- the different provinces
- own area, province, maps
- our Canadian athletes and where they live in Canada
- our Olympic heroes

Learn About the Host Country

- the continent - and learn the other continents
- the people
- the animals
- the northern and the southern hemisphere
- learn the flag
- learn about the major cities and attractions



Learn About Other Countries

Give each child a country to research. They can look up the flag, where the country is, and interesting facts. Perhaps the children would like to learn about their family's country of origin. Put little flags on a map of the world.

Go For the Gold!

"I think I will use coloured 'ribbons' on the board with the students name on the bottom, add stars as they read....like 2 books = red star, 5 books = Blue star, 8 books = green star, 10

books = silver star, 15 books = gold medal; and use a gold seal (like they sell at Office Depot for certificates) to add to the middle when they reach the GOLD medal level. I would title the bulletin board : Go for the Gold! I'd like to do this as a grade-level. I LOVE the Olympics!!"

"Form an Olympic Readers Club. To be eligible, students keep track of their reading on a weekly log during the month of September. If they read a total of six hours per week (average of 30 minutes per night) for the month, they earn a gold medal. Gold medalists are permitted to choose their classroom seating arrangement for the following month or other treat. If the majority of the students are gold medalists, the class gets a pizza/video party at lunchtime."

"Students can be a GOLD MEDAL WINNER and win a gold medal at the end of each week by following all of our new classroom rules every day. Those with the most gold medals by the end of September can choose their classroom job for the following week. Gold medal winners will be graphed and posted on a bulletin board. Students who try their best without winning a gold medal will also receive special recognition."

"For the last Olympics we made a pretend torch and passed it through the classrooms with a book about the Olympics (entitled Olympics by Hennessey). That took about 2 weeks and during that time each class picked a country and made a large flag of that country. Then we had an opening ceremony complete with the Olympic theme and the lighting of the torch and each class taught us something about the Olympics (this took about 3 to 5 minutes each and explained things like the mascots, the rings and the origin of the Olympics) and then the games began. The children earned points for reading, for answering trivia questions about the Olympics, during gym the participated in Olympic type games and earned points and even earned points for bringing in articles or information about the Olympics. The children were awarded bronze silver and gold medals and certificates and we had a short closing ceremony. It was tons of fun!

This year we're having a grandparent come and speak about his participation in the Mexico City Olympics, the students will compete in Olympic Games during gym and will be challenged to read biographies and write about the individual Canadian athlete that inspired them. This year we won't give medals or keep score. We're incorporating it into our Book Fair Night. I'm thinking of posting clues around the school about different past Olympic athletes and people can guess and win a small piece of candy if they are right."

The Olympic flag has a plain white background with no border. In the centre are five rings forming two rows of three rings above and two below. The rings of the upper row are, from left to right, blue, black and red. The rings of the lower row are yellow and green. The rings are thought to symbolize the five continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and America. It is widely believed that the colours of the rings were chosen because at least one of them can be found in the flag of every nation, though this has never been confirmed as the intention of the designer.

The Olympic flame is a symbol carried over from the ancient Olympics, where a sacred

flame burned at the altar of Zeus throughout competition. It was finally reintroduced at the 1924 Amsterdam Games, and again burned in 1932. In the 1936 Berlin Games, it was proposed that the flame be lit in Greece and transported to Berlin via a torch relay. The idea was adopted, and continued at every Olympic Games since 1952. The flame is lit at the ancient site of Olympia by the natural rays of the sun reflected off a curved mirror. It is lit at a ceremony by women dressed in robes resembling those worn in ancient times, who then pass it to the first relay runner.



Have students research the events of the games, our athletes participating in each event, and create a medals tracking sheet they can use to track our athletes while following the games over the summer.

Develop Olympic events and ceremonies at school in place of a field day and have students participate for sportsmanship, excellence and medals.

What is the history of the Olympic torch?

Practice teamwork. Using a parachute will demonstrate this well - do the 'tricks' with the parachute and the students will see that a team must all work together, and everyone must be doing his/her best. learn about the teamwork in the Olympic games.

Have a 'Math Olympics' and/or a 'Reading Olympics', where each student tries to beat his/her best time or increase the amount. Make personal goals and try to meet them.

"Our school has celebrated many Olympic years as a school wide theme. We always have an opening ceremony where each class makes a banner (representing a country they are going to study and record medal counts for) and small individual flags. We had our track and field team run four blocks outside with the principal carrying the Olympic torch. Then the runners came through the school and the children in the classrooms followed them up the hall to the gym. We had the last runner light the Olympic torch. We invited parents and school board personnel to come and make speeches welcoming the 'athletes' and opening the ceremonies. Then every class did a study of their country. (My class did a study of Japan. We did Venn diagrams comparing Canada and Japan as we read and learned about Japan; read Japanese folk tales and had Japanese artifacts brought into the classroom.) We learned about the various sports and had an Olympic Day where the children tried the different sport events. At the end we had a closing ceremony where the flame was extinguished, each country presented a poem or song we had learned and we had a piece of cake. It was a lot of work, but a lot of fun, too. It was neat for the whole school to be involved."

"Before the last summer games, I set up a fitness center in my classroom. In the center I placed a clipboard, scales for weighing, jump ropes, exercise mats, exercise videos, balance beam, timer, large mirror, dress-up exercise clothes, small trampoline, hand weights, step ex-

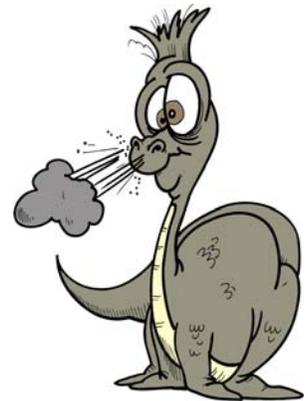
erciser, and an old tricycle put up on blocks. I made a mini obstacle course. We made sweat bands out of old tube socks. I invited an aerobics instructor to visit. We sorted boxes of 'good food' and 'junk food'. We walked a kilometre around the track. The children were given squares of paper to make identification numbers to wear."

"We had an Olympic Day. We made 'medals' for the students (all who participated got one) out of lids used for the canning process. They painted them with gold spray paint, and hot-glued them to a wide striped ribbon to be worn around the neck. They were cute! We made torches from paper towel rolls. You add yellow and orange tissue paper cut in 'flame' shapes and glue to one end. The events were 3 legged races, sack races, and that sort of fun stuff! The kids had a blast!"

Germs!

"One way to show how germs travel is to put some powder on your hands and gently blow it. It will float around the room because it is so light weight.

"One thing we do to demonstrate covering our mouths when we sneeze or cough is to have the kids draw and cut out a picture of their faces. Then they trace around and cut out one of their hands. They glue a tissue over the mouth of their cut out face and glue the hand cut out on top of that like the hand is holding the tissue. These are cut and the kids like them. Be prepared to go through a lot of tissues after this, though!"



Do Kids Catch Cold Outside?

A family moved to a city with a colder climate. The boy's parents are concerned that he'll catch cold if we play outside when it's snowy, windy or even just cold and dry. If a child isn't used to real winter weather, is he more likely to get sick than children who are?

A child might well catch more colds than his classmates, but it won't be because of new weather conditions. It'll be because of new germs that he'll be catching, germs his classmates will already have some immunity to.

Here are some basic facts about cold weather and colds: The common cold probably got its name because chills are part of the early stages of infection, not because cold weather causes it. We know that more than 100 viruses cause colds. The most common cold viruses are rhinoviruses, 'rhino' referring to the nose (as in rhinoceros), the place in the body where cold germs live. All colds involve infection of the lining of the nose. Sometimes the infection spreads to the throat, the sinuses, or the Eustachian tubes leading to the ears.

There is no scientific evidence that colds are caused by going out in the cold, sitting in drafts, or getting wet feet, or even that these things lower resistance to catching colds. However, when the weather is wet and raw, people tend to stay indoors, where close contact encourages the spread of cold germs. Noses are the keys to colds, because sneezing

and nose blowing are the main ways that colds are spread. Coughing and even drinking from the same cup are actually less probable means by which colds get around. When kids sneeze, germs in the nose are shot out at high speed. Other children get infected by inhaling the germs floating in the air or by picking them up on their fingers once the germs have settled. When those fingers end up on noses, the cold germs have found a new home!

Ironically, the playground is probably the safest place to be in winter - from the standpoint of catching a cold. But even though cold feet don't cause colds, it is important that children be dressed appropriately for the weather and avoid becoming wet and chilled.



Germ Experiments

For a quick lesson with instant results, cover a pencil with glue, then sprinkle glitter all over the glue. Pass the pencil around the room (yes, this one's a little messy!) and watch the glittering 'germs' spread from one student to the next. If you wipe the pencil off with a paper towel, some of the germs will still remain. This is why it is important to actually WASH the pencil (and everyone's hands) with soap and water to effectively remove the germs. You can expect at least one of your students to touch something else once they have glitter on their hands. Glitter on a desk, on their face, or in their hair is an even better example of how easy it is to spread germs.

Divide students into small groups (three or four students). Provide each group with four plastic bags. Each should have a label attached. The students should write on each label one of the following:

Bag 1: Handled by group members

Bag 2: Rubbed on surface of _____

Bag 3: Blown on by group members

Bag 4: Control

Cover part of each group's work area with waxed paper. Place four potato slices on the waxed paper. (NOTE: Handle the potato by the outer, skin-covered surface only or use a toothpick to move the pieces. Do not touch the inside, exposed surface of the potato.) Tell students not to touch the potato yet.

Ask students in each group to pass around the first potato slice; each student should have an opportunity to thoroughly handle the slice, then put it in Bag 1.

Have students rub the second potato slice on a selected surface in the classroom (e.g., the floor, a countertop, the classroom sink) and fill in the blank on the bag to indicate the surface the potato was rubbed on, and put that slice in Bag 2. (Continued)

Show students how to use a toothpick to handle the next potato slice. Tell students not to touch the potato or let it touch any surface. Have each student take a turn holding the toothpick and blowing on it for about ten seconds, and then put it into Bag 3.

Finally, have a student use another (clean) toothpick to place the fourth slice in Bag 4.

That slice is the control slice. It has not been touched, rubbed on any surface, or blown upon.

Ask students to record on paper what they have done. Have them predict which potato slice contains the most germs and the least germs. Then have each group gather its four bags and place them in a dark closet. Leave the potato slices in the closet for a week.

At the end of the week, ask students to record the results of the experiment, including answers to the following questions: Which potato slice had the most germs? Which had the least? Why might that be? Did you predict correctly? How is a control important in a scientific experiment? Have students record their observations and write a statement that explains what this experiment taught them about germs. Follow up with this question: What does this experiment teach you about the importance of washing your hands regularly?

Here is another experiment to show the spread of germs:

Put cooked rice into a zip-loc bag. Ask the students to stand in a circle. Begin by putting your hand in the rice and getting a lot of rice sticking to your hand then shake hands with a child beside you. That child shakes hands with the person next to them and so on and so on. The rice should stick to all the hands and works the same way germs do when people shake each other's hands.

Travelling Germs

Use these headings to make a book about germs!

Germs love to take trips and travel through our bodies. Although you cannot see them, they travel on surfaces, toys, furniture and people.

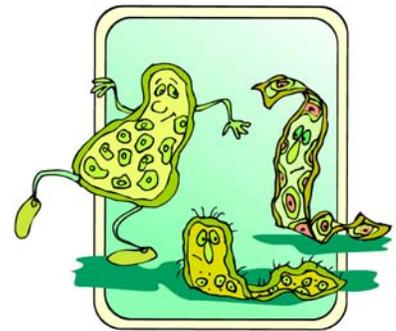
Some germs like to travel on your hands. When you shake hands with someone or hold someone's hand the germs go from your friend's hand to yours and from yours to your friend's hand. If you touch your hands near your nose or mouth, or touch food, the germs are transferred. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water, and dry your hands well, too.

Other germs think they are scuba divers. They like to lie on sponges and dishcloths and other wet or moist areas. It is safer to use a damp paper towel to clean a surface, rather than a sponge or dishcloth. This way you can through the paper towel and the germs away.

Germs are explorers. They are in your nose and mouth. Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough and then throw it away. If you just use your hand, think of all the germs on it and wash it right away or the germs will get transferred to everything you touch.

Many germs love to travel from hands onto food, and because they are so small, you cannot see them. Washing your hands before eating meals or snacks will help you avoid germs that might make you sick. It is especially important to wash your hands after going to the bathroom.

Germs even like to be carried around by your pets. This is especially true of lizards and turtles, but also dogs, cats, mice hamsters, guinea pigs and birds. After you pet or play with pets, wash your hands with warm soapy water and dry them completely.



Parent Communication

Ways to communicate with your parents:

1. Newsletters: Some things that are included are upcoming events, field trips, tests, material covered during the week, parent tips, things to ask your child, pictures, published stories, and general concerns.
2. Parent Connection Line: Similar to voice mail where the teacher leaves weekly messages to parents.
3. Planners: Notes are put in these. Students copy homework into these and parents sign nightly.
4. Phone Calls Home: Try to call at least 2 parents a night with positive comments.
5. Parent Conferences: Prior to the parent conference, make a form that shows the concerns you have and actions you will take. At a follow up conference, bring the form out again and show whether the actions worked or not. Use as documentation.
6. Weekly Work Notices: Check off whether or not they completed all work or if they need to do it over the weekend. Also, include an area to record weekly behavior.
7. Back to School Night: This usually occurs during the first month of school. This is not the time to hold parent conferences. This is the time to tell parents a little about yourself, go over standards, curriculum, and procedures.
8. Reading Logs: The form has an area for the title of the book and two columns that follow. One is called 'My child read fluently and with expression.' The other is called "I had to help my child with a few words." The parents signs it.
9. Friday Folder: The Friday folder goes home on Friday and comes back on Monday. It contains completed work and a progress report.
10. Daily Folder: This folder contains all notes, book orders, lunch money, etc. It is checked every morning while students do their morning routine.
11. Websites: The teacher posts the newsletter, homework, photos of students, etc. on the website.
12. Weekly Behavior Chart: Record behavior on a chart and send it home on Friday.
13. Voice Mail and E-Mail: Give parents your voice mail and email address. Encourage parents to contact you for any reason.
14. Journals: On Friday, kids write a letter to parents telling them what they learned during the week. Parents are encouraged to write kids back in their journals.
15. 'Let's Keep in Touch' or 'Let's Talk' form: This is a form that is permanent in the daily folder. Parents and teachers use to write informal notes and responses back and forth.



"I have a small, hallway bulletin board solely used for messages to parents. On it are things like copies of my newsletters, party sign-up sheets, class schedule, etc. Last year I just called it 'Parent Bulletin', but this year I am going to try to think of a catchy title. I thought of calling it 'Communication Station', but it's not really a station!"

Newsletters to Parents

"In our weekly newsletter my team partner and I always include what we're doing in our subjects: reading - phonics, sight words; writing, spelling, math, science, social studies, computers, art etc. Then, we devote a portion to school news such as Picture Day, fundraisers, assemblies, etc. We also make it a point to recognize students who have reached certain goals such as reading 100 books, and we write thank you notes to parent helpers and guest speakers. We include information on homework and ideas the parents can try to help their children learn at home.

"To write up our newsletter I made a basic template that has the subject headings, fonts and size set so that doesn't have to be done every time. Then this week's business is filled into the blanks. It's sent home on Mondays. We run extra copies so we can give back copies to parents of children that join our class later in the year. We also give a copy to our principal so he has a running record of what's going on in our class. He says they are very helpful when he get questions from parents.

"We've had very positive comments from parents. The newsletter takes time to create, but we think the benefits of better communication and fewer misunderstandings are worth it. It must be, we've done it for over 20 years!"

"I send my notices to parents on neon coloured paper. I pick one colour at the beginning of the year and tell the parents to watch for it. It can't be missed!"

"I do a 2-3 page weekly newsletter. Some columns I include are:

- homework for the week
- words of the week list
- monthly theme with suggested activities
- books which will be read
- the school's Word of the Week with definition
- Student news and stories (which the children contribute).
- Happy birthdays
- A short article which I write (called Dear Parents.) In the article I address questions parents have asked, ask for volunteers, parent support to solve general behavior problems, thank parents for support given, or give suggestions for parents to help their child at home.
- Upcoming events

"It sounds like a lot, but once I figured out a format it didn't take long to put together. Some items were added because parents requested them."



"At our school, class newsletters are sent home on Mondays so parents know to look for them. I try to keep them to one page so that parents will read them - and they usually do.

1) I write about what we've been learning - notice the past tense. I rarely say that 'This week we're going to . . .' I do that purposely. I don't like to 'foreshadow' the week just in case we get off schedule and it doesn't really happen. So I say things like 'Last week we began our unit on _____.' Then I write about what we did.

2) I also write some parent education. I try to help them understand the what and the why of my teaching. It helps parents be more supportive if they understand.

3) The other thing I include briefly is reminders (e.g., book orders are due)."

Open House

"Before Open House I send home notes asking the parents to send in one of their child's tee shirts (they get them back after open house). On white bulletin board paper, I trace the children's arms up to just past the elbow. The children cut them out. I give each child a white paper plate on which children make a likeness of their faces, using proper skin eye and eye colour. They glue on strands of yarn for their hair. I pin the arms inside the sleeves of the tee shirts. Just before dismissal on the day of Open House, the children put their tee shirts over the top of the chair. I tape the arms to their desks. I staple a second paper plate to the face plate leaving a large opening on the bottom. I slide the faces over the top of the seat, using scotch tape along the bottom to make sure they don't fall off. I put a piece of stationary at each child's desk.



"When the parents come in, they love finding their 'children'. While the parents settle in, they write a note on the stationary for their child. After the parents leave I write notes to those whose parents don't show up. The parents take home the children's bodies, and the next day the children are excited to find notes from their parents (or me) in their desks."

"Last year, I video taped 'a day in the life of a Grade Two class' and got footage of my kids doing all sorts of things. I included songbook time, PE, each child telling what they like best about school, lunch in the cafeteria, working hard in math, silly stuff, etc. It was about 20 minutes long and I played it continually throughout the open house. Our open house is a 'come and go' event so the parents could stand and watch it at any point. I'd rewind it when it finished and start it over. The parents loved it and many asked to borrow it over the next few weeks to take home and make a copy. It was so easy and so rewarding. I'll definitely do it again this year."

"Parents really need to know what a typical day in your classroom is like for their child. Have activities out on desks that are typical for a normal day in your class. Also, be sure to explain *why* you think these activities are important (i.e. what skills they are teaching). Explain class rules and discipline, as well as any new school policies."

"At the Open House evening I am introducing the estimation jar to the parents. One lucky parent who estimates correctly will be taking the jar home to be the first family to fill it! Each week the students will estimate the number of objects in the jar, and the winner gets to take it home to fill for the next week's game.



"Here are some of the fill ideas I am giving them: dry noodles, cotton balls, beans, pennies, stones, Lego, bread ties, peanuts in the shell, sea shells, paper clips (tough one), wrapped candies, suckers, pompoms, milk bottle tops, keys, crayons, M&M peanut candies, Barbie shoes, sidewalk chalk, marbles, erasers, buttons, candy corn, candy kisses, rocks, plastic Easter eggs, etc.

"It is a special time of the week when the children have the last chance to place their estimates and we open the jar and count the contents - in groups of 10 and then hundreds, of course."

"I make sure my classroom is spotless, nicely decorated and perfectly organized. I believe that parents (and others) often make judgements about teachers by looking at the room. Not fair, perhaps, but it still happens!"

"I typed up a scavenger hunt for the parents. I gave clues telling where to look for different things their child had done in the classroom, and special classroom items. I had about ten things on the list. The final item was a gift for participating. I typed up a poem and rolled it up and tied it with a ribbon and placed it by the door.

I had the children write a paragraph about the important things in *Grade Two*, and this was left out for the parents to read. I also had their portfolios out on their desks which held work I have collected since the beginning of the year.

It was very successful, because the children were excited by the scavenger hunt and they got their parents to come because of the scavenger hunt."

"I often have parents help their student fill in a response to graphs.... eye colour, boy/girl, favourite colour. They could also do a glyph together."

"I have my students draw self portraits. We give each self-portrait a number, and the name is written on the back. We put them on a wall or bulletin board, and when the parents come they try to guess their child's portrait. It is fun and amazing how many can pick them out!"

"I have our estimating jar by the sign-in table. I ask the parents to estimate how many Hershey's kisses there are in the jar. The parents write their estimations on sticky notes beside the jar. The next day I take each of the estimates and put the sticky next to the number they guessed on our hundreds chart. Then the kids and I count the kisses and find out which parent or parents guessed correctly. The child whose parent was right shares one kiss with each student and then takes the leftover home to share with their family. The parents really like this and the kids really get into it because their parents were the participants."

"Last year I video taped my class during lunch, library, computer, gym and showed it with background music during open house."

"Use the overhead projector to draw a silhouette of each child's profile. The children cut out pictures or words from a magazine that represent themselves, and paste them inside their silhouette. I have those taped on each seat and the parents have to find their child's desk."



"I have a raffle. When a parent walks into my classroom, I hand them a ticket to write their child's name. At the end of the night I raffle the prize. I usually have the 'Prize' on my desk during the school day. I tell the students if your parents come to Open House they can win this raffle for you! I put some candy, some art supplies (crayons, felts, etc.) in a box, wrap it in cellophane and attach balloons to it. Lots of parents come, as the children are excited about the prize."

"The computer slide show was a powerpoint presentation I made that included a welcome to our room and showed a typical day in Grade Two. I set up my computers to loop it so it would run continuously. Everyone had a great time. Everyone was busy. Nobody tried to corner me to have a parent conference!"

"When we have our open house, I have my children do a bit of a program. They recite a poem, do a Readers' Theatre, and sing a song or two. All of my parents come because of this small production, and it is wonderful to have such a good turn-out."

Student Led Parent Conferences

"I love doing student led conferences and always have positive feedback from the parents. I make an agenda and tell all parents they can come anytime between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. (whenever it is convenient for them). I 'coach' the students for about a week and get them all revved up about it. I call it a 'Celebration of Learning' (Let me show you what I've learned) evening. I usually have them do one activity from each subject area. In the agenda I state what the parents should be looking for so they can evaluate how their child is doing.

For example:

1. Have your child read the following story... Listen for fluency. Check for comprehension by asking the following questions.....
2. Ask your child to read you the story they wrote about Penguins on the bulletin board. - check for a beginning, middle and end - check for correct use of capitals and periods - check for neatness (spaces between words, correct size of printing) - check for appropriate, neat illustrations
3. Science

Have your child show you the Oobleck mixture and show you their log book. Ask your child what oobleck is, how it is made and why it is a special mixture. Ask him/her what a solid

is and what a liquid is. Then ask him/her which oobleck is. Look for: - is your child using science vocabulary in the log? - does the child understand the concepts presented?

"I leave spaces in the agenda so the parents can make comments or questions that they might want to discuss with me. I wander about the room assisting where required. I also have the child explain some routines in the class. (i.e. Show them the home reading charts and explain how you get a prize.) I find once the parents understand what happens when they fill out the home reading slips, I get better participation from home!



"The last steps of my agenda are to check their desk for supplies that need replaced. I also have a piece of paper and an envelope where the parents can write a note to their child, seal it in the envelope and leave it on their desk so the child can read it the next morning."

"We do student led conferences and I love them! The way most of us set them up is with centers. Parent and child (three families during each half hour) enter and pick up an 'agenda' from the desk by the door. It welcomes them and lists all of the center/activities in the room. As the student takes parent to each activity they check them off on their list. We usually have 5-6 activities set up. If this conference coincides with report cards, one of the centers is ME. At this center the student tells parent how they are doing, what they need to work harder on, goals for the remainder of the year, etc. The other centers are a wide variety. This past conference we had our Science Fair exhibits set up in the hall; their penguin reports, pictures and ceramic penguins on their desks, the 'blubber glove' experiment; a computer project; an estimation activity (guess how many drops of water will fit on a penny), self evaluation (no report cards).

"The kids love sharing what they are doing in class and have so much fun. After several years of these the parents are more at ease when coming to school. They aren't only invited when Johnny is in trouble! If there are problems with Johnny, I have already made contact by phone. This conference is just to celebrate and share the achievements."

"I have the children's portfolio which has various things in it - journal, math books, spelling, word wall book, reading bag, theme folders. They have an agenda to follow that has portfolio, math basket, literacy basket, look at art on walls, sign the guest book. I have the entry times staggered every 5 or 10 minutes so there are 3 or 4 families in the room at the same time. We always do this at reporting time so I have the children write an invitation to go in the report card. We have practice sessions for about a week before and we go through the books and bookmark things we want our parents to see. I send a note home (also in the report card) that explains how to do the conference and some sample questions to ask their children. I also tell them that if they feel a need to see me privately, we can make an appointment AFTER the conference. I've never had a parent need to see me after the conference and like someone else said, I always get really positive comments."

"I do these kind of conferences every year. Before the conferences, the children and I

sit down and write an agenda of the things they want their parents to see. I write it up on the computer and make little check off boxes. I show them how to do the conference and then they practice with a buddy. They send invitations and I send a letter home before the conferences explaining that the child is in charge and if there are any concerns, the parents should make an appointment AFTER they do the conference.

"One year a most amazing thing happened. There were 4 families in the room and I couldn't understand a word of what was going on. The children were talking in Korean, Chinese, Spanish and Finnish and it was very clear that they were explaining what they were doing in school. I love student led conferences!"

"My student led conference night changes every year but basically looks like this. Show your parent: exercise books (journal, math journal, etc.), calendar, math basket, math book, literacy basket, read a class book, read a book from my book bag, show the art in the room, have your picture taken by the teacher (I use the pictures for a present for the parents. The children make a decorated frame and add the photograph), while you put your books away, make sure your parents sign the guest book.

"When the children come in, they introduce me to their parents and then go for it. They are so excited that they can barely stand still. Sometimes, I need to talk to parents about behaviour so I watch to see when I can interrupt and sit down with the child and parent to discuss it. It's more effective and less intimidating for everyone involved when I do it this way. I try to aim for about 20 minutes per child but I've had some children there for 10 minutes and one child stayed for 2 hours because he had to show his mom EVERYTHING in the room."

VIP

"I use pocket folders. I call them VIP (very important papers). I include the corrected papers of the week, notes from me and from the office. Stapled onto the one side is a sign off sheet for parents with room for comments. I get them back the day after I send them home. I have used these for a couple of years and parents look for them and expect them each Monday."

Expectation Meetings

If your Principal approves, it is very helpful to invite all your parents for an "Expectations Meeting". It is best to hold this in the evening so working Moms and Dads can participate. At this short meeting usually held in late September you may discuss the following:

- your philosophy of teaching reading
- your reading and phonics programs
- what you will expect in spelling and writing
- your math program and what will be covered in the year
- the themes and science units you expect to cover
- other special programs - music, P.E., personal safety, health, art, etc.



- home reading programs
- assessment, reports, and portfolios
- discuss your high academic standards and your standards for neatness
- behavior standards and consequences
- supplies and replacement of supplies
- school fees
- indoor shoes, gym strip, paint shirts and other things the children are expected to have at school
- parent volunteering and visiting in the classroom, plus ways the parents can help
- field trips

You will likely be able to think of many more subjects to add to the list!

Ask Me About

"On Fridays I send home an 'Ask Me About' sheet. I have made a template with the school letterhead, and 'Ask Me About', as well as the name and date at the top. There are a number of boxes on the sheet which I can vary in size and shape as needed. At the bottom I put a problem from our Math Program for the children to solve with their parents. In other boxes I place an outline of our Language, Math and other work we have done during the week.

"I make the outline in the form of questions the parents can ask their children. The questions are designed to allow the child to demonstrate knowledge. e.g. What happens when you mix cooking oil and water? Why does that happen?

"I also use the spaces around the "boxes" to post reminders of activities, make suggestions about watching a worthwhile TV show, or just to post something I have forgotten to put on our monthly calendar, etc.

"The parents say they enjoy the "Ask Me Abouts" and find it help a great deal with their communication with their children."

Student Self-Reporting

"I have done this several times a year with Grade 2 and up. Some grade one students may be able to handle this, too. I had them answer questions such as these:

- My favourite subject is _____.
 - Are you pleased with your reading?
 - What is your favourite book?
 - Do you like to write stories? Why (or why not)?
 - What do you do best in school?
 - What do you like least?
 - What is your favourite time of day?
 - Do you like math? Why?
- etc.

"You will find that the child's evaluation of his or her progress is very often accurate, sometimes provocative and occasionally amusing. The parents are interested in reading the self-reports, too."



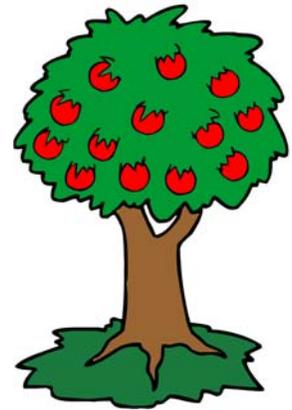
This is a long URL, but it has a great parent resource - 20 ways to help your child improve reading skills.....

http://www.chesterfield.k12.sc.us/cheraw%20intermediate/Boan'spages/pages/ways_to_help_children_improve_reading.htm

The Wishing Tree

"A wishing tree is a display for Open House Night or when the teacher expects parents to come into the classroom. It can also have a permanent place just inside or outside the classroom door.

"A wishing tree has leaves that have various requests for classroom needs, i.e. tissue, baggies, glue sticks, markers, art supplies, etc. Find leaf shaped Post-It notes and write one request on each then put the leaves on the tree. The parents take the leaf (sticky note) and return it with the item requested. It's another way to ask for supplies and those parents who can afford to help out will know what to send."



"A wishing tree is a teacher wish list (in this case made to look like a tree with paper apples) listing what the teacher is hoping to have in his/her classroom. This year our parent teacher organization made a large bulletin board in the hallway next to the teacher lounge - it has die cut apples hung by paper clips and we are to write what we wish for - then someone can see and take the apple. This has worked very nicely! It sure helps out in the classroom."

"I didn't bother making a tree. I put my requests on post-it notes (with an example of what I wanted on them (like the size of coloured sticki dots) and just put them on the board for my parent meeting. I put them right next to the conference sign-up so they had to be near them. Just about all of them were taken. Another idea: all during last year (as I went to the store to buy things) I added to the list so this fall I knew exactly what I would request. If I hadn't had a list this fall I would have forgotten many of them. This year I even asked for glue sticks, plastic cups, and paper plates."

Homework

"What we have found that works best for us is to make a homework calendar for the month and paste it into a composition book. We go over what the homework is for each day during closing exercises. The students are expected to read each night for practice and if vocabulary words have been sent home they are to be studied as well. At the bottom of the calendar we have a statement that says homework should last about one half hour and should include the assignment for that date and reading with vocabulary practice.

"This really works well for us and as far as marking goes I have students place their homework books open on their desks while doing the morning work and I put stickers on everyone's book and often make comments."

A M.O.O.S.E. Book

"The following is a letter to the parents about the MOOSE books.

In an attempt to become more organized this year, I have made M.O.O.S.E (Management Of Organizational Skills Everyday) books for all of my students. My hope is that these books will promote an organization process that the children will adopt and carry with them through all of their years in school. Please make sure this notebook comes to school with your child EVERY DAY!



The M.O.O.S.E. notebook contains the sections listed below:

Inside pocket of notebook:

This is where you will find the weekly newsletter. I will have the newsletters on Friday. This is an important means of communication for me to tell you about all we are doing in school each week.

Zip Case:

Inside the binder is a pencil case. Use this case to send in important notes, lunch money, book orders, money for field trips, etc.

Yellow Folder:

Left Pocket:

Papers in this pocket are returned work, notices from the school, or any other papers that are to be **LEFT** at home.

Right Pocket:

Papers in this pocket are papers that need to be signed and returned to school. Please send them **RIGHT** back as soon as you can!

Calendars:

This next section contains two plastic sleeves. In the first one you will find the monthly snack calendar, and in the second one you will find the monthly show and tell calendar (remember, we don't start show and tell until October)

Literature Log:

Please have your child colour a square each night after reading a book.

Behaviour Management:

This is a calendar page where your child will colour a square each day to show what colour they were on at the end of the day. This refers to the classroom behaviour management **STOP AND THINK** chart.

More Moose Books

Management Of Organizational Skills Everyday

"What is a Moose book? It is a 3-ring binder notebook, put together by the teacher, that houses EVERYTHING the students and parents need to keep up with what is going on at school. No more wrinkled papers in the bottom of bookbags. No more lost notes, newsletters or calendars. No more searching the house to find paper to write the teacher a note. Everything

is in one notebook!

Why is it important to have? This notebook helps students to establish good organizational skills in their primary years of school - skills that can carry on throughout their time in school.

The inside pocket of the book is labelled, 'Important Papers From School.' It is where students put information we get from the office or special notes from me.

There is a nylon zippered pouch used only to keep lunch money.

There is a file folder pocket labelled, 'Wonderful Work'. It is where students put work done in class that they can now keep at home.

There are sections for: Word Lists: Spelling, Word Families, Word Wall Words.

There is a section where the children keep track of books read at home - the book title, author, the number of pages read and a comment; and a place for the parent to sign.

My children do math drill sheets at home, and there is a section with practice sheets, directions for the drill, and scoring sheets to keep track of the progress.

The other side of the file folder pocket is labelled, 'Returned Homework'. I send home a homework calendar each month. Students bring homework back in this pocket.

There is a laminated piece of red construction paper labelled, 'Parent/Teacher Communication'. I keep this section supplied with notebook paper for parents to use to write me a note or vice versa.

One section is labelled, 'Newsletters'. Each week I send home a classroom newsletter. These newsletters are kept in a clear, plastic sleeve.

One section is labelled, 'Calendars'. I send home a monthly calendar with important events and a homework calendar. These are also kept in a clear, plastic sleeve.

Another section is labelled, 'Poetry Journal'. Each week our class learns a new poem. We keep all poems in our poetry journal to read at home. I also use the poems for homework activities from time to time.

Another section is labelled, 'Handbook'. It is to be used as a reference for parents on my classroom and the school's policies and procedures."

"I used the MOOSE notebook for the first time this year. I love them! My parents have expressed how much they like the idea also. I have had to replace one notebook and I really need to replace some pocket dividers, so get sturdy ones.

This is the first year of M.O.O.S.E. Books for our whole school. Overall they have been received very positively. We bought 3 ring plastic binders. Some look fantastic, some look worn and some are falling apart. The children who throw their bookbags around and are careless with most things have the worst looking ones. Next year we are planning to buy ones that are more sturdy."



For Your Parents

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:

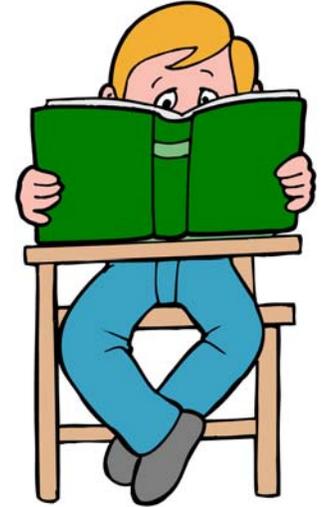
Which student would you expect to read better?

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?



Information for Parents

"I make a cover sheet to glue onto a file folder for each student. (I always make extra folders for move-in's to use during the year). Each year the cover sheet has a title page decorated with my year long theme and my name, the year, and a welcome.

Inside I place the hand outs from the school. I also make sure I have a bus rider/car rider/walker form so I know how they will travel. There is a welcome letter and I also include my classroom procedures/rules sheet, and each student and parent must sign that form. I also usually include some kind of back to school poem and information on how important parents are. There is a page on the importance of reading at home and the daily expectations for reading and homework."

"I usually make an apple tree with requests written on apples and the parents are asked to 'pick an apple and donate the item' if they would like to help out. Some are things to purchase and some are 'free' - containers from margarine or sour cream, egg cartons, etc."

"My year-long theme is going to be "Travelling to New Heights" and I am going to make a bulletin board with hot air balloons and put my wish/requests on make small clouds above them - I might even be able to find post-it clouds already made at Staples or a teachers' store. You want to have something that can easily be 'grabbed' by adults to remind them of what they have offered to donate."

"I have a 'Please Lend A Helping Hand' Bulletin board outside my room. On small die-cut hands I write things that need to be purchased, things that can be done at home (stapling, cutting, etc...), and when I need volunteers to come into the classroom. This way there is something for anyone who wants to help. I have a sign up sheet and whenever an adult takes a hand, they sign up on the sheet so that I know who has volunteered for what. I have done this for about four years now and it has been wonderful!"



Here are some ideas for a wish-list! Disposable cameras, water-colour markers, bottled water, pencils, glue, used puzzles with all of the pieces, buttons, old keys, game pieces (for math tubs), kleenex, baby wipes, old cookie sheets, magnetic letters, hotel sized soap, ziplock bags, clothespins, clear bingo chips, old calendars (for the pictures).

"I'd ask for a used microwave, Ziplock freezer and sandwich bags, shoe boxes (for dioramas), clean, mismatched socks (to hold chalk and be used as small chalkboard erasers), plastic spoons (for those that forget to pack them in lunches), wrapping paper, curling ribbon, used greeting cards (the fronts of the cards only, they can be used for art, or as story starters), styrofoam egg cartons (great for using and storing paint), fabric and ribbon scraps, bread clips, all kinds of seeds, beans, potting soil and plastic cups."

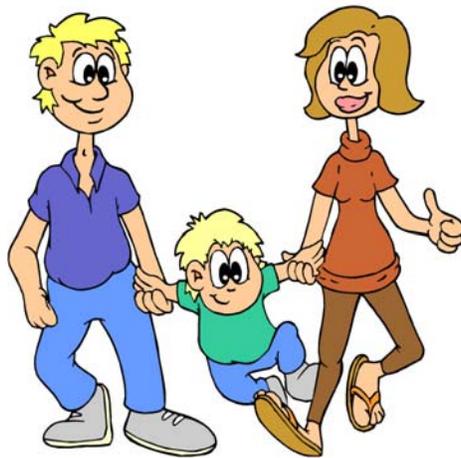
The Class Parent

"Your class parent will be a volunteer. I ask my class parent to think about the tasks that I do that are non-instructional that they could do. For example, they organize the class parties within my guidelines. I give them the time block and I am specific as to food and what will happen. The class parent calls other parents to arrange food, etc. I've also used class parents to make reminder phone calls about a special event and find volunteers if needed. Class parents also arrange for any items that I need contributed for a special project.

My room moms co-ordinate field trips, handle scholastic orders, organize parent volunteers for craft projects or other projects, call parents, plan parties, etc."

What did you do at school today?

"At the end of each school day, take five minutes to gather students before they leave for home to write on a special chart the 'News Headline of the Day'. What was the highlight of the day? What did students do or learn that was special or different? Write a few sentences about the headline you chose. By doing this students will have something to say when parents ask 'What did you do today in school?' and you will have all the content you need for creating an end-of-the-month newsletter to communicate class highlights with parents!"



Websites and Technology

Language Arts

<http://www.janbrett.com>

Undoubtedly the best author's site out there. Great things to download for your classroom. The children will love her alphabet and activities to accompany her books, all with her marvelous illustrations.

<http://www.wfu.edu/~cunningh/fourblocks/>

Pat Cunningham's website on the Four-Blocks.

<http://www.teachnet.com/lesson/langarts/wordwall062599.html>

Oodles of Word Wall activities

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading/table2.html>

Lots of down-loadable worksheets on a variety of language arts subjects.

<http://www.easypeasy.com/anagrams/>

You can type in any word and you will get all the anagrams for that word. Great for Making Words activities.

60 ways to practice spelling words.

<http://teachers.net/gazette/DEC02/spelling.html>

<http://www.marciass-lesson-links.com/janbrett.html>

Lots of ideas to use Jan Brett's winter books.

<http://www.wordles.com>

Try this site for fun with words!

<http://www.suzyred.com/music.html>

The Music Room - Language Art Songs. Words and music with familiar tunes to teaching poems. These are great. For example, the song 'Synonyms! Antonyms! Homonyms!' ends with

The--sau--rus holds the greatest words!

A trivial vocabulary

Simply is absurd.



www.readinga-z.com/recommend.html

Leveledooks and reading and question sheets to use with your class. There are free samples to download and you can pay for access to hundreds more at a variety of levels.

<http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/goodies.html>

Here is the 4 blocks goodies page. It has some lesson plan formats and great ideas and reproducibles.

Readers' Theatre

Here are lots of scripts that will suit your class:

<http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>

Try 'Go Home Goldie!' Easy reading for your students, but can be read as a rap or in rhythm. Sorry for the long URL!

<http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/clattem/Language%20Arts/Reader's%20Theatre/Go%20Home%20Goldie.htm>

Here are many more scripts - find the Reader's Theater scripts link:

<http://www.lisablau.com/archives.html>

Readers theatre

<http://www.readinglady.com/>

Click on the Reader's Theater link.



Math

A+ Math: math games and flashcards; you can also create and print out your own flashcards. If you have classroom computers on-line this is a very useful site.

<http://www.aplusmath.com/>

<http://www.mathstories.com/>

If you want to do a math problem-of-the-day, this is a great source - but you have to pay to join.

<http://www.mathcats.com/explore/factfamilies/addactivities.html>

These are good interactive math websites for time, money and multiplication.

<http://www.teachingtables.co.uk/>

<http://www.teachingtime.co.uk/>

<http://www.mathfactcafe.com/>

This is super! Make up your own math sheets for drill.

<http://www.aaamath.com/grade2.html>

If you have Internet access in your classroom or computer lab, this is a great site for practicing math facts. It gives you lots of choices and the children can do it themselves.

To make math worksheets:

www.schoolhousetech.com

There is a lite version you can download for free and then you can create addition or subtraction worksheets in any style. Go to: *Mathematics Worksheet Factory*.

<http://www.ezschool.com/games/alienaddition.html>

<http://www.ezschool.com/games/aliensubtraction.html>

If you have classroom or computer lab internet access, these are good sites to practice math facts to 18.

Interactive math for your students.....

<http://www.primarymath.org/>

Links to good math games.

Science

<http://www.chem4kids.com/matter/index.html>

If you do a science unit on matter, this will be a big help!

A program for teaching planting of seeds. Well done - it says for Grade 4 but lots of it is suitable for Grade 2's.

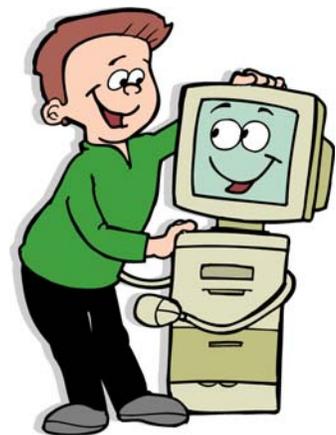
<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/firstgarden/index.html>

Great insect sites!

<http://www.ento.vt.edu/~sharov/3d/3dinsect.html>

A grade Two webquest:

<http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/encanto/insect2/>



Variety of Subjects

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/>

All sorts of teacher 'stuff'!

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

Check this out! It gives you check-lists for many different things , reading behaviour, clean-up, handwriting, math, etc. - or make your own.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/>

Check out the BBC site for kids. There are lots of activities that your students can do.

It was a pleasure to find this website called **Joanne's Links**, and then another pleasure to find that it was written by a Canadian teacher! Try it!

<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/groenen/>

<http://www.canteach.ca/>

Another Canadian site! Iram has put together a great resource for teachers. Check out the 'Poems and Songs' and the 'Classroom Management' sections - under 'Classroom Resources'.

<http://www.teachingheart.net/>

One of the best teachers' sites.

<http://just4teachers.blogspot.ca/>

An interesting blog with good ideas.



<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/siteindex.shtml>

There are super units on everything under the sun! There are books to print out, information with print-outs, crafts, classroom activities and much more. Try 'Zoom Dinosaurs', 'Butterflies', 'Oceans' and dozens more.

There are also great books to print out and photocopy for your kids. You have to pay, unfortunately!

<http://www3.telus.net/public/cbrand30/>

Cathy-Dee had lots of links and ideas. Go into Sites for Teachers to find all the great stuff!

http://www.frontiernet.net/~imaging/build_a_snowman.html

Try it! Great fun and good mouse practice.

http://www.tammyworcester.com/Tips/Tammys_Technology_Tips_for_Teachers.html

Tammy's Tech Tips for Teachers! Look under 'Instructions' for lots of ways to use your computer.

<http://holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/index.htm>

Bizarre and unique holidays for every day of the year! Did you know that November 2 is Devilled Egg Day? And November 9 is Chaos Never Ends Day?

<http://www.bry-backmanor.org>

This is a wonderful site with lots of activity sheets, little books, holiday ideas, picture recipes etc.

http://teachers.net/mentors/primary_elementary/

Have you visited a chatboard? Careful, they can be addictive!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/2ndgrade/>

If you have never been on a listserv, this will give you an idea of the conversations. Scroll down to the months, and click on a time period to see what Grade Two teachers are saying.

<http://www.proteacher.org/>

Lots to explore! There are a huge number of links on every subject.

<http://www.marCIAS-lesson-links.com/penguinCapers.html>

Great ideas for a penguin unit



<http://www.teachingheart.net/bboard.html>

Great bulletin boards!

<http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/exhibits/timemach/main.htm>

For BC teachers - the BC Archives Time machine!

<http://www.boardman.k12.oh.us/bdms/websites/websites.htm>

This is a wonderful resource! Look under 'Teacher Resources'.

<http://www.marCIAS-lesson-links.com/>

Here you will find the most comprehensive list of sites on the internet.

<http://www.abcteach.com/>

Lots of good things! Go hunting. There are materials to download for Language Arts, Math worksheets, sign language and more.

Behaviour Management

<http://www.disciplinehelp.com>

Then go to "Solutions for Handling 117 Misbehaviors'. This is an excellent site that you may find very helpful if you are seeking strategies to help a student with behavioral problems.

<http://www.nea.org/helpfrom/growing/works4me/manage/index.html>

This site offers strategies by which you can strike a balance between freedom and discipline. It offers valuable tips covering Attendance, Behavior Control, Prevention, Staying Ahead, and Inclusion.

Teacher Helps

<http://www.worksheetfactory.com/>

Download a program that will make up math worksheets for you at the click of a mouse. This is a great resource (and Canadian - from a BC teacher).



<http://www.puzzlemaker.com>

Make your own word search, crossword, and other puzzles to use in your classroom. Use the student's names or your vocabulary words. These look impressive and are very easy to do.

"A good site for making word searches, crossword puzzles and more is www.puzzlemaker.com

I make a few modifications to the puzzles that are created. When the puzzle is ready for print out, I do a right click/copy on the puzzle image. I then paste it (right click, paste) into a Word Document. I do this for two reasons. First, I am able to keep a copy of the puzzle in my files. Second, I am able to 'stretch' the size of the puzzle to make the boxes larger so that my students can more easily write in them. It also allows me to change the font style and size for the clues text.

Depending on the size and configuration of the puzzle, I sometimes need to insert a text box or two to hold the clues text.

I have created puzzles for my spelling lists, word wall words, and vocabulary lists. The kids love them. Usually, I try to write clues that include the kids' names. I will often let them team as 'puzzle partners' to work on the sheets. This is also a great homework option.

Since I save the puzzles from year-to-year, I usually just open last year's version and change the names."

"I encourage kids who have internet access at home to make their own crosswords with [puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com). I will often run copies of their puzzles for the class. I also let the kids help me make class puzzles. I assign a word to each student. They are to write a clue (usually a

sentence with the word missing) for that word. Sometimes I ask them to use their own name in the clue. I then type all of the clues into a puzzle. They like to find their own clues within the puzzle."

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/adam.bozon/anagramsolver.htm>

The Anagram Solver - if you do 'Making Words', this site is a big help! For example, I put the word 'valentine' and came up with the following:

VALENTINE VENETIAN ELATIVE ENLIVEN LENIENT LINEATE NAIVETE VEINLET VENTAIL
ALEVIN ALVINE ENTAIL INNATE INVENT LATEEN LEAVEN LENTEN LEVANT LINNET NATIVE
NEATEN TENAIL TENIAE TINEAL VALINE VEINAL VELATE VENIAL VENINE VINEAL ALIEN
ALINE ALIVE ANELE ANENT ANILE ANVIL EATEN ELAIN ELATE ELINT ELITE ENATE ENTIA
EVENT EVITE INANE INLET LATEN LEANT LEAVE LEVIN LIANE LIEVE LINEN LIVEN NAEVI NA-
IVE NAVEL NIEVE NIVAL TELAE TELIA TENIA TINEA VALET VEENA VENAE VENAL VENIN VINAL
VITAE VITAL ALEE ALIT ANIL ANTE ANTI EAVE ELAN ETNA EVEN EVIL ILEA LAIN LANE LATE
LATI LAVE LEAN LEET LENT LEVA LIEN LINE LINN LINT LITE LIVE NAIL NAVE NEAT NENE NEVE
NEVI NINE NITE TAE TAIL TAIN TALE TALI TEAL TEEL TEEN TELA TELE TILE TINE VAIL VAIN
VALE VANE VEAL VEIL VEIN VELA VENA VENT VIAL VILE VINA VINE VITA AIL AIN AIT ALE ALT
ANE ANI ANT ATE AVE EAT EEL ETA EVE INN LAT LAV LEA LEE LEI LET LEV LIE LIN LIT NAE
NAN NEE NET NIL NIT TAE TAN TAV TEA TEE TEL TEN TIE TIL TIN VAN VAT VEE VET VIA VIE
AE AI AN AT EL EN ET IN IT LA LI NA NE TA TI

Computer Ideas

"One teacher made a keyboard on a shower curtain and had the children find and step on keys.... she would teach what each of the different keys does. She also did an art project having them make a lap top computer and even had the mouse dangling out by yarn. She copied a keyboard for them to paste on."

Some guidelines:

no food or drink
clean hands
two hands up on the keyboard,
curl or roll to hunt for letters
use closest finger to key you need.

space bar with thumb
shifty pinky!



"I draw a midline down the keys following formal typing style. They can't cross it with their fingers to get a letter. It makes them use opposite hand for the shift key. I am pretty strict about the rules... do it this way or you lose your turn. I am very opinionated about forming

good habits if we are going to start this young. The mistakes we allow will often follow the children forever."

"We do a lot with drawing programs. I am sure there is a paint program on your computers. Children draw whatever they want. While drawing they must keep in mind they will need to make up a story to go along with the drawing. They can write out the story in the classroom. Then, come computer time again, they can start typing in their story. This takes lots of time but their creativity is so wonderful, it is definitely worth the work!"



"I believe that children should use technology every single chance they have. Some people have the misconception that technology means computers. Technology is a broad umbrella that covers things such as the telephone, cameras, video. Young children love to make their reading stories come to life by acting them out. Video tape it. Tape them reading. Allow them to call home when they did well on a test that they were worried about. Computers bring the world into their classroom (real time). My students check the weather every morning on our computer. They have e-mail pals."

"My kids learn programs in the computer lab and then use the 4 computers in the classroom during centres (at guided reading time). The centres change daily so each student can use them every 4 days, minimum. The computers can also be used first thing in the morning and during free choice at the end of the day. At these times, it is first come - first served. When my kids didn't learn programs in the lab or when I have a new one the lab doesn't have, I either huddle them all around and teach it and/or I teach a few kids who become the teachers and teach the rest."

"We have 4 PC computers in our classrooms. We also have a lab that I go to once a week for 45 minutes. I introduce things over a large screen and I also have the ability to use the TV as a screen also. I do stations in the room where I assign tasks for the students to do ... four to five students a day get to work on the computer. I have timers there. They set it for 10 to 15 minutes depending on what the task card tells them to do. They do the task and then they may have free exploration till the time is done. This works pretty well."

"I give my students both free time and instructional time. We have a shortcut folder on the computers' desktops. The students can click on this folder and browse inside. The websites are educationally inclined. There are days when I teach them specific skills and other days when they can play games. Believe it or not, the students also learn keyboarding skills when they are playing games. Type to Learn is made up of lessons and games. So, the students choose the games when they are actually practicing the last lesson. We have a 'guard dog' on the computers just in case the kids log onto something online they shouldn't...accidentally, of course."

Using a database is great! If you have MS Works on your computer, you will have a database. You may also have Excel or a database maker on Office. When you use a database for marks, for example, the children's names would be in Field 1, and then each set of marks goes into a separate field. You can pop the marks in easily with the database in 'List View', and then you can sort the marks in one field into ascending or descending order, etc. You can sort each field in numerical order or alphabetical order.

This is also great for your library book list. Put the book name in field 1, author in field 2, subject in field 3, and levels in field 4. Add other fields if you wish. When you are finished and would like all the books in Level 7, just sort that field and there they are. You can sort the authors list alphabetically, and all the books by that author will come up. The books can be added in any order and at any time. This is a great resource when it is finished!

"I have my library books on a database and update it frequently. I have these fields (some of the fields are shortened to one word): title; author; theme; location (school or home); AR level - not important to me, but sometimes helpful; how many copies we have; and whether we have an audio tape to go with it. I print out an alphabetical title list and a theme list. These two lists are in notebooks in my room and at home. Every two years I check the lists against the books."

The teachers were asked how they use the computer in the classroom and these are some of the answers.

Newsletters to parents, dayplans, weekly schedule, yearly plans, letters to parents, writing report cards, banners and posters for the classroom, cards for the children and staff (Print Shop), worksheets, keeping in touch with parents via e-mail, keeping inventory, staff communication, Principal's messages, keeping records of children's marks and anecdotal remarks on a daily basis, nametags, flashcards, class lists, typing and printing books for the children to read, and making books from their stories, attendance, certificates, spelling lists, photos from the digital camera etc.!

On the internet they find poetry, worksheets, units, awards, and great ideas.

Make sure there is easy student access, and easy teacher access for presenting, modeling, and process writing, etc. Keep the computers away from direct sunlight, water, magnets, and chalk dust.

Provide enough space for small group interaction.

Post computer rights and responsibilities, guidelines for help, and expected behavior near computer station.

Display posters using computer terms and commands.

Use an **egg timer** to monitor the length of time students are at the computer. Allow the students one minute after the timer sounds to finish their sentence or save their work.

Use **student techies** to keep time, regulate turns, and offer assistance to classmates with problems at the computer.



Odds and Ends

Teach Drawing

"I model drawing for my students starting on the first day of school. I ask them what they want me to draw a picture of. One year I had to draw a moose! (YIKES) I showed them how I start with a pencil so that I can erase if I need to. Then I ask them what we might find around a moose. Mountains, trees, water, grass, etc. So I draw some of that in. Then I colour the whole picture always asking their opinion and what they think would make the picture better. By the time the picture is done - two or three days later - the entire picture is coloured. There are no white spaces left. Then I tell them that every time they draw a picture I don't want any white space left. If a student finishes a picture of a person and that is the only thing on the page I ask questions to make them think. Such as: Can a person float in air? What is your person doing then? What did you forget? Where is that person/animal? In the house? outside? What would help me know that? I always tell the students before they start a picture I want to be able to tell what is happening in your picture without having to ask. By the end of the year I only have to ask, "What did you forget?" High expectations!"



Student-Created Puzzles

"I create word searches for my students all of the time. (Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com>) I think it makes them more aware of the letter order in words. My students also make crossword puzzles. I give them a list of words to choose from (usually 15-20) They might be vocabulary and spelling words or words that go with a unit of study. I did this in small groups the first time but after that they did them on their own, although some still needed help. I gave them a paper grid with 1/2 inch spaces. They write the words on the grid putting one letter in each space. After they have 5 or more words we look it over to make sure that the words only touch on the joining letter. I then number the down words with a red pen and the across words with a green pen. I turn their paper over and write Across and list the clue numbers. Down and list the clue numbers. They write the clues for the words. Usually this is a sentence with a blank or an opposite clue. Sometimes it is a descriptive clue. I create the crosswords on the computer and make a word bank of the answers. This has turned out to be a very high interest project for my kids and I make a booklet out of all of the crosswords for each child. The other first grade teachers get a copy too and often use them to review with their students."

Great Tips!

"One tip I love is to use baby wipes to clean desks. It's a quick, easy, and efficient way to clean up the weekly grunge that accumulates - especially when there is no time to clean in a 'fun' way."

"My school is having a day where we can meet with other teachers and share 'tricks' that have really worked for us. These turn out to be extremely productive!"

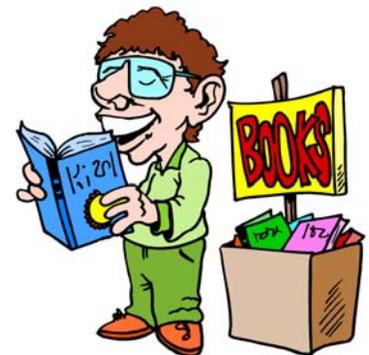
"During Guided Reading I wear a special necklace. When I am wearing my guided reading necklace they are not allowed to talk to me, unless it is an emergency. I usually plan to have a parent or other adult in the room during this time. If they forget and come over to the table, I grab my necklace as a way to remind them not to interrupt. This has worked extremely well for me."

A Wish Tree

"Last year I made a wish tree. Put requests for various items on apples (or leaves) on a wish tree, either just for your room or maybe your grade level. Parents can remove the apple or leaf and fill the wish. This could be left up all year so that teachers could add to it as needs cropped up. Ideas for the Helping Apple Tree: ziplock bags (the kind with the zipper tab), sticky notes, index cards, markers, coloured pencils, film; also add baby wipes, hand sanitizer, kleenex, paper cups, and coloured pencils. I try to think through each month of the year and write down items that we might need. For example, in February I like to have doilies. So I ask for them now and put them away until February. That saves me a trip to the store and a little money in February! Depending upon the income level of your parents, I've also put up requests for a game such as Candy Land (for rainy day recess) or a specific CD that I've been wanting for the classroom. Some parents are very happy to buy these bigger items. I also put out these wishes at parent conference time."

Go 'Shopping' For Books

"I going to use heavy duty zip-loc freezer bags. I have experimented with these, and loved it! The children 'shop' for 5 books at their 'just-right' level and these go in their bag, along with a bookmark and their reading rings and then into their desks! We shop once a week for books. Their just-right level is determined by the running records I take. My books are leveled using Fountas-Pinnell's levels. Neat, clean, and convenient! Now, the book rings.....I used tag board to print cards, hole punched them and set a basket of them where the kids could reach them easily. They have to read their book to themselves, a buddy, and me (or a volunteer) with approximately 95% accuracy. I have them quickly and orally answer a few comprehension questions, state the main idea in one sentence, and then I sign my initials to approve on a card, record the level and the title. They complete the card front and back,



draw and colour a small illustration, and add it to their metal ring. When school starts, I will figure out a way for each child to have a hook to hang their ring on since they will get quite large before the year is over! The cards are really simple...name, date, title, author, level, main idea, and on back, they circled either 'great book', 'good book', 'not-so-good' book, or 'awful' book. I managed to print three to a sheet. It is a good way for them to keep a record of their self-selected readings."

Happy Birthday

"I have a box that is decorated like a present. In it are things that I've collected from Hallmark and other places: Examples: birthday paper crowns, birthday pens, a birthday placemat, birthday watches (paper), a little flag that sits on their desk that says Happy Birthday, birthday stickers, pencils, etc., a happy birthday seat cover that I painted, and little happy birthday signs that sit on their desks. They can pick anything out of the box that they want to use for the day. I have done this with Grade One and Grade 4. It was funny, but many grade 4 boys loved wearing the paper crowns. Some would use every item, and some would be more picky."



"I have a bag that I call the 'Birthday Bag'. The bag contains a number of birthday books, some special pencils, erasers, bookmark, markers that the birthday person can use that day, and a certificate and special stickers that the student can keep.

Throughout the day, the child can read the birthday stories during DEAR time or free time, and I encourage the classmates who have spare time to make a card or note. At any time during the day, the others will pass by and slip their card or note into the bag."

"I have the birthday student bring a gift of a book for the classroom. It is wrapped, and the child unwraps it and then I read it to the class. I write the student's name and the date in the book and then it is put into the class library to remember this special day. The kids love this, and that book is special all the rest of the year. I have a few extra ones wrapped for the ones who can't bring a book."

Getting To Know You Web

"On the first day of school each year I have all of my students sit 'like pretzels' in a circle on the floor. I go first and tell the students three things about myself: "My name is Mrs. Blaess. I have two cats and two dogs. I like to go swimming and read" I then toss a yarn ball to one of the students carefully explaining that when it's their turn to toss the ball they have to make certain they hold on to the string tightly. Each student then gets a turn to tell three things about themselves and to toss the ball. The ball eventually is woven across the

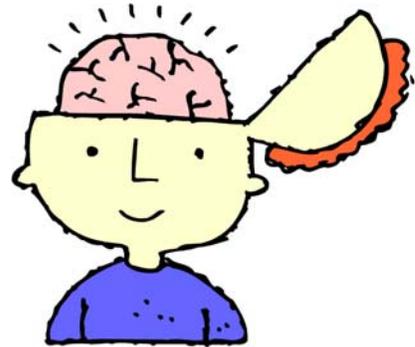
circle. This activity is great for building community spirit because as the students are taking their turns I explain how they each have an important role to play and if a single person lets go the entire web is damaged. Depending on the attention span of the group you can reverse the web when everyone is done asking each student to recall the name of the student who passed them the ball. I have done this activity with various grade levels and everyone has loved it."

Brainwork!

"I always have BRAINWORK on the board for the class to begin after they've placed their markers in the Attendance/Lunch chart. This gives me time to read notes from home, check in homework folders, help the student of the day get the Math board ready. Brainwork is always review material. For example:

1. put words in alphabetical order
2. count on from a number
3. an addition or subtraction question
4. the cat is sad (2 errors - rewrite correctly)
5. Draw a picture

As kids finish, they are to read silently or write in journals. The timer goes off after 10 minutes, we go over the answers together, and proceed with Math meeting."



All About Me!

"I am preparing to repeat a project I did a couple of years ago. I have ordered enough empty books for each child in my class to have one. I am going to send one home with each child and ask the family to help the child write a book about him/herself and return it to school to share with the class. Many add snapshots, drawings, all sorts of things to truly personalize their book. I ask that they be returned by the end of September. As the books come in, they are shared with the class. These books will be stored together in a tub in our classroom library and returned to the child at the end of the year. When I did this before, the kids loved looking at each other's books."

Title It - A Quick Game

Give each team captain a bookmark. Each student on the team must hop down to the book, lay the bookmark on the page designated by the referee, close the book, and then hop back. The next student hops down and moves the bookmark up five pages and hops back. Repeat this until you have a winner.

"Every year I teach my first graders to play chess. It is great. They love it. Last year one of them almost beat me! Very embarrassing. I have thought too about setting up a chess

club at recess. You may want to set up ground rules. With older kids the rule is that there only two things they can say once a game starts: check and checkmate."

Directed Drawing

"I use 2 books by Mark Kistler - *Draw Squad* (ISBN 0-671-65694-5) and *Imagination Station* (ISBN 0-671-50013-They contain step by step drawings which even the most artistically challenged (like myself) can use to draw terrific 3D cartoon like drawings. They contain tons of different drawings from aliens to sharks, castles, dinosaurs and flying rocket pencils. He introduces the children to art concepts and vocabulary such as horizon, shadow, shading, surface, and foreshortening through his lessons. My Grade 2's have loved doing this unit each year and have shown carryover to their independent drawings. He encourages children to add 'bonus' ideas - lots of wild creative details to make their drawings unique. These are great books. I usually do it after Christmas with my Grade 2s but have also done it with Grade 1s in late spring. We have had several teachers use the books, so it was fun to have Grade 2 and Grade 6 do the same drawings."

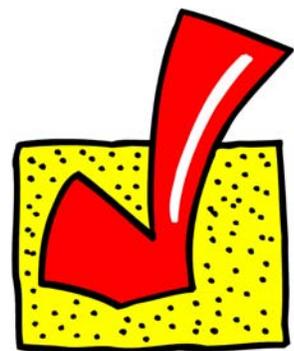
A Reading Checklist

Print out a chart for your students to take home and put on the fridge. They check off each category as they read.

Fairy Tales	Realistic Fiction	Fables	Picture Books	
Science Fiction	ABC books	How to books	Informational books	
Magazines	Comic Books	Newspapers	Cereal Boxes	Greeting
Cards	Road Signs	Trading Cards	School Newsletters	
Other.....				

Marking

"Mark everything you can with each child. Marking after school and returning it to the child the next day is an almost useless exercise! They have forgotten the thought processes that went into the exercise by then. I know it is time consuming in our busy day, but every minute spent marking with the child is valuable. Marking it right away reinforces the positive and you are immediately able to spot children who are not understanding or who need frequent reminders."



"I don't check homework. Below is a copy of the letter I send home at the first of the year. After this initial letter, the 'home'work is three or four worksheets stapled together with a half page sized coupon stapled on top. The worksheets are ones that demonstrate what skills we will cover in class that week and cover reading, spelling, and math. The children and I are very aware of sticker count. When the parents come in for conferences they are, too."

A Homework Coupon

Dear Parents,

Grade Two students are still learning to be organized. Help them get in the habit of unpacking their backpacks and folders when they get home.

At the beginning of each week they will have a 'home'work packet. It will have samples of the skills that we are doing in class. Please help the child understand the skills and check the work with them. If the worksheet seems too hard, do it with them. The papers do not have to come back to school. I will not grade them. Just send the coupon back by Friday. I will give each child a sticker on his/her chart as a reward for getting the signed coupon back to me. This lets me know at a glance who is being responsible and making the home-school connection.

"I have been doing this for quite a few years and have had positive feedback from parents. My aide runs the coupon on coloured paper so it stands out. If the coupon is not returned by Friday, the child has to miss the first 5 minutes of center time. This year I gave a habitual offender an after-school detention. I had my sticker chart as documentation."

Books for Grade Two Teachers

"You'll most likely want *Month by Month Phonics for Second Grade* by Pat Cunningham at some point. It gives a ton of activities to do each month during the 'Working with Words' block. Very helpful!

"*The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks* also gives a good summary of the techniques. It's shorter than *Classrooms that Work* (below) and gives specific ideas for each activity. This one is also useful in a practical sense.

"I especially enjoyed *Classrooms that Work*. It gives a good overall summary of the Four Block philosophy and some 'pictures' of what four blocks classrooms look like. As I look at it more, it is more philosophy and background: Why other strategies have failed, the importance of using science and social studies texts, developing decoding fluency, guiding kids writing and reading... It is an easy read and quite informational. This one is less full of activities and more full of ideas to change your mind about how you teach (I'm sounding as fluent as the kids.....)

"Finally, once you get going, the *Teacher's Guide to Guided Reading* is very good. It just came out and I'm reading it right now. It's full of practical ideas for the classroom."

Using Your Camera

1) "I take a photo of each child in September. Then I print them and use them for 'About the Author' pages in books and all kinds of other places.



2) Take photos of successful art projects you have done with your students. It is great to keep a sample all ready for the next year but they take up a lot of space and are hard to flip through. A file (or album if you are really organized) is much easier to look through when you are feeling desperate.

3) I take photos of the children - sometimes alone, sometimes with two or three children together - doing a variety of activities throughout the year. I get them reading together, in the gym, at recess, doing math, art, sharing their writing, whatever. In June I sort out the photos so I have 4 to 6 or more of each child and then make them into a mini photo album (glue pictures onto construction paper and staple pages together). I write a caption or label under each picture. The parents can have this on a CD if they prefer. I put these in their June report card envelopes as a surprise. These are popular with parents who don't get to see their kids in school."

Use of Digital Cameras and Scanners

- Make a memory book of things the class has done during the year..
- Make personalized bookmarks with the student's picture.
- Make personalized stationery for the student to write letters on.
- Make stickers for students with their picture and name.
- Use photographs of students, and activities for writing assignments.
- Photograph various stages of science experiments.
- Illustrate written work and student assignments.
- Make personalized thank-you notes for guest speakers.
- Make book labels, address labels, etc.
- Make postcards with class, or student pictures.
- Add photos to classroom web site.
- Add photos to passports as you 'travel' to other countries.
- Make student trading cards.
- Add photos to research projects.
- Make a class directory.
- Make student ID cards.
- Create personalized student timelines.

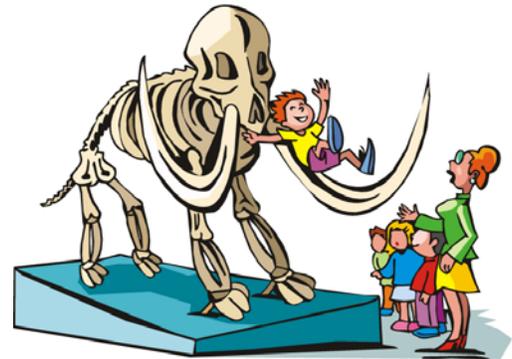


- "Digital cameras are great tools for on a field trip. Kids can take turns (10-20 min. shifts) taking pictures of what they think is important. Guidelines could be set ahead. This makes for terrific follow up when viewed and discussed back at school - especially if you can also get a TV to hook up to your computer monitor.
- Digital portfolios for the kids can include some or all of these pictures. (Digital portfolios are great for educators to have also.)
- Science class activities, nature walks, experiments can be photographed and discussed later as a review.

- You can photo an area kids can't visit on a field trip and give your kids a virtual field trip - again the TV monitor helps for class sharing.
- Kids love taking turns being photographer at any school event - especially their class parties. Fun to view later either in a class or during an indoor recess."

Having a Student Teacher

"My student teaching (back in the days of the dinosaurs) was divided between two classrooms. One of the teachers welcomed me and shared everything, including her joy for her job, and the other one tolerated me and did the bare minimum. But I did learn from both of them. I hardly remember the unfriendly one, but I still love the first one and still use her ideas after 20+ years. And I still laugh with the kids like she did.



"Since then I have had two student teachers and I loved each of them. I tried to share everything I did. I even expected them to stay late with me if needed. Last year we were lucky enough to get a terrific new teacher on our team and she frequently came to me with her questions. It made me realize all the things that a student teacher ought to have a chance to experience, like how to grade, keep records, set up a series of routines. The first year of teaching is stressful anyway, so anything that can be taught during student teaching is a plus.

"Some of the things that I did was: to make sure that the students know that this is a teacher and that we are very lucky to have this extra teacher. Make sure that the student teacher did not just sit and observe. They have been sitting for several years and need to change perspective. I think they started with reading to the class and then had them choose a student that they could see needed extra attention and give me ideas on what I could do. After seeing me teach a lesson, I let them take over and follow my lesson plans for a day or two. We usually discussed what they had taught and then I let them make the plan for the next day. I think we started with spelling and then went to the other subjects. This gave us time to really discuss how to plan for each subject. By the time the two weeks of teaching came, they were pros. I did not make them use the horribly long lesson planning strategy that the college wanted them to do unless they needed to or wanted to. We do most of those things in our head and don't have time to write all that down. But I used the college's outline of lesson plans to ask questions about what they did. I had them plan for a substitute. It's hard to figure out what a sub needs to know and what you can let go. I made sure that they attended all meetings with me. It's good to see the inner workings of a school. I made sure that they took time to talk to other teachers, and to relax at lunch time. I think the hardest thing for me (control freak) was to explain my grading and to hand over my grading book, but they did an excellent job. We always took about 30 minutes after school to talk. We had a Coke and asked questions of each other. This is the really terrific part of having a student teacher - you will learn a great deal from them. I figured that I gained about as much as the student teacher did. I had to be able to justify everything that I did. That really makes you evaluate what you

are doing and I need that every so often! We had the most interesting discussions on things such as laughing with the kids, how to cover or openly expose our mistakes, how much noise was comfortable for each of us (I could usually tolerate more), how to read the signs that a child is not well or is disturbed in some way and what to do about it, and many other things. They need time to ask questions and to learn to laugh at themselves."

A Hand-print Calendar

Cover page: left and right hand-print with photo of child

*I know you wipe some away
But these hand prints were made to stay.
One a month I made for you
Some on white, some on blue.
So keep them forever, a treasure they'll be,
A special gift for you from me.*



January - On blue paper make white hand-prints around in circle (palm in same spot) sprinkle glitter into wet paint and let dry.
*Snowflakes, white are dancing down,
Dancing, dancing all around.*

February - make heart by pointing fingers down and towards each other.
*The heart is you, the hand is me
To show we are friends; the best there can be.
I hope you will save it and look back some day
At the heart I made for you on this day.*

March - shamrocks (fingerprint stems and thumb print leaves)
*May you be feeling
As carefree and gay
As these little shamrocks
On St. Patrick's Day.*

April - rabbit on blue paper white hand-print - do not print thumb or 1st and 4th fingers. Separate 2nd and 3rd fingers for ears, rest of hand makes face of rabbit.
*I'm an Easter Bunny
Watch me hop
Here are my ears
See how they flop!*

May - Two handprints opposite with spread fingers to make a butterfly's wings.
*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!*

June - Flower - fingers spread upwards to make a flower shape.

*Wherever you are, whatever you do,
May this flower bring a smile to you.*

July - On blue paper, make hand prints in a circle for a sun,
fingers are the rays.

*It's holidays and we'll have fun!
We'll swim and have picnics in the sun.*

August - octopus no thumbs 2 hands palms touching (on blue paper)

*In the pool so quite 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 and fingerprints for fall leaves)

*Autumn leaves are now falling
Red and yellow and brown.
Autumn leaves are now falling.
See them tumbling down.*

October - spider - 2 hands with no thumbs, palms overlapping fingers to side (4 on each
to make 8 legs)

*Clever spider spins a thread
To make a trap we call a web.
Clever spider knows that she
Will have some insects with her tea.*

November - Make a bare tree using the arm and hand with fingers apart for
branches.

*No sunshine, lots of rain,
No warm days, snow again!
No bugs or bees
No leaves on trees.
You must remember
This is NOVember!*

December - Rudolph- foot makes the face, hands for antlers

*The reindeer antlers are my hands
His face is my foot
He comes with lots of love
From me to you!*



A Student Leaving

"When I have a student that moves we sit down and each child writes a letter to the student's new teacher and class. The kids tell all the great things about that student and talk about what a good friend he/she is, etc. I make an envelope for the child to take these to his/her new classroom. This might help with the transition and it does make a nice keepsake."

To Dye Pasta

"To dye pasta, put about a tablespoon or so of rubbing alcohol and food colouring in a gallon size plastic bag, then add your pasta, and shake until it is covered. Then spread it out on a cookie sheet to dry. It works wonderfully! The alcohol makes the food colouring spread, and it dries quickly."

Brainstorming

"I do a short brainstorming lesson every day. It helps the children to become familiar and fluent with this and now I rarely get children asking what to write about or wondering how to make a story longer. Here are some ideas for Spring:

List many things that are warm, hot, cool, cold.

List things that are yellow.

List creatures that are born from an egg.

How many different insects can you name?

List signs of Spring.

What things can you do now that you couldn't do in the winter?

What can you do on a rainy day?

Water and the Brain

Our brains function by sending small electronic signals between our neurons. Water is the primary conduit for these signals. Without proper fluid in our systems, nerve signals are dulled and impaired. Think about the dehydrated man in the desert suffering from hallucinations. Try increasing your water intake before a big test and see what a difference it makes.

From the BBC News:

"An experiment in Scotland claims that pupils' test results improve if they drink more water. Pupils at Corstorphine School in Edinburgh have been drinking water throughout the primary school day - and have seen test results improving to the extent that they have already exceeded targets set for 2002. The theory under consideration is that the human brain uses water in its transmission of neural messages - and that if children are regularly hydrated their brains are better physically equipped to learn. The school's assistant head, Carol Wood, says



that pupils bring bottles of water to school and can drink from them whenever they wish - and that the increased intake of water is now part of the classroom scene.

"Apart from any benefit to children's brains, Ms Wood also says that regular consumption of water has more general health benefits - and that it prevents children from becoming dehydrated throughout the day. And she also speculates that the process of stopping in order to drink water can help pupils to re-focus their thoughts.

But she was reluctant to see the school's success linked solely to the water experiment - saying that improvements in test results reflected the effectiveness of the teaching and other measures being tried at the Edinburgh primary school. As well as testing the impact of drinking more water, the innovative school is experimenting with theories based on pupils having different learning styles - such as some preferring to learn visually rather than verbally or through writing.

Water in the Classroom

"At the school I was in they were doing so much with brain research. It says children need to be drinking so much water, etc. We had the PTA buy water bottles for every child in the school."

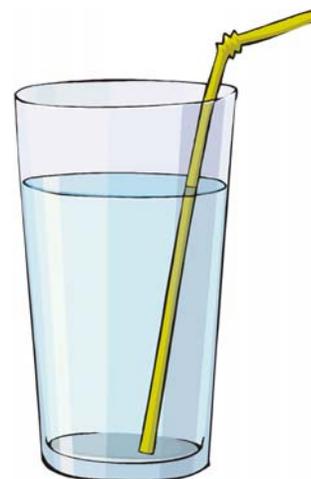
"My children had water bottles last year. The bottles 'sweat' and leave water rings on the tables. I had a student once who brought his water bottle to school wrapped in a man's tube sock. He had frozen the water overnight and the sock caught all the sweating. It became a new trend!"

"I allow water bottles - only the type with the pop up top. I said they had to stay at the table and they could not play with them or they would lose it. You must be very firm about your rules and take away a child's water bottle when they misuse it. I did notice more need to use the bathroom at first until the children's bodies adjusted to more water.

"Keep in mind that they should be taking their water bottles home every Friday for a good scrubbing. Studies show that the growth of bacteria is amazing. I hadn't thought about it until I read a newspaper article. Now those bottles go in the backpacks every week - no guarantee that they will get washed, but....."

A Teacher's Portfolio

"Your teaching portfolio should contain a brief autobiography, statement of educational philosophy, resume, transcripts, letters of recommendation, student teaching evaluations, verification of having passed the department of education exams, copy of teaching certificate, awards/honors, volunteer services and activities, documentation of involvement in student organizations, documentation of participation in professional development activities/conferences,



information on special skills/talents, sample lesson plans, sample curricular unit, photographs of various teaching experiences: bulletin boards, working with students, etc., self-evaluation of student teaching experiences, professional development plan, video-taped lesson."

Water increases the ability of the blood to carry oxygen to the brain by 100 to 1,000 per cent. The more water students drink, the more energy they have. Students who are bored or listless and who lack concentration may be dehydrated. That's why a growing number of teachers remind students to drink water before a lesson and allow them to drink it during class.

A Teacher's Survival Kit

Matches: For those days when you feel you need to light a fire under your students.

Wiggly eye: For when you wish you had eyes in the back of your head.

Battery: Like the Energizer Bunny, so you keep going and going and going...

A Puzzle Piece: To remind you that you don't have to do it alone...we all need to work together to make things whole.

Animal crackers: Eat these when you think you're working in a zoo.

Snickers: To remind you to laugh.

Clothespin: To remind you to hang in there!

Penny: You are a priceless part of _____ (school name)

Pencil: To remind you to list your blessings every day.

Tea Bag: To remind you to take time to relax daily and go over that list of blessings.

Snowflake: When all else fails, pray for a snow day.



A School Money-Raising Project

"Every year at Christmas each class collects gifts to make one lovely basket. These are sold by silent auction. They always are sold for excellent prices and we raise a lot of money. Some of the baskets are: chocolate lover's basket, dog lover's basket (dog treats, toys, etc.), movie lover's (popcorn, video, pop etc.), Christmas basket (various Christmas items), Mom's treat basket (bath salts, nail polish, bottle of wine), gardening basket (garden gloves, seeds, trowel), kids craft basket (there can be lots of items, crayons, pens, etc.), coffee/tea lover's basket (lots of specialty coffees or teas, mugs), summer fun basket (depending on the season - towels, beach mat, sunscreen, shovels and bucket), and many others. There could be sports, pets, kitchen, bath, books, etc. It is a great fund-raiser, takes minimal work, little money, and everyone loves it!"

A Gift for a Student Teacher

"I had a student teacher leaving at Christmas so I rewrote the 12 days of Christmas and gave her 12 teacher gifts. Then pairs of children gave her the gift as she read that part of the book. We had fun with it. Most of the gifts were very small but important teacher things. One gift was a big gift with kids hand prints. We did a t-shirt for that. It was fun and appreciated!"

Of course, this book would be a great gift for a student teacher!



Fingerpaint

Liquid Starch Fingerpaint - Premix 1/2 cup liquid starch and 1/2 cup tempera paint in a cup. Spoon onto paper.

Or: Dissolve 1 cup cornstarch with 1/2 cup cold water and set aside. Boil 3 cups water in a pan and remove from heat. Add cornstarch mixture to hot water, stirring constantly. Place pan back on heat and boil until clear and thick for about one minute. Add 1/2 teaspoon food colouring. (Make sure cornstarch is dissolved before adding or it will be lumpy.) Paint with warm paint.

Or: Creamy Soap Flake Fingerpaint - pour 2 cups warm water in a bowl. Add 1 cup soap flakes and beat with an electric mixer until stiff. Mix in 1/2 teaspoon food colouring. (Ivory Snow, not laundry detergent) Don't dump unused paint in the sink as it can severely clog the drain.

Easy Clean Up Tempera Fingerpaint - Mix 1/4 cup tempera paint with 1/8 cup liquid soap.

In My Desk!

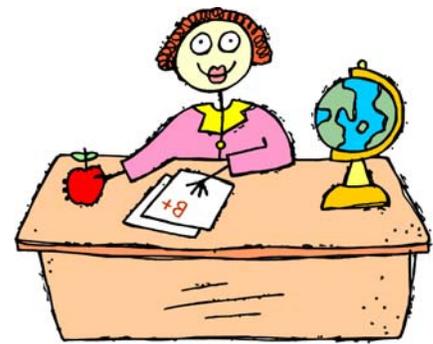
The teachers of the 'grade_one' listserve gathered this amusing and useful list of things to keep in your desk.

The Things That Saved You Because They Were in Your Desk

Inspirational: Pictures of family and friends (don't forget pets!), pictures of MY kids (I suppose I should have one of my husband, too), framed certificates/diplomas/credentials, a book (my friend gave me) with inspirational stories about teachers and teaching, an assortment of cards: birthday (for friends you forgot), thank you, congratulations (baby, etc.), sympathy and my favourite moral support cards (everybody needs one now and then)

Office Supplies: Box of envelopes, extra pencils already sharpened, small hand held pen-

cil sharpener (I can sharpen a pencil and keep teaching, too...), stickers and awards, extra printer ink for those emergency printing needs, string, scissors (at least 2 pairs as I lose one all the time), pen (extra one that I wear around my neck so I don't lose it), extra stapler



Food Needs: CHOCOLATE!! (why not start with the most important - M&Ms are good, they don't melt or go funny), treats for self and kids such as gummi bears, mints/TicTacs/ hard candy, snacks/granola bars, tea bags/herbal tea bags, change for the coke/snack machine, lunch money, pop/water bottle/juice boxes, gum, can of soup (for when you forget your lunch)

Emergency: First aid kit, band-aids, pain medication, (Tylenol, Advil, Excedrin, Aspirin), ricola throat drops, cough drops, Imodium A-D, Echinacea, safety pins, Goo Gone, some spot remover (packaged in individual towelettes), a spare vehicle key taped up on the underside of one of the drawers (just in case I accidentally leave the lights on, but have already locked the keys inside, or, um, something dumb like that), a long distance phone card - because you can't use the school phone to call long distance, hammer, screw driver, needle-nosed pliers, tape measure

Toiletries: Lip gloss/lip balm, hand lotion/cream, sunscreen (for when you take those wigglers outside), hand sanitizer (kills germs without water or towels), perfume, hairbrush/comb, nail file/fingernail clippers, toothbrush/toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss, travel size contact lenses solution/case, baby wipes, mini bottle of eyeglass cleaner, mirror, ponytail holders/a scrunchy to pull up my hair, hair bands and barrettes (for those little girls who need their hair put up), deodorant, feminine hygiene products, a can of Lysol (I sometimes spray the room once they leave at lunch just to freshen the place up)

Clothing Related: Key chain that goes on my wrist or hangs around my neck, extra pair of reading glasses, needle and thread, sunglasses, cardigan/ sweater/ shawl, Cling Free Spray, mittens, hat/scarves, a smock or apron for messy work, a clean shirt, extra pair of socks, pair of comfy shoes (for when you make the mistake of wearing those stupid shoes that hurt your feet to school), pair of slippers (under the desk), extra underwear, an umbrella

Interviews

"The kids listen to interviews daily on TV, so we use this format to encourage asking suitable questions.

We do this as part of the 'Our School Community' theme. The students and I talk about what questions we could ask members of the staff. They came up with about 5 questions: What is your job? How long have you been at this school? What is your favourite thing about the school? What is your favourite thing about your job? Why did you choose this job? After practicing with me, and practicing with each other, I sent them off in groups of two to various

staff members (who had agreed to the interview). After they finished their interviews, they came back and wrote up the information and drew a picture of the person they had interviewed. After editing, the good copy was attached to the picture and we posted the whole thing on the bulletin board and then turned it into a book.

Now I am going to have them interview each other!"



I'm Done!

"I have a poster that says, 'I've Finished Early. What Can I Do?' Then I've listed several things such as: complete unfinished work, read a book, write a letter to a friend, practice your math facts, write the numbers to 1000, work on an SRA, write your spelling/vocabulary words in a short story, write in your journal, do extra credit work, etc. For the extra credit work, I just have a file of various work that I've copied such as word searches, crosswords, or just extra copies of class-work. The students love looking through and finding something that appeals to them."

"I use a small bulletin board with ideas posted for what they can do when they have finished their work. I also have a basket of mind teasers and logic puzzles under it. I labelled it the 'The I'm bored board' and there is a sign on the basket that reads, 'I'm done, but my brain wants to keep working.'"

"I've taught chess with Grade Two very successfully. It is done as a 'Club' activity on Friday afternoon and also very popular in my classroom as a 'fast finishers' activity if there is a reasonable time left - often games are left set up. I have a set of large chess pieces that have the instructions on the back as to how the pieces move - the back of the piece is flat and the instructions are stuck on - they come like this."

Make Rainsticks

"I collect paper towel rolls, and then cut them in half. Christmas wrapping paper rolls are good, too. I cut styrofoam for stoppers at the ends. The kids insert toothpicks into the tube and glue the ends with craft glue. They put in one stopper, and then add some mini-pasta, rice or seeds into the stick, and put in the second stopper. The children cover the sticks with environmental print wall paper, or draw their own designs. The ends are securely glued. We use these with we do word wall spelling."

Beautiful Book Covers!

"To make a beautiful cover: first make some beautiful paper (you can do it in centres 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 water-colours 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 beautifully, rather like stained glass.

You can make other papers using other techniques. Try 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."

A Great Bookshelf

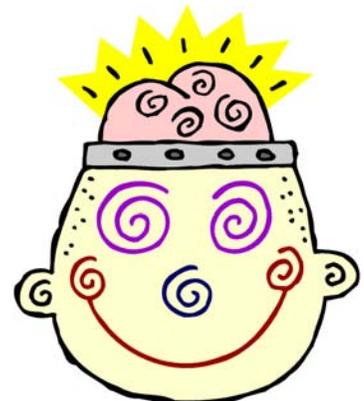
"I love the bookshelf that I made from vinyl rain gutters. I cut the gutters into 4 foot lengths, attached them to the wall with the brackets that are sold with the rain gutters. I have 4 shelves on my wall. They hold about 25 books, all which are flat against the wall and can be seen, and the whole thing only sticks out about 5 inches!"

This website discusses these shelves:

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

Left Brain, Right Brain

"An interesting activity that I often do is a drawing activity that will encourage right-brain thinking. Copy a simple drawing (I usually use one from a colouring book) onto a transparency. Fold a 12x18 sheet of paper in half, hamburger style. For the first drawing, place the transparency on the overhead, upside down. Position the paper so that the students draw that image on the half that will produce the image right side up on the



right half of the paper. They will draw what they see (drawing the image upside down). When finished turn the transparency right-side up, turn their paper around, so that both images are right-side up and have them draw the image they see on the left side of the paper producing the image right-side up.

When you examine the results, you should see an image drawn primarily with the right side of the brain on the right side, the one drawn primarily with the left side on the left side. Theoretically, the right one should be better because being upside down made it illogical, therefore calling on the right side of the brain to work. Since the right side is supposedly more creative, it should look more like the projected image."

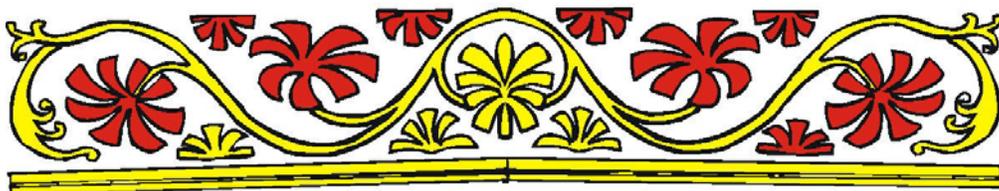
See whether you are a right or left brain person - take a test! [Google left right brain quiz and find out which you are.....](#) (I'm mostly left.....)

Disabilities and Disorders

<u>Disability:</u>	<u>Area of difficulty:</u>	<u>Symptoms include trouble with:</u>	<u>Example:</u>
<u>Dyslexia</u>	Processing language	Reading, writing & spelling	Letters and words may be written or pronounced backwards
<u>Dyscalculia</u>	Math skills	Computation, remembering math facts, concepts of time & money	Difficulty learning to count by 2s, 3s, 4s
<u>Dysgraphia</u>	Written expression	Handwriting, spelling, composition	Illegible handwriting, difficulty organizing ideas
<u>Dyspraxia</u>	Fine motor skills	Coordination, manual dexterity	Trouble with scissors, buttons, drawing

Information Processing Disorders:

<u>Auditory Processing Disorder</u>	Interpreting auditory information	Language development, reading	Difficulty anticipating how a speaker will end a sentence
<u>Visual Processing Disorder</u>	Interpreting visual information	Reading, writing & math	Difficulty distinguishing letters like "h" and "n"



Wit and Wisdom

Help stamp out, eradicate and abolish redundancy!

He who laughs last, thinks slowest.

All children are gifted . . .some just open their package sooner than others.

Good teaching is one-quarter preparation and three-quarters theatre.

Some people can swim around all day in the Sea Of Knowledge and still not get wet.

The trouble with being punctual is that nobody's there to appreciate it.

Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up.

Good teachers are the ones who are able to challenge young minds without losing their own.

School teachers are not fully appreciated by parents until it rains all day Saturday.

Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.

"The main thing, is to keep the main thing - the main thing."

"Don't let yourself get caught in "the thick of thin things"

Steven Covey

When going round a spinney of larch trees Tracking Something, be sure it isn't your own foot-prints you are following. *Pooh*

I have suffered a great many catastrophes in my life - some of them actually happened.

Teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges.

Joyce A. Myers

For every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong.

If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere.



All learning begins with the simple phrase, "I don't know." -- I don't know.

Don't worry that children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you. -
Robert Fulghum

The secret of teaching is to appear to have known all your life what you learned this afternoon.

"Like a ten-speed bike, most of us have gears we do not use."
Charles Schulz

*"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend.
Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."*
Groucho Marx



Amazing as it seems, my life is based on a true story."

*I live by the adage that 'God put us on earth to accomplish a certain number of things.
At this time, I am so far behind I may never die.*

My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.

Most educators have bought into the myth that academic learning does not require discipline - that the best learning is easy and fun. They do not realize that it is fluent performance that is fun. The process of learning, of changing performance, is most often stressful and painful.

Remember the Golden Rule. And remember it's your turn.

The really nice thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, and is not preceded by periods of stress, worry or depression.

Education is a funny thing. At eighteen we knew all the answers - 40 years later even the questions confuse us.

My husband usually calls in and says he has problems with his eyes. He just can't see coming in to work.

The only things in the middle of the road are yellow stripes and dead porcupines.

.....I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.....

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.



As the old man walked along the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up to the youth, he asked why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun.

"But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish," countered the other. "How can your effort make any difference?"

The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. "It makes a difference to this one," he said.

Anonymous

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class.

"In English," he explained, "a double negative forms a positive. In some languages, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However," the professor continued, "there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up. "Yeah, right."

Oxymorons

Act naturally

Found missing

Airline food

Good grief

Almost exactly

Government organization

Sanitary landfill

Small crowd

Soft rock

Military intelligence

Childproof

"Now, then ..."

Taped live

Clearly misunderstood

Plastic glasses

Terribly pleased

Political science

Tight slacks

Definite maybe

Pretty ugly

Diet ice cream

Rap music

Working vacation

Exact estimate

Microsoft Works

The Spell Checker

I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC
It plane lee marks four my revue
Miss steaks eye can knot sea.

Eye ran this poem threw it,
Your sure reel glad two no.
Its vary polished in it's weigh
My checker tolled me sew.

A checker is a bless sing,
It freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed,
And aides me wen I rime.

Each frays posed up on my screen
Eye trussed too bee a joule.
The checker pours o'er every word
To cheque sum spelling rule.

Be fore a veiling checkers
Hour spelling mite decline.
And if were lacks or have a laps,
We wood be made to wine.



T'was 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 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'd 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 -

Butt now bee cause my spelling
Is checked with such grate flare,
Their are know faults with in my cite,
Of non eye am a wear.

Now spelling does knot phase me,
It does not bring a tier.
My pay purrs awl due glad den
With wrapped words fare as hear.

To rite with care is quite a feet
Of witch won should be proud.
And wee mussed dew the best wee can,
Sew flaws are knot aloud.

Sow ewe can see why aye dew prays
Such soft ware four pea seas.
And why I brake in two averse,
By righting want too pleas.

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 fruit cake, every cracker and chip
Every last bit of food that 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!



*Here's to the kids who are different,
The kids who don't always get A's.
The kids who have ears twice the size of their peers,
And noses that go on for days.
Here's to the kids who are different,
The kids they call crazy and dumb.
The kids who aren't cute and don't give a hoot,
Who dance to a different drum.
Here's to the kids who are different,
The kids with the mischievous streak.
For when they have grown,
As history's shown,
It's their difference that makes them unique.*

HOW TO TELL IF YOU'RE A REAL TEACHER

- Real teachers mark papers in the car, during commercials, in staff meetings, in the bathroom, and have been seen marking in church.
- Real teachers cheer when they hear April 1 does not fall on a school day.
- Real teachers drive older cars owned by credit unions.
- Real teachers clutch a pencil while thinking and make notes in the margins of books.
- Real teachers can't walk past a crowd of kids without straightening up the line.
- Real teachers have disjointed necks from writing on boards without turning their backs on the class.
- Real teachers are written up in medical journals for size and elasticity of kidneys and bladders.

- Real teachers have been timed gulping down a full lunch in 2 minutes, 18 seconds.
- Real teachers can predict exactly which parents will show up at Open House.
- Real teachers volunteer for hall duty on days staff meetings are scheduled.
- Real teachers never teach the conjugations of lie and lay to eighth graders.
- Real teachers know it is better to seek forgiveness than to ask permission.
- Real teachers know the best end of term lesson plans can come from Blockbuster.
- Real teachers never give tests the week before a holiday.
- Real teachers know the shortest distance and the length of travel time from their classroom to the office.
- Real teachers can 'sense' gum.
- Real teachers know the difference among what must be graded, what ought to be graded, and what probably should never again see the light of day.
- Real teachers are solely responsible for the destruction of the rain forest.
- Real teachers have their best conferences in the parking lot.
- Real teachers have never heard an original excuse.
- Real teachers will eat anything that is put in the workroom/teacher's lounge.
- Real teachers know secretaries and custodians run the school.
- Real teachers hear the heartbeats of crisis; always have time to listen; know they teach students, not subjects; and they are absolutely non-expendable.

You might be a primary teacher if

You always, to your family's embarrassment, turn a pizza into a math lesson on fractions.
 You ask your friends twice if they need to go to the bathroom before they get into your car.
 You repeat instructions three times and then ask, 'Does everyone understand?'
 Stacking piles of papers on the floor seems like a logical filing system to you.
 You correct the grammar and spelling on restaurant menus.
 You consider a 2.2% pay raise above average.
 You tote more keys than a horse has teeth, and you know how many teeth a horse has.
 You find yourself kneeling down to tie your spouse's shoe.
 You have explained to a child that being a rock in the school play is an important role.
 Untied tennis shoes are a fashion statement where you work.
 You consider a roll of toilet paper on your desk a necessity.
 You have considered encouraging a parent to consider home schooling.
 You believe chocolate is a food group.
 You can tell it's a full moon without ever looking outside.
 You believe that unspeakable evil will befall you if anyone says, 'Boy, the kids sure are mellow today.'
 When out in public you feel the urge to talk to strange children and correct their behavior.
 You can't have children because there's no name you could give a child that wouldn't bring on high blood pressure the moment you heard it uttered.
 Your personal life comes to a screeching halt at report card time.
 Meeting a child's parents instantly answers the question, 'Why is this kid like this?'

Improve Your Writing

Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.

Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.

Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.

Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.

And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.

Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.

Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.

Avoid clichés like the plague. (They're old hat.)

Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.

Comparisons are as bad as clichés.

Be more or less specific.

One-word sentences? Eliminate.

Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.

Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.

No sentence fragments.

Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.

One should NEVER generalize.

Don't use no double negatives.

Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.

Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.

Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.

Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.

Kill all exclamation points!!!

Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.

Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas.

Use the apostrophe in it's proper place and omit it when its not needed.

Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.

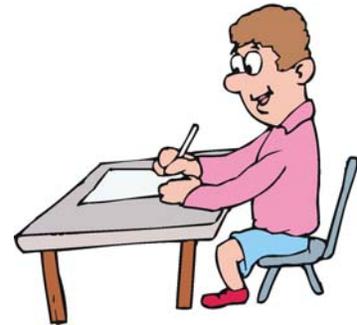
Puns are for children, not groan readers.

Who needs rhetorical questions?

Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

And finally...

Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.



Tired of Those Highly Paid Teachers?

I, for one, am sick and tired of those high paid teachers. Their hefty salaries are driving up taxes, and they only work nine or ten months a year! It's time we put things in perspective and pay them for what they do, baby-sit! I think that is worth much less than minimum wage. That's right.....I would give them \$3.00 dollars an hour and only the hours they worked, not any of that silly planning time. That would be 15 dollars a day. Each parent should pay 15 dollars a day for these teachers to baby-sit their children. Now, how many do they teach in a day....maybe 25. Then that's $15 \times 25 = \$375$ a day. But remember they only work 180 days a year! I'm not going to pay them for any vacations. Let's see... that's $375 \times 180 = \$67,500.00$ (Hold on, my calculator must need batteries!) What about those special teachers or the ones with masters degrees? Well, we could pay them extra. Let's round it off to \$6.00 an hour. That would be \$6 times 5 hours times 25 children times 180 days = \$135,000.00 per year. Wait a minute, there is something wrong here!

How you know if you're an elementary school teacher:

You declare 'no cuts' when a shopper squeezes ahead of you in a checkout line.

You move your dinner partner's glass away from the edge of the table.

You ask if anyone needs to go to the bathroom as you enter a theatre with a group of friends.

You hand a tissue to anyone who sneezes.

You refer to 'happy hour' as 'snack time'.

You ask guests if they have remembered their scarves and mittens as they leave your home.

Do you say 'I like the way you did that' to the mechanic who repairs your car?

Do you ask 'Are you sure you did your best?' to the mechanic who fails to repair your car?

Do you sing the 'Alphabet Song' to yourself as you look up a number in the phone book?

Do you say everything twice? I mean, do you repeat everything?

Do you fold your spouse's fingers over the coins as you hand him/her the money at a tollbooth?

Do you ask a quiet person at a party if he has something to share with the group?

If you answered yes to more than two of the above items, you are hooked on teaching.

If you answered yes to more than half of them, you're probably beginning to think about retirement.

If you answered yes to more than ten, you'll always be a teacher, retired or not!



WHICH WORDS WILL YOU USE?

DID tells us of achievement;

WON'T tells of retreat.

MIGHT hints of encouragement;

CAN'T tells of defeat.

OUGHT reminds us of duty;

TRY gives us faith each hour.

WILL shows we're determined;

CAN gives us power!

REMEMBER:

We DID do a good job this year!

We WON'T let negative people influence us!

We MIGHT even make some improvements next year!

We CAN'T let stress get us down!

We OUGHT to get paid a lot more!

We will TRY to make a difference in every child's life!

We WILL be the best teacher we can be!

We CAN grow as a professional.

Thoughts On Life

It's more fun to colour outside the lines.

If you're gonna draw on the wall, do it behind the couch.

Even Popeye didn't eat his spinach until he absolutely had to.

If your dog doesn't like someone you probably shouldn't either.

Even if you've been fishing for 3 hours and haven't gotten anything except poison ivy and sunburn, you're still better off than the worm.

Sometimes you have to take the test before you've finished studying.

If you want a kitten, start out asking for a horse.

There is no good reason why clothes have to match.

If the horse you're drawing looks more like a dog, make it a dog.

Save a place in lines for your friends.

Just keep banging until someone opens the door.

Making your bed is a waste of time.

Make up the rules as you go along.

It doesn't matter who started it.

Ask for sprinkles.

Hang on tight.

Ask 'why' until you understand.



When I Am Old

When I'm an old lady, I'll live with my kids,
And make them so happy, just as they did.
I want to pay back all the joy they've provided,
Returning each deed. Oh, they'll be so excited.
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll write on the wall with reds, whites and blues,
And bounce on the furniture wearing my shoes.
I'll drink from the carton and then leave it out.
I'll stuff all the toilets, and oh, how they'll shout.
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they're on the phone and just out of reach,
I'll get into things like sugar and bleach.
Oh, they'll snap their fingers and then shake their head,
And when that is done I'll hide under the bed.
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they cook dinner and call me to meals,
I'll not eat my green beans or salads congealed.
I'll gag on my okra, spill milk on the table,
And when they get angry, run fast as I'm able.
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll sit close to the TV, through the channels I'll click,
I'll cross both my eyes to see if they stick.
I'll take off my socks and throw one away,
And play in the mud until the end of the day.
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

And later in bed, I'll lay back and sigh,
And thank God in prayer and then close my eyes,
And my kids will look down with a smile slowly creeping,
And say with a groan. 'She's so sweet when she's sleeping.'



O.D.D.

"Last year, one of my co-workers with whom I worked very closely, had a child who was labelled ODD (Oppositional Defiance Disorder). When his mother told us this however, she told us that he had OPTIONAL Defiance Disorder. We have laughed about this for a year now. We wanted to tell her that if it was OPTIONAL, he should just choose another option!"

The English Class

The teacher said, 'Class, today, we'll learn the letter 'G'.

It really is quite easy, as soon you all will see.

'G' makes a 'g' sound in the words, 'good' and 'girl' and 'graph'.

'G' also makes the 'j' sound that's found in the word 'giraffe'.

You may think that's all there is, and our lesson's now through.

But there's more - a silent 'G', in words like 'sign' and 'gnu'.

'G' also works with 'H' to make a special 'GH' sound,

And here are just a couple of words in which the sound is found:

A 'g' in 'ghost',

Silent in 'though',

'F' in 'tough',

And 'oo' in 'through'.

Just memorize these different words and you'll know English too!

As my teacher carried on, I thought of that old rumour,

Whoever made up English sure had a real strange sense of humour.



Improving the English Language

Having chosen English as the preferred language in the EEC, the European Parliament has commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communications between Government departments. European officials have often pointed out that English spelling is unnecessarily difficult; for example: cough, plough, rough, through and thorough. What is clearly needed is a phased programme of changes to iron out these anomalies. The programme would, of course, be administered by a committee staff at top level by participating nations. In the first year, for example, the committee would suggest using 's' instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants in all sities would resieve this news with joy. Then the hard 'c' could be replaced by 'k' sinse both letters are pronounsed alike. Not only would this klear up konfussion in the minds of klerikal workers, but typewriters kould be made with one less letter. There would be growing enthusiasm when in the sekond year, it was announsed that the troublesome 'ph' would henseforth be written 'f'. This would make words like 'fotograf' twenty persent shorter in print. In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be ekspektet to reash the stage where more komplikated shanges are possible. Governments would enkourage the removal of double letters wish have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. We would al agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the languag is disgrasful. Therefor we kould drop them and kontinu to read and writ as though nothing had hapend. By this tim it would be four years sins the skem began and peopl would be reseptive to steps sutsh as replasing 'th' by 'z'. Perhaps zen ze funktion of 'w' kould be taken on by 'v', vitsh is, after al, half a 'w'. Shortly after zis, ze unesesary 'o' kould be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou'. Similar arguments vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. Kontinuing zis proses yer after yer, ve vud eventuli hav a reli sensibl riten styl. After tventi yers zer vud be no mor trubls, difikultis and evrivun vud find it ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze drems of the Guvermnt vud finali hav kum tru.

Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his boots? 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 than 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 and courage she had left 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..." Her trial starts next week.

The Positive Side of Life

Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun every year.

How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.

Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live.

Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

Ever notice that the people who are late are often much jollier than the people who have to wait for them?

Most of us go to our grave with our music still inside of us.

If Wal-Mart is lowering prices every day, how come nothing is free yet?

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.

Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened.

We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colours....but they all exist very nicely in the same box.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.



LOST

Dear Mrs. Butler, this is just a note
About our son Raymond's coat
Which he came home without last night,
So I thought I better write.
He was minus his scarf as well, I regret
To say; and his 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 P.E. bag, he says, and one
Of his socks, too - it's purplish and green
With a darn in the heel. His sister Jean
Has the same socks, too.
And while I remember, is there news
Of those gloves which Raymond lost that time
After the visit to the pantomime?
Well I think that's all. I will close now.
Best wishes, yours sincerely,

Maureen Howe

(Mrs). P.S. I did write 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 now he might have lost the note,
Or left it in the pocket of his coat.



A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You're in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be a teacher," said the balloonist.

"I am," replied the woman, "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is, technically correct, but I've no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all. If anything, you've delayed my trip."

The woman below responded, "You must be a School Administrator."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise, which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."

Have you heard about the next planned Survivor show?

Several businessmen and women will be dropped in an primary classroom for 6 weeks. Each businessperson will be provided with a copy of the curriculum, and a class of 25 students. The class will have five LD children, three with A.D.D., one gifted child, and two who speak limited English. Three will be labelled as severe behaviour problems. They 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, 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. They must attend workshops, staff meetings, union meetings, and curriculum development meetings. They must also tutor those students who are behind and strive to get their 2 non-English speaking children proficient in English. If they are sick or having a bad day they must not let it show. Each day they must incorporate reading, writing, math, science, and social studies 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.

Lunch will be limited to 30 minutes. On days when they do not 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 two 40-minute planning periods 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 job.

Failure List

Einstein was 4 years old before he could speak.

Isaac Newton did poorly in grade school and was considered 'unpromising'.

Beethoven's music teacher once said of him, 'As a composer, he is hopeless'.

When *Thomas Edison* was a youngster, his teacher told him he was too stupid to learn anything.

He was counseled to go into a field where he might succeed by virtue of his pleasant personality.

F.W. Woolworth got a job in a dry goods store when he was 21, but his employer would not permit him to wait on customers because he 'didn't have enough sense to close a sale'.

Michael Jordan was cut from his high-school basketball team. Boston Celtics Hall of Famer *Bob Cousy* suffered the same fate.

A newspaper editor fired *Walt Disney* because he 'lacked imagination and had no good ideas'.

Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade and had to repeat it because he did not complete the tests that were required for promotion.

Babe Ruth struck out 1,300 times -- a major-league record.

The Mysteries of the English Language

There's no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One goose, two geese. One moose, two meese? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend, that you comb through the annals of history but not a single annal?

If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? If teachers taught, why didn't preacher praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? If you wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? Park on driveways and drive on parkways? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? How can overlook and oversee be opposites, while quite a lot and quite a few are alike?

How you noticed that we talk about certain things only when they are absent? Have you ever seen a horseful carriage or a strapful gown? Met a sung hero or experienced requited love? Have you ever run into someone who was dis-combobulated, grunted, ruly or peccable? And where are all those people who ARE spring chickens or who would ACTUALLY hurt a fly?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling out and in which an alarm clock goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it!

A person may make mistakes, but isn't a failure until he (or she) starts blaming someone else.

We must believe in ourselves, and somewhere along the road of life, we must meet someone who sees greatness in us, expects it from us, and lets us know it. It is the golden key to success.



Sayings not seen on morale posters.....

Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.

We put the 'k' in 'kwality'.

A person who smiles in the face of adversity...probably has a scapegoat.

If you can stay calm, while all around you is chaos...then you probably haven't completely understood the seriousness of the situation.

If at first you don't succeed, try management.

Never underestimate the power of very stupid people in large groups.

Hang in there, retirement is only thirty years away!

Go the extra mile. It makes your boss look like an incompetent slacker.

When the going gets tough, the tough take a coffee break.

Never put off until tomorrow what you can avoid altogether.

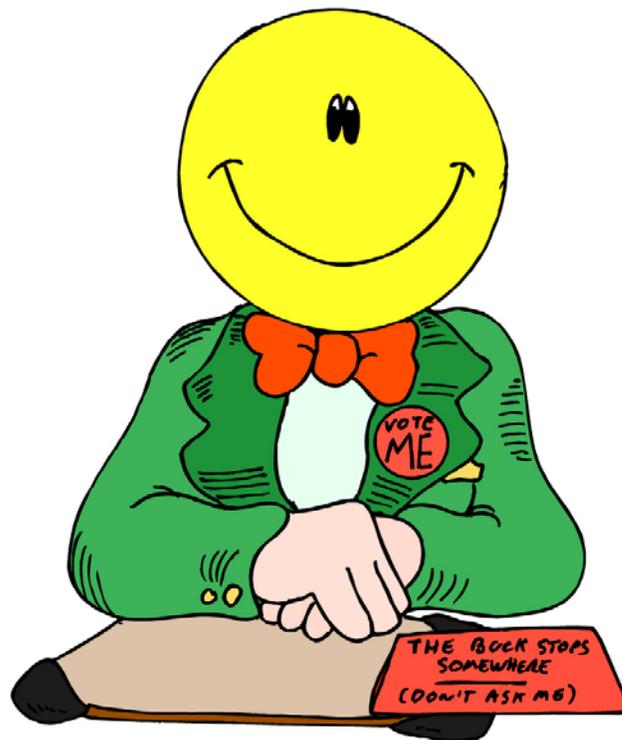
Artificial Intelligence is no match for Natural Stupidity.

Rome did not create a great empire by having meetings, they did it by killing all those who opposed them.

INDECISION is the key to FLEXIBILITY.

Succeed in spite of management.

Aim Low, Reach Your Goals, Avoid Disappointment.



Notes

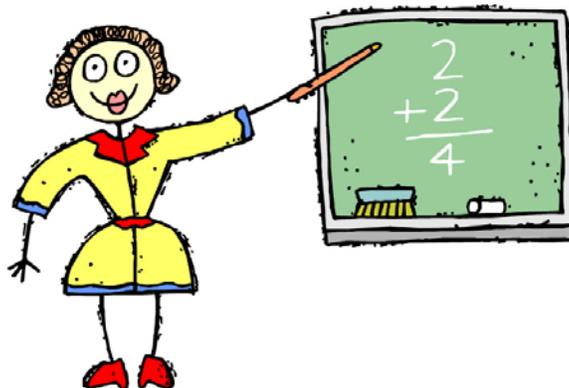
Teachers and Teaching

A Philosophy of Good Teaching

"I have often been asked for my teaching philosophy. This is a very difficult question, and my ideas on this have changed drastically over the years. Now, as an 'old' teacher (read 'experienced!'), I have come to the conclusion that the better the lesson plans and program plans the better the students will progress. This seems to follow in every subject that I teach. It begins in the morning with the class circle time. If I don't have a routine of skills to go through, the time isn't nearly as useful. The more comprehensive the reading program is, the better the children learn to read. If the lessons begin with a review, have a teaching component, a practice section and then a closure - the children progress faster. The same plan applies in Math and other subjects. You need to know what you will do every day and where you are going, and today's lesson should follow yesterday's lesson in a natural progression of skills. For years my Science and Social Studies lessons were haphazard (and often left out). My P.E. lessons were thought up on the spot. Now I find that so much more real learning takes place when I follow an overview plan, my lessons follow one another in a systematic way, and each lesson follows the basic lesson plan above.

"This sounds so sensible! Isn't this what our University professors expected of us? But how many of us actually do this? Even though I know this to be true, I don't always follow a consistent plan in all subjects, but I know that my children will succeed if I can follow a good program closely. I see other teachers who teach reading, for example, without a daily progression of skills and a consistent format. Their children don't learn as well. While we may not particularly enjoy teaching to a strict program, it works best!"

"My philosophy of good teaching can be summed up in one word - model! Model good reading. Model good math processes. Model writing skills. Model neatness. Model behaviors we want the children to emulate. Model all the good things that you want your kids to do, and then expect the best from them!"



Questioning Common Procedures

Morning meeting vs. calendar time - another view

"While most of us start the day with calendar activities, it may be better to start the day with a meeting that's more focused on interpersonal, oral communication and listening skills (answering a question of the day, shared reading of a poem or song). You can do administration things at that time, too, like attendance. A morning meeting sets up the day on a good, friendly, positive shared note, and it also flows nicely into a literacy block.

"You can save the calendar for a lead in to your math block. It makes for an excellent post-recess wind-down. Here you do things like reciting the date, counting the days of the school year to practice place value, doing skip-counting to the 'days in school', and answering numerical questions with this number and the date number, counting money, etc. At this time you can report the weather and graph the results, play an estimation game or do mental math."

Show and Tell

"I can't stand show and tell, it's just too boring, so I do something I heard about at a workshop. It's called Desktop Teachers. We start in the fall and I assign four or five kids each Friday to be a desktop teacher. (I have them each at a different table and the class rotates through like centres.) They have to teach the rest of the kids about something they know a lot about, or can do really well. They may bring in posters, pictures, or artefacts to help them. I go first to model the concept. I bring in my Scuba equipment and explain it to them. After everyone in the class has had a turn, we stop, and then we do it again in the spring. The first year I did it, the kids were really phenomenal. One boy researched Egypt on the internet. Last year my class was not as receptive. Some kids didn't want a turn. But it is a really good opportunity for the accelerated kids to work to their potential."

SSR - DEAR

There is some controversy over whether SSR is a valuable use of time. Some studies have shown that children reading independently in class results in no improvement in reading ability. Opposing studies say that this is a very important part of the reading program, improves skills and fosters a love of reading.

Perhaps the studies are using children at different ages and reading stages, and are both correct! Do a survey of your class during this time. Watch each child for several minutes and answer the following questions:

- Is the child actually reading the book chosen?
- Is the child absorbed in the story?
- Is the book at the child's reading level? Was it a good choice?
- Is the child simply studying the pictures and then turning the page?



- Is the child's attention wandering?

At this time in Grade Two you will likely find a variety of answers. Some of the children who are now reading fluently will be using this time to enjoy a story. Some children who are able to read fluently will have made a poor choice of book, and will not be reading. The students who have not reached the fluency stage will not usually be actually reading. Some may be pretending to read and others will be looking at pictures or their attention will be wandering to other things.

The time is valuable for the children who are reading and enjoying their books. The time is *not* valuable for those who are simply waiting out the SSR time, pretending to read or looking at pictures. For these children, this time may actually be harmful. They are giving themselves the message that others can read and they can't, that reading is difficult and 'work', and they may be trying to deceive the teacher - this is definitely harmful to the child.

There are some things you can do to improve this experience. Make sure each child has a book at his/her independent reading level - 95% word recognition or above. Below 90% word recognition is frustrating and the child will soon not try. Give a purpose to the reading, if possible. If there are still children who will not or cannot read independently, bring a group together and oral read a favourite story. If you have parent volunteers, have an adult take a child for oral reading. You can read a simple story to a group of children, then have them go to their seats and read the story to themselves.

Think about the process! We need to justify what we do.



Stress

Teaching can be a stressful occupation. When work stress continues steadily over time, negative physiological and psychological consequences may result.

Many teachers would agree. Teaching is not only hard work, it can be full of stress. Pressures due to curriculum changes, district expectations, inadequate administrative support, poor working conditions, lack of participation in school decision making, the burden of paperwork, and lack of resources have all been identified as stress-causing factors. Teaching students with learning and/or behavioural difficulties will almost certainly cause stress. Often primary teachers have a working day with few breaks. They are expected to be parents, disciplinarians, social workers, entertainers, psychologists, nurses, office workers, computer technicians, and, of course, teachers.

What is stress?

Teacher stress is defined as "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression, resulting from aspects of work as a teacher". Most teachers, especially primary teachers, have been there.

Being aware.....

Teachers must learn to recognize stress-producing work events and the corresponding thoughts that they provoke. Teaching can be a stressful profession. Add report cards, concerts, parent interviews, etc., to the daily stress of unruly children, students with learning difficulties, paperwork, playground duty and dozens of other situations that appear each day. Environmental influences can also add to stress, whether or not you are aware of them. High noise levels are stressful. Clutter and an untidy working environment will add to the stress level. Air quality makes a difference.

Female teachers also contend with guilt - that we are ignoring their families for the job, spending too many hours at school and bringing the problems of the job home. We often put impossibly high expectations on ourselves.

Be aware of where stress can lead. If you find yourself worrying or obsessing about things in your life that aren't truly important or those over which you have no control; if you can't sleep; if you have sadness, irritability, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, you may suffer from depression. See your doctor for advice.

What can you do to lessen the stress?

Focus on your senses a few minutes each day. For a few minutes a day, practice being mindful - focusing only on what's going on in the present - whether it's during your workout or taking a break from your work. Take a relaxing 20-minute walk and don't think about your job worries or anything else unpleasant. Pay attention only to your senses - what you see, hear, feel, smell. This can make a huge difference in your emotional and physical well-being.

No matter how stressed or busy you are, exercise. Exercise is probably the most effective stress reliever available. Researchers recently found that after spending 30 minutes on a treadmill, their subjects scored 25 percent lower on tests that measure anxiety and also showed favourable changes in brain activity. If you can't hit the gym, even a brisk walk at lunch will help relieve stress.

Organize your life! Often part of a teacher's stress is environmental. Make your classroom beautiful. Mess and clutter contribute to stress. Keep your classroom as quiet as is practical. Calm, organization and quiet will help enormously. Spend 10 minutes each day keeping your classroom neat and use behavioural techniques to ensure that your students are quiet and organized, too. If your home needs some loving care, hire someone to come in each week to help you.

Talk about the good things in your life. When you get together with a co-worker or home to your spouse, talk about the good parts of your day. Each day, spend a few minutes being grateful for the wonderful things in your life.

Look after yourself! Eat well. Eat small amounts of complex carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables and protein often throughout the day. Drink lots of water and breathe deeply.



Saving Your Sanity

One teacher's ideas to lessen stress:

1. Prioritize. I'm not talking about the little things, I'm talking about the big ones. Family first, yourself second, job third. I know others believe teaching comes first, but for me, my job comes second to my family and my sanity. You have got to put yourself before the job or you will burn out quickly in this profession. It is just too demanding. Also, you only raise your family once. Don't have the regrets of putting the job before time with them.
2. All special projects are wonderful learning experiences, but not all at once! When you see all the wonderful ideas that other teachers are doing it is easy to feel like you want to do them all. That is impossible. When you see an idea for a fun project to go with a unit, do it. Then when that project is complete begin looking for another one. I make notes of what I do and what works, then the next year if I liked the project I do it again and add more to the unit. My units are built over years, not days. I just try to add a couple of new things each year.
3. Not all lessons are required to have a fantastic, eye catching, tap dancing teacher. Sometimes it is okay to just present the lesson as it is in the teacher's guide. Not everything has to be a dog and pony show. You end up with a three-ring circus!
4. Not every paper must have a mark at the top. When we are practicing a skill I do things with the children. If we do it together I don't mark it. This saves my marking time for things that actually must go in the book. At my school we are supposed to take two marks per week per subject. I am not an over-achiever in that area. I pick and choose what I want to take a mark on and only put marks on those items. Everything else we go over together and review the correct answers. I think the students learn more from this than if I just stick a mark at the top and hand it back. If parents ask I just tell them we did that paper together.
5. Mark all you can with the individual child in class. This is worth far more to the child's learning than marking after school.
6. Don't be afraid to say no.

"I made the choice to simplify as much as possible. Here are just a few ideas. I used to use those plan books you could purchase where you had to write in everything. Instead I now use my computer and create a table. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday are on one page and Thursday and Friday on the other along with a column to write notes. At the bottom I have an area for meetings I need to attend. I type everything on that stays the same all week. It has saved me a tremendous amount of time.

I also decided to mark math papers twice a week and go over the others during math class. The kids like it more, too.

I integrate my social studies and writing assignments as much as possible. This has also helped me tremendously.



I wanted to do centres but decided against them because of the amount of time needed to keep them going. I really had to think if it was busy work or a beneficial task. I gave up the idea of doing them altogether. My family life has to be a priority as much as my sanity needs to be.

I assign a special number to each child that he or she must write in the upper right hand corner of assignments. It makes it so much easier to see who owes work. I use the numbers for other things like attendance that they do themselves using a magnet that is on my chalkboard.

I bring some work home that I do as we sit together in the evening, but it is not as much as I used to bring home. I do arrive early at work but it is because I like to avoid traffic and I have a 30 minute commute. The other benefit is that no one is at the copy machine. I make sure I leave as early as possible almost every day."

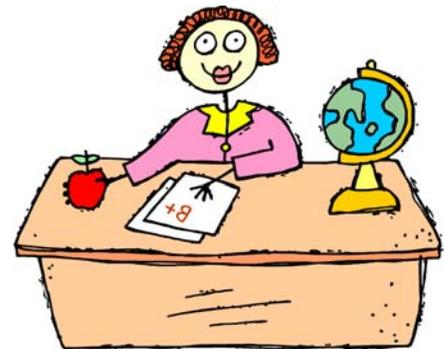
Time Management

Do you work at school on weekends and holidays?

- Instead of going to school to tidy up the classroom, spend the last twenty minutes on Fridays doing a classroom clean-up with your students.

- Instead of spending hours creating decorative bulletin boards, display children's work.

- Instead of schmoozing with colleagues, hang a CLOSED sign on the door when children leave at the end of the day. Then, work free of interruptions for thirty minutes. That's two and a half hours of solid work time you can gain each week!



Can you do activities with your students instead of for your students?

- Instead of writing sentences about stories on sentence strips to use for sequencing activities, elicit sentences from students and write sentences as children watch. Then, read and reread sentences aloud together. Interest is heightened because you are using the children's words and ideas for the sentences.

- Instead of decorating borders of handprinted poetry charts, have pairs of children do the illustrations. This fosters in children a sense of classroom ownership and responsibility.

- Instead of correcting papers with a red pencil, do corrections together. Have children find and fix their errors. Rubber stamp their papers 'Self-corrected'.

- Work that you mark with the student and he can correct immediately is worth far more than work that you correct after school or on the weekend.

Are you doing activities that require a lot of teacher preparation time? Is there an easier way to accomplish the same thing?

- When you attend a class or inservice and the instructor explains that you'll need to make significant changes in how you teach in order to use his ideas, ask yourself how you can adapt and integrate the ideas **without changing** the way you like to teach. You are the expert in your classroom - you know what works best for you and your students.

- Published reading, spelling and math programs that are laid out for you in sequence save much time - and sequential programs have been proved to increase the learning. They have been written by people who have lots of time, so why re-invent the wheel? When you do sequential programs, you never have to ask "What will I do tomorrow?" This saves a LOT of planning time.

- Summers and weekends are for your life beyond teaching!

- Instead of using your time to tape record yourself reading stories for book and tape sets, read each story aloud to the class and tape record it **AS** you read it to the class.. You are making the tape on the spot on school time - not your time! What an easy way to get book and tape sets for your classroom library.

Seek out simple, make-sense ways to get things done that do not create more work. Even if the teachers on your grade level camp at school most weekends, you don't have to join them. Donating your weekends to your job is a choice. You will be a more enthusiastic, energized teacher if you have a life beyond teaching. There is a positive correlation between a teacher's level of enthusiasm and how much children learn. And the most important children are your own! The children in your class are on loan.

There is every good reason to have a life beyond teaching!



Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

You have a boy in your Grade Two classroom. He is a slightly withdrawn child who seems to be a 'loner'. He appears to have an average or higher intelligence, and he may have slightly inarticulate speech. You notice that his pencil grip is immature and he appears to have difficulty with simple fine motor tasks, although he can explain to you how the task should be done. Even after a year in Grade One he seems to have difficulty printing letters accurately on lines. His drawing is very immature, while his vocabulary is well within the average range for his age. He may simply refuse to participate in P.E. exercises or games. He runs awkwardly. He becomes stressed or confused if routines change. His parents tell you that he has always been a bit shy and that he is "just not athletic".

It is very possible that the student described above has Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). Developmental Co-ordination Disorder is described as an impairment, immatur-

ity or disorganization of movement. The term DCD is now replacing the labels "Clumsy Child Syndrome" and "motor learning difficulties". In the past these children may have been described as "klutzy", or "nerdy". Up to one child in 10 is affected by DCD. It is therefore likely that every class will have a child with this disorder in varying degrees of severity.

Teachers may recognize the following symptoms in the classroom:

- Immature speech or articulation.
- Immature fine and gross motor skills. The child will have difficulty learning new motor tasks. He/she may appear clumsy and awkward. The child may run awkwardly and not have understanding of his body in space. He may have small motor problems with printing and drawing.
- A child with normal intelligence may have difficulty in planning and organizing his thoughts. He may have difficulty processing more than one request. He cannot multi-task.
- The child may have difficulty with reading, writing and spelling and some math.
- Behavioural/emotional problems - difficulty joining in with peers, low self esteem, P.E. avoidance, acting out during art lessons, trouble coping with free time, isolating. This area is especially important. Children with DCD are capable of growing into fully functional adults, however, confidence and self esteem issues can lead to larger problems than the disability itself.



If any of the above symptoms are noted it is important that the child is assessed by a paediatrician and an occupational therapist and physiotherapist.

It is quite possible for a child with DCD to be successful in school. It may be helpful to have a meeting with the parents and any other professionals working with the child to discuss the specific difficulties and strategies that work. Some strategies that are helpful working with children with DCD in the classroom are:

- 1. Allow extra time:** Try to provide the child with enough time to complete fine motor activities such as math, printing, and artwork. If speed is necessary, be willing to accept a less accurate product, or adapt the exercise. Children with DCD do not deal well with tasks when they are feeling stressed, so timed tasks may be especially difficult.
- 2. Use repetition:** Children with DCD do not learn physical skills naturally as other children do, and need a significant amount of repetition and practice before a new physical skill or movement becomes automatic.
- 3. Allow for variability:** It is important to remember that a child's ability will be variable day to day, sometimes even hour to hour. They may not be able to do something today that you saw them do perfectly well yesterday.
- 4. Provide motivation and praise success:** Motivation is key - a child with DCD may be quite ready physically to learn a new skill, but he may be overly cautious. A behavioural reward program can be quite effective in getting over "I can't do it".

5. Create an appropriate learning space: A desk that allows the child to sit with his feet flat on the floor and to maintain good posture is important. The immediate workspace should have minimal distractions. He works best in a private space that he can organize in his own way - other children may disturb his task planning.

6. Remember the goal: It is important to always remember the goal of any activity. For example, if the point of an exercise is not printing, do not ask a child with DCD to copy from the board or from a book. If the goal is creative writing, ignore messy handwriting.

7. Break it down: In all tasks, both in the classroom and the gym, ensure that each task is broken down into small, achievable parts. Simply including a child with DCD in the class explanation of a game and then expecting them to join in will only cause anxiety and/or isolation or acting out. Children with DCD need to learn things in small steps, where complete understanding of one concept is the foundation for learning the next.

Of particular importance is the child's reaction to functioning at a lower level of competence than his peers, despite his intelligence level. It is important to focus on the individual strengths that he will have. As the child learns each new skill, he will maintain it. At a point in adolescence or early adulthood, the signs of DCD will become much less intrusive. However, loss of confidence and self-esteem can be carried into the teen and adulthood years. Teachers, along with parents and others involved, can play a vital role in both the skill acquisition of these children as well as the growth of their confidence and self esteem.



Special Needs Students

Do you have a special child in your class? It can be a good experience if you have the support that is necessary. This child should only take his or her fair percentage of your total time. If you must give more time than this it is not a good learning situation for the other children in the class who also deserve your time. As every Special Needs student is very different, it is hard to give specific advice. Here are some non-specific suggestions.

- Never forget that you have the ultimate responsibility for the child's education, training and welfare at school. You have the last word!

- Have a weekly conference with all the school personnel actively involved with the student. This school-based team would include yourself, the child's aide or personal care attendant, the Inclusion Teacher (hopefully you have an Inclusion Teacher to do the I.E.P.'s and much of the other paper work), and other individuals who work with the child. Whenever possible, this conference should include school district personnel such as the physiotherapist, speech-language pathologist, etc. At this weekly conference discuss the problems of the week and brainstorm possible solutions, talk about goals and objectives both short and long term, be-

havioural concerns if any, and always discuss encouraging advancements and ways to support one another .

- This is 'inclusion'. It is your responsibility to include the child in as many class activities as possible. This usually involves opening exercises, music, sharing time, gym, science, etc. If possible, the child's cognitive exercises should parallel your timetable so that he/she feels a part of the group.

- Remember that with many Special Needs students the goals and the gains may seem small to you but represent a large step for this child. For some, to learn a new word, to sit for 3 minutes in the circle, to recognize and respond to another child, to pile one block on another, to accept a simple instruction without fuss - these may be huge gains. Don't underestimate the child's ability to learn. Make sure he or she is challenged.

- Document everything! This cannot be stated strongly enough. Hopefully you will have the help of an Inclusion Teacher to do the major documentation, but also take a couple of minutes every day to write down the happenings. If possible, do this daily documentation with the help of the aide.

- The aide is the school person who is closest to the child. Listen to the aide's concerns and his/her ideas. The aide should be doing things that you and the school-based team decide upon, however, and should not be making independent decisions.

- Keep the parents informed. A 'Back and Forth Book' is the best way. It should go home every day with the child and be returned every morning. Both you and the aide can write the daily happenings and the parents can tell you what is happening at home. What the child does and how he behaves at home is often different than the way he behaves at school.

- More than most children, a child with special needs will require a low-stress environment. Some children are sensitive to the types of lights, or to the flickering of a television or computer screen. The classroom needs to be a safe environment, without cross words or stress.

- All teachers feel frightened, uneasy and unsure when they first receive a Special Needs child in the classroom. You are not alone! Talk to other teachers of these children. Try to treat the child in a matter-of-fact way. Most teachers grow to love these children, and learn to handle them with ease.

- If you feel additional stress because of this child, ask for help! Talk to your school-based team about your frustrations and brainstorm solutions. Sometimes simply removing the child from the classroom for a certain part of the day will give you a breather, or changing his routine to better suit your lessons may help. Remember, you are responsible for the education of the other children equally.

- By the end of the year you will likely be very glad you accepted this child, for yourself and for the other students!



Testing

Learning is something students do, NOT something done to students. *Alfie Kohn*

Mr. Kohn is a modern educator, who is passionately against testing and advocates teaching children how to learn. He says. "...the most impressive teachers are those who despise the whole process of giving grades."

This is, of course, admirable in theory. Unfortunately, many teachers who despise the testing process have low results! This may prove one of Mr. Kohn's theories true - those students and teachers who are not doing well despise being rated - self-esteem is involved.

Now we have schools being rated by test results, and this has caused ripples across the educational community. Teachers and principals talk about schools being more than test results - and this is true, but we rarely hear this from educators in schools which tested well. There is a strong socio-economic factor in many of the results, too. But how might we explain the rare schools in very low socio-economic areas with high poverty who score admirably on the tests? And the high socio-economic area schools that have mediocre scores?

There is more at play here than meets the eye. What are exceptional schools doing, especially the schools in what one would expect to be the lower areas? Schools that come out low in the testing have excuses or rationalizations, schools rated highly are doing something right.

Schools that are exceptional have different philosophies than the lower schools. Teachers are encouraged to try different programs and to do whatever works to help the students, and to work together for the benefit of the students. Teachers teach, and students learn. Exceptional work for individual children is celebrated, and expectations are high for every child. There are also high expectations for organization and behaviour. Exceptional schools are more likely to have not only high test scores, but other admirable qualities of character!

