



Primary Success

Issue #16

September – October 2007

A New School Year!

We are so lucky to work in a profession that renews itself every 12 months! By the start of the new school year in the autumn, we are eager to begin again with a new class of children. Our frustrations from last year have all gone on to another teacher and we begin with a clean slate (or should I say 'a clean whiteboard?') and fresh ideas. We are able to start work with all the knowledge of our past experience and no left-over problems. It is wonderful to have this renewal of interest and enthusiasm!

This is like New Years! Make a few resolutions as you begin the year. How can you improve your lessons? Do you model your expectations as much as you should? Are you as organized as you would wish? Can you do more to help your children become better readers? Pick one or two areas to improve, and spend perhaps five or ten minutes each day working on this. Five minutes a day on organization, for example, will make a huge difference in your classroom, or an extra ten minutes a day modeling your expectations will make a huge difference with your class.

Have fun, and remember to smile lots and laugh heartily every day!

Jean



Look for:



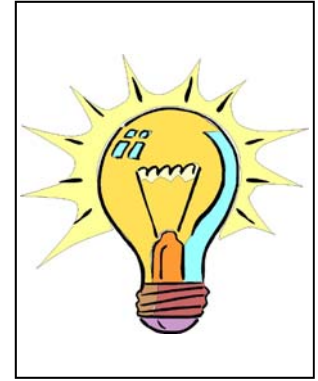
**Tips -
the best ideas!**

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Remember the Golden Rule. And remember it's your turn.

Super Teacher Tips!



Janeen's Tips

I use table managers, one at each table. The table manager's chair is a different colour and they change each week. The managers hand out things at the end of the day, get out supplies, binders, duotangs etc., for their tables. I have a tool box of shared supplies at the tables and colour coded magazine boxes and bins for their duotangs and binders (for poems and songs). They are kept in areas close to their individual tables. I also colour code the tables by using a coloured circle sticker in the middle of each table. The supply bins are also the same colour as the table dot. The only problem is finding bins that are 6 different colours.

I put all the names of the kids on a strip of poster paper and have a clothes pin labelled '1st Helper' and '2nd Helper'. I begin with the '1st Helper' pin on the left of the name chart and the '2nd Helper' on the right. I start them at a different place and we just move the pegs down each day.

I also have a poster list of names with a clothes peg for 'Mystery Bag'. I move it along as each child has a turn. They take a large bag home and print up 3 clues. On their day they read out the clues and the kids get 5 guesses. The child talks about the item and asks "Are there any questions or comments?" They can take 5 responses. There is applause when they are finished.....

Barb's Tips

My 'to do' list for the first day of school:

- before the kids come in, I put their names on coat hooks, cubbies, the chore chart and the show and share days poster.

- I sort all of the kids' school supplies - duo-tangs and notebooks I keep so that I can use one colour for math, one colour for spelling etc. Extra pencils and erasers go into ice cream buckets (everyone has 3 pencils and one eraser in their pencil box, then as they get dull they put them in the 'to be sharpened' tin and take a sharpened one out of the 'ready to go' tin. Paints, pastels and white glue I keep in boxes in a cupboard. They keep one glue stick in their pencil boxes and I put the extra ones in a bucket in a cupboard. We either tape the bottom of pencil crayon boxes or we dump the crayons into large ziplock bags. We do the same with wax crayons.

- I take a picture of each child and get two copies made at lunch - one will be cut to fit a frozen juice lid and will get a magnet on the back to be used for graphing. One will be cut and glued onto a paper apple and hung on our class tree. I also photocopy a set of the pictures so that I can make a class book for each of the kids to work on. It has a child's picture on a half sheet of paper and below it, his/her name and a place for the owner of the book to print the person's name. The kids walk around with their books, introducing themselves to their classmates and filling in their names. Once done, it goes home so that the parents have a reference of who's who in the class.

- I talk about what 'on task' behaviour looks like and while they create their self-portrait, I walk around and ask them to show me what 'on task' looks like and I take a picture of them working on their picture. Once these are developed, I tape them to the kids pencil boxes with a note that says 'Me on task'. This way, if someone is not on task, I don't have to say anything, I just walk by and point to the picture on their pencil box.

- I remove the covers from their exercise books, turn them over, glue on a fancy piece of paper (i.e.: apple shaped paper) and write on it the subject and the child's name. I then laminate the cover and re-staple it to the book. If I don't laminate them then I at least turn them over, add a fancy cover piece and reinforce the spine with clear packing tape on the outside of the notebook.

- on the first day we play lots of 'get to know you' games and we practice our quiet signal.

- I usually read 'The Kissing Hand' and we do a craft around that book.

- I stay in the classroom while the kids eat lunch so that we set lunch behaviour standards (i.e. no walking around while you eat and when you are done you spray and wipe your desk and put away all of your garbage, recycling etc.)



"I teach them the Lunch Time Rap...we snap and chant:

Been thinking about lunch
Cause it's time to eat
Got tired brains
And tired feet.
So come on teacher
Won't you let us go?
The gas in our cars
Is getting low!"

Sharon's Tips

Before the first day I have my coat hooks numbered. At first they can take any free hook. After 3 weeks I assign an ID number down the class list alphabetically. All new students go to the bottom of the list and get the next number. I have them print their name and number in the top right hand corner of all their work either on the front or the back. This way I can quickly figure out who I am missing by thumbing through the stack of pages I am looking at from day to day.

I also have file folders using the numbers to file work which is eventually placed in their Portfolio binders. The kids learn their number and most of the other numbers as well. I can call all odd numbers to do tasks or even numbers to do tasks throughout the year. When I am missing assignments I can print the missing numbers on the board and check with each child when I have a few minutes or before they go to recess they have to complete the task. I love using ID numbers!

I used to collect all the supplies that came in but I have arranged with my administrator to order in bulk for the whole grade. This way grade groups of teachers can order what they want/need and if there is something special then they can add it to the supply list. The parents pay a set amount - approximately \$30.00 - to the office. The secretary collects it all. This way we get exactly the supplies we want and the quality. Everything matches! I keep cans of crayons, coloured pencils and markers in the tool tubs along with glue sticks, glue, scissors, printing pencils and erasers. I introduce these a little at a time.

I need to become a filer instead of a piler! Organization is always a problem..... I keep most things in monthly binders because most topics or themes come up the same month from year to year. About two weeks before the end of each month I take in my binders for the upcoming month and usually one or two magazine boxes for that month as well and go through them and decide what I need copied and prepped.

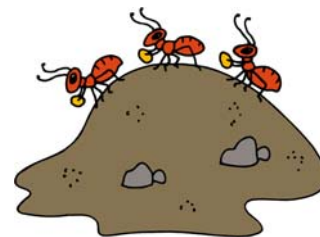
For day to day lessons I have two large file boxes that sit on my table/desk near my computer. They hold file folders 1-6 (we have a 6 day schedule). One set is red and the other is blue. The red week I usually focus on Social Studies and on the blue week it is Science. As I pull materials that I need I place them all in the file folder with the lesson plan on the top for each day. I also have a yellow sub file that I can pull from when I have to be out due to illness if a change needs to be made quickly along with a sub binder with useful information. My school also requires a 6 day Emergency Sub Plan be kept in the office as well. For this I have typed up my lesson plans for each day of the cycle and created theme packets to use if my regular plans can not be covered or if I should ever be out longer then originally planned. I reuse these from year to year as I have stayed in the same grade.

More tips.....

“I wait for a couple of days before I put name tags on desks and around the classroom. I have found each year that some children do not go by the names on the class sheet! If I do them too soon I have to change several.”

“We do a mini-theme on ants early in the year. We talk about the workers and how busy they are, and we go out to the playground and leave crumbs. Then we watch the ants picking up crumbs larger than they are and pack them all away. Then, when we clean up the classroom floor, I say, ‘Time for ants!’ and the children busily pick up all the paper bits on the floor. The kids really like it and it seems to work really well!”

“I have two stuffed animals that stay in my classroom. One is Bruce, the Bathroom Bear. The child puts it on his/her desk when going to the washroom. I can immediately see who is out. The other is a kangaroo and it sits on the desk of the child who is the Star of the Day.”



Centres...or No Centres?

Every child needs a reading lesson each day and should oral read to you each day. You must fit it in! What the others are doing is very important so that you can have this time free of interruptions.

There seems to be some guilt in teachers who don't do literacy or other centres. They are 'in vogue' and 'progressive'! I give full credit to the teachers who can handle them well, have high expectations and the children live up to them, can keep track of what each child is supposed to do and has accomplished.

But..... there are many reasons why centres are difficult to manage. Here are some - perhaps you can think of more.

- One purpose of centres is to give the teacher some quiet time to teach groups. When children are around the classroom engaged with peers in centre activities, quiet is difficult. Movement and noise detracts from your group lesson.

- Centres are a lot of work to organize and more work to keep changing so the children do not become bored.

- They take a lot of modeling so the students know exactly what is expected.

- It is often difficult to assess what the child has accomplished at a centre. We always have children who will accomplish as little as possible!

- Storage can be difficult and not attractive looking.

- Too often the children aren't doing a 'job' that has learning value.

So - what can you do? Here are some suggestions for work that the children can quietly do while you are doing your reading groups.

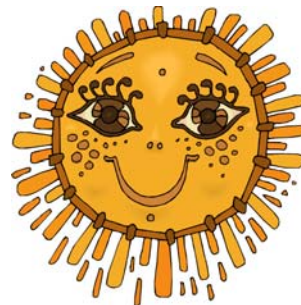
- This is a good time for SSR! Each child should have books at their independent reading level and just read, read, read. This is not useful until perhaps February in Grade One, but works very well after that.

- Do a printing exercise. Children cannot do good work in creative writing until they can print fluently and well - and this takes a lot of practice. Have high expectations for neatness, correct formation and spacing. The students can print a poem, do close exercises with the reading vocabulary, fill in the blanks, etc. There should be a reason for the child to print what you give them - and also a reason to read it. This is useful, quiet independent work.

If you have three reading groups, for example, you can have three 20 minute lessons, and the children not in the group you are teaching can read for 20 minutes and print for 20 minutes. Simple is always best!

The process of the adoption of an idea that works.

1. Ridicule and scorn
2. Tolerance
3. "Hmmm..this might work"
4. "Hey, this is great"
5. "Glad I thought of it"



Something to Ponder



Minimally guided instruction, while very popular, doesn't work well.
It is one reason most children underachieve in reading, math, and science from early on.

Bulletin Boards

Most primary teachers cover bulletin boards with the coloured butcher paper and a fancy purchased edging. This is attractive and easy, of course - but there are other things you can use to cover those ugly spaces!

Fabric is great. Stretch it out and staple it. It doesn't fade or show staple holes like paper, and can be taken down and washed to use next year. Use a pastel or single colour or a simple not-too-busy pattern if you want people to focus on the bulletin board material. There are lots of fabrics that are great for themes, seasons or holidays. You can also find fabrics with texture - velvets, burlap, felt, etc. Check the remnant bins for bargains, too!

Sheets, table cloths or curtains bought at discount stores are good.....

You can buy shower curtains at dollar stores - these can be written on - see page 17 for ideas to use these.

Gift wrap, newspaper, comic book pages, magazine pages are interesting.

Look through wallpaper bins for discontinued lots. These can be interesting and fun. Wallpaper borders are also great for decorating. Just staple these!

If you are in an older school, paint your bulletin boards! Give them several coats - then you can add stencils to make it more interesting if you wish.

Welcome!

Put up a 'Welcome' bulletin board for your new class! Here are some ideas.....

One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish.

Here are Ms. Peter's new fish!

Cut out large coloured fish and put the kid's names on them. Add pictures after the first day! Maybe you could draw ones like the ones in the book.

http://www.robinsonschools.com/wes/teachers/1/corn/august_september.htm

Here is an alphabet bulletin board with the kids' pictures. Neat!

For Grade 2 or 3 - make a cross word of all the names so everyone connects. The students can do it for a first day project. Give out a page with squares to print in.

Make green frogs in a pond.....*I'm so hoppy you are here!*

On the first day take a picture of each student wearing sunglasses. Enlarge just the heads on the computer and print out - cut around the heads and put up on a board - head it 'We're Cool!'

Have little ducklings and a mother duck (you!). The board could be titled, 'Waddle We Do This Year?' 'Waddle into a Cool Class', etc.

A simple bulletin board can have stars - "Ms. _____'s All-Stars!" or 'We're off to the stars' or 'Reach for the stars!'.

Grade Threes will like a bulletin board with jeans for each one and the label, "Grade Three Jean-iuses".

"On the first day read the book *Chrysanthemum*. We talk about the students' names and the number of letters in each. We graph our names by the number of letters. Who has the longest name? Who has the shortest? Then we do flowers. They trace a circle for the centre and print their name in it. Then I have pre-cut petals - some wide and some thin, and they glue the number of petals behind the circle as they have letters in their names. We talk about the petal size and the best choices."

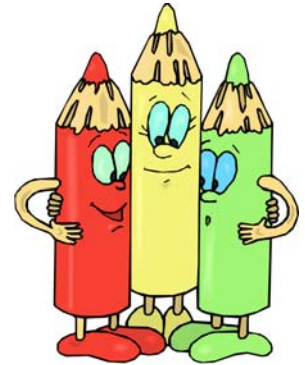


Before the First Day

If you are new to the school meet and remember the names of the personnel with whom you and your children will associate.

Set up the classroom, thinking about all the areas you will need - the calendar meeting place, the library, the teacher's desk or other personal area, centres, computers, storage for math manipulatives, etc.

Cover the bulletin boards and frame them with borders. Autumn colours of red, orange and yellow are nice! Make the walls attractive, colourful and welcoming - without overdoing it. Leave at least one bulletin board with fresh coloured backing for students' work in the first week. Make a 'Welcome' bulletin board with all the children's names.



Clean off your desk and organize it for the school year. Have a container for the things you will need many times each day and put everything else away in a cupboard. A large sheet of poster tag in a bright colour placed where you work on the desk outlines your space. A vase of flowers or a plant makes your desk beautiful.

If you have a class list, label the coat places, cubbies and other personal places for the children. You may want to leave the desk tags loose until the end of the first week.

Prepare a computer folder with files for each student. Also make a basic data base on MSWorks with the students' names. Copy this several times. One of these copies can have the children's birthdays, addresses, parent contact information, etc. One can be for math tests, another for knowing letter sounds, etc.

Prepare a binder with sections for each child if you write anecdotal notes on a daily or weekly basis. This can also have spreadsheets for math scores and test results if you don't do this on the computer.

Create a sub folder. Have seating plans, spare activities, worksheets, schedules, emergency information and a class list.

If you wish, write a class handbook - see page 29.

Organize the classroom library and know how you are going to use it.

Know all your procedures. How are you going to handle bathroom passes, sharpening pencils, handling supplies, going to groups, lining up, etc? What will your rules be? You may want to brainstorm the rules with the children, but you should know the final result first.



Prepare lessons for the first week or two. Prepare more than you think you can possibly use. You will always use much more (or much less) than you think you will.

Have materials ready for those first lessons. Pull the books you want to read, have the art supplies, the math sheets and manipulatives, the pencils sharpened, the paper ready, etc.

Make nametags that the students can wear the first few days until you learn all the names. These can be labels stuck to their shirts, tags around the neck, crowns, etc.

The First Day

Many schools have the students go to their last year's teacher for the first day so that the school knows the enrollment and can put them into classes. If you do this, and are wondering what to do with the children you had last year - here are some ideas.

You could have them write letters of advice (do's and don'ts, rules to follow, etc.) to the new students about being in your class...something light and funny that they can illustrate. Then compile the letters and pictures into a book that you can read to your new students on the first day you have them. *Martha*

Dear New Students,

I would like to wish you a _____ year in grade one. I had a _____ year with Mrs. _____, and here are some things to help you have a _____ year:

1. Always remember to _____ when you _____.
2. Don't be afraid to _____ if you _____.
3. Never, ever _____ or _____.

Mrs. J. can be really _____, especially when _____.
Something else you should know about Mrs. J. is that she _____.
My favourite memory of grade _____ was _____ because _____.

Good luck!

Sincerely,

"I made bubble letter names..... I set up a computer page in Word - turning it to the landscape form. I use Comic Sans font and enlarge it to about 200 by highlighting the letter size and typing in the number. Then I go under 'Format' at the top, to 'Font' and then click beside the word 'Outline'. This makes bubble letters of the word. Center the word. Now, I print in each child's name and print them off. The very first morning, when they come in and I am busy, I give them their names and some old crayons and have them colour in the letters. This gives me a bit of time to organize, talk to parents, etc. If there is a child who is not on the list, I just have this format page up on my computer and make a new one in a flash.

Later in the week we use these to put into alphabetical order, counting boys and girls, graphing the number of letters in the names, etc."

"I give my kids an envelope with the letters to make their name and I tell them there is a secret word in there! When they figure it out we glue the letters onto a paper and draw a self-portrait."

"We make little books that the kids can take home and show off how they can 'read'!

Cover: I'm In Grade One - There is a box for them to draw an apple or you can put a graphic here.

Page 1 - I am _____. The child prints the name and draws him/herself

Page 2 - This is my friend _____. The child draws a friend in class and prints the friend's name.

Page 3 - My teacher is (you put this). The child draws a picture of me.

Page 4 - This is the school. I print in the school name and the child draws the school.

I have these photocopied and we do the pages at different times in the first school day."

Sing to the tune of London Bridge -

This is <George> we're glad he's here, glad he's here, glad he's here!

This is <George>

We're glad he's here.

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



More First Day Ideas

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

“I make a sheet of labels (20 to a page) with one child’s name per page - the print in bubble letters. On the first day they colour them in. Now there are 20 labels to put on exercise books, pencil cases, coat hook spots, etc.”

Play a name game or other circle game to learn all the names: Give each child a name tag or the name on a cord around the neck. Play, for example, ‘Who stole (or ‘took’ if you don’t like the word ‘stole’) the cookie from the cookie jar?’ Go through this until the children are comfortable with the sequence and words – then put it to rhythm by slapping the knees with alternate hands. It will take some time and practice to do it in rhythm!

Who Stole the Cookie?

Leader: **Who** stole the **cookie** from the **cookie jar**?

Group: Amanda stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Amanda: (*Point to self*) Who me?

Group: Yes, you.

Amanda (*shake head*): Couldn’t be.

Group: Then who?

Amanda: Thomas stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Thomas: Who me? Etc.



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

- With Grade Twos and Threes, write in the journals at the end of the day. Today they can tell all about the first day of school and what they enjoyed. It will be fun to look back at this!

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

Play Classmates Bingo! Have all the names of the students on a chart and on small cards or popsicle sticks to draw. The children get blank Bingo sheets and fill in the squares with the names of their choice. Then I pull names at random and they cover the names they have with a candy. They love to hear their names called. On the second game draw out the names you haven’t called yet and put all the sticks back when every name has been used.

Do ‘All About Me’ math. How many numbers are part of your life? Your address, phone number, number of people in the family, number of pets, age, etc.

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

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

Improving Oral Language

Studies have shown that oral language abilities are related to beginning reading achievement.

Children begin school with varying experience in oral language. Among the reasons for the differences are the home literacy environment, and the preschool (or lack of) experiences.

One study shows that the number of words heard at home per hour by 1- and 2-year-olds learning to talk range from 2,150 to a low of 620 in an average hour. By the age of 3 a child in an academic household will have heard three million words and a child in a low academic household will have only heard one million.

We can't reverse this - in fact, as we are discussing this the higher children are continuing to widen the gap because experience and ease with language leads to faster learning. That does not mean that we can't improve the oral language skills of our children!

Here are some ideas:

- Read lots of books to your class. Choose books with interesting stories and ones that have a vocabulary that is higher than the students' spoken vocabulary. Gradually increase the difficulty. Read with pleasure and animation.
- Discuss the stories, using some of the difficult words. If, for example, the princess is wearing a scarlet dress, discuss the colour repeating the word 'scarlet' a number of times. Ask, "Is anyone here wearing something scarlet?" to bring the word into familiar context.
- Discuss the pictures in the book, again using words above the children's spoken vocabulary whenever it is suitable.
- Have the children who have low language skills sit close to you and the book to keep their close attention.
- Re-tell and sequence the story or have these children do puppet shows or act out the plot.
- In sharing time, when a low language child has told a story, tell it back to him with other words and discuss the topics to increase the vocabulary.
- Do themes that interest the lower children and widen the vocabulary by using new and different words as the theme is taught and shared.
- Have these children speak in complete sentences when they want something - 'Please may I go to the washroom?' 'I don't have a red crayon', etc.
- Teach and then correct grammar - 'Me and Mom went home....' 'gots' etc.
- Don't talk down to your children. Some teachers speak differently in the classroom, choosing very simple words. This does not help to increase their oral language skills.

The Alphabet Rap

A-B CDE

School is where I want to be

F-G HIJ

Learning to read and write each day

K-L MNO

Boys and girls I want to know

P-Q RST

Sharing books with you and me

U-V WXY

Now it's time to say goodbye

The alphabet always ends with Z

Now it's time to go to bed!



"For alphabet practice I have cards for each letter and I give them out at random to my children - some may get two of them. Then they must place them in order on the chalk railing as fast as they can. Sometimes I time them to see how fast they can do it.

For another exercises they must hold the card in front of them and line up in alphabetical order. This is fun and slow at the beginning - and it is very easy to see who are the bossy children!"

Reading Ideas

My opinion..... For those who are new to the magazine, a few words on my philosophy of teaching reading. The old-timers have heard this before and can skip this and go to the next entry!

I believe that children are all different from one another and they all learn differently. Some are visual learners, some auditory learners and a few learn by kinesthetic methods. Some are strong in all three modalities and others may only be able to learn in one of them. Most children have a blend of strengths with one stronger than the other two. In order to be the best reading teacher that we can be, we must teach the visual methods - sight reading and 'whole language' - for the children who need this, phonics for the auditory learners and use kinesthetic strategies to help those learners.

If you teach a visual method only, you will not be doing the best for the auditory learners. If you teach predominately phonics, the visual learners will be left out. If you teach the 'whole language' literature methods you will leave the auditory learners and many of the lower visual learners at a disadvantage.

The second point is that most children learn best - more quickly and thoroughly - if they are taught specific lessons in sequential order. Teaching reading through literature works well for some kiddies but leaves many not learning as quickly or as thoroughly as they should. It is a disaster for children with learning disabilities. Some children can pick up phonics through incidental teaching - but many can not. This top-down method lacks specific lessons in sequence and expects children to grow without this.

So..... it is my opinion that that to do the very best for all your children you must teach all the methods. A number of children in your class will excel in each type of lesson. In Grade One and Two I would suggest 20 to 30 minutes of phonics, taught to the whole class. Follow a sequential program and try to teach it to mastery for most children. There may be a few students who will have difficulty learning an auditory method. They need to be exposed to lots of phonics, but will do better in other modalities. Do at least one hour of sight word reading, again, following a laid-out sequential program so the students get lots of repetition. Usually you will have to group the students in this, as some will learn very quickly and others will learn slowly. Phonics and sight reading are usually done in the early morning block of time.

But that is not enough! Your students need the literature, too. In the afternoon, do what we used to call 'whole language' or guided reading lessons using trade books. This can be a whole class lesson. This takes the learning done in the morning and puts the methods together in context. Take perhaps an hour in the afternoon to read a story to the class and do this guided reading lesson.

If you haven't taught reading like this - try it. You will be surprised at the progress your children will make. Make your lessons interesting because of your enthusiasm. You will find out a lot about your students, too. You will find some of them do well in all parts of your reading program, but others will do poorly in one area and progress well in another. You will understand their learning and what each child needs to succeed.

I worry about educational 'bandwagons'. So often progressive ideas are touted as the perfect solution to teaching reading. Teachers are inspired to throw out all they know and take on a new philosophy. Invariably this new philosophy sells books and is pushed by publishing companies - and others who stand to benefit. Most only last a few years until it is found that they do not hold the answers. Teachers wonder what they have done wrong when they don't get the promised results. There are some good ideas with every program, though - take from each what works well for you. Collect knowledge and try everything!

Things to Ponder

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"I have some books sorted by level and some by category or author. I have found that if I have the kids help me sort they mostly get the books back to the right spot. Every once in a while I go over and we do a big show of how sad it is that a book is in the wrong place! For the first month of school we have a short lesson each day talking about where the books go. The books have coloured circles on the spines and inside, too - in case the one on the outside comes off."



Word Walls

"I have been introducing five words each week from my spelling program. I put each word from the list on a tag card. One thing that I do that works well for me is to put the 'easy', phonetically spelled words on green tag (I introduce these as the 'easy' ones). The ones that are 'red' words in the spelling program are put on red tag and we call these our 'doozies'. Words that can be tricky (not going along with the rules or not quite phonetic) are on yellow tag - 'be cautious'.

'Colour' words are on pink and names of children in class are on a different colour. The colour of the tag is one clue we use when we play *Guess My Word* with the word wall. It can also be a clue when the student wants a word and I can tell them what colour to look for on the Word Wall. I save these words each year clipping them into my Spelling book. To make it easy to sort at the end of the year I put the number of the lesson on the back of the tag card."

Pam

"In Grade One I start off the first day adding ONLY their names and my own to the word wall. Then we slowly add the spelling words after the tests. I also add sight words as we introduce them. The children MUST spell these words correctly in everything they do - no excuses!"

"My Grade One word wall takes up a large double-sized bulletin board on one side of the classroom. I am lucky to have this - some teachers in my school find it difficult to have their word walls where all the children can see it easily. The words have to be high enough so that they aren't blocked by heads or furniture or too far away from where the children sit so everyone can see the words easily.

I don't let my Grade One kids take the words off the wall because I think it is important that the words are in exactly the same place throughout the year so they can immediately find the one they are looking for. I add new ones below the ones already under the letter, even though they are not in alphabetical order. When I taught Grade Two and Three I did alphabetize them under the letter - the kids helped me decide where a word should go.

I make sure I take at least 10 minutes each day to play games with the word wall words and chant and clap the spelling. This is a great filler before breaks or when waiting for the bell to ring. If I haven't had time during the day I take the last ten minutes before dismissal."

Writing

"One of my favourite writing units is doing 'How to.....' stories. I model writing one and we practice sequencing events. I do a simple task like putting jam on a cracker. As I do it the children watch and then tell me what I have done. When they are finished I do what they have said..... sometimes it makes sense and sometimes it doesn't! Then I put some sequencing on sentence strips and we talk through them - then I mix them up and we see if the directions can be followed. Sometimes I leave out one of the sentences and see if the children can see what is missing.

I begin having them write 'How to.....' stories that are about very familiar things. Here are some:

This is how to....

- have a bath.
- get dressed.
- brush my teeth.
- set the table.
- sharpen a pencil.
- make a food.
- make a new friend.
- plant a seed.
- wash your hands.
- play hopscotch/soccer/skip/hockey....



Spelling

The following came from Barb Mathieson in North Vancouver. She gives me permission to use it here, but asks me to make clear that these procedures came from Emily Calhoun and her book *Teaching Beginning Reading and Writing with the Picture Word Inductive Model*.

“Emily’s book describes it a little differently than what I do. She draws lines from words to their place in the picture...i.e. the word 'hat' has a line pointing to the hat in the picture. This would work if you were just looking for words of things you can see...like if you were going to use it for ESL learners, but I like extending it so I don't do lines. I also don't think that she sorts the words and for me, that is a big part of the learning. I don't have problems selling it to parents...they are usually shocked at the words the kids develop and work on. Have fun!” Barb

Have you ever heard of PWIM? (Picture Word Inductive Model). It was developed by Emily Calhoun and it is a super way to generate word lists for spelling/writing/word work. Here are some of the basic steps, but keep in mind that once you get going with it you can expand it on soooo many levels.

1) Pick a picture that you think will interest the kids, or pick one that has to do with a theme you are studying. I often start with the Norman Rockwell print, ‘Shiner’. (If you put ‘Shiner Norman Rockwell’ into Google Image it you can see it.)

2) Ask your students to really look at the picture and try and capture all of its details in their mind’s eye. They spend time silently looking at the picture.

3) Tell the kids that you want them to find what words they have in their heads to describe the picture. What is it that they see? Ask them to take turns calling out single words for things they see in the picture and as they do, print them all over the board (no need to do it in lists...think more word web format).

4) Every now and then stop the kids and say “I’m just going to ask you to shift your thinking for a minute.....I want you to tell me what words you have for the feelings this picture shows, or feelings that you have regarding this picture.” then “time to shift your thinking again.... this time pretend you are the girl in this picture.... tell me what you are feeling? seeing? thinking? again, just try to give me single words” Then “time to shift your thinking a third time, tell me what you think has just happened...what do you think would be in the picture if we had been able to see what took place five minutes before....”

5) Keep shifting their thinking and recording their words all over the board.

6) Now you play with the words.

- Have the kids stand up and read the words as you point to them...read them in monster voices, fairy voices, whispers, opera voices etc.

- Have the kids stomp the syllables of words that you point to as they read them to you in unison.

- Have them finger snap spell words as you point to them...*f*r*u*s*t*r*a*t*e*d* spells frustrated, etc.

- Cover parts of words and have them read what is left (i.e., cover up the root words so they are only reading the suffixes, etc.)

7) ANOTHER DAY (this could go on for days and days and days if you want it to) you could choose 20 of the words and have small groups of kids print them on cards. They then are asked to sort the words according to any rule that they can come up with. The challenge is for other groups to guess their sorting rule. (I've had kids sort by letters, vowel sounds, parts of speech, number of letters in the words, living/non living, etc.)



8) Do a sorting game of your own with the words. Look at the words that you have all over the board from the lesson and decide what you would like to teach, or highlight. Make yourself a list of all the words that would fit your rule. Tell the kids that you are going to sort the words into two groups according to a secret rule. Their job is to try and guess your rule. You begin by telling them that you will circle the 'yes' words in green, and the 'no' words in red. You say one word and circle it with the appropriate colour. As you go along, the students are invited to write their guess down on paper. If at any point their thinking changes, they are to record that. If, after several words, they think they know the rule, they are asked to simply come up and circle a word that they think is a 'yes' word, (or a 'no' word) and you tell them if they are right or need to adjust their thinking a little bit.

9) Once you think that many of the kids know your rule ask them to create their own list of words that would fit your rule on their own papers. The words can be from the board, and can be from their heads. Walk around and see who truly knows your rule.

10) Help the kids that don't see your rule by reading all of the 'yes' words for them and see if they can hear or see what they all have in common. The rules you could choose are endless, but some are the number of syllables, prefixes, suffixes, vowel sounds, nouns, verbs, adjectives, words that describe feelings, etc. It can be whatever you want to teach them using the words that they have generated.

11) And more....

- You could go on to have them write sentences for ten of the words.
- They could choose five words that they think are hard to spell and tell why they are hard.
- They could try and come up with a creative title for the original picture.
- They could write a story about the picture using the words on the board as a word bank.
- They could copy the words that they have never used in their writing into their own word books for future use.

The PWIM lessons could go on forever. I know one teacher who uses a new picture every two weeks simply to generate spelling words and then she teaches whatever she sees appear in the list. Example: if the picture ends up generating a lot of words that use suffixes, she takes the opportunity to teach suffixes. The only tricky part is letting go of the "I have to have a formal program to follow"...you go with what the kids come up with.

Once you've done several, challenge the kids to bring in pictures that they think would be worthwhile. One teacher put a Canadian Flag on the board and they generated all kinds of words around what that meant to them, feelings, things, places, dreams etc.

Barb

More Grade Three Spelling

"I choose specific sounds or spelling rules and make the list accordingly. I also use the words in sentences that they have to also write and I mark them on punctuation as well. For example: Words with dr, nk
1. dry 2. dream 3. dragon 4. drop 5. drum 6. drink 7. blank 8.
pink 9. think 10. thank 11. bank 12. sink

Challenge: drawer dress prank

Sentence: I like to dream of dragons thinking of things by the bank of a river.

This would be a unit I would give near the beginning of the year. The next few units would look at other 'r blend' words and word endings. They can be sounded out and once I mark them I can see who knows their vowel sounds, etc., I also mark the punctuation in the sentence.

As the year progresses I will include words we use frequently in subject areas and will divide the class into 2-3 spelling groups and focus those groups on their areas of need.

Cathy-Dee



Spelling Rules

Note: the following rules were made to be broken! There are exceptions to most of them. They are meant to help with spelling generally. Some of the consonant and short vowel rules can be taught in Grade One, and the long vowel rules in Grade Two and Three.

Consonant Rules:

1. ‘__ck’ goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel. duck black peck
2. When a word has two or more syllables, use ‘c’ for the final /k/ sound. picnic magic terrific
3. ‘__tch’ goes at the end of a one syllable word for the sound of /ch/ after a short vowel. watch pitch
exceptions: much, such rich, which
4. Double ‘s’, ‘l’, ‘f’ and ‘z’ at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel. off pass buzz ball
5. Never end a word with ‘v’, always add a silent ‘e’. have live
6. ‘q’ is always followed by ‘u’ and at least one more vowel. quack quail queen
7. Never double ‘v’ or ‘x’.
8. ‘x’ is never followed by ‘s’.
9. Use ‘__dge’ when you hear /j/ at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel. badge bridge
10. ‘c’ says /s/ if it follows ‘e’, ‘i’ and ‘y’. cell city icy
11. ‘c’ says /k/ if it follows ‘a’, ‘o’ and ‘u’. cap cop cut
12. ‘g’ says /j/ if it follows ‘e’, ‘i’ and ‘y’. gem ginger gym
13. ‘g’ says /g/ if it follows ‘a’, ‘o’ and ‘u’. gas got gust



Vowel Rules:

14. A single vowel between two consonants is usually short. hat met pup pin hot
15. A vowel is usually short if it comes before a double consonant. ladder dinner mutter
16. ‘y’ as a vowel make the long ‘i’ sound at the end of a one syllable word. my try by
17. ‘y’ as a vowel make the long ‘e’ sound at the end of a two or more syllable word. happy silly
18. A vowel at the end of a word or syllable is usually long. go because bacon
19. ‘ai’ is often followed by ‘n’. ‘l’ or ‘d’.
20. ‘oa’ is usually found in one syllable words.
21. Use ‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c’ - or when it says /a/ as in ‘sleigh’ or ‘neighbour’. ceiling thief

Suffixes:

Plurals:

Add ‘s’ to most nouns.

Add ‘es’ to nouns when we hear the /e/. Add after ‘s’, ‘x’, ‘z’, ‘ch’, ‘tch’ and ‘sh’.

When a ‘y’ follows a consonant at the end of a noun, change the ‘y’ to ‘i’ and add ‘es’.

Some words ending with ‘f’ change the ‘f’ to ‘v’ and add ‘es’. elves calves

When adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, drop the final ‘e’. coming finest tasty

If the suffix begins with a consonant, keep the ‘e’. homeless lovely

When adding ‘ing’, ‘y’, ‘ed’, ‘er’, ‘est’ (suffixes beginning with a vowel) to a one syllable word with a short vowel sound - CVC - double the final consonant. patting running fattest thinner

When a word ends with ‘consonant y’, change the ‘y’ to ‘i’ when adding suffixes - unless the suffix begins with ‘i’. try - tried trying



Phonics

“Once I have taught all the letter sounds and the children are learning to blend, I do these activities every day.

- I have three cans - two of the cans hold cards with consonants, and one holds vowel cards. Three children come up and each pulls one card from one can. They hold their cards up and we blend the word - usually a nonsense word - that is formed. Each child says his/her sound and we slide them together to make a word. Sometimes I put the letters in a pocket chart, we blend the sounds and go on to a new word. Then we come back at the end of the drill and re-blend all the words that we have made.

- I sit a group of children in a circle and I give each a word card (CVC) face up. Then I go around the circle - as soon as each one says the word, I give him or her another and keep going round and round as fast as I can. The children have a bit of time to blend the word before I get back to them and this takes the pressure off..... They really like to see me go fast - and I pretend to be very tired and puffing!

- With the children who have problems blending we do a lot of kinesthetic work with tapping each letter, zipping or sliding the sounds together with the hand. Sometimes I have them tap on different surfaces or on their bodies - shoulder, head, shoulder, for example, saying a sound with each tap.

- Some children have problems hearing the different vowel sounds in words, especially ‘e’ and ‘i’. I put the vowel cards down on a table, say a word and see if they can choose the correct one that they hear.

Phonemic Awareness Exercises



Phoneme recognition: ‘S’ says /s/ as in snake....

Segmenting sounds in a word: stretching the sounds to separate them.... c-----a-----t

Segmenting syllables in a word: hearing the word parts and clapping or tapping them as the word is said - begin with names.

Segmenting words in a sentence: saying a sentence and then saying each word with a space between.

Blending and rhyming: It starts with /b/ and ends with -ite, put them together and you’ve got _____ (bite).

Blending sounds heard to form a word: /b/ /a/ /th/ = bath

Listening to initial sounds: Is there a /p/ in pen? pet? hat?

Recognizing initial sounds: What is the first sound that you hear in bear? bed? dog?

Listening to final sounds: Is there a /t/ in hat? bit? sun?

Recognizing final sounds: What is the last sound that you hear in sit? rat? put?

Identification of phoneme positions: Where do you hear the /t/ in sat? tip? (at the beginning, middle or end?)

Phoneme matching: Do mouse and map begin with the same sound?

Do had and rid end with the same sound?

Onsets and Rhymes

Some teachers use the onsets and rhymes system to teach phonics/reading/spelling. For those teachers who find that this works in your classroom, here is a great page with a colourful chart that you can print. Scroll down to ‘Word Family Chart’.

http://www.carlscorner.us/word_way.htm#word%20family%20database

There are 37 common word endings. On the above page you will find lists of rhyming words and links to reproducible material you can print.

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

This website has a new URL as it has grown so large. Spend an hour (or a week) exploring all the great things there!

Classroom Management Ideas

Have each child bring a shoebox. Cut out one end of the box and tape on the lid. The names go on the lid over the opening. This makes a 'mailbox'. These can be covered with paper and decorated, if you wish. They can go on a shelf in the coatroom area and papers and take-home things can be added through the day.

"I have a box decorated with birthday paper and ribbon. On a child's birthday, the box is presented as we sing to him/her. Inside is a fancy birthday pencil, some stickers and a birthday book. I got lots of these books at a reduced price and the kids love to get their book, signed inside by the teacher! There is also a birthday medallion that they wear for the day."

"I outline a specific space on the floor by putting down a hula hoop. This can be used for centres, a game, a place to read, etc. The children know that all items must be kept in the circle."

Make a science corner! Put some of these: a terrarium, plants, pictures of animals, small animals, magnets, fish, magnifying glasses, leaves, a wasp's nest or bird's nest, fossils, seashells, etc. Add books that are interesting or have pictures showing some of the objects displayed.

Have a complaint box.... In Grade 2 and 3 have a box with this title and a mail slit - and if they have a tattle, a complaint or something that is bothering them, they can put a note in this box. Check it every day!

"I have a special shelf of neat books that the students can only read if their work is all done."

If you are short of bookcases in your classroom and the district has none to give you, go to yard sales or second hand stores. A coat of paint will do wonders for an old grubby wooden bookcase! You can also ask your local high school carpentry class to make some for you. You will likely have to pay for the materials and paint, but this still will be reasonable.

"On the first week I train my children to pass out and collect papers. I have my students in rows, so the first student in the row gets handed enough papers for the row. He takes one and passes the pile back, as does the others in the row. The opposite is done handing them in - the back person hands his forward, the next hands his own and the first one ahead until all are at the front.

When I had students sitting in groups, one student got the papers, handed them out and collected them after the lesson. Teaching these simple tasks saved lots of time!"

When children have problems, they use their 'helping hands' to solve the problem themselves. Helping hands have 5 fingers and 5 strategies.

1st strategy - Tell how you feel

2nd strategy - Walk away

3rd strategy - Ignore

4th strategy - Ask a friend for help

5th strategy - Tell the teacher. This is the last resort! Do not tell the teacher until you have tried to work it out using your 'Helping hands'.



"We practice lining up quietly. We say: "Quiet, quiet, quiet as a mouse - so no one will know that we're in their house." We begin loud and then get soft. I also play 'If you talk, I win' game with the kids. The deal is to walk to our destination without making a sound. If I talk, the kids win and vice versa. You'd be surprised how hard it is for me to keep quiet when other teachers want to talk as we pass by. Some teachers try to get me to talk much to the delight of the kids. We play this quite a bit at the beginning of the year (but not every time we're out in the hall.)"

More Classroom Management

“I get all my children to clean up the floor a number of times every day. I call them ‘Floor Monsters’! These monsters HATE having anything on their floor that doesn’t belong, so they clean up really well. It is amazing how quickly my floor monsters can tidy the classroom floor!”



“Each teacher in our school has a holder beside the door with a bell-shaped tag note in it with the teachers’ name on it. We keep it close to the door where children can reach it. When we need an adult for whatever emergency situation, a student knows to carry it to the office after we hand it to them - and no talking is involved. We are to use it for emergency situations or any situation that could easily get out of control. The whole school practices this and we model it and practice it for the first two weeks of school.”

Use clear contact paper to tape down your name tags and desk information. It holds better than packing tape and is easier to remove.

If your children have Elmer glue bottles, take off the spouts and wipe with a bit of Vaseline - this will prevent the glue from clogging lids.

Fingernail polish remover gets permanent marker off whiteboards and desks.

“I take digital pictures of my children on the first day. I take a head-to-toe shot, a waist-to-head shot and a head shot. I use these in a number of ways - graphing, bulletin boards, making books, etc. It is so handy to have the pictures all ready to go!”

Shower Curtains

How many ways can you find to use dollar store shower curtains?

- Divide the shower curtain into as many squares as you have children (plus a few extra) using the colored masking tape. Each month have children illustrate on a white piece of construction paper cut to fit the square a picture representing something relating to your theme. With these squares you can do a holiday quilt or a monthly quilt, attaching bright pictures to each square. If the shower curtain is attached to a bulletin board just pin the student made ‘quilt squares’ to the board.

- Create a hopscotch board on the shower curtain. They take a card from a pile of cards with CVC words and place it on the square (instead of tossing an object) and then they have to read or blend the word in order to advance and put the next card in the next square.

- Make a large number line and practice adding by counting on (hopping on to the next numbers) or subtracting by counting down.

- With a wide felt pen, create a large Venn Diagram and give students objects to sort.

- Time - create a large clock, students then use their arms and legs to show the time.

- Patterning - draw patterns and have students extend. Use objects or erasable felts.

- “I drew a huge computer keyboard on a shower curtain with a wide permanent marker, and we used it to spell words and practice our keyboarding! One child says a word and the other child steps out the letters and then jumps on ‘enter’ to end the word. It is good exercise and they practice their spelling. It’s one of the kids’ favourite centres! They learn the keyboard as they do it...”



- “I put up curtain rods and hung shower curtains to hide my boxes full of teaching things. The children cut out shapes of falling leaves in the autumn to tape onto it.”

- “I put up two drapery rods and bought clear shower curtains over my white board. I used Velcro to put the words up. When I wasn’t using the word wall and needed the white board, I pushed the curtain aside.”

- Print reading vocabulary words in circles randomly on the shower curtain. The children must jump from one corner to the opposite, only standing on circles - but they have to read the word before they can land on that circle.

Sharing Time

“In my grade one class I schedule 4 kids per day for show and tell. Their day stays the same and it is on the calendars I send home. If there is a holiday or pro-d day the children who miss their day are allowed to bring their show and tell the following day. Other than those special occasions if a child forgets on their day, they miss their turn for the week.”

“The night before their turn, the child (with parental help) writes three clues about the show and tell item. The first clue must tell us the beginning letter. The other two clues can be whatever they like. At show and tell time the child keeps the item hidden in their backpack. He/she reads us the clues and the class try to guess what the item is. At the beginning of the year the guesses are really interesting. I remember one day when the clues were:

1. It starts with the letter B.
2. It has lots of pictures.
3. It came from the library.

The class must have guessed about five completely wild things. Then I told them they needed to LISTEN to the clues. The child read the clues again. The next few guesses were things that started with B, but didn't match any of the other clues! I had to tell them to listen to ALL the clues! I'm glad to say that they get much better at both writing the clues and making appropriate guesses as the year goes on. It's good writing practice. It's interesting to watch how the spelling changes through the year - from one or two consonants to represent a word, to invented spelling, to more traditional spelling. Some of my very good writers write more than the required three clues (the most I had was 17 clues!), other children rely heavily on Mom and Dad to help them with the writing.

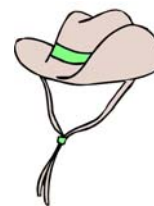
In the first term I let them do show and tell even if they have forgotten to do the clues. In the second term I give them a piece of scrap paper and tell them to write their clues at recess or lunch so they will be ready at Show and Tell time. In the third term I tell them if they have no written clues, they forfeit their turn for the week.”

Cathy

“I only have one child share each day on their special day of being the line leader, chief helper, etc. They are to think a lot about what they bring and find something that is really interesting. No toys allowed!”

Sometimes you can ask for specific ‘show and tell’ ... here are some ideas:

- Bring a hat to school and tell why and when you would wear the hat.
- Bring a stuffed animal and tell some facts about the real animal.
- Bring a collection - or an item from a collection.



Tie the sharing time to the different units you do.

- For science, bring an object that fits with the science unit - a bird or wasp's nest, a fossil, different rocks, etc.
- For social studies, bring pictures or items meaningful to your family, things from other parts of the world, etc.
- For math, take turns bringing an estimation jar.
- For literacy, share a good book, telling why you like it.
- In Kindergarten - you will teach colours. Have the students bring something in the colour of the week. When teaching the letter sounds, have the students bring something that begins with the sound of the week.

The general rule for sharing time is to bring something interesting that is not a toy. In Kindergarten, however, you may get shy children to share toys more easily than other objects.

Know what your purpose is for having sharing time - is it oral language? Public speaking? Listening skills? Insist that your children be polite listeners and ask intelligent questions or make positive comments. The speaker should look at the listeners, stand straight, speak clearly, etc.

Thanksgiving

Coffee Filter Turkeys

Colour the coffee filter with alternating colours of marker in autumn colours of red, orange and yellow. If you want to blend the colours, wet the filter with a fine spray from a water bottle and let it dry. When the students have finished the filter, they cut out the body of the turkey with circles of brown construction paper, and the feet and the beak with the orange construction paper. Cut small black circles for the eyes. Glue the turkey's body onto the filter for the tail. Add legs and feet.

Paper Plate Turkey

Make a turkey body with brown paper circles (as above) and glue it to the paper plate so the body is touching the bottom edge of the plate. Colour the plate left showing with bright colours. Cut red and yellow paper strips about 1 1/2 cm wide and 10 cm long. Wrap each paper strip tightly around a pencil and gently slide the pencil out of the rolled paper. Glue the paper curls to the turkey's tail to create feathers.

Turkey Glyphs

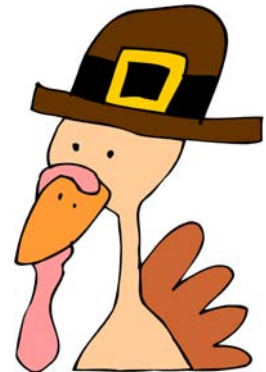
<http://www.geocities.com/mrshogueclass/Lessons/turkeyglyph.html>

<http://teachers.net/gazette/NOV02/printable.html>

The second website has a printable turkey pattern.

"I did turkey glyphs with my class last year. When they were finished, I put them up on a bulletin board with the directions, and headed the board *We're all turkeys as you can see...Read my glyph, can you learn about me?*

Instead of the plain white paper and having them colour it according to the glyph, try using construction paper, real feathers, wiggly eyes, etc. They come out VERY cute!"



Thanksgiving Vocabulary: feast thankful family friends friendship dinner food turkey corn stuffing gravy pumpkin pie

Albuquerque

To My Darlin' Clementine

Albuquerque, he's my turkey,
and he's feathered and he's fine
and he wobbles and he gobbles
and I'm awfully glad he's mine.

He's the best pet you could ever get
better than a dog or cat -
Albuquerque, he's my turkey
and I'm awfully glad of that.

Albuquerque, he's my turkey
he's so cozy in his bed
because for our Thanksgiving dinner
we had scrambled eggs instead.

My Turkey

I have a turkey, big and fat
He spreads his wings
And walks like that
His daily corn he would not miss
And when he walks,
He sounds like this,
Gobble, Gobble, Gobble!

Turkey Dance

Let's talk turkey!
What a walk it's got...
Strut about, strut about,
Do the turkey trot!

Let's be thankful for this day
For our friends and for our play
Let's give thanks for you and me
And our home and family .

Gobble Says the Bird

If You're Happy and You Know It
Gobble gobble, gobble gobble
says the bird
Gobble gobble, gobble gobble
says the bird
Mr. Turkey gobble gobbles
And his feet go wobble wobble
Gobble gobble gobble gobble
Says the bird.

Math

Kindergarten

<http://www.barrbunch.com/mathmats.htm>

This website has lots of different math mats with different pictures. You can use them in different ways. You can cut them apart and use them for counting practice or for patterning. The children could roll a die and put counters over the squares to see who can fill the card first.

“We count ‘heads’ to do attendance each day. One child goes around the circle and pretends to touch each head as he/she counts. The child must make the motion as the number is said - not before or after. We practice doing this. Then when they are counting objects we talk about doing this - picking up or touching an object at exactly the same time as the number is spoken. This really helps the children who are just learning one-to-one correspondence.”

“We practice making number patterns to 5 and drill the number cards so the students learn to ‘see’ that there are 4 things instead of counting them each time. This is hard for some kiddies but after we practice it all year they are much improved.”

“As we learn each number, the children learn to print it. Some numbers need a lot of practice. We do them every day with fingers on the carpet, on the chalkboard, with different crayons and paint, and finally on lines. We do a lot of directional cues to help them know which way to go in the beginning - some go left and some go right.....”

Grade One

“I like to use huge floor number lines to learn simple addition and subtraction questions. I have the students use the same words each time they do a question..... ‘Stand on the first number..... Jump the second number.’ Once they understand that and the concept of reversing addends to get the same result, we change the words a bit - ‘Stand on the biggest number Jump the smaller number.’ By this time they can see that it is easier to do this, especially in a question like $1 + 5 = \underline{\quad}$. I find that if the children really understand this, the number facts are learned much easier.”

Teach ‘equals’ with a balance scale. Try balancing different classroom objects. Instead of saying, “Does it balance?” ask, “Is it equal?” after explaining that equal means ‘the same’. Then use classroom blocks. Get the concept that $1 = 1$ and if you add another to one side it is no longer equal. Give the children balancing scales and one person makes an unequal pattern on the scale and the other makes it equal. Have the children talk about what they are doing to make the pattern equal.

Grade Two

Teach the clue words for addition: sum, total, in all

Teach the clue words for subtraction: difference, how much/many more, left

Do lots of problem solving. Teach the students the steps involved in answering a problem.

- What facts have we been given?
- What do we want to know?
- What will we do to find the answer?
- Give the equation.
- Put the answer in a sentence, orally



Teach the Grade Twos all the addition and subtraction ‘tricks’ (these were in last year’s magazine - if you don’t have them, just ask!)

Grade Three



“To begin the idea of rounding numbers, I draw a mountain on a chart. Zeros go at the left and right base of the mountain and 5 at the top of the mountain. I then write the numbers 1 - 4 up the left side of the mountain and 6 - 9 on the right side of the mountain. I have a toy car and pretend to drive it up the mountain. This car does not have good brakes! If I stop on the 1, 2, 3, or 4 to admire the view, the car will roll back to the zero on the left side of the mountain. Sometimes the car goes over the hill and I try to stop on 6, 7, 8, or 9 - and because the brakes won't hold it rolls to the zero on the right. When I stop on the 5 the car wants to go forward so it rolls to the right side.

Then..... we round numbers to 100 to the nearest 10, thinking about the mountain and the little car. Ones numbers 1 - 4 we roll back, 5 - 9 we roll forward to the next ten.”

“This is an idea I use to show one thousand. Take your class on a walk to gather pebbles, autumn leaves or dandelions. Ask each child to gather ten of the item at a time. Place the bunches of ten on the ground until you have ten rows of ten bunches each. Beginning at one end of a row, have one person pick up and group the bunches in that row as the rest of the class count by tens. For each row, repeat the process until you have ten piles of one hundred items. Then, pile by pile, put them into a giant pile as you count by hundreds to one thousand!”

Let's Make Graphs!

Make a magnetic graphing board:

- 1) Flat rectangular oil drip pan - the big ones (for cars) approximately 3'x5'. (inexpensive at Wal-Mart)
- 2) Clear contact paper
- 3) Clean frozen juice can lids (one for each student and the teacher)
- 4) Coloured construction paper (preferably a light colour)
- 5) Two rolls of stick-on strip magnets or other magnets that have a sticky back.
- 6) Sentence strips
- 7) Teacher Tac

Cover the oil pan with the clear contact paper. Draw a simple grid. Six rows going horizontally works great. Leave about three or four inches open at one end to write in the answers to the questions. I left the right end open. This allows 14 votes in any one row. Clean the 2 1/2 inches in diameter juice can lids and cut circles to fit inside the lids. Prepare the juice lids by attaching the magnets before giving them to the children. Have the children draw their faces (and their name inside the bottom arch) to make it special identification badge. At the beginning of every day, post a graphing question. Write it on a sentence strip or other paper and use teacher tac to attach it on the top of the graph board. Either first thing in the morning or when the children have an extra minute they move their face (juice lid) to place their vote. Take time to talk about the choices that everyone made.

<http://www.abc123kindergarten.com/graphmka2001.html>

This is a fabulous site for graphing ideas - some even show a photo of a completed one.

<http://www.jmeacham.com/graph.of.the.week.htm>

This site has lots of ideas and pictures, too.

“Make ‘Human Graphs’! The children become the graph. We use the floor tiles as boxes to stand in and do vertical and horizontal graphs on lots of topics. Or use the floor tiles by putting a name or an object in each.

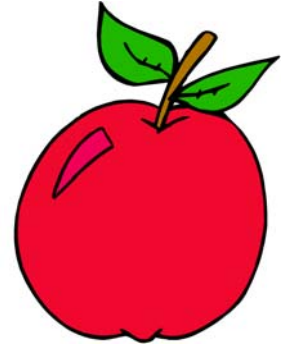
A Math Wall

“I have done a math wall in Grade Two and Three. I don't have it in alphabetical order, but add concepts and vocabulary after they have been taught. I put up the processes, too - like adding with regrouping or rounding and estimating. I just put a small sample of the process - something to remind the kids of what they have learned. The words are used in their math journals, too, so the spelling is important.

We do a 2 minute quick drill each day to review the new words/concepts on the math wall.”

Test Your Teaching....!

Rate yourself on a 0 to 5 scale - 5 is wonderful (other people, including your principal, compliment you on the high quality - it is excellent), 4 is good (you feel that it could be somewhat better, but it is high quality), 3 is adequate (you make an effort and the results are satisfactory), 2 is less than adequate (improvement is needed), 1 is poor (you rarely do this) and 0 means that you don't agree or are not doing this at all.



1. My classroom is tidy and organized, and my desk and tables always have clean space to work. Visitors who enter the classroom compliment me on the neatness and attractiveness of the room.
2. My bulletin boards are up to date and attractive. I change them frequently to reflect the classroom activities.
3. My records are well kept. My daily plan book is always clearly written and I gather test scores and anecdotal notes on the children on a weekly basis.
4. I take the full responsibility for the children's learning. I could have a 'The Buck Stops Here' sign on my desk! I have never thought that the parents, the RR teacher, the Learning Assistance teacher or the child himself share blame for the child's lack of success.
5. I believe that my teaching ability should be assessed more by the progress of the lower and learning disabled children in the class than by the brighter children. I understand the strengths of my challenged students and teach to these strengths. My lowest students, even those suspected to be learning disabled, have stretched their skills and progressed as well as it is possible for them to do so - even surprisingly well - and I can take the credit!
6. I teach well-structured, carefully planned lessons. I begin with review or introduction, I teach new skills, the children do a hands-on exercise and then a written exercise, and there is a conclusion or wrap-up at the end of the lesson.
7. In my whole class lessons every child in the class can understand the concepts and participate fully. I use questioning and discussion to get every child involved in the lessons.
8. I have my lessons in each subject planned so they follow one another sequentially. Today's lesson logically follows yesterday's lesson, and tomorrow's lesson will logically follow today's.
9. I balance teacher-directed lessons, hands-on activities and written or other individual practice. The children spend approximately one-third of their time with each.
10. I model my expectations in behaviour, routines, work habits and assignments.
11. My printing on charts and the chalkboard is beautifully done to give a good example to the children, and I teach them to print neatly and fluently.
12. My classroom is quiet and peaceful. It is sometimes silent when that is necessary, sometimes pleasantly humming. It is only noisy when noise and activity are part of a directed exercise or game.
13. I use positive reinforcement for behaviour management rather than negative. I manage the classroom behaviour without punishment and without charts, prizes, candy or other incentives. The children behave well because it is expected and the right thing to do.
14. I manage transition times without noise or wasted minutes. The children know how to make these transitions smoothly and quickly.
15. I keep marking up to date, and I try to mark most daily work with the individual children in class so the errors can be discussed and corrected.
16. I teach in a brisk, enthusiastic manner and I smile and laugh with my students many times each day.
17. I use a computer to keep records, to write reports, to send and receive e-mail and to research on-line. I use the computer and other technology in my lessons and teach the students to use it.
18. I share my knowledge and my resources with my colleagues.

19. I am not ideologically or philosophically rigid. I understand that philosophies change and my philosophy will change and mature throughout my teaching career. I am eager to learn new methods and explore old ones and I am willing to change or adapt my present philosophy if it would benefit the children's learning.

20. I am able to turn off the teaching part of my life when I leave school, and give the rest of the day to my family with a clear conscience. I look after myself first, my family second and my job third. I look after myself first so I am able to do my best for my family and teaching.

Some questions you may not agree with at this point of your career. Some of the points have to do with attitude and some with performance. All the questions do have validity and it is important to take them seriously.

Teachers justify what they do, and as they are very good at arguing their cases they are often able to convince others (and possibly themselves) that what they do is right even when it is not best for the children in their care. For example, teachers who are very untidy and disorganized argue that it doesn't matter and that it has nothing to do with the quality of teaching - and they don't want to waste time that could be spent on the children. This is, of course, nonsense! There are many reasons why mess is not a good thing. As you answer the questions, try to turn off the 'Justify' button!

To score: Of course, a score of 100 is impossible! No one is that perfect..... A score of 80 would be very good and 60 is adequate - just satisfactory. Anything below 60 should show you that there are many ways in which you need improvement. You can also treat each question as a separate entity, and see where your strengths lie and where you can possibly improve. You may score lower in one area than others.



The Teaching Profession Today

What are the major issues facing public education today?

- Teacher stress is a big problem. Many teachers in every district go on leave each year because the stress has caused health problems. There is little support in most schools for this, and many teachers don't talk about their stress levels because they think of it as a mark of failure. Stress is just as common in the best teachers as in the less competent.

- Many primary teachers put in very long hours. The idea of teachers working from 9:00 to 3:00 and having all those lovely summer months off is, of course, a fallacy. Teaching is very tiring, too. It can make family life difficult unless a balance can be reached.

- Lack of funds for instruction is a problem everywhere. Here at Primary Success, teachers order books to use to teach reading and math and pay out of their own pockets. There is no reason schools or school districts shouldn't pay for program resources! High schools seem to get many times the amount of money per student than the lower classes - why don't the powers-that-be understand the simple fact that success in Grade One will enable success in Grade Ten? It seems simple to me!

- Large classes can be a problem. Some provinces and districts are better than others. More children means less individual attention, more behavioural problems, more marking, more assessment and report cards.

- The behaviour of the children and their lack of self-control seems to be getting worse over the years.

- There is lots of new technology - new technology that is not available to all. There should be more consistency in this availability. Teachers do not always receive adequate training and support. Sometimes these things have to be forced on teachers by the administration - teachers often do not want to take the time to learn things or use them - but thoroughly enjoy them when they have been mastered.

- Teacher training - Universities do not give primary teachers enough 'how-to' theory in the various methods. Usually the university shows the students one method of teaching reading only.

- Administrators not understanding the primary grades. Many elementary principals come from the high school or older grades. Some of these really want to learn all about primary but some believe that the older the grade, the more important education becomes.

P.E. Games and Fun

Time Allotments for P.E.

Because of the prevalence of childhood obesity and the fact that many children are not getting the exercise they need, some provinces and school districts are insisting on more time for P.E. That sounds like a good idea, but gyms are not increasing in size and gym times are not able to become longer in order that teachers can come up to these guidelines. This calls for some creativity!

Here are a few ideas to increase your daily P.E. minutes....

- Pool some of the P.E. time with the classes in the primary grades. For example, book the gym every day for 15 minutes at the same time and do aerobics to music with several classes. Have a music source and jazzy music, one leader who has done some aerobics (or fake it!), teach the children to spread out to have a personal space, and exercise all together. This is fun and good for teachers, too!

- On days when there is an outdoor recess, take five minutes and the whole school run laps around the playground. You can add the distances run and do math with the numbers in the higher grades or see if the whole school can run the distance to the capital city (Social Studies).

- Interest the children in doing more active sports in the longer recesses. Teach football, freeze tag, red rover, Frisbees, hula-hoops, kickball, dodge ball, different versions of tag, etc. Play 'Follow the Leader, learn to skip and put out skipping ropes in the breaks, teach hopscotch.

- Do active breaks in the classroom such as the 'Figure 8's' below. This will be good for the learning, too.



Move It!

One person starts and performs an action, nods his head, for example, and everyone does it. They continue to do it and the next person adds another movement, taps the foot, perhaps. Everyone does this and continues to do the two movements. The third person adds another movement. This continues until it becomes too complicated! A student could also add singing a song to make the game more fun.

Figure 8's

Can you write trace a figure 8 shape in the air with:

- just a finger?
- your whole arm?
- both arms?
- your left elbow? (left and right)
- your foot? (left and right)
- your shoulder? (left and right)
- around your eyes and nose as if drawing spectacles or a mask?
- both hands clasped together? (palm to palm)

Can you draw two 8's at the same time, with:

- fingers on different hands?
- both arms?
- both shoulders?
- both feet?
- both elbows like chicken wings?

This is a good exercise to help with the formation of the 8, too. Practice making it beginning with an 's' and then closing the shape - one continuous line.

There are different shapes that the 8 can be drawn in.

Fallen over 8's - these lie on their sides.

Skinny 8's - longer, narrower loops



<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

This is a great site for kids' games! There are the rules for all the old favourites, and almost 50 skipping rhymes. There are indoor games and outdoor ones, too. Remember the ones you played as a child?

Autumn Ideas



Autumn

Leaves are falling, dancing, swirling
Piling high along the street
Leaves that scatter when you kick them
Leaves that crunch beneath your feet.



Making leaf rubbings is one of the easiest things to do and is fun for all ages. Simply lay leaves down, vein side up, place a piece of paper over them and rub across them with a crayon.

Stained Glass Leaves

You will need squares of construction paper, wax paper and crayon shavings. Take two squares and draw the same leaf shape on each. Cut it out so you have a leaf shaped 'hole' in both pieces of paper. Cut two squares of wax paper slightly smaller than the paper squares. Sprinkle fall colored crayon shavings on the one of the sheets of wax paper. Lay the other piece on top. The adult places a cloth on top of the wax paper and iron it until the crayon bits have melted. Glue the wax paper in between the two pieces of construction paper. Hang them in the window.

Leaf Stencils

Gather some leaves that are perfect shapes and paint the back of them, the side with the veins showing, with autumn colours or red, orange and yellow. Lay the leaf down on the paper (or the paper down on the leaf) and gently rub. After it has been rubbed, carefully lift the leaf up to see the print.

Keeping Leaves

Press leaves between the pages of heavy books. You can also lay pretty leaves on clear contact paper and put another piece on top. This is a good way to make a quick leaf display without the mess of dried leaf bits! Flat autumn flowers, seeds and other items can be added. The children could make small ones using the clear packing tape (but perhaps you should do the top layer of tape!) - they could put in tiny flowers, small coloured leaves, grass, etc.

Leaf Hangings

Collect coloured leaves of all shapes and sizes. Give each student a whiteboard or individual chalkboard and a 20 inch piece of wax paper. Put the wax paper on top of the board and then lay a few of the most attractive leaves on the wax paper so it makes a pretty design. Lay another piece of wax paper on top. When done and it is time to iron the wax papers together to seal it, bring the board to a table where you are ironing and carefully slide the wax papers and the leaves off the board and iron them, covered with a soft cloth. When cool, trim the ends on the paper cutter. If you want to hang these from the ceiling add a top and bottom border with strips of orange or yellow paper. If you put them on the windows, just leave the ends or cut shapes around the leaf design.

Autumn Math

Estimating - How many candy corns/acorns/leaves are in a jar? How many acorns we can hold in one hand?

Graphing - Graph leaves by color, shape, size.

Probability - Put equal numbers of red, yellow, orange, and brown leaves in a bag. Then each child takes a leaf out of the bag and adds it to the graph. Discuss the probability of getting a leaf of a certain colour.

Sorting - Sort the leaves by shape, species, colour, edge design, etc. Sort a basket of nuts by type, color, and size.

Patterning - When leaves or nuts have been sorted, make patterns.

Corn Flowers

Using the dry feed corn on the cob you can buy at the local feed cut the cob across and print with the cut end. These make pretty fall flowers like small sunflowers.

Halloween is Coming!

“We made pumpkin pancakes. I used a regular pancake mix and mixed it as directed but also added a can of pumpkin and some nutmeg, cinnamon and brown sugar. You could also use some real pumpkin meat that you pre-cook. They were yummy!”

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/sendhome/halloween/monster.htm>

Bottled monsters! Cute!

With this idea, use the bottle pattern with this magazine and have the students pretend they have trapped a monster or some other Halloween creature in it. Catch a bat or a spider or a witch! They can write stories about how it was caught and what they plan to do with it now..... Will they feed it? What would this monster eat..... What would happen if the jar was opened?

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

This idea has been around for years, but I am not sure we can buy this candy in Canada. If not, perhaps on your next trip to the US!

“We play a game called ‘The Goblin in the Dark’. We turn out most of the lights in the gym (just leaving on one light near the door so it's not completely dark!). The game is just like ‘The Farmer in the Dell’ except we change the words to:

The goblin in the dark,
The goblin in the dark,
Heigh-ho it's Hallowe'en
The goblin in the dark.

The goblin takes a witch
The goblin takes a witch
Heigh-ho it's Hallowe'en
The goblin takes a witch.

The witch takes a cat.....

The cat takes a bat.....

The bat takes a ghost.....

The ghost says "BOO".....



Then the ghost becomes our next goblin and we start again. When I first heard about this game I didn't think they'd like it very much. I was expecting them to say it was ‘too babyish’, but there must be something about having the lights out....they love it. They ask to play this one even after Hallowe'en is over. *Cathy*

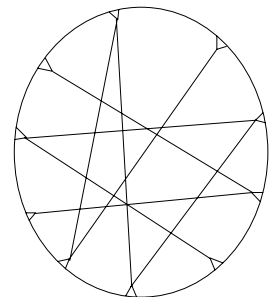
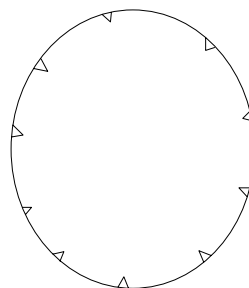
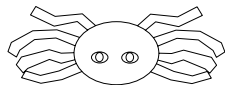
“One person is it. The rest of the class lines up on the middle line of the gym and does a little dance singing “Witch, witch, couldn't sew a stitch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich!”

The child who is it sings, “Are you my children?”

The class sings “No, you old witch.” The class runs to the wall being chased by the witch. *Gail*

Make a spider web! Glue black construction paper to both sides of a piece of tag to make it stiffer. Cut a large oval out of the black paper and make 8 to 10 small ‘v’ shaped cuts randomly at the edge. Wind white thread across and around the oval in the v’s.

Hang the spider web, and add a spider:





Halloween Fun!

To encourage ghostly writing, give your students a piece of black construction paper and a white pencil crayon to write a Halloween story. Decorate with ghosts!

“Our Halloween P.E. time is called the Monster Mash! We put on that music and during the music we have the students walk forwards, backwards, step to the side, fast and slow paced. The students will also be doing jumping jacks, twisting and turning motions following the teachers lead.”

“We play Monster Tag - 3 taggers who are the monsters are to tag the trick or treaters to steal their candy. If a monster catches one, then the student has to stand and freeze until another trick or treater comes over and crawls underneath the legs to get unfrozen.”

“I buy a package of cheesecloth and some starch. I cut a piece of cheesecloth for each student. Each child draws a ghost shape on tag and cuts it out. I have some business card holders and stand the ghosts in them. The cheesecloth is soaked in a stiff solution of starch and a bit of water, and then draped over the tag ghost. When the ghost is dry (and stiff) the tag is removed. The ghosts are semi-transparent!”

“My class makes pumpkins every year. They colour all sides of brown paper lunch bags orange, and then crumple newsprint and fill them. The top is tied with a green pipecleaner and a couple of green leaves are attached. Then the kids cut out eyes, nose and a mouth from black construction paper and glue on the face.”

“We make 3-D ghost pictures. The children cut a simple ghost shape from a 12x18 white drawing paper and draw eyes with black felts. On a black piece of paper they glue down the top of the head and hold it until it sticks - I have them count to 30. Then they put a line of glue on the back of the ghost's neck area. They made sure the ghost head rounds out away from the background by sliding the neck toward the top of the paper. They did the same thing 2 more times so the ghost was wavy on the background paper. Then we add a moon above.”

“We do ghost drawing - white crayon heavily on white paper, then paint overall with dark blue.”

“I make cup ghosts with my Kindergarteners. I buy white foam cups and large facial tissues - ‘man-sized’ if you can get them. Turn the cup upside down and the children paint glue over the bottom and about 2 cm. down the sides. Then the tissue is held out flat and lowered onto the cup. The bottom of the cup should be about the middle. Then the tissue is pressed into the top edge that has glue. Add a face, and you have a cute ghost!”

Play Ghost Bingo! Make up usual cards, but with the letters G H O S T across the top. Draw a pumpkin for the free space.

Here are some good websites to visit for more ideas!

<http://www.bry-backmanor.org/holidayfun/ween.html>

<http://www.primarygames.com/holidays/halloween/halloween.htm>

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



Five Little Witches

Five little witches
On a Halloween night
Made a very spooky sight.
The first witch danced
On her tippy tiptoes.
The second witch tumbled
And bumped her nose.
The third witch flew
High up in the air.
The fourth witch combed
Her fuzzy hair.
The fifth witch sang
A Halloween song.
Five witches played
The whole night long!

Parent Communication

“One thing I do in my newsletters for the first two months is to add a section of ‘What we did this week’. I explain to parents that they should ask open ended questions to encourage their kids to talk about what they did in school. In this section I simply list some of what we did - not even full sentences, such as, Read Mrs. Wishy Washy and Tasted seven apples. This way mom can ask which apples did the class like best? What did Mrs. W. W. do? Parents always comment that this helps get the conversations flowing.”

“I sent home a doorknob hanger that lists the five school days and what was needed on each day. I asked parents to hang it on the inside of the door through which the child leaves the house. For example:

Monday: Gym

Tuesday: Library - Bring books back

Wednesday: Gym

Thursday:

Friday: Remember poetry duotang” Barb



“I always try to be completely honest with the parents about their children's reading. I send the page about the importance of reading at home (*an extra page in this magazine*) and find that it makes a difference. I send home appropriate reading material each night for the children to read at the child's independent reading level. Parents should not be choosing their child's reading material for practice. Library books are fun, but are not usually at the child's independent reading level and the parents can read these to the child.

Parents are not usually good teachers! They often become frustrated when the child is not able to read or do other skills that seem simple - and then the child becomes defensive and less than nothing is accomplished. Homework should only be reading and math that the child completely understands and the practice is for fluency, not understanding. Homework should be simple and fun for both the parent and the child.

Once the child is reading fluently (Grade Two, usually) he or she can read silently for pleasure. I introduce the many chapter books at this level and try to find books that interest the children.”

“On our open house night I do a Powerpoint presentation. It includes information about the reading and writing programs and the math curriculum. I talk about the usual day and the days we have gym and library. The parents like to know about sharing time, field trips, volunteers, etc.

By the time of our open house I have collected lots of pictures of the children working and playing at school and the parents have fun watching this.

At the end of this presentation, I give out my contact information and the classroom handbook.

Having this on Powerpoint makes the open house interesting and go by with less stress for me!”

“Before the first day of Kindergarten my parents come in for a short interview. I have this note on the whiteboard when they come in:

Be excited about this new experience for your child!

Say goodbye with a smile. Don't linger - I will handle any tears.”

“I collect anecdotal notes about each child and after school each day I transfer them to the child's file on the computer. For each child I have a file with subject headings and I pop the comments into the right place. Then, when I have a parent conference, I copy the file and edit the comments to be parent friendly. I try to keep these comments completely honest but as positive as possible. Then I print these off. This gives me all the information I need to talk really knowledgeably. These comments keep the conference focused and I am sure that I cover everything. Then the parent gets the sheet to take home.”



Websites

Here are some websites for leveling books.

<http://registration.beavton.k12.or.us/lbdb/>

<http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante/>

<http://classroom.jc-schools.net/pohlmanr/levelingbooks.html>

http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/classroombooks/browse_level.asp

This teacher has huge talent - it has been a while since I have been so intrigued with a website.....

<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3>

Go to 'Teachers' Resources' and then check out 'Peer Book Recommendations' - a great ideaand also 'Thick vs. Thin Questions' - you can download the terrific pictures for this! Under the 'Teachers' Resources', scroll down to Classroom Economy. At the bottom of the page, look in on 'Creating a Classroom Newsletter'. Go under 'Academics' and then explore! There is so much on this site for Grade Three teachers!

Interactive maps - a great idea!

http://www.softschools.com/social_studies/continents/map.jsp

Need a phonics worksheet fast? This website generates them to your specifications.

http://www.softschools.com/language_arts/phonics/worksheets/teaching_sounds.jsp

<http://www.reacheverychild.com/feature/ESL.html>

ESL links

Ideas for bulletin board titles through the curriculum.....

<http://www.teachingtips.com/articles/Dbulletinboards1.html>

A site that takes a bit of time to explore but has a lot of good things:

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

<http://www.rainforestmaths.com/> Have you checked this out? It's great!

Some good Kindergarten sites:

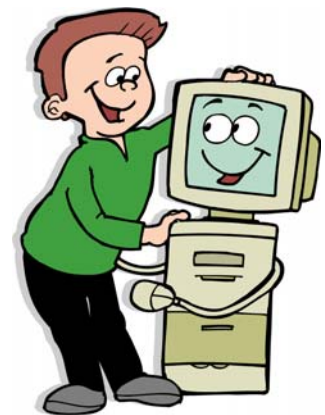
All I really need to know I learned in Kindergarten! <http://www.peace.ca/kindergarten.htm>

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

http://kellyskindergarten.com/math/math_activities.htm

<http://bes.lumpkin.k12.ga.us/~bfulgham/resourceslinks.htm>

Boni has a page of links that link to thousands more useful sites. It helps to have somewhere quick to go where another teacher has already done the hardest work for you.



A Class Handbook

A class handbook can be done with the ABCs! Find a word or words for each letter that are suitable for the information you wish your parents to have. Many of the sections and ideas have come from Marilyn. Thanks!

THE ABC'S OF GRADE 1 !

A - Agenda The agenda book will be required to be taken home every day and brought back the next day. The front of the agenda contains a plastic bag which will contain unfinished work to be completed, notes from us, spelling tests, notes from the school etc. Please check it and empty it every night. The rest of the agenda contains information that you will need to know about the school.

- Absence If your child will be absent, please call the office (Phone #) and inform us of the reason for it.
- Attendance Regular attendance is important to a successful school year.
- Arrival and Dismissal

B - Book Orders A Scholastic book order form will be sent home once a month. If you wish to buy books, please return the form with a cheque made out to Scholastic books within a week of receiving the order form.

- Backpacks They help your child carry books, messages and information to and from school, you are asked to provide a backpack.
- Birthdays
- Breakfast Please ensure that your child has eaten a healthy breakfast. Children need this energy to learn.

C - Clean We do a lot of different activities that may become messy. Please don't send your child in clothes that shouldn't get dirty. A paint shirt helps too - preferably send one with short sleeves as long sleeves fall into the paint (an old adult-shirt is good).

D - Discipline The school rules are - be respectful (to everyone and everything), be responsible (for his/her own actions/progress), be ready (on time, with all required materials). Grade 1's also need to listen and do their best.

E - Envelopes When sending money (cash or cheque) to school, please put it in a sealed envelope labeled with your child's name, what the money is for, and the teacher's name. This insures all the money gets to school and we know what to do with it.

- E-mail You may reach me at my e-mail address which I check each day.
- Emergency Closings If schools are closed for a snow day or any emergency, radio station _____ or the local TV stations (Channels _____) will make an announcement, generally by 7:00 A.M.

F - Field Trips We go on one or two field trips every year.

- Fire drills These are held once each month.

G - Gym Classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday. Girls should be wearing pants on those 2 days. Your child will also need runners for the gym. Since your child needs indoor and outdoor shoes, the indoor shoes should be runners.

H - Hours of school School begins at Lunch time is School is over at

- Health Please let me know of special circumstances which may affect your child. These could include medication, allergies or other conditions.
- Home Reading Discuss your home reading program.
- Homework - We expect that the children will read at home each night. Other homework may include work not completed in class, learning spelling words, doing math drill sheets, etc.

I - Illness Any medication your child needs will be given in the office and must be brought with a note giving detailed instructions as to how and when to administer.

- Inside days Children will be allowed to stay indoors in inclement weather.
- Inside shoes These shoes are kept at school. Please try to have shoes that your child can easily put on with velcro fasteners.

J - Juice, Water, Snacks Each day we will have a scheduled 5 minute snack time before our morning recess. Please send a small nutritious snack with your child (a piece of fruit, granola bar, small yogurt, cheese and crackers, carrot sticks, celery etc.). Try to send things that are easy to open and not messy. Also, send a water bottle - preferably one that will not spill.

- Journals We will do Journals several times each week where the children write about the things they are doing through the days.

K - Kindness Students in our classroom are encouraged and expected to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Bothering others, bullying and interrupting learning will not be permitted.

L - Library A library period will be given on Fridays. Books will need to be returned every Friday.
- Lunches We eat lunches in the classroom. Please send nutritious lunches.

M - Music We learn many songs through the year. Ask your child to sing them to you!
- Milk sales The school sells milk and juice for lunch for 5 days each week.

N - No toys No toys are allowed at school.
- Newsletters A weekly newsletter will be sent home to keep you informed of our activities.

O - Outdoor time We have two recess times each day. Most of the time the children are outside and should be dressed for the weather.

P - Portfolios We are creating a portfolio of work for each student which will be sent home on a monthly basis.
- Parent Interviews - Parent/teacher interviews will be held in November and March.
- Parties We will have class parties for Halloween and Valentines Day.

Q - Questions Anytime you have a concern or question, you may contact us by writing in the agenda or phoning the school at _____ from to (a.m./p.m.) or e-mailing me at

R - Report Cards Report cards will be sent home in November, March and June.
- Recess All children are expected to go outdoors at recess unless the weather is inclement.
- Room Parent

S - Special Day Each student will have a special day on a rotational basis - approximately one day every month. For September, each child will get a paper bag labeled "Me in a Bag". Place 3 or 4 items in the bag which tell about your child - pictures or small toys or ornaments. Your child will then talk about each item and how it relates to him.
- Spelling tests - Spelling will start in October. 5 words will be sent home each week and a test given on Fridays.
- Show and tell Your child will have one special day each week to bring something to share. No toys, please!
- Supplies You will be notified when your child is running short of supplies and you will be asked to replenish these as promptly as possible.

T - Tooth and Birthday Book Bags The Lost Tooth and Birthday bags celebrate those special days. Your child will get a Birthday book bag at the time of his birthday. If your child's birthday is in the summer, we'll have a special time to send the bag home. The Lost Tooth bag is, of course, given when your child loses a tooth. Each bag contains books to read and a journal to write in about the experience of losing a tooth or having a birthday.

U - Units of study The monthly newsletter will explain what will be taught in the major subjects that month.

V - Volunteers For those of you who wish to volunteer, please fill in the form in this newsletter and we will set up a schedule. We also use volunteers on special days (Hallowe'en, last day before Christmas ...)
- Visitors All visitors to the school must check in to the school office.

W - Words Every day, we'll be teaching and reinforcing the basic sight words for reading and spelling. 5 sight words will be written in your child's agenda each week. Please practice them with your child.
- Website Our class has a website at

- Wish List Our class has a wish list of things we need or can use in the classroom. Some may be purchased and some are recycled things. These will be in the weekly newsletter.

X - An eXtra set of clothes It is very important that you send an extra set of clothes in case of an accident.
- XXXIII - this is how many children in our class!

Y - You You are your child's most important teacher! Encourage their education by working with us and forming a positive relationship.

Z - ZZZzzz's: Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest. Setting and keeping a bedtime is a wonderful gift you can give your child. It will help them be ready to learn and alert every day.



Odds and Ends

A Winning Combination!

A great idea for a 2/3 split is 'We're a Winning Combination'. You could use combination locks with the children's names on them for a bulletin board display. Have a lesson on the meaning of the word combination.

If you send home a summer letter, maybe you could have them each bring in LABELED combination locks to share. They could tell how or where they use it, perhaps, as part of the sharing time. You could tie it into math with combinations. I guess keys wouldn't work if it is a combination lock...but maybe you could start a growing list of different places you might use a combination lock (reviewing what brainstorming is). If you do stations, maybe you could have a station where they try to open different combination locks by following directions. If you had, let's say 24 kids, you could do all different combinations of 24. They could make several different class graphs to post, illustrating some of the combinations: Example: a circle graph illustrating how many blue, green, brown, hazel eyes in the room. An ice cream scoop graph illustrating their favorite ice cream flavours. A bar graph illustrating their ages. A line graph illustrating their ages by month. A pictograph illustrating how many lived in houses, apartments, townhouses etc. At the top of each graph you could have all of the winning combinations. ...example $2+5+10+7 = 24$ if that's the total for the eye colour graph etc. It would be a fun way for them to learn things about each other and be introduced/reminded of all the different types of graphs that are out there.

Susanne, Ada and Barb

Using Photostory3

"We use Photostory3 for slideshows with music. It's a free program from Microsoft and you import pictures, add a few words, and then select music and then the slideshow is in a universal media format.

1. Download the free program. Google Photoshop 3 and choose the Microsoft website and follow the download instructions.
2. Open the program to start a new photostory.
3. When it asks something about adding or importing pictures, go into your pictures file and drop them into place.
4. To add music, go to 'create music'.
5. You can save it as a movie file that can be played in Real Player. There are lots of other tricks and tips that you can use to make this more interesting.

This is lots of fun and we use it for lots of things in the classroom!

Extra Supplies

"I have a tree on a bulletin board near the door for the first two months of school - it is there for the beginning of the year, the first parent conference and open house. There are apples on the tree and on each apple is an item that parents can donate to the classroom if they wish. They can choose a more expensive item or one that is less expensive or even free recycled items. This is, of course, optional.

Here are some of my 'wishes'!"

boxes of tissue
ziplock baggies of all sizes
used computers
CD's
paper towel
post-it notes
stickers
books
games

self-adhesive Velcro strips
ice-cream buckets with lids
disinfectant wipes
white paper plates
ink cartridges for class printer
glitter glue
fancy crayons or pens
wrapping paper tubes
etc!



More Odds and Ends

“We have been looking at work by Picasso and so we had a Picasso Cafe today instead of a Halloween party. It worked out really well because I had a couple of children who couldn't celebrate Halloween. It was great fun!

I gave up on fabric paints years ago because they got to be so expensive and you can only buy them in little bottles. I use regular acrylic paint now and they work just fine.”
Barb

“My morning message always includes a daily graphing question that they vote for on the pocket chart or dry erase board. This is a great discussion starter for our morning meeting.”

“I have area rugs on top of the classroom carpet. I had problems with my rug curling on the edges and I was afraid some child would fall over it, so I put the rough part of very wide velcro under the edges. It grips the carpet underneath and keeps the rug from sliding and curling and has not harmed the carpet underneath.”

Have you tried <http://www.rhymezone.com/> ? Type in your word, then pull down the menu to see rhymes, homophones, antonyms, synonyms - and more.”

“I wear a necklace with a red circle on one side and green on the other. When the red circle is showing the children know they are not to interrupt unless their is a REAL emergency!”

“During my Reading Conferences (when I really hate to be interrupted), I wear my red hat. It is a ball cap. I will tell the kids that it is a ‘stop sign’ hat. If they plan to interrupt me when I am wearing it, there better be a fire or a broken leg!”

“We play a math game called ‘Slap!’ I invented this to give the students practice in making 10s. I give two students a pile of playing cards without the 10 or face cards, and they know that the ace is one. The two players take turns taking a card and putting it face upward on their individual pile. At first we talk about what would be needed to make a 10, and then they do it themselves. The first person to see two cards that equal 10 slaps the card and takes the other person’s cards.”
Kim

“Model, model, model! You cannot assume that they know anything. When you make generic statements like ‘behave’, or ‘get ready for math’, or ‘be good in the hall’ - there are many children who have no idea what the behaviour you expect looks like. We practiced walking in the hall, having personal space, looking at the back of the head of the person in front of you. We discussed what you should do when you go into the bathroom - how much toilet tissue is appropriate, that bathrooms are not for climbing, that you need to make sure you flush, how to wash and dry hands, etc. etc. etc. Sometimes I would feel like a broken record at the beginning of the year going over expectations every time we did something, but in the end it pays off!”

“I think many children who really struggle with friendship issues are actually unpopular because they have serious problems with personal space...they don't know their boundaries. They need to be taught very specifically about personal space. I have a child that goes right up to other children and gestures in their face. I've actually had her visualize that everyone has a box around them...and I often remind her of that box when she gets inside other's space. Now I can just make a box with my hands to remind this girl about the ‘space’ problem, and she gets the hint, without undue attention being drawn to the problem.”

The First Twelve Days of School (to the *Twelve Days of Christmas*)

On the first day of school, My teacher gave to me, A book of the A B C's. On the second day of school, My teacher gave to me, Two new pencils 3rd - three coloured crayons 4th - four glue sticks 5th - five gold stars 6th - six pairs of scissors 7th - seven school boxes 8th - eight spiral notebooks 9th - nine wooden rulers 10th - ten magic markers 11th - eleven pink erasers 12th - twelve library books

Some Thoughts.....

My husband usually calls in and says he has problems with his eyes. He just can't see coming in to work.

The only things in the middle of the road are yellow stripes and dead armadillos. - Jim Hightower

Just think how deep the ocean would be if sponges didn't live there.

To err is human; to moo, bovine.

Most educators have bought the myth that academic learning does not require discipline - that the best learning is easy and fun. They do not realize that it is fluent performance that is fun. The process of learning, of changing performance, is most often stressful and painful.

Predestination was doomed from the start.

.....I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.....

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class. "In English," he explained, "a double negative forms a positive. In some languages, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However," the professor continued, "there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up. "Yeah, right."



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Dear Colleagues,

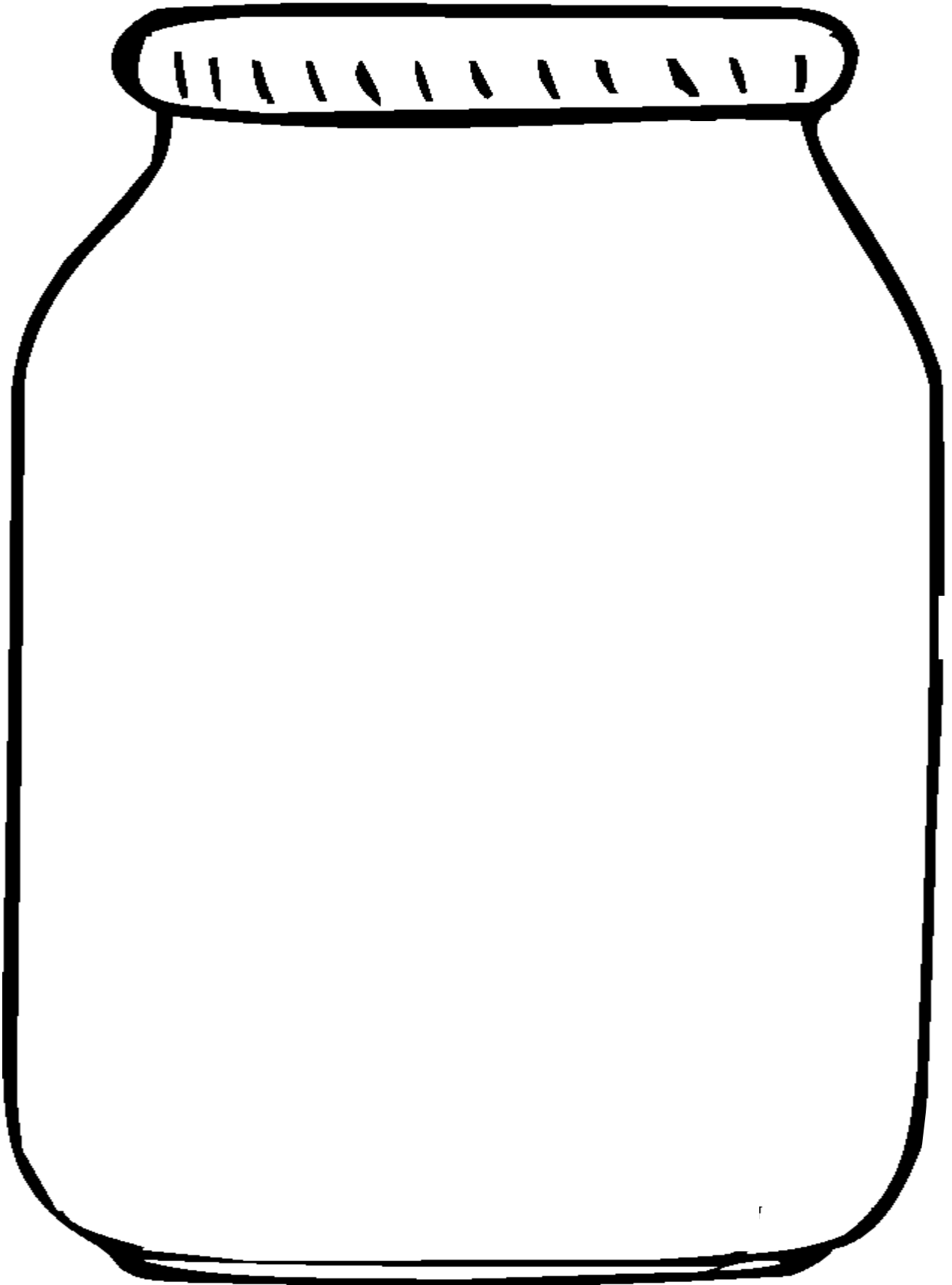
Thank you to all the teachers who have continued with the magazine after I threatened to cancel it! And thank you for the compliments - I really wasn't fishing for praise.....

However, this may be the last year. The Primary Success company will continue and hopefully I will be able to write a few more things for you.

Have a great start to the new year!

Jean





Why Can't I Skip My Ten Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Let's figure it out - mathematically!

Student A reads 10 minutes five nights of every week;

Student B reads only 4 minutes a night, or not at all.

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night \times 5 times each week.

Student A reads 10 minutes \times 5 times a week = 50 minutes/week.

Student B reads 4 minutes \times 5 times a week = 20 minutes.

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week \times 4 weeks each month.

Student A reads 200 minutes a month.

Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month \times 9 months/school year.

Student A reads 1800 min. in a school year.

Student B reads 720 minutes in a school year.

By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits,

Student A will have read the equivalent of 30 whole school days.

Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days.

One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance.

How do you think Student B will feel about him/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

Which student would you expect to read better?

Which student would you expect to know more?

Which student would you expect to write better?

Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?

Which student would you expect to be more successful in school and in life?



Help Me Get to Know Your Child

Parent's Name: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Nickname: _____

What are some of your child's favourite things to do? _____

What are your child's special interests? _____

Does your child speak more than one language? Which ones? _____

Does your child have any medical conditions that I should be made aware of? If yes, what are they?

Does your child enjoy being read to? What are some of your child's favourite books?

What time does your child go to sleep at night? Does he/she sleep well?

Does your child eat well? Does he/she eat a good breakfast before coming to school?

Does your child have any siblings? What are their names, ages, and where do they go to school?

Do you have any concerns about this school year? _____

Tell me about your child! (Use the back of this sheet or attach a letter with your thoughts)



September News

_____ 's Class



Academic Highlights
Reading

Phonics / Making Words

Writing

Math

Science / Themes

Other

Upcoming Events

Homework

Reminders

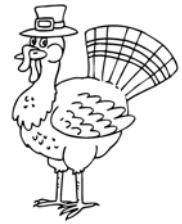
Special Students





October News

_____ 's Class



Academic Highlights

Reading

Phonics / Making Words

Writing

Math

Science / Themes

Other

Upcoming Events

Homework

Reminders

Special Students



