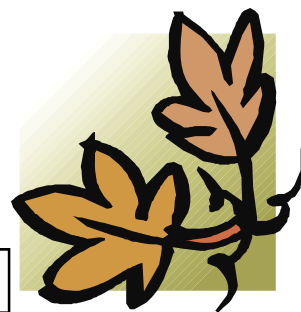


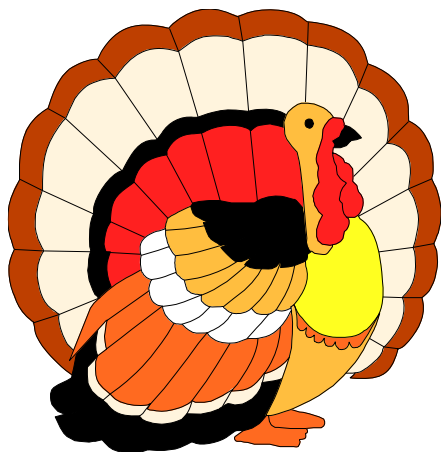


Share-Two



September – October 2001 Issue #6

“Amazing as it seems, my life is based on a true story.”



The Second Year!

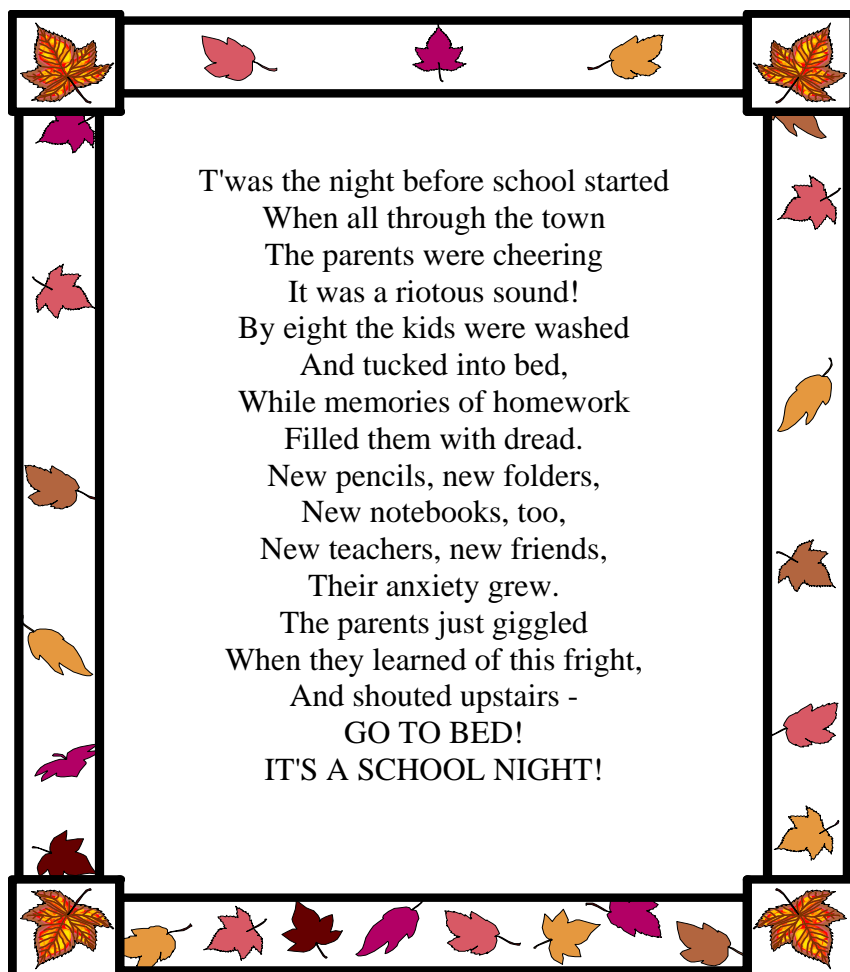
We begin the second year of “Share-Two”! The first year was a success, and I thank you for your continued support. I know you are all very busy, but I (and all the readers) would be very appreciative of any ideas you can send in to the newsletter. You can send ideas to me by e-mail, and I will include them in the next “Share-Two” or at the appropriate time of the year. I would love to hear what you are doing!

Do you have any suggestions for the newsletter? What would you like included? Am I missing anything that you feel would be useful? Please become a part of the newsletter, and share, too!

Jean

IN THIS ISSUE..

- Article page 4 – 6
- Autumn Art..... page 18 – 19
- Behavior Management.. page 20 – 21
- Bulletin Boards page 27
- Classroom Manage..... page 16 – 17
- Communities page 23
- First Day page 7
- Hallowe'en..... page 24 – 25
- Language Arts
 - Fluency Scale page 10
 - Poetry page 8
 - Read Around World .. page 10
 - Running Records page 9
 - Reading Ideas page 11
 - Writing Ideas page 9
- Mapping Skills..... page 22
- Math page 14 – 15
- Odds and Ends..... page 28 – 29
- Parent Communication. page 26
- Poetry page 2 – 3
- Student Teachers..... page 17
- Thanksgiving page 12 – 13
- Websites..... page 28
- Welcome Bag page 6



T'was the night before school started
 When all through the town
 The parents were cheering
 It was a riotous sound!
 By eight the kids were washed
 And tucked into bed,
 While memories of homework
 Filled them with dread.
 New pencils, new folders,
 New notebooks, too,
 New teachers, new friends,
 Their anxiety grew.
 The parents just giggled
 When they learned of this fright,
 And shouted upstairs -
GO TO BED!
IT'S A SCHOOL NIGHT!

Poetry for September and October

September

September means -
 School,
 Effort and
 Play.
 Trying your best
 Each hour of the day,
 Making new friends,
 Being as good as you can,
 Exciting discoveries,
 Reading books with a friend.



Now

Close the barbecue
 Close the sun
 Close the home-run games we won
 Close the picnic
 Close the pool
 Close the summer
 Open school



The Leaves

The leaves had a wonderful frolic.
 They danced to the wind's loud song.
 They whirled, and they floated, and
 scampered.
 They circled and flew along.
 The moon saw the little leaves
 dancing.
 Each looked like a small brown bird.
 The man in the moon smiled and
 listened,
 And this is the song he heard.
 The North Wind is calling, is
 calling,
 And we must whirl round and round,
 And then, when our dancing is
 ended,
 We'll make a warm quilt for the
 ground.

Pencil Magic

I like a yellow pencil,
 A shiny yellow pencil
 With a rub-away eraser
 And a point all sharply black.
 I can draw all kinds of pictures
 Of animals, things, and people -
 With a shiny yellow pencil
 There isn't a thing I lack!
 If I want a brand new spaceship
 Or a secret house in a treetop
 Or a friendly bear to play with
 Or eleven ducks on a pond,
 I've only to use my pencil
 And there they are on the paper-
 Oh, a shiny yellow pencil
 Is a magical fairy wand!



The turkey's not the most handsome
 bird.

To say he's cute would be absurd.
 To sum him up in just one word -
 TASTY is the best I've heard.

Pumpkin pie is yummy to eat.
 Around Thanksgiving, it's a treat.
 But watch yourself -
 You could create
 A very painful tummy ache!

Turkeys United

We gather together
 as birds of a feather
 oh, turkeys united we stand!

If you would be thinner
 skip Thanksgiving dinner
 we turkeys think that would be grand!

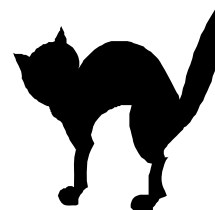
Turkeys united
 no people invited.
 Turkeys united
 no people PLEASE!

Monsters

There are monsters everywhere,
 Monsters wandering in my hair,
 Monsters on the corner stair,
 Monsters on the rocking chair,
 Monsters going up the wall,
 Monsters that are very tall,
 If I caught them in a bunch,
 I'd have monster stew for lunch.

The Cat of Many Colours

Once there was a cat all white
 Who wished that he were black as night.
 He was as thirsty as could be,
 And in the cupboard, what did he see?
 Grape juice right before his eyes!
 He drank it. Then, to his surprise,
 He turned from white to something new:
 Deep dark purple was his hue.
 He peered into his little cup,
 Saw tomato juice, and lapped it up.
 He soon became the brightest red.
 He thought, 'Maybe I should go to bed',
 But he wasn't tired, and so
 He looked for somewhere else to go.
 He spied an orange on the floor,
 And pounced in it, and played some more.
 As he played this little game,
 Orange was what he became.
 He played with some blueberries, too,
 So suddenly the cat turned blue.
 A sour lime sat on the ground.
 The kitty licked it, and he found
 That he felt strange and not so keen,
 For he had turned the colour green.
 Now he was a sad little fellow,
 So he ate a banana and turned bright
 yellow.
 Just then he saw a tasty treat,
 Another food he had to eat.
 A long black piece of licorice
 Gave the little cat his wish.
 He ate it all, and soon he was
 Black from his head down to his paws!
 Why did this happen? You guessed right,
 If you blamed it all on Hallowe'en night.



Poetry For Your Classroom

Take a Turkey Out to Lunch

Take a turkey out to lunch.
Let him sit right down and munch.
But don't say a word about
Thanksgiving Day.

Take a turkey out to dine.
He will think it very fine.
But keep it under your hat,
that you're glad he's getting fat.
And don't say a word about
Thanksgiving Day.

Take a turkey out to eat.
For a very special treat.
But don't you let it slip,
Please button up your lip.
Keep it under your hat,
That you're glad he's getting fat.
And don't say a word
To that silly old bird.
Don't say a word about
Thanksgiving Day!

Ooops! I think I gave it away.



Celebrating Me

I am the only ME I AM
who qualifies as me;
no ME I AM has been before,
and none will ever be.

No other ME I AM can feel
the feelings I've within;
no other ME I AM can fit
precisely in my skin.

There is no other ME I AM who
thinks the thoughts I do;
the word contains one ME I AM,
there is no room for two.

I am the only ME I AM
this earth shall ever see;
that ME I AM I always am
is no one else but ME!



The Ocean Song

to 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean'
The earth is all covered with ocean.
The earth is all covered with sea.
The earth is all covered with ocean.
More water than land, don't you see!

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.

So salty and cold is the ocean.
So salty and cold is the sea.
So salty and cold is the ocean,
Too cold and too salty for me!

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.

Atlantic, Pacific, the Arctic.
And then there's the Indian, too!
These oceans all cover our planet.
I've named all of them, now can you?

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.

Water, water, there's water all over the
world, the world.



"Come, little leaves," said the wind
one day,

"Come o'er the meadows with me
and play:

Put on your dresses of red and gold -
For summer is gone and the days
grow cold."

Do You Know Your Continents?

to 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush'
Oh, do you know your continents?
Your continents, your continents?
Oh, do you know your continents?
All around the world?

There's Asia and Africa,
North and South America,
Europe and Australia,
And Antarctica.

Oceans, Oceans
Do you know your oceans?
Oceans, Oceans
All around the world.
Atlantic, Pacific
Indian, and Arctic
We'll sail away some bright sunny day
Out in to the ocean.

Sailing, Sailing, Over the Oceans Blue

to 'Sailing, Sailing'
Sailing, sailing over the oceans blue
There are four, no less, no more
We'll name them now for you
Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic, too
So come along and sing our song
We're sailing the oceans blue!

There Are Seven Continents

to 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'
There are seven continents, continents,
continents
Continents are large land masses
We can name them all.

There's Africa and Asia
Antarctica, Australia
North and South America
And Europe is the last

(repeat first verse)



What Does a Balanced Literacy Approach Mean?

The following article is by Sebastian Wren and is used with his permission.

There have been, over the years, two general instructional approaches that have governed reading education. They have gone by many names, but today they are generally known as Phonics and Whole Language approaches. These approaches to reading instruction reflect very different underlying philosophies and stress very different skills. The philosophy underlying the Whole Language approach is that reading is a natural process, much like learning to speak, and that children exposed to a great deal of authentic, connected text will naturally become literate without much in the way of explicit instruction in the rules and conventions of printed text. The philosophy underlying the Phonics approach is quite different -- Phonics advocates argue that in order to learn to read, most children require a great deal of explicit instruction in the rules of printed text.

Whole Language and Phonics Approaches

A young child in a Whole Language classroom is provided with simple, predictable and repetitive text - frequently the text is already familiar to the child, making it that much easier to understand. Emphasis in a Whole Language classroom is not placed on reading precision and accuracy, but on comprehension and appreciation - children are not expected to read the text verbatim, they are allowed to insert and substitute words as long as the story still makes sense, and as long as the child is understanding the gist of the story. The primary goal of the Whole Language teacher is to foster a love for the act of reading authentic and connected text, and to keep the process of reading instruction uncontrived.

In a Phonics classroom, by contrast, a great emphasis is placed on reading precision, and children are encouraged to read the words exactly as they appear on the page. Children are explicitly taught "rules" about the way words are written and spelled, and they are taught spelling-sound relationships. After a teacher provides an explicit lesson in a particular Phonics rule (e.g. if the last letter of a word is an "e," then the first vowel is usually long), the child is presented with a passage of text that contains many words consistent with that rule (called decodable text); this provides the child with the opportunity to apply each Phonics rule on a variety of words in the context of a passage. The goal of the Phonics teacher, then, is to instill children with the Phonics rules and the common spelling-sound relationships, and to teach children to apply this knowledge in sounding-out each word they encounter, making the assumption that comprehension and appreciation will be a natural consequence of accuracy.

Some people have characterized the fundamental difference between these two philosophies as being a debate between whether reading is "top-down" or "bottom-up." The Whole Language advocates state that reading is "top-down" in that the meaning of the text is dependent upon the background knowledge and understanding that the reader brings. The reader forms hypotheses and makes predictions, and only samples the text occasionally to confirm those predictions.

By contrast, the Phonics approach could be described as "bottom-up" - Phonics advocates argue that if a person is able to correctly decode text, meaning and understanding will follow. The text contains the message, and through the act of decoding the text, the reader discovers what that message is.

The Great Debate (a.k.a. The Reading Wars)

Educators have debated over which is the best approach to teach children to read for many years. The ancient Greeks began reading instruction by teaching the letters and the letter-sound relationships, and children did not attempt to decode any real words until they had mastered these basics. In the middle of the 19th century, the great education reformer Horace Mann criticized the Phonics-like approach to reading instruction that was prevalent at the time, describing letters of the alphabet as "bloodless, ghostly apparitions." He advocated more of a "whole word" approach to reading instruction. Late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century, the pendulum swung back towards "skills and drills" based instruction, such as the McGuffey readers and the Beacon readers. Before the second World War, the pendulum of education back swung back again with the publication of the Scott Foresman's "Dick and Jane" reading books that were more repetitive, emphasized simple words that were supposed to be in the child's "sight vocabulary," and which were highly predictable. Thus, the "look-say" approach to reading instruction became the predominant approach to reading instruction. In the midst of the Cold-War era, Rudolf Flesch published "Why Johnny Can't Read," which suggested that the look-say approach was more than merely educationally inappropriate, he characterized it as a threat to democracy. The pendulum once again swung back towards Phonics, but in addition, this book added very political overtones to what was already becoming a very heated debate. In the 1980s, educators rebelled against the contrived drills and worksheets that were common in the Phonics curricula; the pendulum swung back towards Whole Language and more "authentic" reading lessons, and the volatile nature of what has come to be known as "the Great Debate" became even more politically charged. With social and political conservatives having embraced Phonics as a traditionalist, back-to-basics approach to reading instruction, liberals embraced Whole Language, describing the Whole Language approach as more "democratic" and even using terms like "elitist" and "racist" to describe the Phonics philosophy.

Arguably, the Great Debate, or what some have more appropriately dubbed the "reading wars," has been one of the most destructive forces in reading education. The battles have grown from ideological differences to personal, politically charged attacks on character. Teachers, and more importantly children, have been caught in the crossfire.

Recently the National Academy of Sciences released an analysis of research in reading instruction called *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. In the preface to this book, the committee that authored it expressed their hopes that the research-based information provided in their report would "mark the end of the reading wars." They state that, "The study reported in this volume was undertaken with the assumption that empirical work in the field of reading had advanced sufficiently to allow substantial agreed-upon results and conclusions that could form a basis for breaching the differences among the warring parties." Their intent was to provide information about research-based reading instruction without regard to ideologies or sides in the reading wars. It was clearly their intention to simply promote the best information available about reading and reading instruction, and to ignore which "party" had promoted it in the past. Still, reviews of the report summarized the content with overly simplistic statements such as "researchers call for a balanced approach to end the reading wars."



A Balanced Approach

In fact, very few educators today would describe themselves as strict advocates of either a Phonics approach or a Whole Language approach - most would describe their teaching as "balanced," which, on the surface, has a great deal of appeal. Educators nationwide are promoting a "balanced" approach to reading instruction in an effort to bring an end to the reading wars. However, while an end to the reading wars could not possibly be more desirable, it is important to remember that a compromise between these two approaches to reading instruction will not necessarily result in the single, best approach. If either Phonics or Whole Language was even close to being the panacea of reading education, then there would not be a Great Debate. The fact is, there is not much evidence that either the Whole Language approach or the Phonics approach is particularly effective. As Marilyn Adams has said, "We have known for 30 years that Phonics did a better job at teaching reading than Whole Word - and now Whole Language - instruction. But, you know, it never was that much better." Neither approach has been sufficiently effective, so why do we assume that a compromise between these two approaches will provide educators with the most effective approach possible?

While the pendulum of reading instruction has swung back and forth several times, reading performance for children has remained quite stable, and unfortunately, quite poor. In the U.S., the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been used to assess major areas of education including reading performance since 1969. In 30 years, despite the different approaches to reading education that have prevailed at different times, reading scores have not really changed appreciably; about 40 percent of this country's fourth graders have always performed in the "below basic" category, while approximately 5 percent have been ranked in the "advanced" category at the other end of the distribution. Around the world, not just in the U.S., when either a Phonics approach or a Whole Language approach is adopted, an unacceptably large percentage of children fail to learn to read. According to the 1992 NAEP, most teachers in the U.S. adopted what they described as a balanced approach to reading instruction, but still the scores remained unacceptably low.

Problems with a Balanced Approach

One possible contributing factor in the stability of the NAEP scores despite teachers moving to a more "balanced approach" to reading instruction stems from the fact that most people do not agree what the term "balanced approach" means. A balanced approach could be generically described as "mixing some Phonics with Whole Language," but how this is accomplished in any particular classroom is unclear. The eclectic approach, as some have come to call it, sometimes involves teaching Phonics first, and then "graduating" to Whole Language approaches. Alternatively, the Phonics instruction may be explicit, but children might be given more opportunities to read connected, authentic literature. Or, lessons prescribed by Phonics and Whole Language may be intermixed in the hopes that different children will benefit from different "styles" of teaching. Similarly, it is not uncommon for teachers to use an amalgam of decodable text and predictable, repetitive text in a diplomatic approach to balanced literacy instruction. The argument is often made that the best elements of each philosophy can be utilized while the worst are eliminated, but how are we to decide what the "best elements" are? Should we assume that the two approaches represent the entire world of reading instruction, and that the "best elements" are to be found in one camp or the other? It is possible that some combination of the two approaches will work better than either approach alone did, but is it necessarily the best possible approach for each individual child?

Science to the Rescue

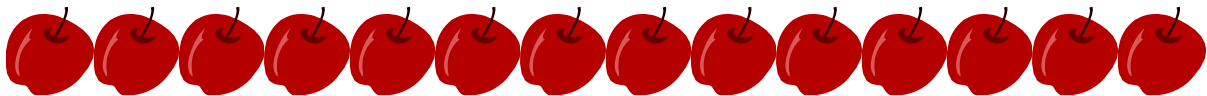
Research in reading is providing us with approaches and understanding that neither "camp" was able to provide - fresh ideas and new ways of thinking about reading and reading instruction that are not consistent with the tenets of either traditional Phonics or Whole Language philosophies are being substantiated and validated through empirical research. Teachers are now being encouraged to look beyond the restrictions of the traditional approaches to reading instruction, and to use research evidence to gain an understanding of the reading process that allows them to make clearer and more purposeful instructional decisions. More importantly, teachers are able to use the information provided by research to customize instructional strategies to individual children's needs - rather than creating lessons based on a philosophy or an approach, teachers can examine a child's development in reading and respond with appropriate instruction.

As long as educators are in any way expected to base their educational decisions on the issues, debates, politics and polemics of the Great Debate, and as long as we limit our horizons to approaches and philosophies that have been advocated by one faction or another, there is no reason to believe that real progress in reading education will ever be made. Phonics approaches may be improved by incorporating elements of Whole Language instruction, or vice versa, but it is doubtful that the best approach to reading instruction will be scavenged from these two philosophies, and it is even less likely that any instruction that is not squarely centered on the individual student's learning needs will ever be universally effective.

Rather than picking the best elements from these two approaches, it seems sensible to simply ask what information about reading and reading instruction has been supported by research, and move forward from there. If we focus on what research has said about how children learn to read, and if we truly focus on the educational needs of each individual child that is learning to read, then we do not need to concern ourselves with striking any sort of balance or making any compromises in our reading instruction. Educators should not be asking whether a lesson is Phonics-based or Whole Language-based, they should be asking whether a lesson is going to help a specific beginning reader to learn to read.

The most troubling aspect of the debate over Phonics, Whole Language and balanced approaches to reading instruction is that the interest and debate almost always focuses on the lessons and activities that a teacher should deliver (and the order in which those lessons and activities should be delivered). A typical Phonics teacher plans lessons weeks or months in advance. So does a Whole Language teacher. So does a teacher who is trying to balance these two approaches. But if instruction is to be customized on individual students' learning needs, teachers need to become more adept at planning lessons to focus on areas of instructional need that were revealed through artful assessment and observation of individual students. Lesson plans can be thought out in broad strokes in advance, but if instruction is to be truly effective, lesson plans need to be constantly revised to accommodate new assessment information, and lessons need to be customized to suit the learning needs of individual students. The Great Debate over reading instruction does not help teachers to develop more assessment driven, individualized instruction strategies.

As stated earlier, an end to the Reading Wars could not be more desirable, but the debate will not end as long as the focus of reading instruction is on the teacher and the activities and materials. The focus needs to shift to the student and the individual learning needs that can be revealed through assessment. Only when all teachers learn to diagnose student reading skills and responds with focused, deliberate instruction will literacy be available to all children. There is no debating that.



A Welcome Bag

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

This is the note that I include -

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More 'Welcome Bag' Ideas.....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The First Day



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

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

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

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

“Here are some ideas I have collected...”

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

Barb

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

Using Poetry

"I had attended a Grade Two Reading and Writing conference about 4 years ago. One of the suggestions was to use poetry on a daily basis and I have been using poetry in my room ever since. During the summer, I make each child a Poetry Book - it is made with oaktag covers and different coloured construction paper pages (about 15 pages). I also have a collection of poetry for the children. Most of it has been collected from different websites that I have found. The poems are about school, holidays, silly poems, weather, science, etc. Each child receives a copy of the poem, cuts off the extra paper and glues it into his/her book. We recite it several times for one or two days, as a whole class, or front of the room, back of the room, etc. Then the children volunteer to recite it from memory (help is given when needed for missed words or phrases). When the poem is recited, I put a stamp on the poem and the class applauds after each child recites his poem. After a few weeks, the children select their favorite poem and recite it. The children are thrilled to be able to take their poetry book home at the end of the year. Many times this year the children learned a new poem every three days. This informal public speaking helps cover one of the standards - public speaking. I've had parents tell me about how their child love to recite the poem at breakfast, at dinner and to grandparents. The children have even invited the principal to one of the poetry reviews. It's fun and learning takes place!

"You can also use the poems to review vowel sounds, language arts lessons of compound words and contractions, discuss science, etc."

Kathy

"I use poetry on a daily basis as part of my opening routine. My students have a 3 ring binder and they add a new packet of poems each month. I try to use some poems that tie into our current units (dinosaurs, rain forests, etc.). I also use them to teach specific skills like compound words or contractions. Sometimes they do a scavenger hunt for word wall words or spelling words that can be found within the poem. We always do a choral reading of some variety after the poem has been modeled. They love to read in small groups (boys/girls, by rows, or numbering off) to see which group can read with the best expression or fluency. It takes about 10 minutes a day, but I consider it part of my reading time. Once a month, they take the poems home to read to their parents as a homework assignment. The kids really like the variety, so it is well worth it."

"I use poetry journals in my classroom, which are small three ring binders. You can easily substitute these with folders that have three holes in them. Just insert brads into the holes and punch holes in all poetry for insertion. When I introduce a new poem, generally I read it aloud the first day. I like to copy the poems onto chart paper for all to see. I have used a lot of poems, and especially love Shel Silverstein's work. The first day (shared) I would read the poem aloud to let them hear the flow of the language. I model some strategies for figuring out an unknown word using the rhyming pattern. During repeated readings we do rhyme roundups, followed by some type of word activity. My class loves to highlight in different colours the words we are focusing on.

"For guided reading, I would preview the vocabulary in the poem and introduce words they might have difficulty decoding. I then would build some background or make predictions based on title. Then they go into groups with a purpose and read the poem. Some days they round up rhymes on their own. Other days they work to add a verse to the poem following the pattern, compare/contrast to another poem, etc. During the final share portion of this block, we read the poem again using some time type of oral reading activity. Be creative here, they love it. The poem is then glued into their journal and they illustrate. These poems are brought home for reading to their family. The children love to read and reread these poems, and the journals are a favourite during the SSR block."

Do you need poems for every occasion?

<http://www.track0.com/canteach/elementary/songspoems.html>

Iram has a great website with a wonderful poetry collection.

<http://www.dmarie.com/asp/poems.asp?action=queryform>

Hunt for poems that contain a key word or subject.

<http://members.home.net/henriksent/index.htm>

Lots of poetry under a variety of headings.

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/thebes/9893/>

'Teaching is a Work of Heart' website has poetry under the subject headings.



Writing Ideas

“I do a modeling lesson at the beginning of each writing period. My kids have two basic kinds of writing. Journals tell about their daily life – true experiences. Their Journals must be corrected perfectly every day. When they finish their entry, they bring it to me and I underline any errors and then they go back and correct. We discuss any problems at this time. They don’t re-write, they erase and correct. The other kind of writing is free writing where they may write fiction. Free writing can occasionally be edited and published but most days is just for writing fluency.

“I require a certain number of words each day in the Journals, rather than sentences. If you ask the kids for a certain number of sentences, there are always children who will make the shortest sentences possible. Asking for a number of words prevents this and the quality is better.”
Beth

“Each child has a writing folder. I glue the checklist on the outside and on the pockets inside. Then they are laminated. I use 5 colours for my 20 students. Yellow folders read from the author’s chair on Mondays, Reds on Tuesdays, etc. This year I included: Entire sight word list (Dolch list). Lists of other words often requested during writing (Barbie, Nintendo, Disneyland, grandma, soccer, etc. There is also an upper/lowercase handwriting guide and an alphabet to help with sounding out.
Editing checklist: 1. Read to see if it makes sense. 2. Punctuation 3. Capitals 4. Spelling.”

“My favourite activity is very simple, and also helps with correct form in writing questions. The kids find a magazine picture that they like. Then they think up a ‘Why’ question about the picture. They glue the picture on the front of a folded piece of paper, and write their question above or below the picture. I insist on correct punctuation, capital usage in the question. I often use legal size paper for this. They unfold the paper and write an answer to their question on the inside. Using the word ‘because’ in their answer sentence seems to help them direct their thoughts.

“For example, one child found a picture of a boy wearing a raincoat and boots and playing in the rain. His question was ‘Why is the boy wearing boots?’ On the inside of the ‘booklet’, his answer was, ‘He’s wearing boots because it’s raining’.
“Another thing that I think helps with cause and effect is jokes and riddles....my kids love to read and solve them.”

Running Records

“This is how I score my running records – it may sound complicated, but it really is very simple. Once you do a few, it will come easier.

“The child reads with the book down flat so I can see the words he/she reads.

“I use lined loose-leaf paper. For each word read correctly, I simply put a check mark. I write the page number, then the checks for the words on that page. So, let’s say the page said... ‘The mother rabbit hides her babies in the grass.’ I would write p2 >>>>>>>>> (pretend those are check marks). Then on the next line, I would do page 3, etc.

“For each word read incorrectly, I make a ‘word fraction’. I put the word they said over the actual word. If the child self-corrects, I make a circle with SC in it right next to the word. If they repeat a word, I make a circle with an R next to the check mark for the word. If they go back and repeat a whole portion of the sentence, I make an R in a circle and draw an arrow to however far back they went. If a word is skipped, I make a word fraction again. This time, though, I put a dash over the word from the story. If a word is added, I put the word they said over a dash. If I have to tell them the word, which I try not to do but sometimes you just have to...then I make a T in a circle next to the word.

“To get a score, count ONLY the errors - repeats and self-corrects don’t count. Put the number of words read correctly OVER the number of words in the book. Divide the bottom number into the top number to get a percentage.

“I use the same books for a certain level called benchmark books. I have already counted the number of words and written the number on the book so I don’t have to re-count every time. I keep a calculator in my basket so I can just do it up real quick. It only takes 2-3 minutes to do each child.

- below 90% = Frustration level
- 90-94% = Instructional level
- 95-100% = Independent level

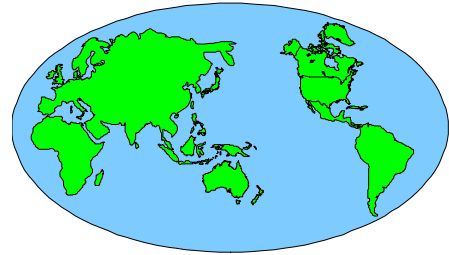
“I take notes while they are reading, too. Maybe they are ONLY trying to sound out, or did they look at the pictures, whatever you might find interesting or helpful. I sometimes note comments that the children say....‘I don’t know this word’, ‘I know b-l-u-e is blue, so this word must be SUE’, ‘That doesn’t make sense’, ‘That’s really funny!’, etc. It helps you remember later what strategies they might be using or what information they gleaned from the text.”
Jacki

“I type out the selection I am going to use for running records, with a good space between lines and using a fairly large font. Then I can write errors between lines and have room to make notes. This makes it easier to follow the passage being read and to see what the child has done after they are finished.”

Read Around the World

“Each day we read a book or two that relates to a particular country or continent. We locate and colour that place on individual maps and list the place, book title and author in a photocopied ‘passport’ booklet. I sometimes add sticker ‘stamps’ of flags or animals related to that place on each child's page. Here's my list:

- England....Hedgie by Jan Brett, The Prickly Hedgehog by Mark Ezra
 France....Mirette on the Highwire or Madeline stories
 Egypt....The Day of Ahmed's Secret by Heide and Gilliland or Tut's Mummy (I think its a Step-Up Book in Random House series)
 Africa....It Takes a Village by Jane Cowen-Fletcher, Anansi stories or any African folktale by Mwenye Hadithi, Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe, Whistling Thorn by Helen Cowcher, Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema
 Vietnam....The Lotus Seed, Angel Child, Dragon Child by Michelle Maria Surat
 Italy.... Strega Nona stories by Tomie DiPaolo
 Japan....Yoshi's Feast or The Faithful Elephants (very sad – have tissues ready! It may be too sad for lower grades), Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say
 China....Ming Lo Moves the Mountain by Lobel or Tikki Tikki Tembo by Arlene Mosel, The Most Beautiful Thing in the World by Barbara Walker
 Australia....Katie No-Pocket
 Indonesia...Bushbaby by Adrienne Kenneway
 S. America....The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry
 India....One Grain of Rice
 Russia.... Babushka Baba Yaga by Patricia Pollacco
 Ukraine....Rechenka's Eggs by P. Polacco
 The Caribbean Islands... The Calypso Alphabet by John Agard
 Mexico... Erandi's Braids by Antonio Hernandez Madrigal,
 Antonio's Lucky Day folktale by Joe Hayes
 Finland... The Maiden of Northland: A Hero Tale of Finland by Aaron Shepard
 Sweden... Annika's Secret Wish by Beverly Lewis
 Korea... The Trip Back Home by Janice S. Wong
 Philippines... Rockabye Crocodile by Jose Aruego



and of course,

Canada!... It's really difficult to pick just one book, however I always love reading The Hockey Sweater by Roch Carrier”.

“I also found a great big book you might want to use with your geography unit. As the Crow Flies – A First Book of Maps by Gail Hartman (McMillan/McGraw Hill big book).”



Fluency Scale

Reader reads:

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

Reading Ideas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What We Can Write About Books

I liked the part . . . because . . .

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



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

Home Reading

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

Nancy

Thanksgiving

The 12 Hours of Thanksgiving

“On the _____ hour of Thanksgiving, my mother made for me:

12 tasty turkeys, 11 luscious lobsters, 10 bags of popcorn, 9 squares of cornbread, 8 bowls of berries, 7 ears of sweet corn, 6 cups of green peas, 5 pumpkin pies, 4 buttered yams, 3 cooked clams, 2 mugs of milk and a scoop of vanilla ice cream!”

Nancy

Bulletin Board

“How about some book reviews? Title could be ‘We Gobble Up Good Books!’ Have turkey holding a book near each child’s book review. This could also be used to advertise new books.”

A Turkey Glyph

“Last year for Open House I chose to do a turkey glyph with my students and their parents. I liked it because it was educational (math), fun, and my bulletin board was done in the blink of an eye. Cut enough templates and construction paper so that parents can make their own!

Materials:

turkey head and body template cut out of heavy stock (shaped sort of like a rounded boot)

half or full sheets of light brown and dark brown construction paper for the head and body

precut rectangular pieces of construction paper in orange, green, red, yellow, brown and light brown for the feathers

precut smaller rectangular pieces of red, yellow and orange construction paper for the feet and wattle

precut small sized orange squares of construction paper for the beak

“I introduced the activity with a book, but I don’t remember which. Perhaps *Gracias, the Thanksgiving Turkey*. I hung up a poster of the glyph and a turkey I’d made to represent me. We read the poster together and the students answered a couple of questions about me to check their comprehension. (Do I like mashed potatoes? How do you know?) Then we passed out the body templates and paper and began. I introduced the next step when I saw most people were ready for it. With the parents helping their kids cut, colour, trace, etc., it went beautifully. As the turkeys were finished, we stapled them to our bulletin board. All in all, the activity took about an hour. If I were to do anything differently, I might consider making templates for the feathers. I had expected my students to free-cut the feathers (basically trim off the corners of the rectangles). Some did, but just as many used my model to trace the feathers, because they wanted their turkeys to have nice, even feathers.

Here’s the glyph:

Body - dark brown if you like turkey, light brown if you do not like turkey

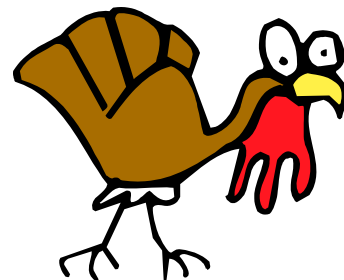
Beak - open beak if you like mashed potatoes, closed beak if you don’t like mashed potatoes

Eyes (draw) - open if you will eat dessert on Thanksgiving, closed if you will not

Feet - yellow if you will have company for dinner, orange if you will not

Wattle - red if you like gravy, orange if you do not like gravy

Feathers – On Thanksgiving I like to eat - cranberries - red pumpkin pie - orange
green beans - green corn - yellow stuffing - brown sweet potatoes - light brown



Loop Turkeys

- “Cut a strip of brown construction paper 18" x 2" , make a circle and glue.

- Cut a 9" x 2" strip of brown, make a circle and glue.

- Glue the two brown circles together (I place the seams together) and you have the body and head.

- Cut 6 strips (18 x 2) in a variety of colours for the feathers. These are glued with the ends together so they form tear drop shapes.

- Glue the feather shapes to the body starting about 1/3 of the way around the body circle from the head so the rounded part of the feather points toward the head. The next feather gets glued right under it and so on.

- A small diamond of yellow folded in half makes a beak. Glue the fold to the front of the head. Glue paper eyes above beak. A red ‘wiggle shape’ glued under the beak makes a wattle.

- For legs take a piece of yellow yarn about 8 inches long and tie a small piece of yellow to each end. This strange yarn goes through the body circle so a foot hangs on either side of the turkey. Tape in place.

When gluing the circles and feathers they need to hold the pieces until they are FIRMLY glued. I have my students count to 100. They actually DO it and I haven’t had a turkey fall apart yet! I know this sounds strange, but they turn out great and look wonderful hanging from my ceiling.”

'Poems and Pies'

"Each year we have a "Poems and Pies" celebration. The other teacher and I planned this together. Late in September we started teaching our kids some poems and songs for Thanksgiving. Some are funny and some are 'educational'. Our classes learned one song and one poem that were the same so we could recite them as a group. The others that we learned were different.

"We sent a note home to parents inviting them to come to the celebration. On the bottom of the note was a form to sign and return, telling us how many were planning to attend and if they were interested in bringing a pie, and if so, what kind? The response was overwhelming!

"We practiced, practiced, practiced. On the day of the celebration we decorated the room, put on a large pot of coffee and mixed some Kool-Aid. A large lunch table was set up and covered with chart paper. It was soon COVERED with every kind of pie imaginable. We set up chairs on one side of the room to hold the 60+ parents and grandparents who attended. The students walked in and took turns performing their poems and songs. After the last song they said, 'Thank you all for coming, now let's eat PIE!' Each student escorted their parents to the table to get a piece of pie (which they ate standing or sitting all over the room).

"We provided the coffee, Kool-Aid, plates, forks and cups. I'm sure, had we asked, the parents would have provided those also. This year we plan to add another class to our group. We'll have to find a bigger room though....."

Cindy

"Each of my kids had their poem printed on a slice of 'pie' made of cardboard which they had decorated to resemble a particular kind of pie. After reading their poem aloud, they placed their slice on a table, forming many pies. This was our integration with fractions/math. All children came in costume and everyone went to the lunch area to enjoy real pies that parents had baked with the children at school the day before. I think this was more meaningful than parents just bringing food from home. Our parents went all out and had fruit salad, coffee, drinks, etc. and supplied all the paper goods. Children had made laminated placemats and took them home to use at their own Thanksgiving tables. A good time was had by all!" *Sharon*

"We've held a Pies and Poems Celebration for the last 2 and have received an overwhelming response from family members and faculty alike.

"Last year we had more kinds of pies (and cookies too!) than you can imagine. Grandparents, younger siblings, and aunts/uncles came as well - it is just far enough into the school year for our students to 'show off' their new found skills in memorizing poems and chants. It was a great photo opportunity for the family as well - a perfect way to start the holiday season. This is one annual event I already have booked into my plan book. For those considering it, it is a bit of work but well worth it!"

Justine

The Turkey Shuffle *"To the tune of Turkey in the Straw (sort of!)"*

You shuffle to the left, *(2 steps to left)*

You shuffle to the right, *(2 steps to right)*

You heel and toe *(stick out right heel, then point right toe)*

And scratch with all your might. *(scratch like a chicken with right foot)*

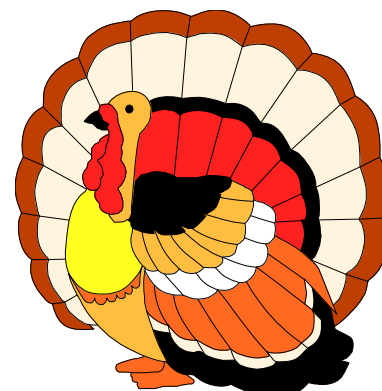
You flap your turkey wings, *(thumbs under armpit, flap bent arms)*

And your head goes bobble, bobble. *(nod head twice)*

You turn around and then you say, *(turn around)*

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

The teachers enjoyed this one as much as the kids!



Turkeys

"Have the children draw lines on a paper coffee filter using waterbased markers. They then fold the filter in half three times and dip it in water. The colours from the markers will blend together and give a tie-dyed effect. Lay the filter on a paper towel to dry. Cut out a pie-shaped 1/3 of the filter. The 2/3 left will become the tail feathers of the turkey. The children cut two circles from brown construction paper, one larger for the body and a smaller one for the head. Cut a rectangle for the neck. (Or cut a peanut shape with one end thinner than the other.) Glue this over the dry coffee filter tail. Draw eyes and glue a beak on the head. Add orange or yellow feet at the bottom."

Math

Calendar Math

“For our calendar math activities we have the children count the number of days we have been in school and then we do various activities with that number. So for example on day 52 we:

- write the number on our number a day chart that we do everyday.
- add a penny to our board and then write the amount 52 cents and if he/she can exchange any of the coins they do so.
- add a popsicle stick to our ones/tens/hundreds bin to make 52 (if it falls on a tens day or hundreds day they have to make the exchange).
- make ‘incredible equations’ - equations equaling the daily number.
- answer questions such as, ‘How many days until John’s birthday?’, ‘How many weeks until Hallowe’en?’, etc.”

“I do a 15 minute calendar every day as the last 15 minutes of math. Each month the days go up one by one and we try and find the pattern. The kids do a picture identification of the pattern and an alphabetic identification. Ex: (Flower, flower, cat, cat) would be (a - a - b - b). The pattern gets harder and longer as the year goes by.

“After the new day is up the child says the date. ‘Today is Tuesday, October 15, 2001’. We keep track of the day of the school year. Every ten and hundred days are bundled (Math Their Way style). I use a commercial pocket chart with straws. We talk about place value at this time. Someone gives a roman numeral for the day of the year. We learn them all the way up to 180. I use a post-it note and stick this up on my number line or just stick up the current day's number on the straw tally chart. We do odd and even activities and they give me the day of the year in money several different ways.

“On the first day of the new month...taking down the calendar is the most fun. I pick a number and the children give me combinations of numbers that equal that number. Number is 15... $7 + 8$, $16 - 1$, etc. As they give them to me, I take them off. Soon only the big numbers are left and I get great thinking! $17 - (23 - 21) = 15$. When there are no more combos, I ask for cards that are even or odd, whose digits equal a certain number. The kids love this!”

Deborah

“I have one student get the calendar ready for the day, put money in the money chart to equal the day of the month in as many ways as they can, and add a straw to the 1s, 10s, 100s pockets for each day of the school year. Another child is in charge of the magnetic Judy Clocks. The child sets the hands to the time of our special for the day in analog and digital time (later in the year we add another clock to show pick up time from the special).”

Favourite Lessons

“My two favourite math lessons come from Marilyn Burns. The day after Labor Day I tell this big story about how my husband and I were driving down a farm road near my home and I see a farmer standing in the middle of the road. I beg my husband to pull over and finally he does. I go to the farmer and ask Mr. Farmer why in the world he is standing in the middle of the road. He explains he has a problem. There are 3 cows and 4 chickens up on the hill and he wants to know how many tails and feet there are all together. I tell him I have a super smart class of children who would love to help him. Then the class tries to answer. I get some very interesting answers. I have done it with 2 grade two classes and a grade one class. We also wrote the farmer letters.

“The other comes from the same book. It is a patterning lesson that takes 3 days or so. Day 1 we make ziti noodle necklaces in a growing pattern. 1 white, 1 red, 1 white, 2 red up to 6 red I think. We look at the growing pattern and the repeating pattern. I do this lesson very early in the year and use growing and repeating all year after that. I demonstrate mine, then we look at the bags of ziti and determine which one will be less and why. They have NO idea! Then they make the necklaces.

“The next day I tell them they are going to make their own necklaces. I have them vote on a colour of necklace they would like to make. We graph and discuss results. Then we dye the ziti. They watch me do it.

“The 3rd day they are to make the necklace, but they must first tell me how many coloured and how many white they will need. They do the work and it is amazing the numbers they come up with. I always have one or two who get it right!

“To dye the noodles put a tablespoon of rubbing alcohol and a few drops of food colouring in a ziplock bag, put in the noodles and shake. Lay them out t dry. I do them at night and use them the next morning.

“Put a little glue on the end of the yarn to make it easier to string and use piece of masking tape to keep the noodles from slipping off and for their names. DO NOT LET THE NECKLACES GET WET LIKE AT THE WATER FOUNTAIN. THEY STAIN. Experience is talking!”

Debby



Review of Grade One Math

“For September and October (and sometimes into November and December) we learn the combinations to 10 so that the children can do them backwards and forwards, quickly and with ease. They need to have these understood and memorized before they go on to the Grade Two math. Here are some of the things that I do to accomplish this:

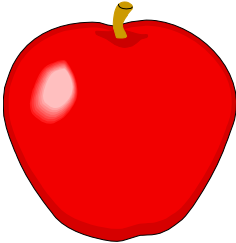
- Have the children visualize patterns of the numbers to 5. A few children won't be able to do this, but it really helps if the children make numbers with counters and then visualize the patterns with their eyes closed.
- Let the children use counters at first – the double sided ones are useful – but encourage visualizing the numbers rather than using the counters so that the children soon put them aside and don't need them.
- Do a lesson each day giving the children clues of how to add certain numbers – e.g. doubles, + 1, + 2, + 3 by counting on, subtraction by counting backwards, etc.
- Do a drill practice sheet every day, graphing these scores.
- Once a week see how many questions the children can accurately do in a set amount of time and graph the weekly results.

- Especially work on the combinations of 10. The children should know these perfectly before you go on to the combinations of the 'teen' numbers. If they are completely confident of the combinations to 10, you can teach the 'magic 10' - for example, $7 + 5 = 7 + 3 + 2 = 12$, and this makes teaching the combinations to 18 much easier.” *Arleen*

Fractions

“I always use food when I'm doing fractions. I start with the concept of 'fair shares' - If I'm going to share an apple between two friends, how would I cut it so each has a fair share? They all relate to that! Then divide pies between four people, pizzas, etc. I bring in apples, round cookies and graham wafers but I don't go as far as pies and pizzas!! They all seem to get it if you start with this.”

Betty-Ann



“We call them: 'fractions of a whole' - and 'fractions of a set'. I teach my kids both - but on separate days - and explain that there are 2 ways. The top number always shows how many parts you've chosen - the bottom number is how many there are in all - whether individual items or a set. I haven't experienced confusion with my kids. I don't use the words numerator or denominator. For fractions of a whole I emphasize that the sections must be the same size - fair shares. For fractions of a set it is easy to use kids in the class. 3/4 of these kids are wearing jeans - etc.” *Cheryl*

“I also do the fair shares. I start by not having enough cookies to share so I tell the kids I'll break the cookies into two pieces and share them that way. Then I make sure the pieces are obviously not the same size. I tell them they cannot eat their piece until I've handed out a piece to everyone. It doesn't take them very long to get into the it's not fair. Then we each get a whole cookie to make things fair in the end. They love this lesson.” *Cathy-Dee*

“Our math specialist uses oranges and plain Hershey bars for fractions. They are easy to divide into fractions and fair shares.”

Math Journals

A Math Journal may include: recording sheets; diagrams, lists, surveys, charts; math vocabulary; questions; pictures to help solve problems; student reflections; self and peer evaluations.

These can be kept in a variety of ways including: duotang folder; scrap book; binder; booklet; notebook (some teachers just have it as part of their math notebook, but we don't use one); file folder with pockets.

Students and teachers will decide upon the most appropriate organization of the journals. The Math Journal should be used on an ongoing basis for collecting information and for reviewing previous entries in order for students to reflect upon their understanding of concepts and acquisition of skills.

What?

communicating about math in writing; an interactive way for students to communicate back what they have learned; a realistic way to 'listen' to all students individually; a diagnostic tool; a means of assessing, planning and adjusting program

How?

prompted writing; open-ended writing; demonstration of knowledge or skills visually or in writing

“This is from Joanne Languay and Scott Sincerbox. They're from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. Both instructors were really great. For those of you from Ontario, ETFO has a booklet called 'On the Road'. It lists presenters who can come to your school and do in-service. It costs their expenses for travel and the cost of their supply teachers. I didn't know about that before, but I plan to look into it since we have some P.D. dollars left from last year.” *Marie*

Classroom Management

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

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

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

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

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

"We also keep a Busy Bee Folder to house any unfinished extra papers, calendars, etc."

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

Diane

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

Karen

Lining Up

"I post a list of each line, written in big letters by the classroom door. They can easily see the list when they are in line. But I have found that after practicing this 3 or 4 times, they don't need the list. The first day I do this, I call them up in the order of the list and have them stand in line, inside the classroom. Then I have them look at who is in front of them and in back of them. They also look at the person that is beside them. Then I have them take note of a 'landmark' (a poster on the wall, or lined up with a shelf, etc.) to remind them where to stand, because they may be dismissed to line up before the kids ahead of them. For example, if they are the seventh person in line and they get dismissed first to line up, then I don't want them to stand at the front of the line. I want them to stand about seven paces back. This way there is no need for the kids ahead to push anyone back when they line up. After they get familiar with where they stand, I have them sit down. Then I ask all of Line 1 to line up. We work out any problems and make sure that they all leave room for anyone ahead of them. Then I do the same for Line 2. The order never seems to be a problem, but spacing themselves out takes practice. Most kids are used to racing to be first and that's what they naturally want to do.

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

Erica

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Having a Student Teacher

“My student teaching (back in the days of the dinosaurs) was divided between two classrooms. One of the teachers welcomed me and shared everything, including her joy for her job, and the other one tolerated me and did the bare minimum. But I did learn from both of them. I hardly remember the unfriendly one, but I still love the first one and still use her ideas after 20+ years. And I still laugh with the kids like she did.

“Since then I have had two student teachers and I loved each of them. I tried to share everything I did. I even expected them to stay late with me if needed. Last year we were lucky enough to get a terrific new teacher on our team and she frequently came to me with her questions. It made me realize all the things that a student teacher ought to have a chance to experience, like how to grade, keep records, set up a series of routines. The first year of teaching is stressful anyway, so anything that can be taught during student teaching is a plus.

“Some of the things that I did was: to make sure that the students know that this is a teacher and that we are very lucky to have this extra teacher. Make sure that the student teacher did not just sit and observe. They have been sitting for several years and need to change perspective. I think they started with reading to the class and then had them choose a student that they could see needed extra attention and give me ideas on what I could do. After seeing me teach a lesson, I let them take over and follow my lesson plans for a day or two. We usually discussed what they had taught and then I let them make the plan for the next day. I think we started with spelling and then went to the other subjects. This gave us time to really discuss how to plan for each subject. By the time the two weeks of teaching came, they were pros. I did not make them use the horribly long lesson planning strategy that the college wanted them to do unless they needed to or wanted to. We do most of those things in our head and don't have time to write all that down. But I used the college's outline of lesson plans to ask questions about what they did. I had them plan for a substitute. It's hard to figure out what a sub needs to know and what you can let go. I made sure that they attended all meetings with me. It's good to see the inner workings of a school. I made sure that they took time to talk to other teachers, and to relax at lunch time. I think the hardest thing for me (control freak) was to explain my grading and to hand over my grading book, but they did an excellent job. We always took about 30 minutes after school to talk. We had a Coke and asked questions of each other. This is the really terrific part of having a student teacher - you will learn a great deal from them. I figured that I gained about as much as the student teacher did. I had to be able to justify everything that I did. That really makes you evaluate what you are doing and I need that every so often! We had the most interesting discussions on things such as laughing with the kids, how to cover or openly expose our mistakes, how much noise was comfortable for each of us (I could usually tolerate more), how to read the signs that a child is not well or is disturbed in some way and what to do about it, and many other things. They need time to ask questions and to learn to laugh at themselves.”



Autumn Art

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

Vicki

Leaf People

“As a class, take a quick walk outside. Ask each child to choose one leaf. (If this is not feasible, bring an assortment of fall leaves to class.) Give each child a piece of paper. Tell students to glue the leaf to the center of the page, then use crayons or markers to add faces, arms, hands, legs, and feet. As students complete their ‘leaf people’, ask them to think of autumn things their leaf person might say if he or she could talk. Print this in a speech bubble.”



Nature Prints

“Gather a small assortment of leaves, weeds, flowers, herbs, and so forth. Cover tables in newsprint. Ask each student to select three or four items, dip them in tempera paint, then arrange them on a section of newsprint. Have children clean hands, then give each child a piece of heavy paper or cardstock. Tell children to press their paper against the paint-covered objects. When they lift their papers, they will find their ‘print’ on them.”

Wreaths

“There is truly no limit to the type and variety of wreaths your students can make using leaves, twigs, seed pods, and other Autumn objects found on a walk. Because we live in an area where grapes are grown, we sometimes make our own grapevine wreaths. Other good bases for wreaths are paper plates, tagboard or posterboard circles or other shapes, and all those extra cd's from cd-rom software you'll never use. Items can be attached with glue, or with a glue gun if you have parent helpers. I usually pour white glue into margarine cups and show the kids how to dip the end or edge of their object into the glue, then place it on the wreath form.”

Leafy Lanterns

Suspend these lanterns for a spectacular array of fall foliage.

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

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

Form a cylinder by overlapping and stapling together the ends of each construction-paper strip. Attach a 1" x 8" construction-paper handle to the top of the lantern. Hang from the ceiling. Adapt this idea to create lanterns that ‘glow’ with seasonal paper cutouts such as snowflakes, hearts, butterflies, or shamrocks.

Corn Cob Flowers

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

Cornflake Leaves

Cornflake leaves
Beneath the trees -
Are they a breakfast
For the breeze?

Have students draw or paint a brown tree trunk and branches. Paint a small area with glue and sprinkle with cornflakes. Paint another small area with glue and add corn flakes until the branches are covered.

A variation on this activity is done with coloured pasta shaped like leaves.

Falling Leaf Mobiles

Have children colour and cut out leaf patterns from a blackline copy. Glue or staple the leaves onto a spiral made from a paper plate or freehand from construction paper. Hang from the ceiling. The leaves appear to be falling to the ground!

Sunflowers

“The class and I did sunflowers. We talked about sunflowers and learned a sunflower poem and then learned about Van Gogh. Two books I would recommend are:

Camille and the Sunflower by Lawrence Anhold ISBN 0812064097. The fact-based story is a fine introduction to Van Gogh.

Van Gogh For Kids by Margaret Hyde ISBN 1888108045

“Our activities included finger painting sunflowers and adding a center and putting them into a vase for a bulletin board display. We also did construction paper sunflower and used real sunflower seeds in the centers.” *Ann*

“I let the kids fingerprint with yellow paint and then had each child make a handprint. They also painted a large piece of butcher paper with green paint which when it dried I cut into the stem and petals. After the hand prints dried I cut them out and made a large circle out of them. It was our ‘Handy Sunflower’.

“Sunflower art project: my students made sunflowers by painting their palms brown and their fingers yellow. They pressed that one hand down several times turning the paper, with their palm in the same place and their fingers making petals all around. (The fingers needed to be repainted at least once.) They then painted the stem and leaves. They turned out really cute.”

**The sunflower children
Nod to the sun.....
Summer is over,
Fall has begun.**

Positive Playgrounds - Putting the 'play' back into playgrounds

The following is a program originating in Alberta, and the information is taken from the website, with the authors' permission. Have you ever noticed ..

- *that children don't always play co-operatively on the playground?
- *that children don't seem to know many games to play outside?
- *that children are often more aggressive and frustrated on the playground?

If you said yes...we can help! Positive Playgrounds provides elementary schools with all the tools to plan a successful "Playground Program". The Positive playgrounds program is designed to give students the opportunity to learn and participate in a variety of games on the playground including wall and tarmac ball games, field and tag games, skipping, hopscotch, marbles and jacks and clapping games. The goal is to expand the number of games that children can play independently during recess. This program can be initiated by a parent or a teacher resulting in everyone working together to encourage cooperation and good sportsmanship at recess. Our program manual makes planning this program a delight! Positive Playgrounds is also an excellent resource of outdoor and indoor games for teachers to use as part of their Physical Education programs and is highly recommended by the Physical Education consultants. Authors Pearl Marko and Michelle Smith have spent many hours of planning and research to make this program work for your school. Their "Positive Playground" programs receive rave reviews from administrators, teachers, parents and children...throughout Canada!

For more information contact: Positive Playgrounds Consultant Pearl Marko at (780)466-9612
Sales@Positiveplaygrounds.ab.ca <http://www.positiveplaygrounds.ab.ca>

Behavior Management

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

Leanne

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

Debbie

Tattling

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

Kathy



“We generally have discussions about what are important things to tattle about. I usually make a lesson about the difference between tattling to get someone into trouble vs. tattling to get someone out of trouble. They can understand the concept of if someone is going to get hurt, I need to know about it because they are ‘in trouble’ instead of trying to get someone ‘into trouble’. If they tell me something I

don’t need to know, I respond with ‘That’s something that you will need to work out yourselves....’ or ‘Do I really need to know this?’ or ‘Are you trying to get them into trouble?’ I find this really works.”

Bryna

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

Amy

Positive Statements

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

Julie

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

“I do know that they respond MUCH better to praise than being ‘fussed at’! We talk about making choices. This works for me!”
Karen

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

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

1. Realize that the children are suffering too. No one likes them (sadly enough - this often includes the teacher), they are always ‘in trouble’ and they are likely failing miserably.
2. Realize that these children don’t have brains that function the way yours probably does. They often can’t see past their impulse to do something in order to focus on the consequence of their actions. Then, having to focus on a whole day can be too overwhelming for them to even contemplate.
3. I find at least one positive thing about them and make that my focus. It’s like when you have a math whiz and call on them all of the time - except no one else suffers since focusing on the positives with an ADHD child often helps the whole class through behavior changes. If he’s constantly talking, allow him opportunities to do so - maybe as the class messenger.
4. I’ve found that behavior contracts work extremely well with ADHD children. If I break our day into smaller, more manageable chunks of time, the child is able to focus on one chunk at a time. For example: our chunks are the following - arrival and up until our first special; after special until lunch; after lunch until SSR time; after SSR time until dismissal. I have a form that the child and I work together to complete and that child sets individual goals (with my help) and we determine a reward for accomplishing that goal.

EXAMPLE: For every time period that the child achieves his goal (maybe staying in seat or raising hand before speaking but only one goal at a time), he gets a stamp on the contract. After 10 stamps (or whatever) he can choose a prize. It has really worked for me and I can honestly say that I don’t feel like pulling my hair out anymore.”

Marie

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

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

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

Jennifer

Being Unusually Good

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



Mapping Skills

"I used this web site to teach mapping skills last year. I couldn't believe that this whole unit was on the net!

<http://www.usgs.gov/education/learnweb/MA/>

It's aimed for K-3 and it has 7 lessons. The children learned a lot about maps and they really liked the story. I supplemented with some of my own activities but it's a good starting point."

Patricia

Mapping Activity:

1) Introduce cardinal directions:

- explaining the four cardinal directions
- writing the words north, south, east and west on cards
- placing the cards correctly in the classroom
- having the students stand and practice facing in the cardinal directions

2) Give each student one sheet of 8 x 11 paper and tell them to write the four cardinal directions on their paper following your instructions. Write the word north at the top of your paper, west on the left edge, east on the right edge and south on the bottom edge.

Instruct the students to listen carefully and follow these directions:

- Draw a river from the north side of the paper to the south side of the paper.
- Draw a tree on the east side of the river.
- Draw a house on the west side of the river.
- Direct the students to add the elements necessary to make the drawing a map. (scale, compass rose, key, border)

3) Draw a sketch of the school grounds. Put in the various buildings and have the students add other features. (restrooms, playground structures, lawn, etc.) The students could even number the classrooms if you added those details on the map.

4) Go outside and mark off the shape of the classroom. Ask the students to find out where they should be. Create a Human Map by having students wear signs that are labeled with the different parts of the classroom.

5) Read Hansel and Gretel to the class. Allow students to retell/reenact the Hansel and Gretel story. Discuss why Hansel and Gretel used pebbles and breadcrumbs to find their way through the forest. Draw a map of the forest from the route the characters took.

1. **Me on the Map** by Joan Sweeney. Read the story, **Me on the Map**. Check to see if everyone knows the difference between their left and right. If not, use the mnemonic device. (Have the children put their hands out in front of them with the palms of their hands facing away from them and their thumbs pointing to each other. Have them put all their fingers down except the thumbs and pointer fingers. The hand that makes an L is their left hand, and the one that does not is their right hand.) Explain what a compass is - a device used to show north, south, east, west. Have the children become compass kids. Ask one child to come up to the front of the room to model the cardinal directions. (Have children stand up with their arms straight out to each side. Everything to their left would be to the west, in front of them would be north, etc.) Label the volunteer with cards that say north, south, east, and west. Look at the map and explain to students that everything above a certain point on the map is to the north, everything below is to the south, everything to the left is to the west, and everything to the right is to the east. Review what a map is. Show a map of the classroom and discuss where things are on the map.

2. Show the class a map of our neighborhood. Point out and label (with pictures) local landmarks on the map (our school, churches, grocery stores, etc.) To tie in with other grade levels on the unit, we will also locate some local industries.

3. Name streets on the map and have children stand when you say their street name. Place a small house with child's name and address on the street.

4. Take a walk around the immediate neighborhood and plot landmarks on the map.

5. As a homework assignment, children will create a floor plan to their house to share with the class. When the maps are brought in, discuss the differences and similarities in the children's maps. (This is also a good way to find out more about the children. What was important enough for them to put on their maps?) Select a book, story, or poem that you know is a class favourite, and help the students create a simple map that shows the movement of the story's plot in geographical terms. Students can draw their own maps at their desks, work together in cooperative pairs, or contribute ideas as an entire class to help you draw one large map on the chalkboard or bulletin board.



Community Places and Faces

“Here are some ideas I have used successfully with grade two students:

Mapping

Give the students an enlarged map of the school and then have them work together to fill it in according to which teacher is in each room (give them a list of all of the teacher's names and rooms (e.g. gym, office) that you want filled in. Let them go into the hallways in pairs to locate the rooms and fill in their maps. My students loved this!

“Take them outside and have them walk together around the school, stopping to draw pictures of what they see in the N, E, S, W. This is another favourite!

“Work together to draw a map of the surrounding neighbourhood and have the students draw where their house is. If you do a wall-sized map they can draw, cut out and paste their house onto the map.”

Community

“We started by studying about our school. We made a booklet describing things we do at school, what we like/don't like about school, what types of schools are around, the people who work in our school, etc.

“We also discussed our roles and responsibilities in the home, school, and community. We read a book called ‘A Job for Jesse’ and Shel Silverstein's ‘Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take The Garbage Out’ and talked about the various jobs we do and what we happen if we did not do them. Then the students had to complete a chart, describing a job that is done at home, at school, and in the community. They had to identify who's responsibility it was to do that job, and why that job was important.

“Take walks in your neighbourhood/community. Draw and write about what you see and do. Have students brainstorm favourite places to visit in their community. Each of them chooses one and draws a picture and then you can compile them into a book (with captions) or into a class quilt.”

Community Helpers

“Have students discuss what they would like to be when they grow up. They can draw a picture of themselves as that person and write a sentence ‘When I grow up I would like to be a _____ because _____.’ Or, this year I used a poem as a basis for more extensive writing.

I Wish I Were The Principal

I wish I were the principal,
That's what I'd like to be.
I'd make each day a weekend,
And all the kids would be proud of me.

We used this poem to write our own.
These turned out really well.

I wish I were a _____
That's what I'd like to be.
I'd _____ [something they would do in that job]
And _____ [something else they would do in that job]

“Invite parents in to talk about their jobs. I asked the principal, the school nurse, the SPCA, and one of my relatives to come in. The kids enjoyed the presentations and learned how to ask questions rather than always sharing personal stories (we brainstormed questions ahead of time and had them posted during each presentation). We also recorded the visit in our learning logs by writing down the name of the presenter, their occupation, and two sentences describing their job.

“Visit some local businesses to see what they do. I have taken the students to the public library and to Safeway.

“This year I made up sentence strips with the names of different occupations and an accompanying picture. We then played Charades where the student had to act out the job on the card and the others had to guess. Really fun to do!

“The students chose books to read about community helpers and then filled out an information sheet about their job: What they do, where they work, what equipment they use, and how they help the community.

“We drew and cut out drawings of each staff member in the school. We then put them on a bulletin board outside the room, with the person's name and position (grade 2 teacher, secretary, etc.) This was a HUGE hit among staff and students, and provided many laughs for all of us after school! The pictures were so funny but precious at the same time, and most did capture some essence of the person. It helped my students to realize how many people it actually takes to make a school run.”

Tammy



Hallowe'en

Pumpkin Seeds

"I cook my seeds in the microwave. I add a little butter and salt. I don't have a time limit. I just watch for them to turn a darker colour and become crispy. The kids love them. I love using the microwave."

"I bake my seeds. I take 2 tablespoons of butter and 1/2 teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce mixed together for every 2 cups of seeds. Spread the seeds on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with salt. Bake in a 250 degree oven for about 2 hours. They are yummy!"

Nancy

Hallowe'en Activities

"We are doing rotations in our room on Hallowe'en and will be doing the following five stations:

- 1) Pumpkin Pizzas – english muffins with cheese cut out from a pumpkin cookie cutter, pizza sauce and pepperoni.
- 2) Decorating cupcakes with Hallowe'en motifs.
- 3) Guestimation activities - the children will be guessing how many candy corns are in 3 - 4 containers; we also will do a pumpkin float/sink prediction activity with a large pumpkin (where the parent will throw it into a large tub of water to verify the predictions - they love the SPLASH!) We'll also measure the circumference of a pumpkin, etc...
- 4) Art Center (they will make black cats with sequin eyes)
- 5) Trick or treat bags (they will colour Halloween pictures and then decorate little lunch bags - then the mom at that center will let them 'trick or treat' right there and get candy for their bag)

"A teacher at my school make these gorgeous little hanging bats from a black sock and felt for the wings, eyes, etc..

They were adorable and I plan to make them, too. I have a large tree on a bulletin board and the bats will hang up side down from that tree."



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

We also had a little strip of paper they would write something the floating head was saying, and we would have it coming from the mouth of each head."

MaryAnn

Pumpkin or Ghost Candle Holders or Candy Containers

Materials: baby food jars
white glue
tissue paper (white for ghosts, yellow and orange for pumpkins)
tea lights or candy

Dilute white glue until it is a paintable consistency. With a paint brush, spread glue onto baby food jars, layer with tissue paper, alternate. It takes about three layers. Let dry overnight. Use a permanent marker to make a ghost or jack-o-lantern face. Fill with candy or a tea light."

Karla

More Ideas.....

Black Magic.....Use crayons to draw a Halloween picture. Choose bright colours and apply crayons heavily. Wash over with black paint. The wax drawing will show through

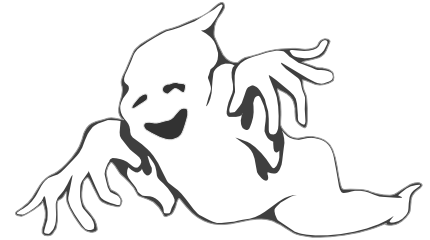
Spooky Skeletons.....Pencil a skeleton on black paper. Glue white straws or Q-tips to the sketch. Add background.

Spiderific.....Draw a web on paper. Glue yarn to web. Cut out spider body and legs. Staple folded legs under body. Paste cotton on body. Attach to web.

“One thing we did for our Hallowe’en party that the children enjoyed was wrapping each other up in toilet paper like a mummy. I divided the children into groups of three. One was the mummy. The other two were the wrappers. We timed them to see who could make the best mummy in a short amount of time (about 3 minutes). If there is time, you can switch roles and try again.”

“As a Halloween alternative, we spend one morning rotating with the 4 classrooms and have theme centers in each room. One does apples and pumpkins, I do spider activities, one classroom has monsters and ghosts, and one is scarecrows. She makes a real scarecrow and has him propped in a chair and they do measuring activities, trying to predict how tall he is in unifix cubes, how long a string would be to measure his head, etc. Then there is a cut and paste activity that they do to construct a paper scarecrow.”

“How about ‘ghost writing’ .. cover the bulletin board with dark material/ paper, provide full moon and maybe a spooky tree on one side and then have flip ghosts flying - these ghosts have eyes on the top sheet of paper (cut in the shape of a ghost of course) and lined paper under the first sheet (stapled/glued at the top – have students write a spooky story, or finish a short story starter you have given them.”



A Hallowe’en Carnival

If you have access to a lot of pumpkins, here are a few ideas:

1. Pumpkin pitch – Take the tops off of carved pumpkins and pitch ping-pong balls into them for points.
2. Pumpkin bowling – Set up empty milk cartons as pins and use small round pumpkins as balls.
3. Pumpkin push – Push a pumpkin around a goal and back relay style, using their feet.
4. Pumpkin looping – Use coat hangers twisted into circles to toss around pumpkins.

Other games -

1. The Cat's Meow – Roll a ping-pong ball through an open cylinder (such as a paper towel tube) to land in a flat pie tin.
2. Apple Fish – Tie a string onto a pole and have the kids cast it through a hole in a cardboard wall. Tie an apple onto the string and send it back through.
3. Easy Ring Toss – Turn chairs upside down to make four poles. Throw clothes hangers.
4. Down the hatch – Drop clothespins into small bottles.
5. Owling Inn – Tilt small metal wastebaskets against a wall at a 45 degree angle. Throw ping-pong balls into them.

Dianne

“I do an art project for Hallowe’en which always comes out really well with the students doing it all. It just takes newspaper, construction paper (orange, yellow, white and black), glue and scissors. Give the students a large piece of black construction paper. Have them cut out Halloween shapes from newspaper and the coloured construction paper and glue onto the large black paper. An example might be: newspaper gravestones, yellow moon with a black witch flying by it, orange pumpkins and white ghosts coming from in back of the gravestones. (I don't have them use crayons, markers or coloured pencils, just the paper and they look really good.)”

“While they are handling the pumpkins, have them think about how it feels, then write a description of it. Write on pumpkin cut outs. Wash the pumpkin seeds when you finish with the counting, dry them and place them on a baking pan with butter and salt, bake at 400 until they are toasted golden brown. Have students predict how they will taste, eat, then write how they did taste. Estimate how many pumpkins it will take to weigh the same as a child. Paint faces with acrylic paints on pumpkins, then spray with clear varnish to protect and seal the pumpkin so it will not spoil. Decorate the room with them.”



“I do a circumference lesson with pumpkins as well. The kids cut a piece of string that they THINK will fit around the pumpkin as if the pumpkin ‘needed a belt’. Then we actually measure the circumference, and we cut the string. We compare the real circumference with their guesses and then the string goes home as a homework assignment. They have to find three things as long as their pumpkin is wide.”

Parent Communication

"I use pocket folders. I call them VIP (very important papers). I include the corrected papers of the week, notes from me and from the office. Stapled onto the one side is a sign off sheet for parents with room for comments. I get them back the day after I send them home. I have used these for a couple of years and parents look for them and expect them each Monday."

Nancy

Expectation Meeting

If your Principal approves, it is very helpful to invite all your parents for an "Expectations Meeting". It is best to hold this in the evening so working Moms and Dads can participate. At this short meeting usually held in late September you may discuss the following:

- your philosophy of teaching reading
- your reading and phonics programs
- what you will expect in spelling and writing
- your math program and what will be covered in the year
- the themes and science units you expect to cover
- other special programs - music, P.E., personal safety, health, art, etc.
- home reading programs
- assessment, reports, and portfolios
- discuss your high academic standards and your standards for neatness
- behavior standards and consequences
- supplies and replacement of supplies
- school fees
- indoor shoes, gym strip, paint shirts and other things the children are expected to have at school
- parent volunteering and visiting in the classroom, plus ways the parents can help
- field trips

You will likely be able to think of many more subjects to add to the list!

Ask Me About

"On Fridays I send home an 'Ask Me About' sheet. I have made a template with the school letterhead, and 'Ask Me About', as well as the name and date at the top. There are a number of boxes on the sheet which I can vary in size and shape as needed. At the bottom I put a problem from our Math Program for the children to solve with their parents. In other boxes I place an outline of our Language, Math and other work we have done during the week.

"I make the outline in the form of questions the parents can ask their children. The questions are designed to allow the child to demonstrate knowledge. e.g. What happens when you mix cooking oil and water? Why does that happen?"

"I also use the spaces around the 'boxes' to post reminders of activities, make suggestions about watching a worthwhile TV show, or just to post something I have forgotten to put on our monthly calendar, etc.

"The parents say they enjoy the 'Ask Me Abouts' and find it help a great deal with their communication with their children."

Mary

Student Self-Reporting

"I have done this several times a year with Grade 2 and up. Some grade one students may be able to handle this, too. I had them answer questions such as these:

- My favourite subject is _____.
 - Are you pleased with your reading?
 - What is your favourite book?
 - Do you like to write stories? Why (or why not)?
 - What do you do best in school?
 - What do you like least?
 - What is your favourite time of day?
 - Do you like math? Why?
- etc.

"You will find that the child's evaluation of his or her progress is very often accurate, sometimes provocative and occasionally amusing. The parents are in reading the self-reports, too."



interested

Bulletin Boards

Summer Holiday Preserves

“Make a tracer that is in the basic shape of a canning jar. Have each student trace and cut out their own canning jar. Ask students to think about their best summer holiday memory and draw the scene on the canning jar. When displaying them on your bulletin board write out each student's name on a strip of paper and place them on their canning jar so looks like a lid.”

Iram

“I'm going to cut out large white paper jars for the students to draw about their summer holidays. To make them look more like jars, after the drawing/writing is complete, I'll cover the glass jar part with a cut-out made of overheads (stiffer plastic film) to simulate the 'glass'. For the rim, I'm going to make paper lids to glue onto the 'overhead jar' piece, using gold wrapping paper pieces. Then I'll use my labels to attach each child's name onto their 'lid'.”

Tannis

Using Fabric

“I have used material for years and use prints. If I wanted solids, I would use paper. I have up yellow gingham check. The check is not the smallest, and not the largest, somewhere in the middle. I use a double border on it. I have had sunflowers with a yellow sticking out from underneath the past two years. This year I bought a new flower border and will just have to see about the yellow underneath. I put white paper underneath the material to make the white look whiter. The board is blue underneath so makes the white look gray without it. I have the iron on hemming tape already on it so that it does not fray when I wash it.

“I have a friend who has a different holiday material for each month. Another has green and white checks with white border and a red and white check with a year round holiday border with matching calendar. They all look really pretty. My favourite is the Halloween (pumpkins and trick-or-treaters) material with black border and orange construction paper underneath the childrens' work. It always looks so cute.”

Ideas Galore!

Grade Two is Unbelievable - Give students a bee pattern and pipe cleaner. Have students write something on the bee that they expect to learn in grade two. Colour the bee and attach the pipe cleaner antenna. Add to bulletin board.

The Shining Stars of Grade Two - Each child illustrates special talents, hobbies, favourite things etc. on a star. Add name.

Jump into Grade Two – Frogs.

Start off on the right foot in Mrs. _'s class – footprints.

Look who buzzed into Grade Two – bees

Look who was spotted in Mrs. Miller's class – with dalmations



“This year I am going with the latest fashion trend and using leopard, zebra, and tiger print - the names go on paws with **Take a walk on the wild side** or **Wild Thing.**”

“I make big sunflowers. I write a different kid's name on each petal with the heading **‘What a Sun-sational class!’**”

“Make a theatre popcorn bag or see if the local theatre will give you one. Put it up on your door with pieces of construction paper popcorn with the student's names on them. Title it, **‘Pop on in!’**”

“One that is relatively easy and appealing is making the door a maple tree. The door is the trunk, and I use large butcher block paper and make big leaves of assorted fall colours. I made them three-dimensional by placing tape on the back and puffing them in all directions. I placed children's names on them and used the title:

EVERYTHING IS FALLING INTO PLACE!

It was perfect for the fall months. In October, there were falling leaves and we put Halloween directions up on it. Bats, witches, ghosts, etc.

“Out of brown parcel wrapping paper make the branches and trunk of a tree just by tearing. Mount on a blue background. Each child dips their hand in their favourite fall colour using poster paint. Make handprints on the branches and some on the ground. When dry each child autographs one of their 'leaves'. The bulletin board is labeled **‘What a Handsome Class!’**”

“I am making a window decoration for the one near my doorway. I bought border with cute feet in many colours and a pad of matching feet on which to write each child's name. I will title it **‘Stepping into Grade Two’**. Last year I had toads and my title was **‘Toadaly Awesome Students’**.”

Dianne

Websites

<http://members.aol.com/MGoudie/index.html>

Here you will find the most comprehensive list of sites on the internet. Marcia is one of the most helpful teachers on the net. If you need anything, e-mail her personally and she will either know the answer or will find the answer for you. (*You can mention my name! Jean*)

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

Lots of good things! Go hunting. There are materials to download for Language Arts, Math worksheets, sign language and more.

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

If you want to do a math problem-of-the-day, this is a great source.

And these Canadian sites.....

<http://www.track0.com/canteach/elementary/elementary.html>

I mentioned this one last year, but Iram's Canadian site is great! She lives in Kamloops, BC.

<http://www.members.home.com/groenen/>

Joanne's Links – Joanne is in Calgary.

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/themes.html>

If you want theme material, this is a great site from Newfoundland.



Odds and Ends

School Pledges

"My former school's pledge was:

We want to learn. We want to grow. There is so much we want to know."

Bobbi

"Here's a school pledge that the children recite during morning announcements over closed circuit TV.

I am somebody. I am special. I can be anything I want to be. I can learn anything I want to learn." *Karen*

I will respect myself and others by the way I speak and behave.

I will not fight or be unkind.

I will act in such a way that I will be proud of myself and others will be proud of me too.

I come to school to learn and I will learn.

I will have a good day.

Birthdays

"One activity I have done at the beginning of each school year is a birthday graph. I have a large cake representing each month on the wall and hang their little cakes that they decorate with their name on it above their birth month. They fill in a bar graph with the information.

"What I really like about this is then I give them homework to complete the same bar graph but with birthdays of their friends and family. They have to ask their parents or make some phone calls and see how many birthdays they can find for each month. They colour a box above the month every time they find someone with a birthday in that month. They even write the name of the person in the box or an initial. Some kids just do their immediate family which is fine but others really ask around. Their grandparents love getting the phone call asking them when their birthday is.

"Then in school the next day we make a Friends and Family Chart. I have the months written down and we go around the room and find out how many birthdays everyone has found for the months. We tally the amounts. This could get boring but it actually doesn't because the kids are ready to yell out their number and I quickly place the tally marks down. They are so excited to see which month has the most birthdays of our friends and family."

More Odds and Ends

Caught You Reading!

“I took several pictures of my kids reading. I really tried to catch them reading things other than books. In the hall reading posters, reading the computer, reading their stories to others classes, reading directions to a game, directions on a work page, postcards, pen pal letters, lunch menu, readers theater, reading to the principal, etc. I put these on a bulletin board (in the hall) with the caption ‘I Got Caught Reading!’ They loved it and the parents loved it, too.” *Sandy*

Webs

“The children should be able to show some kind of web (pre-writing), as well as staying on one subject. I am helping them really distinguish between WHAT kind of writing they are doing. It goes like this:

- 1) Journal Writing
 - ** This web would include: Who, What, When, Where, Why
(I have a big hand with those words written on each finger)
- 2) Story Writing (fictional)
 - ** This web would only have 4 lines which would include Setting, Main Characters, Problem and Solution.
- 3) True Writing (non-fiction)
 - ** This web includes 1 subject and 4 lines to write down 4 facts. This will be done later in the year.”

Up C Daisies

“Sometimes a silly saying helps the children to remember to edit their stories.

U = understanding

P = punctuation

C = capitalization

The S on the end could stand for spelling.”

“I’ve used an editing ‘Helping Hand’. Each child traces his/her own hand. From left to right they print R C P S W ...one letter on each finger.

R = Reread

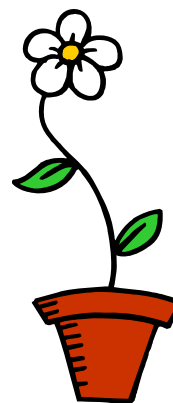
C = Capitals

P = Punctuation

S = Spacing

W = Word Wall

I then laminate their hands and tape them onto their desks (or put them into their writing folder). It’s a very visual reminder close at hand...no pun intended!” *Linda*



‘All Year’ Bulletin Boards

“This worked ALL year. In the beginning of year, each student made a cloud out of white paper and glittered their name in the middle of it. I tacked them up with a title: **Proud Clouds** Throughout the year, the student was in charge of putting up work that he/she was proud of under their cloud. Sometimes, I put something up, but mostly at the end of every week, I would ask if anyone wanted to exchange a new paper for their ‘proud cloud’. Simple, but so effective.” *Annette*

“I had two huge bulletin board in the hall. One of them was covered with blue paper, then I painted on a huge bare branched tree and tore green paper and stapled it to the bottom with some bumps to look 3 D. I stapled green leaves all over it that we had collected on our first week of school walk. You could certainly add student photos and an easy title to tie it all in. I took a broom when they were all dry and dead and it was October and simply swept them all off to the floor and cleaned it up very easily. Thanksgiving time had turkeys on the tree. I then stapled paper plate owls we had made all over this tree for Hal-lowe’en. I added a touch of white paint to the branches and voila...it was December. January was snowflakes cut from paper and more white paint for snow and mittens, too. February was hearts andI am sure you get the picture. When it was time to have the green paper covered with snow I just tore white paper and added it on top. Then we painted sprigs of green and buds on things as they began to appear out doors. I loved the bulletin board as it was so easy to change.”

Dear Colleagues,

I had a wonderful trip to the UK in May, and I am going back early in September to see southern England from Land's End and St. Ives to Brighton and Canterbury. I am planning a couple of days of walking in London and that should be fun. This time I am going alone, and it will be interesting to see how that turns out! My daughter will be handling the office while I am away.

I am enjoying my new house and the lovely ocean view. I see the cruise ships every evening and the sunsets, the storms, the shore birds and the Nanaimo bathtub race. As my computer desk is in a window with an ocean view there are days when work is very difficult!

I hope you have a wonderful year with a super group of children!

Jean



You might be a primary teacher if

You always, to your family's embarrassment, turn a pizza into a math lesson on fractions.
You ask your friends twice if they need to go to the bathroom before they get into your car.

You repeat instructions three times and then ask, 'Does everyone understand?'

Stacking piles of papers on the floor seems like a logical filing system to you.

You correct the grammar and spelling on restaurant menus.

You consider a 2.2% pay raise above average.

You tote more keys than a horse has teeth, and you know how many teeth a horse has.

You find yourself kneeling down to tie your spouse's shoe.

You have explained to a child that being a rock in the school play is an important role.

Untied tennis shoes are a fashion statement where you work.

You consider a roll of toilet paper on your desk a necessity.

You have considered encouraging a parent to consider home schooling.

You believe chocolate is a food group.

You can tell it's a full moon without ever looking outside.

You believe that unspeakable evil will befall you if anyone says, 'Boy, the kids sure are mellow today.'

When out in public you feel the urge to talk to strange children and correct their behavior.

You can't have children because there's no name you could give a child that wouldn't bring on high blood pressure the moment you heard it uttered.

Your personal life comes to a screeching halt at report card time.

Meeting a child's parents instantly answers the question, 'Why is this kid like this?'

To order or renew your subscription

To contribute a great idea, a funny story,
a project or an insight

To comment on the newsletter

To complain

Write to:

Primary Success

4971 Fillinger Cres.

Nanaimo, B.C., V9V 1J1

E-mail: primarysuccess@home.com

Phone: 250-758-2608

Fax: 250-758-2661