



Primary Success

Issue #21

September – October 2008

Welcome to the '08/'09 Year!

The challenge of the new school year has arrived, and most primary teachers are happy and excited to be back in the classroom. It is wonderful to plan new programs and methods, and to think of ways in which our teaching can be improved this year. Each September we begin anew, with a bare classroom and new little faces coming in the door, some smiling, some fighting back tears, all a bit apprehensive just as you are. Yes, if you are nervous, know that you are not the only teacher with the jitters!

We are lucky to have this renewal! Wouldn't an "ordinary" job be boring?

Primary teachers are the most important people in the school system! If our children learn to read and love to read, they will likely do well all through school. We teach not only the fundamentals of reading and math but the attitudes towards learning that will either help or hinder each child's progress.

This is a great responsibility, but also a great pleasure as we see the students progress and see their excitement. Have a great year!

Jean



You can't scare me. I teach.

Look for:



Tips -
the best ideas!

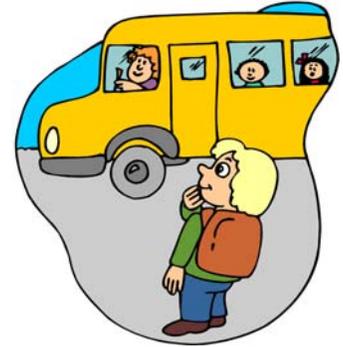
In this issue:

- Assessment - Grade One . 26
- Autumn Ideas 28
- Behaviour Management.. 19
- Bulletin Boards 6 - 7
- Classroom Management . 16
- First Day 8 - 9
- Getting Ready 2
- Halloween 29
- Language Arts
 - Phonics 10
 - Printing 13
 - Reading Ideas 11 - 12
 - Writing 14 - 15
- LD - DCD 17 - 18
- Math 20 - 21
- Odds and Ends 31
- Research Writing 24 - 25
- Scarecrows 23
- Teacher Tips 3 - 5
 - More Teacher Tips..... 27
- Thanksgiving 22
- Websites 30

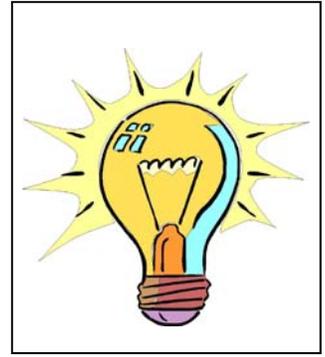


Getting Ready - Things To Do

- Make name tags for desks, coat hooks, bulletin boards, door, necklaces, helpers; on magnets, clothes pins and/or popsicle sticks. Or..... instead of name tags, put up numbers permanently and give each student a number on the first day.
- Calendar corner – Make or buy a calendar, weather chart, days of the week, months, today is, days in school chart, birthday chart, temperature, etc., and tack up behind your meeting circle spot. Have a handy place to put all the things needed - perhaps a plastic box with drawers that could sit on a table beside your chair.
- Charts – alphabet, colour words, numbers and number words, poems, direction words, etc. Different grade levels have different needs.
- Set up the word wall, ready for the first week's words. Having the year's words ready is a time saver.
- Letters to parents and/or students. Last year's Primary Success September/October issue had a good outline for a class handbook. A great idea is to have the parents write a letter telling you about their child.
- Prepare your computer files for each child and a data-base with emergency numbers, addresses, birthdays, etc. Prepare data-bases for marks in different subjects and a place for anecdotal remarks.
- Know what your classroom rules will be and have a rules chart prepared if you wish.
- Know the school rules and procedures if you are new to the school.
- Review curriculum outcomes. Cut and paste the outcomes for your grade from the provincial website into files of your own, and separate into months if possible.
- Prepare a binder for marks and anecdotal remarks that is useful to use on a regular basis.
- Have at least one week's lessons, worksheets, flashcards, games, etc., ready.
- You will want to have your students tested in the first week or two. The Successful Assessment K-2 book is very useful - it provides tests at each grade level and check sheets so you can have a good idea of each student's level of knowledge.
- Have art supplies ready and paper supplies organized.
- Have plans for the handling of supplies.
- Have a decorated 'Welcome' bulletin board with the children's names.
- One bulletin board should be covered and outlined, ready to put up the children's work in the first week.
- Organize the classroom library, displaying books.
- Have books chosen to read to the class in the first week.
- Have a handy shelf for teacher's manuals, curriculum guides and useful books. Put boxes of themes and teacher 'stuff' out of sight. If you have no room to put them out of sight, perhaps there is another place in the school – or leave them at home until you need them!
- Organize your own supplies – pencils, pens, ruler, chalk, scissors, glue, stapler, etc.
- Have file folders labeled with the children's names and portfolios ready.
- Understand your procedures – entering the room, bathroom, sharpening pencils, lining up, taking drinks, etc.
- Ask another teacher for help if you need it, and be always willing to help others. Share ideas, poetry, books, units and give support when you can.
- And after all that – relax and be rested for the big day!



Super Teacher Tips!



Rebecca's Tips

Chair pockets on the backs of their chairs made out of brushed denim have lasted a multitude of years and keeps our books clean, in a safe place and organized ready for reading at a moments notice.

Book bags sewn from upholstery samples are exactly the right size and easy to make as they are pretty much 'pre-cut'.

For recording notes on students progress at a moment's notice I use full sheets of sticky labels ... they don't get lost like post-its and are stuck quickly into a binder at the end of the day under each student's name; when report card time rolls around I have already accumulated notes on each student's progress in a variety of subject areas (I have a subject page for each student).

I use a beautiful soft garden chime to get student's attention rather than my voice ... it's an effective and pleasant way to have them stop, look and listen.

I purchased some garden bucket chairs from Superstore a couple of years ago ... I got the large adult size for about \$8 each at the end of the season ... Grade 1s and 2s are small enough that 2 kiddos fit per chair and they love to use them for reading buddies ... I bought 3 and situated them around the classroom for quiet reading times.

We always play soft music during art classes, it keeps the noise down and the atmosphere is so pleasant ... student's actually remind me to turn on the CD player if I forget ... of course we vary the composer, style, artist, etc. and discuss how the music helps our creative juices flow.

To take attendance in the morning, I have student's turn name cards as they come into the classroom, then the monitors of the week retrieve the unturned cards and track down those who may have forgotten, then they fill in the attendance page and bring it to me to check.

We have teddy bears in the classroom as reading buddies ... they love stories, but they need to be read to everyday ... that's why they 'chose' to live at our school!

At the beginning of the year I create a set of laminated name tags (I now purchase pre-made ones); after laminating them I write each student's name on a name tag/place card with a Sharpie marker and I put sticky velcro on the backs of each card (the scratchy side of the velcro goes on the name tag; the soft side of the velcro goes on the table). I can change the seating plan and refigure tables at a moment's notice ... and I always have extras for when new students arrive throughout the year (I use Sharpies because I can also recycle the name tags by simply writing over the Sharpie with dry marker and then rubbing away with a brush, then reuse with another student).

I used to use baskets of supplies at each table (and I do still have some for the child who always loses everything) but our school switched over to individual pencil boxes which contain writing pencils, colored pencils, crayons, individual pencil sharpeners, erasers, and scissors. We have a high turnover which means kids are always coming and going ... so to save time throughout the year (and to avoid chaos) at the beginning of the year we create about 2 times the number of pencil boxes we require for our class list (I store the extras in the back closet), then when a new student arrives early one morning I don't have to scramble around for the basics but have it all at my fingertips ready for the little one to fit right in.

We begin a 'Songs and Poems' book in the fall using a duotang. We add to it weekly and then have a variety of songs and poems to share with our parents any time. The students take them home at Winter break and keep sharing them with their families at home while we start another in January ... years later I've still had student's come back and tell me they've kept their songs and poems duo tangs and still have them!

We keep our boots on an old bookshelf in the hallway ... our floors stay clean and dry throughout the year, regardless of the weather ... our janitor has personally thanked us for this little tip!

We always take pictures of our field trips wherever we go ... then when we return to school we sort through the pictures and create a 'story' about the field trip as a shared writing experience. Later in the year student's actually do their own writing. We laminate and ciroflex the pages and turn it into a 'book'. The students love to share this with each other and their parents and they will read them repeatedly. At the end of the year we have created enough books that everyone gets to take one home with them for keeps!

I purchase cards from the dollar store to help celebrate birthdays and I create a beautiful cake drawing on the inside using colourful markers ... the candles on the cake each have a sticker atop them for the flame ... students then get to take their bookbag to the office and as a special treat read with the principal on their birthday. At the 'meet the teacher night' in September I explain to parents that should they choose to celebrate their child's birthday with food that it be in the form of cupcakes as it is much less chaotic or messy than cake. I've never had a parent refute this.

In math during addition and subtraction, we use unifix cubes in egg cartons which are cut down to 10 containers from 12 - this really works using Trevor Calkins Power of Ten program ... I've seen kiddos "get it" when other strategies have failed.

I've used the plastic eaves troughs in my classroom to create bookshelves underneath the old chalkboards (I've positioned them about 6 inches off the floor); they provide excellent bookshelves which allow me to place books facing out. Young children do not readily chose books by looking at the spine of a book, they like to see the fronts.

I always get to know the public librarian in my community (school or home); when they cull children's picture books I often get a phone call and they let me come down and take my pick of the culled books. Generally they let me take the books at no charge knowing that they will be in front of children and be read.

I use Rubbermaid dishpans as book baskets in our classroom; they are sorted by genre or author or subject and each tub and each book in it is labeled with a number - that way it is easily relocated to the correct tub ... and kiddos can easily do this, it's not just up to the teacher to do the sorting.

Many years ago my teaching partner and I created an Environment Club at our school ... the students in the Environment Club take turns throughout the year to collect all the disposable juice boxes and dispose of left over juice and straws. We take these to the Bottle Depot. Twice a year we meet as one large group and decide where the money we've collected should be spent ... students have donated to some amazing causes (we built a well in India for a community without fresh water; we donated to the Calgary Zoo Conservation Fund; we've donated to the Mustard Seed to help homeless; we've sent supplies to a new school in Africa) ... they truly are becoming good citizens!

I got rid of my teacher desk and instead used a large kidney-shaped table (which I purchased) and a bookshelf/cupboard. I was able to use the table for guided reading and found it much more useful and less cluttered than my 'teacher desk' which was never big enough to be of much use anyway and at the wrong height to meet with little ones.

Purchasing individual pencil sharpeners at the beginning of the year for everyone has saved us all from the constant grinding of the wall sharpener. Of course you always have the child who sharpens continuously (or so it seems) but that little one was always in line to sharpen anyway.

I always have kiddos write their name on the board when they are heading off to the bathroom ... that way you always know who is out of the room. I also have a rule that only one boy and one girl (with a buddy up until December for Grade 1s) was allowed out of the room at a time (unless of course it's an emergency - as it can be sometimes).



Songs and poems are a great way to start the day when kiddos are straggling in. They can start sharing with a buddy and then lead into a whole group before we tackle the morning message. This way we're all doing something instead of waiting for everyone to gather together ... this also encourages those stragglers who like to dawdle in the coatroom.

Treasure boxes (pencil case boxes filled with buttons, rocks, keys, polished stones, glass blobs, feathers, shells, etc.) are magical to a child and are a great way to practice counting (just remember to let them have some play time with it at the beginning and ending of the lesson).

Counterpillars are strings of pony beads in two colour groups of ten each - 10 blue and 10 white. They are another quick strategy for beginning adding and subtracting to 20 in Grade 1 - easily held in the hand and used when needed.

A 'magic' pointer created by a piece of dowel with a sparkly pom-pom on the end can work wonders for a shy child to take a turn reading the morning message. I really do believe that if learning can always be a fun experience they will be motivated to try their best.

At report card time I always set up stations in the hallway which reflect our learning in the classroom - classroom books are laid out, as are a few copies of the Songs and Poems duotangs, whatever we've been working on learning in math is set up for parents to try with their kiddos, science experiments are also laid out for the kiddos to teach parents. It provides some important glimpses into our classroom learning experiences as they await meeting with me. The students really enjoy showing their parents what they can do and if siblings are along they are occupied as well.

The best beginning of the year art activity I have done (and continue to do) is to meet with our Grade 6 buddies and create life-size paintings of the Grade 1s and 2s; I then laminate them and the Grade 6s help again the following week to cut them out. Then we line the hallway in front of our classroom with these 'bodies' - we now have individual bulletin boards for each student to hold a sample of their work for display to families throughout the school. It's a great ice-breaker for the kids to get to know their older buddy. Since we're on the first floor near the entrance to our school we always get lots of compliments about our 'welcome to the school'!

Individual mini whiteboards are available and very economical, come in a class set, are very good quality and extremely useful for all kinds of activities in the classroom. I teach how to hear the 'click' of the dry marker to make sure it's properly closed and won't dry out. We each have a sock for wiping the board clean (I just purchase a pack of kiddies socks and each child gets one in which to store the marker (we practice math sentences, spelling, even letter printing; it's fast, easy, fun and motivating.

For classroom clean ups to happen quickly and efficiently, I have a music box which is wound and we try to 'beat the box' and get cleaned up before the music stops.



One thing I do is the first month of school I let them pick where they want to sit, of course if there is a problem I can move them around, the next month I pick where they sit, then the next month is their turn again. They like this and try hard to stay close to a friend. I also assign who gets to pick the story everyday, both in the a.m. and p.m. and everyone tries hard to be on time or they get skipped until next time. *Ruth*

To keep anecdotal notes on students and notes from parents organized I use a binder. In the binder is a set of alphabetical dividers where students are filed by their last name. Each student has a sheet with all personal info on it that I get from the office. Then I record all my notes on the child and add pages as the year progresses if I need to. Behind this page I insert a page protector for each student. I store ALL notes from parents regardless of what the note is about. It is so easy during the year if I need to check on something or look back at what a parent requested. I never lose any notes from parents this way and all my notes on students are in one place. *Louise*

Bulletin Boards

Take pictures on the first day of all the students with big smiles, or have them draw their smiling faces. Talk about smiles being catching. Can you catch my smile?

"I do a bulletin board with fish. The slogan is 'One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish. Welcome Mrs. Capra's new fish!'"

For an ocean theme: "Making a big splash in Grade ____!"

"Make a frog bulletin board... 'I'm so HOPPY to be in (Grade One, Three, etc.) or 'Welcome to Our Pad' - little frogs on lily pads, or 'A Toadally Awesome Class!'"

"I used a red and white picnic table tablecloth, and cut out ants and the food bowls were math, spelling, reading, writing, etc....e.g. Grade Three will Be a Picnic...."

"Make stars with the children's names and a place to put a picture on them after you take them the first day of school...and the heading... 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Stars'."

"I am getting a combination Grade 2/3 class this coming year. I want to do a BB with combination locks. We will talk about how to use the real combination locks - and then I can tie in math combinations, word combinations in compound words, etc. We could brainstorm a list of different places you might use a combination lock."

"I'm thinking of doing an Autumn themed bulletin board to welcome the students. I could title it, 'I'm Falling for You!' with the word 'falling' printed down as if the letters are falling. The children's pictures and names are on big leaves, also falling."

Trace and cut-out hands, with photos or self-portraits of the students make a cute bulletin board, with the title, 'Meet our HANDsome Class!' or 'Meet the Handy-Dandy Class'.

"I made each student's name in big bubble letters. In Word, go to 'Format' then to 'Font' and then check off 'outline'. I used Comic Sans for the font. I made them as big as I could on legal paper and printed them. Then they decorated the letters with crayon, or the fancy pens that I don't use other times - glitter pens, etc. I cut out around the names and put them up on a bulletin board the first day. They had great fun with this and the board looked nice!"

"I like using the *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* tree, with the letters of their first names and their photos. I teach the book in the first week."

"I drew a large coconut tree. I made the board to look like the cover of the book. I used the first letter of each child's name and had it going up the tree with a picture of the student attached to the letter. I had the rest of the alphabet in a pile beneath the tree. I did have some letters more than once because, of course some children's names begin with the same letter. It was very colourful!"

And..... 'Blast Off for a Great Year' - rockets
'Mrs. ___'s Bunch' - balloons (you could have a clown holding them - the teacher!)
'Mrs. ____'s New Crop' - apples on a tree or another harvest fruit or vegetable
'Stepping into Grade One' - shoes
Apples on a tree with 'We are a great bunch!'

**You cannot give a smile away,
No matter what you do.
Every time you smile at me
I give it back to you.**



More About Bulletin Boards

“I like to put up several layers of paper on the bulletin boards before school begins. I put a spring colour on first, with a border, then cover it with blue for winter (or red for Christmas and Valentines Day) with its border, covered with an Autumn colour - orange for fall leaves and Halloween. Then all I have to do is pull down the top one and the second one is fresh behind it. I have more time in the summer to do this, and it is such a treat to be able to change boards quickly the rest of the year!”

“When I teach Grade Two or Three, I have a special bulletin board where I put up posters to help the students who need clues to different parts of the curriculum - how to subtract with re-grouping, the meanings of the words synonyms, antonyms, etc. These are there for the kids to refer to when needed.”

“I have a small bulletin board, too. It has an up-to-date seating plan, a weekly schedule with times, a calendar with things to remember - meetings, holidays, birthdays, etc.”

Use a variety of backgrounds for your boards - fabric, wrapping paper, newspaper, aluminum foil, wall-paper, etc.

Make sure your bulletin boards are up-to-date and relevant. Tidy, too! If you have problems putting things up in straight lines, make them deliberately angled.

Every student should be able to read all the print around your classroom - this may take some time in Kindergarten and Grade One, but words are useless if they cannot be read. Go over the print every day until the children are all perfectly familiar with the words. Then they can 'read the room' and these words become part of their reading vocabulary.

Don't decorate every inch of your classroom. It can become too busy and may bother some students' concentration. Think of your classroom as your home, and decorate it with attractiveness and simplistic charm. As in your home, everything should be beautiful, meaningful or useful.

Make single bubble letters on your computer - see the previous page - and print them on bright coloured paper. Parents and volunteers could cut them out for you. These are great to name bulletin boards.

Try making three-dimensional bulletin boards! Objects such as feathers, dried flowers, old ties, masks, hats, and costume jewelry can all be added to your bulletin boards. Strive to use multiple textures to make the bulletin boards more attractive. Use corn or leaves on your autumn BB, costumes or masks or other costume accessories for your Halloween board. Old ties pointed outward make great turkey tail feathers for a Thanksgiving BB.

A local teacher has several strings of the tiny white 'Christmas' lights that she has up all year. They go around a special bulletin board. She also has a white painted bare tree held by a bucket of sand, with the lights strung on it - and then seasonal decorations are added - fall leaves, bats and owls for Halloween, hearts for Valentines, eggs for Easter, etc. The students especially remember Halloween Day, when she dresses as a witch, pulls the blinds shut and turns out all lights except on the little tree and reads spooky stories.

Put up Velcro dots on your boards, and then things can be moved about and taken down or moved around to make the board interactive. Post a daily question with a graph and the students can move their names by matching the Velcro dot to the one on the back of their names.



The First Day

Will you get your last year's class on the first day of school? Have them write about their year to tell your new students what they will be doing and learning. Begin sentences, such as 'Ms. _____ likes to _____.' 'She gets upset if you don't _____.' 'In math we learned _____.' It was _____.' Etc.

Then for your first day with your new children, here are some ideas:

Play the 'Name Game': Sit everyone in a circle. The teacher begins with, "My name is _____, and I like to _____". The student to the right of the teacher repeats, "Her (the teacher) name is _____ and she _____." My name is _____ and I like to _____." Repeat just what the person before you said, around the circle.

Read **Chrysanthemum** by Kevin Henkes. "*Chrysanthemum is a cute mouse with a very beautiful name. Chrysanthemum is the name of a flower. She is happy to go to Kindergarten. Her name has 13 letters! That is half of the letters in the alphabet, one of her classmates points out!*" Discuss the length of Chrysanthemum's name. How many letters are in each of your students' names? Give them their names in bubble font, and have each count the letters. Can they read the letters out to the class? Make a simple graph to show the number of letters in the names. Ask grade suitable questions: How many children have names with 5 letters? Who has the most? Who has the least? How many more letters does ___ have than ___? Decorate the names for a bulletin board graph.

"Each week one of the students is the 'Star'. On the first week of school, I am the start person. I have a star student board, and each week that person fills the board with information about his/her family, friends, pets, favourite things, favourite places, etc. to share with the rest of the class and bring in pictures and show and tell things. I do it the first week to show how it is done, and the children learn a bit about my life."

Take the students' pictures the first day. Now with digital cameras, these are easy to do and can be used immediately. Take them against a plain background. These can be printed either in colour or in black and white and in a variety of sizes for different purposes - large and in colour for bulletin boards, small for graphing, black and white to make a book of classmates for the first week, memory books for the end of the year, etc.

"Writing Activity - Read *Today I Feel Silly, and Other Moods that Make My Day*, by Jamie Lee Curtis. This is a very funny story and the children always get a kick out of the main character's moods! After reading this story, have the children write about how they are feeling. Start them off with: "We read Today I ... today on the first day of second grade. Last night I felt _____. I felt _____ when I was getting ready this morning. Right now I feel _____ and I am feeling _____ about second grade. I then have them add on a couple more sentences on their own...Once they are finished, I let them illustrate their mood on a blank face die-cut. The children are then allowed to share what they have written. This is also a good informal writing assessment to see how they are writing. Before starting this activity, tie it in with the first Writer's Workshop mini-lesson to let students know expectations for their writing."

For grade two or three classes, do a class survey. There is a sample survey at <http://www.abcteach.com/Backtoschool/classsurvey.htm>
The students go around the room and find out things about their classmates.

Of course, younger students may need a tour of the school. Practice lining up and model how we walk in the halls and what to do in the washrooms, etc.

Make a class book. It could be modeled on the book *Mary Wore a Red Dress* by Merle Peek. Make a book with each page saying a child's name and a self-portrait: _____ wore a _____ _____ on the first day of school.



More First Day Ideas

“I want to tell you what I do on the first day of school with my new students. At our school this happens on the second day of school because on the first half day, our last year students come to us. It is such a great time to see the kids and find out what they did for the summer. It also puts the children under less anxiety as they are going back to their old classroom and teacher and it seems to be easier for them to come to school under a new situation. But anyway, it always seems that the children are comfortably sitting in their chairs ready to listen to me for instructions and the classroom walls are lined up with anxious parents not knowing what to do. So I say to the children to go give Mom and Dad a hug and kiss, say goodbye and we will see you after school. So the children get up and do just that and the parents leave wondering what to do with themselves now that the children are at school all day. I have only had one dad ever say to me that ‘you sure got us out of there’. I responded that he was welcome to come any time he wanted to join us but it looked like most of you were kind of uncomfortable and didn't really know what to do but were having difficulty leaving the children who seemed to be comfortable, settling in and ready to spend some time with me and able to let mom and dad go for a while. It really does work and even some reluctant children follow the pack and say good bye for the short time that they are at school. It also seems to set the tone for the rest of the year for most parents and children. I have told many teachers what I do on the first day and they seem pleased with the idea and have tried it and let me know that it works. I am sure that this is not a new idea but possibly someone has not heard of it and wants to try it.” *Carol*

“We always read the room on the first day, and every day or second day after that until the students are able to do it themselves. I use a ‘magic’ wand to point to the words as we read. After that I encourage the children to read what words they can and they can use the wand or other fancy pointers or glasses to help them. (The Dollar Store is a big help when looking for these!)

“I always have my Grade One students do some ‘work’ on the first day. I have them print their names, and as many letters and numbers as they can - and even words if they know any.

When I taught Grade Two and Three, I had them write a story about their summer. We talk about it first and think about the most exciting or important things that happened during the holiday. The stories gave me insight into their writing levels.”

“First, I introduce myself and tell the children something about myself. We go over the class and the school rules. We go over our classroom procedures - how to look after supplies, how to line up, how to come to the reading corner and how to behave there. We discuss after school procedures, too. We read the room and talk about the different areas in the classroom.

I always do some ‘work’ on the first day, and some art or craft project, too, and this goes up on a bulletin board to make the classroom personal. We play ‘Heads Up, Seven Up’ (an old favourite), and ‘Sparkle’ to practice counting.

We begin our calendar activities - as this is Day One, and go through the calendar procedures. I always have at least one book to read to the class and a simple activity to go with it.”

“I introduce my students to my number system - every child gets a number in alphabetical order and keeps it all year. We practice finding that number on the coat hooks and cubbies, and line up by numbers. Number One is the leader of the line today - tomorrow #2 will be the leader and #1 goes to the back of the line.”

“I read *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. The children trace their head and shoulders and decorate them to look like they do. Then they fill in this prompt:

The important thing about me is that I am _____. I can _____
and _____. I like _____ and _____.
But the important thing about me is that I am _____.



Beginning Phonics

Activities to Teach the Sounds

Action; food snack; make tactile letters; praise

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

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

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

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

Ee – exercise; eating eggs; egg shells; excellent!

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

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

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

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

Jj – jumping jacks; eating jam and jelly, jelly beans, juice; jelly beans, jewels, jigsaw pieces; jazzy!

Kk – kingly kisses (we practice kissing in the air - very funny!); eating kiwi; keys, kleenex; Kingly Kids!

Ll – looking at leaves; eating lemon, lasagna, licorice; lace, leaves, lollipops, letters; lovely!

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

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

Oo – obstacle course; eating olives, omelet; Cheerios (or other 'o' shaped cereal); awfully good????

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

Qq – quietly questing quarters (hidden in the room); eating quiche? (sound isn't correct.....); quarters, quilt squares, Q-tips; quite _____!

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

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

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

Uu – putting umbrellas up; eating upside-down cake; ugly _____; unsurpassed! unusual!

Vv – voluminous voices (singing loudly!); eating vegetables; velvet, velcro; very _____!

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

Xx – do eXercises; eat ????. x-rays; eXcellent!

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

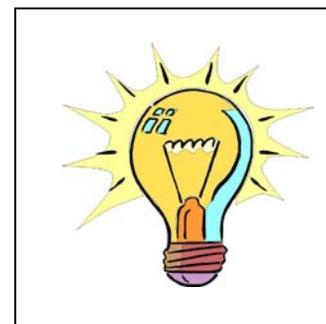
Zz – zany zippers (glue a zipper on a piece of paper and then draw a zany picture around it), zipping zippers; eating zucchini; zig-zag braid; zippy!

Reading Ideas - Grade One

Alphabet Chant

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

Sung to Frere Jacques



(letter) (sound) (object)

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

“I have always been interested in finding out the ways my children learn. Some will learn sight words easiest, some learn best through phonics and some need to use printing and body movements. I think about this whenever I am teaching a reading lesson, and try to do all three - they are supposed to be especially effective when all are used at the same time. For example, if I am teaching the word ‘look’, the students see the word, say it and make ‘glasses’ with their fingers over the o’s - all together. We stretch the letter sounds, too, and talk about the sounds we hear while looking at the word and pretending to ‘strreeetch’ with our hands. Then we ‘look’ for the word around the classroom (I have put some around before the lesson), saying the word as we find it. It seems to work well!”

“Some Grade One teachers in my large school use the onset-rime method of decoding. I don’t - I think it makes decoding more difficult rather than easier. The students must know the letter sounds, and also be able to recognize the word parts. I think to do the onset-rime, the child must look at the end of the word and the beginning consonant as separate parts.

I simply teach them to blend from the front of the word to the end. There is nothing else to know but the letter sounds, and they slide the sounds together from left to right. They learn to do this as they read, and it doesn’t interrupt the eye flow across the page.

Just my opinion!”

Mary

Reading Ideas - Grade Two

“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.”

I have recently become aware of a great Canadian publisher of books. My granddaughter is beginning Grade Two this year and is reading well, and her Grade One teacher suggested these chapter books for summer reading. It seems that many chapter books have plots and word usage that are above a 7 year old’s comprehension, and these books are suitable, interesting, and keep the attention of Grade Two kiddies. I recommend them!

http://us.orcabook.com/client/client_pages/Orca_Echoes_Info.cfm

Orca also publishes books for ‘reluctant’ readers in middle school and higher. They specialize in books that are at a suitable reading level but have a suitable interest level, too.

Book Responses

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

I start at the beginning of the year by asking each student to bring in a favourite book and each shares why he/she likes that book. I model this first. 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 the theme (humour, adventure, mystery, etc.). We write these on a chart called ‘What we Can Write About Books’. (This stays up and is added to throughout the year.)

Next I introduce written book responses. I do this on the overhead. I make a quick drawing 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.

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, but use whatever they decide is important, plus a couple of 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.

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.”

Teaching Printing

“My students came in printing all over the place. Their letters were formed incorrectly and were anywhere but on the lines.

In the beginning of Grade One I teach one letter every day. I am fussy about the correct formation - all letters must be printed from the top down. We make huge letters with the fingers on the desktop, the carpet, in the air, etc., before putting them on paper. One thing that has helped them see the difference between well-formed and sloppy letters is that I model correct and incorrect letters myself on the overhead. I show them, in fine detail, what the correct letter formation looks like and how to write it. Then I do some that are not resting on the ‘floor’ or that don't touch the ceiling, maybe that go down into the ‘basement’ and so forth. We talk about what is wrong with them. Then I do a few more that are correct.



I always ask for quality rather than quantity. I would rather they print three or four perfect letters than a dozen sloppy ones. They put a two finger space between each letter they print. I then ask them to pick out the one letter they have printed the very best. Why is it the best? Why are the others not as perfect?

I also have been fussy about colouring within the lines. This isn't an art activity; this is a fine-motor development activity. We don't do a lot of colouring, but it does come up sometimes in math or in other content areas. I will not let them scribble or turn in sloppy work. They now know they will have to do it over if it's not neat. I can see an improvement in everyone's handwriting because I have set the standards and stick to them. They are learning what ‘quality work’ looks like and how to do it.

Of course, I have my share of immature writers who need more time and I make individual allowances for them, but even they are getting much better.”

“When I teach handwriting I tell the kids that the lines are like a peanut butter sandwich. The top line is the top slice of bread, the dotted line is the peanut butter, and the bottom line is the bottom slice of bread. They like this and it makes it easy for them to visualize what I mean. I often wonder what another adult might think if they walked into the classroom while I was saying, ‘The letter ‘m’ begins on the peanut butter. Did you put your pencil in the peanut butter to begin ‘m’? The kids understand totally...an adult might think I was nuts!”

“I say that letters in a word must ALMOST touch - they show me by the thumb and forefinger what that means - and words must be separated by a space big enough for a finger - but no bigger. We look at our printing to see if we are doing that.”

“For a finger space, decorate a popsicle stick like a finger – nail, nailpolish, rings, etc.”

“Use a popsicle stick and decorate like a ‘Space Man’!”

“I tell my kids that if they leave too much space within a word - I will draw a jelly bean there. I do this when I check their work - with various colour markers. Letters or words that are too close get peppermint sticks – just two vertical lines next to each other in red. If they leave too much space between words I draw rainbows to connect the two words. They seem to really like this idea! I just give reminders like – ‘watch out for the jelly beans and the peppermint sticks’ and it seems to help.”

“I rarely let my students print on un-lined paper. For some reason, children can't seem to visualize lines, and their printing is all different sizes and it runs downhill.”

“I have my students practice printing every day, and I gradually increase the amount. We do cloze sentences, we print poems, and do other exercises so they must read what they are printing. My goal is to get everyone printing fluently. Once they are, their creative writing improves as well.”

Writing

Writing is a very difficult task as it involves many different skills. To write a sentence, the child must first form it mentally. Then the sentence must be broken down into words. The child must take the first word and think about the spelling. He will have to think about the sounds, or be able to find the word in the classroom. Then he must print it – another set of skills – putting the letters in order. Then he must remember the original sentence and think what word comes next, and so on. When the sentence is printed, the child must be able to read it to himself and another person.

Many small children find writing a formidable task. Some of your students may be ready to do this early in Grade One or even in Kindergarten, but most of your students will not have the skills necessary and will be very frustrated if they are asked to write too early. There are prerequisites to writing, and giving the children time to gain these will make the writing process much smoother.

That does not mean that you do not teach writing! Every day the teacher should model the writing process, going through the steps and vocalizing the writing process. Each day discuss topics, sentences, using interesting language, capital letters and punctuation. Talk about the sequence of words. Discuss the spelling of the words and the strategies for spelling that can be used. Teach the children to print fluently and neatly on lines, and give them lots of printing practice. By the time they are ready to write, they will be reading simple material, will be able to spell a number of words accurately or phonetically or find them on the word wall. When the children have the prerequisite skills they will be anxious to write and because they understand the process you will find that their writing is much more fluent and interesting.

Up C Daisies!

“I like to say ‘Ooopsy-daisy’ - an old-fashioned term. I use it when there is a spill, or someone falls without getting hurt. Then I use this silly saying to help the children remember to edit their stories.

U = understanding - do your sentences/story make sense?

P = punctuation - did you remember periods at the end of sentences?

C = capitalization - did you put a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence?

D = Did you spell words correctly?



“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.”

“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’.”

Capitals and Punctuation!

“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.”

“We do lots of shared writing. A really effective way of demonstrating where we need punctuation and capital letters is to use the 'Traffic Light' concept. Green means 'go' when we use a capital letter to start a sentence, Red means 'stop' which is when we need a period. I have a green pen to print the capital letters and a red one which the children can hold and they hand them to me when I need to use them. Sometimes I let them use red and green crayons in their own writing for a special treat and they use them for the beginning capital letters and ending punctuation.”

“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!”

“Sometimes I go on 'Punctuation Patrol'. I tell the students that I am the punctuation policeman and I am coming to inspect their writing. I give them some time to make sure they have all the periods in, and then I go around to see if any are missing.”

“I like to do sound effects for the punctuation. At the end of each sentence, for example, they could clap, or say 'BEEP!' or make some other noise. If there aren't any periods in the writing, they can't make any noise....”

“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.”

“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. Batman said, "Let's go, Robin!"”

“You can use four pieces of elbow macaroni to make the quotation marks on sentence strips. The kids love to do this! Macaroni can also be used as apostrophes.”

“I find the best way for the students to see the errors in their writing is to read it aloud. I have them first read it aloud to themselves (quietly), correct anything that they see needs changing and then read it to another student. We talk about being careful to read what is actually printed, not what they think is there. Finally, I read it out loud to them just the way it is printed and see if there are still things to be changed.”



Classroom Management Ideas

“My idea is an old one. I know a lot of teachers will ‘number’ their students (usually alphabetically). Years ago, I took a set of numbers from an old calendar bulletin board set, and put the numbers at the coat hooks. I covered the numbers with book/packing tape, and there they remain . . . years later. No putting names up each year at the coat hooks. And easy to follow by the children.” *Debra*

“At the beginning of the year we learn this song: *(To the tune of: If You're Happy and you Know It)*
The first thing on your paper is your name! *(2 times)*
The first thing on your paper
The first thing on your paper
The first thing on your paper is your name!

Some times we will sing the word 'first' very loud, other times 'name' is loud. Often we will clap on the word 'first'. Kids love it. Some even learn to do it!!”

For the first week of school, make two sets of name tags – one for the child's table space or desk, and one for the child to wear around the neck to special classes. This is not only helps you learn the names, but it helps other teachers, too. And keep these neck tags - they are great to pull out when a substitute teacher is there. These could be hung on a hook - handy for these other uses.

“I don't assign jobs to certain children and rotate them. I think it takes too long for some children to do certain jobs. Before each break and the end of the day I assign tables or rows to do certain things - clean up the floor, straighten desks, tidy the books, etc. So there are at least four children doing a job and it gets done in seconds rather than minutes. I often count to 10 and see if they can have the job done by then. We all make the mess and we all need to clean it up!”

One of the messiest places in the classroom is where coats and boots are kept - this is especially bad in the Canadian winter with all the outside clothing needed. Teach your children to hang the clothes carefully and put the boots or outside shoes just so. Model what you want every day for the first week and at least once a week after that.

“Every day the last thing we do before going home is talk about what we did that day - what we learned, what we read, what we sang, etc. Then the children can go home and answer the question, “What did you do in school today?”

Having set routines is very comforting to insecure children, and ones who have behavioural disorders - the more formally set routines, the better. Some children cannot handle change easily, and become nervous or excited and act out when things don't go according to plan. If there must be a change in the daily schedule, talk about it so the students are ready for it.

Model what you expect for every activity, whether it is reading or walking in the hall. This takes a lot of time in the first weeks of school, but pays off handsomely later.

Teach your students the expectations in assemblies and concerts and other activities where all the students gather.

Children love to use a little broom and dustpan, and the inexpensive carpet sweepers, too. It will be a treat to clean-up!

Certificates for good work or good behaviour are always favourites! Parents love them, too.

Learning Disabilities

Dyspraxia—Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

You have a little boy in your kindergarten classroom. He seems to be a slightly withdrawn child who prefers to play by himself or with one other child. He does not appear to be able to join in with a group of children playing, although he seems to enjoy watching their activities. He appears to have an average intelligence, although slightly inarticulate speech. You notice that his pencil grip is immature and he appears to have difficulty with the simplest of fine motor tasks, although he can explain to you how the task should be done. His drawing seems to be at the level of a 2 year old, while his vocabulary is well within the average range for his age. He simply refuses to participate in circle time, dancing or games. He has trouble dressing himself and becomes stressed or confused if routines change. His parents state to 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, immaturity 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. As in all learning disabilities, the problem cannot be ‘fixed’ and the children will have this disability all their lives, but they can be taught positive coping skills.

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.
- A child with normal intelligence may have difficulty planning and organizing his thoughts.
- Difficulty with reading, writing and spelling or math.
- Behavioural/emotional problems – difficulty joining in with peers, low self esteem, P.E. avoidance, acting out during craft time, 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 their specific difficulties and strategies that work. Some strategies that are helpful when you are 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, i.e., provide the child with a photocopied set of questions. 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 will eventually learn the skills necessary to perform a task. However, they do not learn naturally as other children do, and need a significant amount of repetition and practice before a new skill or movement becomes automatic.

3. Allow variability: It is very 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 one day that you saw them do perfectly well the day before.

4. 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.

5. 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 and focus on the content.

6. Break it down: In all tasks, both in the classroom and in 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 physical things in small steps, where complete understanding and ability to do one motion is the foundation for learning the next.

Provide motivation and praise success: Motivation is key – a child with DCD may be quite ready physically to learn a new skill, but they are overly cautious. A behavioural reward program can be quite effective in getting over the first hurdle of "I can't do it".

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 a 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 adult 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.

Kelly Raine, BSW, Dip. CYC

Note: Kelly's son, my grandson, has DCD quite severely. He is now going into Grade 5. He learned to print quickly and legibly by Grade 3, but handwriting is now a problem. He reads above grade level but has some problems in math. He has difficulty with physical movements - he runs awkwardly and can't catch a ball, and is finally learning to swim after years of lessons - he can do one physical movement (kick his feet, for example) but to coordinate the arm movements at the same time is difficult - and then add breathing in the proper places..... The physical things that other children do automatically must all be thought through and taught in isolation. Jean

An Old Favourite

Chant this with rhythm and lots of expression. Begin the chant standing, and each child sits down after he/she has had a turn so everyone gets a turn.

Leader: Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?

WHO stole the COOKie from the COOKie JAR

(child's name... *Mary*) stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Mary: Who me?

Who, ME?

Class: Yes, you!

Yes, YOU!

Mary: Couldn't be!

Couldn't BE!

Class: Then, who?

Then WHO?

Mary: *John* stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

John: Who, me? etc., etc.



Behaviour Management

“I like to use the book *Chrysanthemum* (Kevin Henkes) at the beginning of the year to talk about inclusion and bullying. In the book, the children in her class make fun of Chrysanthemum's long name. I enlarge a picture of her from the book and give one copy to each child. Every time Chrysanthemum is made fun of in the story, we stop and crumple the picture a bit. By the end, our picture is crumpled into a ball. Later we talk about how we can say we are sorry if we hurt someone (and smooth out the paper) but the hurt will still be there. Illustrated by the wrinkles still left in the paper, even after we try our best to smooth it out.”

Aleesha

“Here is a very brief behaviour management teacher tip I've used for years and found it works really well in my K-2 class. I have a desk tucked behind my classroom door we call the 'Privacy Desk'. On the side of the desk, I have attached a sign, upon which is written; 'Privacy Desk: If I am sitting here, please don't talk to me because I need some quiet time to think. Thank you'. If kids come in off the yard upset and unwilling to talk, or have a meltdown in the class, I encourage them to go to the Privacy Desk to cool off and/or take a break to think. I always check on the students after 5 or 10 minutes to make sure they're O.K. and want to talk. Students often go on their own, and will sometimes choose to do their work there if they need a really quiet spot. At the desk we keep a 'feelings' poster, headphones, a chart of strategies they can use to solve small problems, and a small stuffed mascot from our conflict resolution program taught at the beginning of the year (called 'Kelso's Choices', an absolutely fabulous program for teaching kids how to make choices to help them solve small problems). If there is a conflict between two students, I send them to the privacy desk together to try and solve it on their own (I check on them after about 10 minutes, or if there's excessive giggling, after which I tell them I can help them with it later).

I've found the 'Privacy Desk' is respected by the students and empowers them to solve their 'small problems' independently. It also gives them a safe place to sit in peace where they won't be bothered, which is sometimes hard to find in a classroom and it gives me a positive place to send someone who needs a time-out.”

Jennifer

“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.”

“Children who suffer from ADHD are living a life of negativity. The first thing that I would recommend 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, they seem to always be ‘in trouble’.
2. They often can't see past their impulse to do something in order to focus on the consequence of their actions. 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.
4. I've found that behaviour 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.



Math

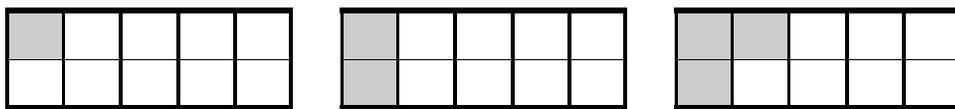
Beginning of the Year Assessment - Grade Two

Here are some ideas to assess the math skills of your new Grade Two students.

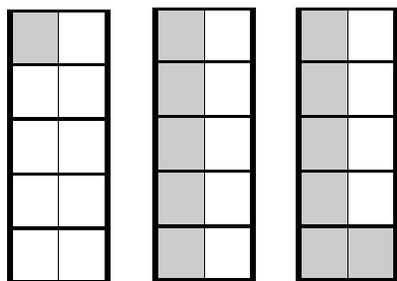
- Have them print the numbers to 100. Look for children making numbers incorrectly – bottom to top or reversed. See if there are children who have difficulty sequencing numbers.
- Take the children individually or in small groups and give them manipulatives. Show one addition question ($4 + 5 = \underline{\quad}$) 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, preferably, 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.

Working with Ten Frames

Some provinces and school districts are advocating the use of ten frames. From what I have seen, there are several ways of using them. Sometimes they are shown horizontally, and filled from the left end in pairs.



Another author wants them vertically - filling down the first row and then up the second:



The students memorize how the frames look with each number.

They are used for place value - full tens and the last partly filled for the ones number.

These cards are used for addition with re-grouping.... for example, to add $9 + 5$, 9 squares are filled in the first frame and 5 in the second, and it is easy to see that we can slide one over to fill the first frame and have 4 left for a total of 14.

The idea is that the student will be able to visualize the number patterns and ‘see’ what needs to be done without the frames later.

The ten frames are used to replace the bundled sticks for place value and the counters and patterns for addition and subtraction.

I think they are a valuable addition to your math program - but like all ‘new’ ideas - keep all your other strategies, too!

More Math

“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.”

“I always thought I was making my kids think until we started a new math series. I complained all last year that what I had been doing worked better ... but now I realize the missing link is talking about what we are doing. The kids need to sit down after they do an exploration of any kind and they need to talk it out. It's amazing how the children think about what they are doing and getting them to explain it to each other helps those that aren't thinking about it, just trying to get through it. Now we sit in a circle after each math class (well, maybe every other) and those who want to talk, tell about how they did whatever they did or what they discovered. I still have those that look like they aren't listening (and maybe aren't) but I've seen a big increase in participation and thought.”

“Teach a lot of math games at the beginning of the year. Then when the fast finishers are done, they can play a game that reinforces the skill they are working on. I would also suggest laminating drill sheets and buying some non permanent markers as a math game...for some reason, students seem to love to do drills if they are done with wipe off felts, rather than pencil. Go figure!”

Aleesha

Place Value Roll

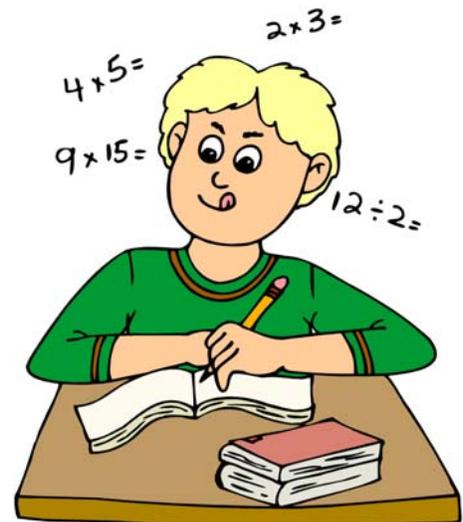
Have the students make a place value mat - tens and ones for Grade Ones, hundreds, tens and ones for Grade Two, and add the thousand column for Grade Three. One student rolls the dice. All students put the number rolled on one line of their place value paper. When all the lines are filled up, the students tell their numbers. The student that has the highest number wins. This can also be done with each student rolling the die for his/her own number in turn.

Green Ghost - White Ghost

You need 2 two sets of answers written on green and white shaped ghosts. Randomly pass out the green and white ghosts to the students. Show or tell a problem. All of the students work the problem. The first student with the correct answer to raise his ghost up high in the air scores a point for the green or white team.

M&M Math - Some Ideas

- Predict (estimate) the number in the box.
- Count the number given to you. Write the number.
- Graph the number of M&M's in the bag. Measure the box.
- Make up number sentences about the colours.
- Do you have an even or an odd number?
- Make a number sentence (equation) about all the colours.....
4 blue + 3 red + 6 green.... etc. = _____
- Put the M&Ms into groups of 2, 3, 4.
- Is there more of one colour than another? Are all boxes the same?
- Make patterns with your candies.
- Match the M&Ms to the colour words.
- Graph your favourite colour. Which is the most popular?
- What do you like to eat first? Last?
- Make up subtraction problems..... I had 14 M&Ms and ate 6....



Thanksgiving

Turkey Tails

"I made the front view of a turkey with brown paper, about 2 and a half feet tall, and I put it in the middle of a bulletin board. I've laminated this so I can use it year after year. I send home a cut paper feather (I get two out of one piece of 12 x 18 white construction paper) with a note telling parents to help their child decorate this feather. Anything goes....colours, markers, paint, fabric, buttons, beans, real feathers, etc. I also tell them they can glue it to a piece of cardboard to make it stronger, if necessary. Then as the kids bring them back, I put them up around my turkey for the tail. It always turns out so interesting and colourful.

The all-time favourite turkey poem.....

The turkey is a funny bird
Its head goes bobble-bobble;
And all he knows is just one word...
And that is GOBBLE-GOBBLE!

Thank You

Thank you are the words we say
Not just on Thanksgiving Day
Thank you are two magic words
Say them loud so they are heard!



The Turkey Shuffle

To the tune of Turkey in the Straw (sort of!):

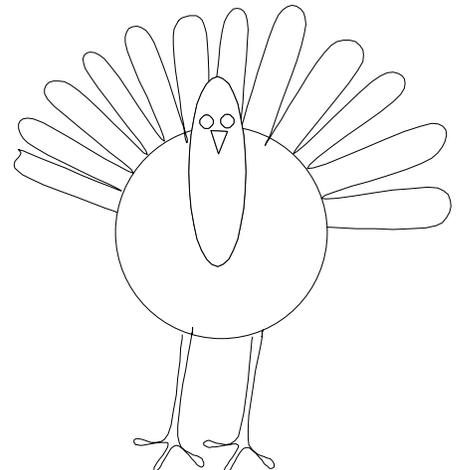
You shuffle to the left, (2 steps to left)
You shuffle to the right, (2 steps to right)
You heel and toe (stick out right heel, then point right toe)
And scratch with all your might. (scratch like a chicken with right foot)
You flap your turkey wings, (thumbs under armpit, flap bent arms)
And your head goes bobble, bobble. (nod head twice)
You turn around and then you say, (turn around)
Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Make a paper plate turkey. Colour or paint a small paper plate brown. Trace hands onto bright yellow, orange and red paper and cut them out. These are the tail feathers - glue them behind the plate so the fingers stick up above the rim. Cut a slim oval about 3 inches (8 cm) long from brown paper and put the turkey's eyes and beak at one end and glue it onto the paper plate. Draw and cut out feet and glue them behind the plate.

Note: Pardon my computer drawing, but maybe you get the idea.....

Five Little Turkeys

Five little turkeys standing at the door,
One waddled off, and then there were four.
Four little turkeys sitting near a tree,
One waddled off, and then there were three.
Three little turkeys with nothing to do,
One waddled off, and then there were two.
Two little turkeys in the morning sun,
One waddled off, and then there was one.
One little turkey better run away,
For soon it will be Thanksgiving Day.



Scarecrows

What is a scarecrow? Have you ever seen a real one? Where might you find one? What is their purpose? Do you think they really scare crows? Why?

Have the students lie down on butcher paper and trace around each other, cut them out and decorate them like scarecrows.

Michaels and other craft stores have inexpensive scarecrows for decoration - or make your own with old clothes.

Watch the Wizard of Oz, and/or read the book.

Make crows by tracing your foot for the body and hands for the wings.

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/fall/kids-crafts/paper-plate-scarecrow.html>

This website has a cute paper plate scarecrow to make.

Make a class book: I am a scarecrow. My shirt is green. My pants are blue. My hat is black. I am stuffed with straw. etc. Put one detail on each page - and the last page could be 'And I scare the crows away - BOO!'

Scarecrow, scarecrow,
How scary can you be?
You scared (insert name)
But you didn't scare me!

Scarecrow

I'm a scary scarecrow made of straw,
Listening for the noisy crows to caw.
I watch the field all day and all night, too.
If a crow comes by, I just say, 'BOO!'

Here are four websites that will give you lots more ideas!

<http://www.teachingheart.net/scarecrow.html>

<http://www.theteachersroom.com/scarecrowunit.htm>

<http://www.kinderkorner.com/scarecrow.html>

<http://www.kindergartentreehouse.com/scarecrows.html>

Math Experiences:

Count crows.

Do subtraction problems with crows flying away.

Make patterns with vegetables.

Make a scarecrow with pattern blocks.



The 'Project Method'

"I have been teaching Grade 1 for about 30 years and using this 'project' method for quite a few of them. It helps to give the children ownership of their writing, as well as, direct them away from 'copying' the words directly from books or the internet."
Bev Smith, Winnipeg, MB

Grade One Science Research Projects

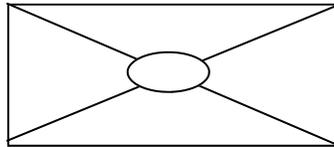
"Because grade ones are not ready to read for information and because much of what is written is at an advanced reading level anyway, this process of doing research uses observation skills and listening skills to gather information for the project." Bev Smith 2008

Project 1: Winter Birds (ex: blue jay, downy woodpecker, nuthatch, chickadee, sparrow & redpoll) Working in table groups of 4 - 5

Gather pictures of several birds commonly seen in the neighbourhood (six for my six groups) and put in large envelopes. In the preamble, tell a little about each bird **without** showing its picture. Add tales about a few birds that are not included to make the next task more challenging. Have the names of the birds you tell about (including the birds not selected for the study) on cards that you show as you talk. Place on board or in pocket chart. (*This is one of the listening skill activities*).

Then assign a package to each group, they are to look at the pictures carefully and try to determine which bird they have chosen. Have them as a team guess and eventually determine the bird's name. Take card from chart. (*more listening skills*)

Give each child a piece of 8 ½ x 14 paper for "web". They write the name of their bird in the very center of the paper, with their own name and circle it. Then draw lines from this circle to the 4 corners of the paper. Labels are needed for the four sections and they can write or you can prepare self-sticking labels for them: (LOOKS LIKE, FOOD, LIVES, ENEMIES, or MOVES)



Now we are ready to start **observing** the birds and gathering information. I do LOOKS LIKE first and begin with colours. They discuss together the colours they see in the photos, and assist each other spell them in the first section of the web. Once colours are recorded we discuss birds in general and look for common features: beaks, wings, feathers, 2 legs ... Add these new words to the web.

For the FOOD section, bring in samples of bird feeder food (seeds, peanuts in the shell, suet) to look at and record for the bird they have. Not all birds eat the same food.

Because we are emphasizing the birds that live in our city in Manitoba and may see them later in the month on a field trip to Fort Whyte Nature Centre, we all record "Manitoba" in the LIVES section.

For ENEMIES we discuss the possibilities from our own knowledge and experience including pets, larger birds, pollution and of course the very cold weather.

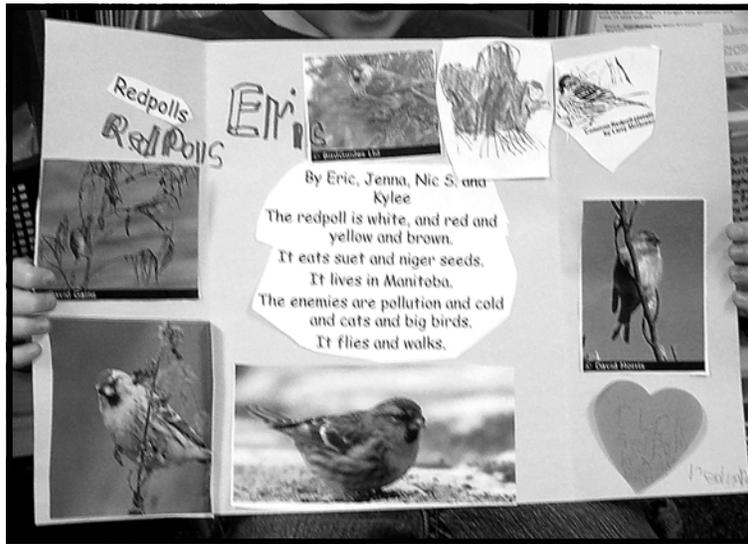
(if a 5th section is needed, divide one section in half) For MOVES, they fly, walk, perch or cling and the nuthatch is unique as it can go down a tree branch head-first. Now the information is gathered.

If the children like to look for extra information and pictures (you want to save the ones you're using for observation for next year), provide them with several appropriate websites.

Cooperative Writing: The group will compose the research report together, each taking a turn writing a sentence for one section. They will sign and hand in one report which will be typed up for them. (Power Point is a good program to use to type them as the panels are ready for a slide show later.) Print one copy for each member of the group.

Criterion: As a class develop a criterion for the display board for this project. Items to include are: Neatness, true facts, name of project, own name, & pictures (drawn and collected), and a personal note about the project (I call this “the part from the heart” and supply heart-shaped paper). Display this list prominently and make **continual reference** to it as the project develops. (*As this list will be used again in the class, use “project” vs. bird in the criterion list*).

Display: Use 12x18 construction paper and make a stand-up display by folding it in ¼, ½, ¼. The children arrange the typed report, their pictures and other items as they wish. This is now an individual project. (Old nature magazines are good sources for pictures too.)



Presentation: Each group will display their projects, read the data together and be scored on the criteria.

Test: A follow-up test is administered to test recall. Sample included.

NOTES: This is a photo op! During preparation as well as at presentation time.

This is the first of about 3 non-fiction writing projects during the second and third terms of grade one: The second one (often about penguins as there are great old readers with penguin research facts they can read and there are enough varieties of penguins to have one for each of six groups) is done in the same manner with the difference being how the report is developed; in pairs instead of a small group. The third project is an independent one on a wild animal of their choice. In the Manitoba curriculum for science they must study an animal native to the province, so I limit the choices to native animals.

I hope that you enjoy working on these projects with these steps using listening and observation skills.

Bev Smith 2008

Sample test:

Include a black line drawing of the bird.

What bird did you study? _____

Name two colours you saw. _____

Colour the picture correctly.

Tell three facts that you learned about this bird.

What was the best part of this project? _____

Project 2 follows same format but is with groups of 2-3 children.

Project 3 follows same format but is done alone.

Beginning Assessment - Grade One

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

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



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

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

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

It is helpful to ask the child a few questions. The answers will give you some insight.

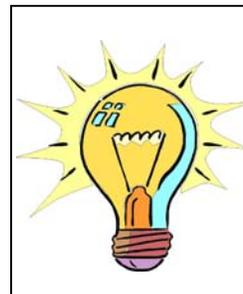
- Does someone read stories to you at home?
- What is reading?
- Can you read?
- What is your favourite book??"

More Teacher Tips

“I have a type of management strategy I use in my room regarding washroom breaks. Each student gets a colored popsicle stick at the beginning of the year with his/her name on it. When he/she wants or needs to go to the washroom or get a drink he/she simply asks and if it is granted he/she places his popsicle stick in a bucket and does not get it back until the end of the day. This works well because students are only allowed to go to the washroom or get a drink during class time once throughout the day. If the child does not have his/her popsicle stick they are not allowed to go. If the student has been missing the popsicle stick for more than a week he/she may get a new one but if found one needs to be thrown out otherwise they will take advantage of having two!”

Rhonda

“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.”



“One thing I do is the first month of school I let them pick where they want to sit, of course if there is a problem I can move them around, the next month I pick where they sit, then the next month is their turn again. They like this and try hard to stay close to a friend. I also assign who gets to pick the story everyday, both in the a.m. and p.m. and everyone tries hard to be on time or they get skipped until next time.”

Ruth

“To keep anecdotal notes on students and notes from parents organized I use a binder. In the binder is a set of alphabetical dividers where students are filed by their last name. Each student has a sheet with all personal info on it that I get from the office. Then I record all my notes on the child and add pages as the year progresses if I need to. Behind this page I insert a page protector for each student. I store ALL notes from parents regardless of what the note is about. It is so easy during the year if I need to check on something or look back at what a parent requested. I never lose any notes from parents this way and all my notes on students are in one place.”

Louise

“This is not my idea but one I got from a workshop. I have used it often and the children like it. It's called "Reading Train". I have the children sit side by side as if they are on a train. The children on the left are ‘a’ and the children on the right are ‘b’. I ask ‘a’ to begin reading to ‘b’ and when I want them to change I have a wooden train whistle that I blow. Then ‘a’ moves ahead one person on the train and ‘b’ now reads to ‘a’ or I have them stay seated with that partner and ‘b’ reads to ‘a’. If you have an uneven number of children, the teacher takes a turn on the train also.

Another idea is using the brightly coloured plastic display boards from the teachers’ store for private offices. If a child needs less distractions or is disturbing others put one of these display boards on their table or desk so they are better able to concentrate on the task at hand. I always refer to them as private offices. All the children like them and will often ask for an office to do their work.”

Donna

Morning Meeting: First thing every morning we meet on the carpet and begin our day with a handshake and hello. We stand in a circle. I turn to the person next to me, shake their hand and say, "Good morning, Susan!". Then Susan says to me, "Good morning, Mrs. Leyne." Susan turns to the person on her right, shakes hands and says good morning. The handshake travels all the way around the circle. It's a lovely, calm way to start the day, everyone is recognized, and the children learn to shake hands properly, look their friend in the eye, and greet them with a smile on their face.

Barb

Autumn

“This is suitable for Grade Two or Three. We found leaves outside and laid a piece of aluminum foil over the back side of the leaf. We taped it all down and then rubbed, gently at first, to make the leaf veins stand out on the foil. The leaves with the big veins turned out best.”

Go to this website and look at the wonderful tree shape made from a paper bag.

<http://www.mrsbrownart.com/1st.htm>

Leafy Lanterns or Pictures

Suspend these lanterns for a spectacular array of fall foliage.

Place a few bright, colourful leaves on the waxy surface of a 9" x 12" sheet of waxed paper. Cover the leaves with a second sheet of waxed paper, turning the waxy surface to the inside. Using a press cloth, carefully iron (at a low setting) the outer surface of the waxed paper until the leaves are held in place by melted wax.

Fold in half two 2" x 12" strips of yellow, red, orange, or brown construction paper. Insert the upper and lower edges of the waxed paper into the folds of the construction-paper strips and glue in place (like a quilt binding along the long edges of the wax paper).

Form a cylinder by overlapping and stapling together the ends of each construction-paper strip. Attach a 1" x 8" construction-paper handle to the top of the lantern. Hang from the ceiling.

Or..... after pressing the leaves between the wax paper, make two identical paper frames from fall-coloured construction paper and glue one frame over the leaves, turn it over and put the matching frame so both sides look the same. Put these up on the windows for a great autumn look or hang them from the ceiling.

Put a lovely real leaf between two pieces of clear contact plastic and cut it out, leaving a 1 cm. edge around the leaf. This is a great way to use real leaves for display. Use them to make mobiles, too.

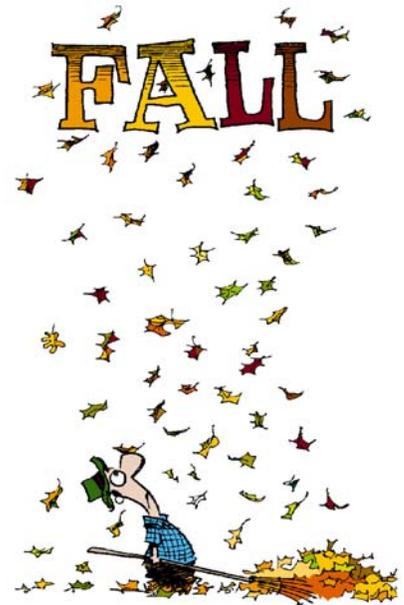
Corn Cob Flowers

“Buy dried corn cobs from a feed store and cut them into 3 pieces; or buy ears of corn at the store, shuck them, cut them into 2-inch lengths and allow them to dry for a couple of weeks. Place shallow containers of tempera paints at each table. Show children how to dip the end of the corn cob into the paint, then press it onto a paper to create a flower shape. After some practice, give each child a sheet of paper, and ask them to create a garden full of corn flowers. They may use markers or crayons to add stems and centers after flowers have dried.”

“In the fall the class and I go on a search for nature items, for example, leaves, small flowers, flower petals, (we have a garden at school and it proves to be a good time to take the flowers off the stems - which I do before class as I really don't want the kids to think that they can do it) and so on. The kids are encouraged to find colourful things and always do a great job. Then they arrange them on their desk top, sharing, of course. Then I give them a piece of clear contact mactac and they redo their arrangement on this. When done we put another piece on top. Then I cut them into round shapes and hang them from the wire in my room. They move in the wind and are really effective!”

Apple Prints

Cut apples through the centre to show the star. Paint the flat side with red paint and make prints.



Halloween is Coming!

Write a class book for Halloween! It could be one of these:

Pattern it on Brown Bear, Brown Bear..... Begin with 'Black cat, black cat, What do you see?' and on the opposing page..... 'I see a white ghost, looking at me.' Then 'White ghost, white ghost, what do you see?' etc.

Make a book with each student getting a page - 'On Halloween I will be _____.' and an illustration.

'In the haunted house I saw a _____.'



If you want to do less Halloween but still celebrate the season, learn about owls, bats and spiders. They make great room decorations, too. You can have the students research these, write about them, do art projects and learn poems.

"I make these gorgeous little hanging bats from a black sock and felt for the wings, eyes, etc. They are adorable! I have a large tree on a bulletin board and the bats hang up side down from that tree."

"I make black cats from a large circle (the body), a smaller circle for the head, triangles for ears, and a long tail. The children glue sequins on for eyes, and the cats are very effective."

Put up a picture of a skeleton. Teach the names of the main bones and talk about the human skeleton. Then give the students a large piece of black construction paper and put out white straws, q-tips and the foam peanuts. Can the students make a skeleton? Try first, and glue later.

Draw a simple spider web on paper. Then make thin glue lines and put black yarn on the line.

Trace the bare foot for a ghost shape - the heel is the head and the toes the bottom. Cut out of white tissue paper and use just a tiny bit of glue to glue just the head down so the ghost can move and you can see through it!

"Have the kids paint a paper plate with black tempera paint and let it dry. When the plates are dry, using a single hole punch, punch holes around the outside edge of the plate. Using white yarn, tie one end to one of the holes on the paper plate and the other end to a plastic needle. Have the students lace in and out of the holes in what ever directions they want to create a spider web. When they are done, knot off the remaining end to the paper plate and make a construction paper spider to go on the web. I did this as a buddy activity with my Kindergarten class and the grade 5 class."

"We make pumpkin pizzas – English muffins with cheese cut out from a pumpkin cookie cutter, pizza sauce and pepperoni."

"My kids in grade two enjoy doing 'floating heads' for our door. Everyone started with an oval traced on a sheet of drawing paper as the 'face' or head for the project. Kids would either draw their own face in 'make-up', or draw their face with a mask. Some years we did a theme of spooky faces or favourite characters from literature or something that tied the Halloween thing together. They would add 3-D hair, hat, noses that stuck out, glasses, or whatever they needed. Then all the decorated faces would be taped to our door. We had a little sign that said, 'Floating Heads in Room 12'. The kids liked that. We also had a little strip of paper they would write something the floating head was saying, and we would have it coming from the mouth of each head."

"My students always love to make haunted houses. We start with a 12" x 18" of gray paper and they draw a house that size. They make their lines a bit wavy for a spooky effect. They draw doors and windows and then cut along 3 sides and fold them so they open. This is glued to black paper. Then spooky things are put in the windows, so you can see them when the window (or door) opens."

Websites

<http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/2344.html>

Here are lots of great ideas to teach the book *Chrysanthemum*.

Look at this site for great Halloween fonts to download for free. (The free fonts are at the top of the page.) Look under H for Horror fonts.

<http://www.1001freefonts.com/index2.html>

This Hallowe'en site is filled with lots of goodies - recipes, lessons, literature ideas, graphics, poems, books, things to print, and lots more. It is called 'The Ultimate Halloween Resource'!

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/9893/halloweenindex.html>

This is great! Tour classrooms by photos.

<http://teachers.net/gazette/photos.html>

If you teach early primary, this website has loads of useful things. It has been written by Cherry Carl, who is a retired teacher, now an instructor at the University of California. Every link down the left side of the page contains bushels of information. Have fun!

<http://carlscorner.us.com/>

This is fun! Try it with your colleagues.....

<http://www.sciencegeek.net/lingo.html>

Another very useful site:

<http://www.tooter4kids.com/>

Here are songs to teach many different skills, and video clips with the music, too.

<http://www.suzyred.com/music.html>

This is a great collection of Halloween links.

<http://www.suelebeau.com/october.htm>



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."

Odds and Ends

<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/1stgrade/crayons.htm>

I have mentioned this before, but it is worth repeating. This poem is nice to use with a friendship or bullying unit or alone. Very little prep time is involved with this one. You can have the students use the whole 8 ½ by 11 sheet of paper to draw the picture as outlined in the poem. You could use examples first and if the students work turn out they can make a lovely bulletin board.

“This is a good activity to use when you have an afternoon that is not going as planned or you have a TOC in or the last day before an extended break. I like to keep it as secretive as possible as this gets them very curious. It will take an hour or more to complete. Good for grade 2/3 and up. This activity is called –WHO AM I— Give each student the same sheet of identical paper and have them write their name in the exact same spot on the paper just big enough to be read by the teacher.

Next have the student’s numbers their paper 1 through 8 or more depending on the number of questions you might want to ask. Here are the questions:

1. Are you a boy or a girl?
2. What is your eye colour?
3. What is your hair colour?
4. Where were you born?
5. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
6. What is your favourite TV show?
7. What is your favourite hobby?
8. Who is your best friend?



When the students have finished writing, collect the papers and read them out. The students try and guess who each person is. Usually the friend part gives it away so it’s best to keep that one for last. Vary the questions depending on the grade level. Sometimes the students will ask what it is that they are doing and the more secretive you are the more their interest rises. Everyone loves to guess!”

Verna

The yearly calendar at the end of this issue was sent to Primary Success by Karla. I think it is a really good idea. Put it up on a bulletin board beside your desk or in the front of your plan book. Put in holidays, meetings, in-service days, children’s birthdays, and other important dates.

“I thought I'd share an idea I'm going to try this year. I'm going to use coloured construction paper in my printer and print out doorknob hangers for my kids. On the hangers I'm going to print out the days of the week and what they need to remember each day. Example:

- Mon.** gym
- Tues.** library books back
- Wed.** gym
- Thurs.** poetry duotangs back
- Fri.** spelling test today

I'll then laminate them and give one to each child to hang on the inside of their front door so that they can read it as they leave for school in the mornings.....Wouldn't it be wonderful if it actually worked!!!!...Hey I can dream.....”

Barb

“I have my students do 'self-reporting' 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.”

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

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!



Dear Colleagues,

A very big 'Thank you' to Rebecca Pierce-Peters, Bev Smith, and all the other wonderful teachers who responded to my on-line pleas for helpful tips! Your contributions are much appreciated.

If any others have things to share - we would love to see them!

Have a great year, and look after yourselves first, then your family and then your teaching.

Jean

To order or renew your subscription
To contribute a great idea, a funny story,
a project or an insight
To comment on the magazine
To complain
To request ideas on a specific topic

Write to:

Primary Success Publications
4971 Fillinger Cres.
Nanaimo, B.C., V9V 1J1

E-mail:

primarysuccess@shaw.ca

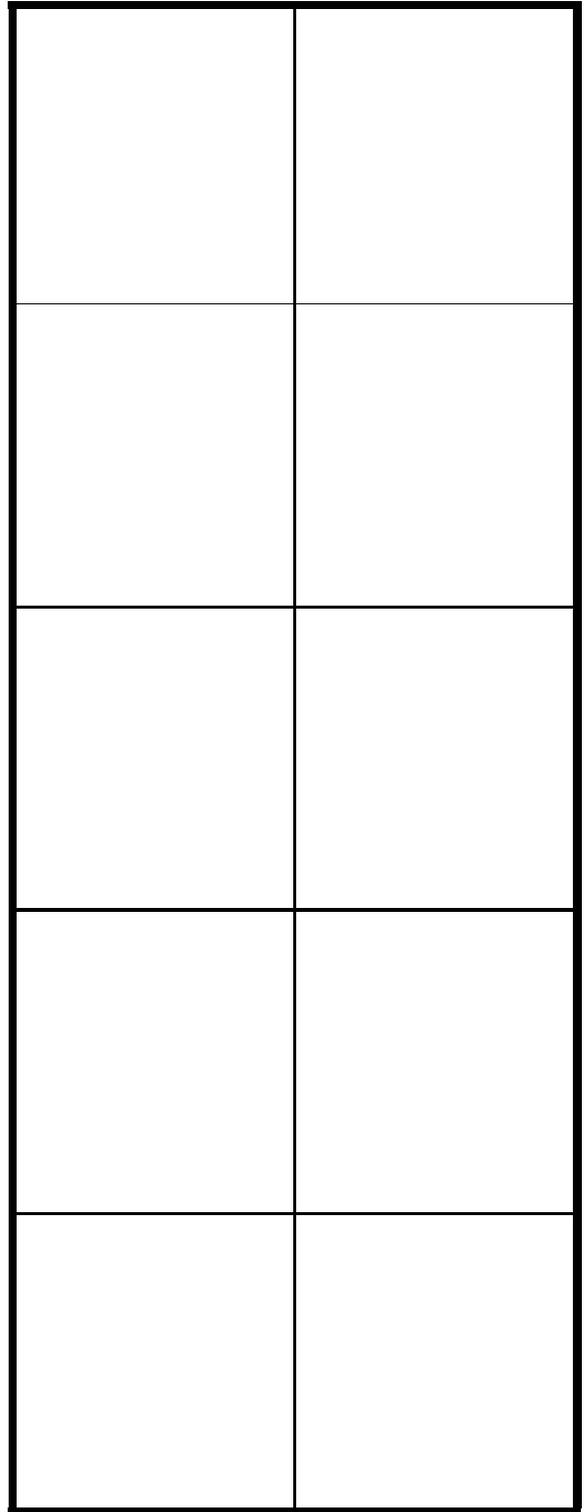
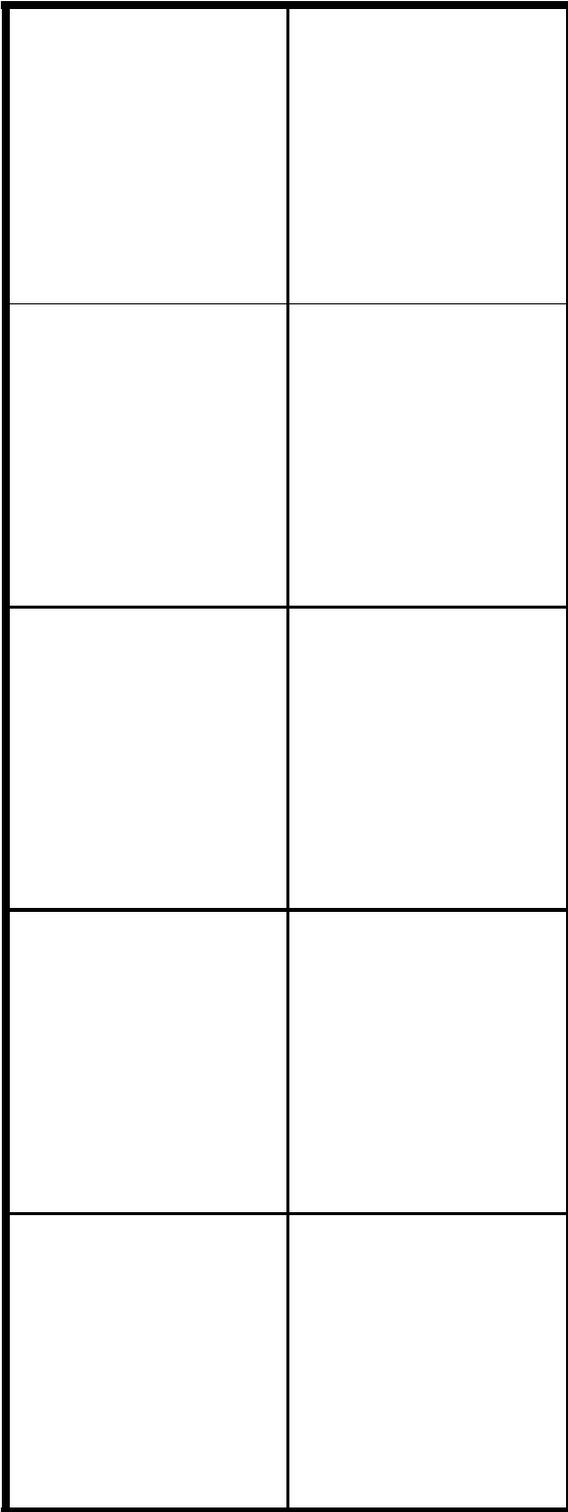
Website: <http://www.primarysuccess.ca>

Phone: Toll Free
250-758-2608 1-800-758-0889

Fax:
250-758-2661



large ten frames



small ten frames

