



Primary Success

Issue #11

September — October 2006

Happy 'New Year'!

We hope that you are rested and refreshed after the summer vacation, and excited to be back in the classroom! Often we end the year stressed and tired, tired in body and mind - and tired of the daily interaction with small children. But the summer can work wonders and most primary teachers are eager and happy to begin the new school year.

As it is a new year, make some resolutions. Every teacher can improve and make the learning better for the children. Try some new things in your reading and math programs, improve your science program or teach more PE to improve the fitness of your students. If your organizational skills can be improved, work on this. Every year these things should be a higher quality!

Remember to model what you want the students to learn. The small kiddies may not understand exactly what you want unless they see it in action. One reason we read aloud is to show children how good reading sounds, and we should model math strategies and good behaviour, too. Roll

play the way you want your class to run, and then practice it until it is automatic. The time spent in the first month modeling, practicing and repeating the classroom rules and behaviours will be made up two-fold later with smooth classroom function - and a happier place to work and learn.

It is sometimes said that a teacher shouldn't smile until November! Don't pay any attention to that.... smile often and laugh well every day. It will keep you healthy and happy.

Have a great first two months!

Jean



pri-mary:

First or highest in degree, quality, or importance; principal.

First in time, order, or sequence.

Fundamental, basic, or elemental.

Look for:



**Tips -
the best ideas!**

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Super Teacher Tips!

Cathy's Tips



Always make extra copies of any workbooks or work pages you create. This way when a new student arrives in your class you can easily find work for them to do. If there is no need to use those extra copies I have given them to some of my students who would benefit from extra practice at home.

Have a bin for students who are absent. Copies of all work that is handed out during the day goes into the bin. This way if a parent calls for homework you can find items easily.

If your school uses agendas - something I do every Monday is type a message on a large sticker (I buy the sheets with 6 stickers per page). I put the sticker in the agenda with upcoming events, special news or reminders. It saves me class time instead of having the students copy notes into their agendas every morning.

Create a master substitute teaching plan for your classroom. This plan would include all the information that doesn't change. Then when you have to plan for a sub all you need to write out is your plans for the day. All the other information is already done.

Items I include are.... classroom rules and procedures (for lunches, dismissal time, special classes, morning routines), my photocopier number, specific students and their needs/concerns, and anything else that pretty much stays the same all year long.

Take time for yourself - I plan for several evenings and at least one day of the weekend to just take care of me.

Pat's Tips

Alphabetize class, assign 'magic numbers' to each child with #1 going to the child with last name A. etc. Have children to always put their magic number on their paper along with their name.....then you can have a student arrange the papers by 'magic numbers' and they will be in alphabetical order - and you can see if any are missing.

Keep all holiday items, books, decorations, story starters, etc., in a big plastic tub with lid and LABELLEDI always keep Halloween tubs and Easter tubs, etc. For the month with no holiday, I just marked it 'June'. I also have tubs for Dinosaurs, Apples, Pumpkins, etc.

In my district the teachers must label the kids' books. I made sticker labels with each child's name (many copies) and it was easy to label their books, workbooks, crayons, etc. by just affixing a sticker.

At parent orientation, each parent was given a fridge magnet (business card with magnet on back) with school name, address, phone number.... and also my home phone number and cell number. This is helpful for parents just moving into the area. I made a spread sheet with the kids' name, parents' names, home phone numbers, parents' work numbers and emergency numbers. This was handy to have near the school phone AND my home phone. With so many parents having different last names from their children, I could call them by name.

Life is the art of drawing without an eraser.

Ada's Tips

One idea that I always used for the beginning of the year was to use a page in the grade book, alphabetize the names and make a class list...(I used the larger box grade books) then I photocopied it and I had extra lists for check-off sheets for a variety of purposes. It already had the lines/boxes for each name ready-made...and the sheets can be discarded when no longer needed. Add new names at the bottom, and next time you need to run more, re-alphabetize and adjust your list.

If at all possible, greet the children at the door of your classroom every day and speak to each one of the children. Make eye contact with each.

I like to have a picture of my students up on a bulletin board that first week. I take digital pictures that first day and get them up as soon as I can. It helps me put names with faces, and it makes each child feel part of our classroom community.



Barb's Tips

I collect all the school supplies from the students and put things we don't use regularly into tubs so that they are out of their desks. I also colour code each subject so that I'm using everyone's yellow duotang for printing, everyone's red duotang for math etc.

I have a legal size clipboard at my desk and one at the carpet area. I have divided them with a permanent marker into 25 spaces and put a sticky note in each space. Each space is also labelled with a student's name. This way, whenever I see something that I want to remember (i.e.: Johnny is left handed, Sally needs work on her pencil grip, etc.) I jot it down on a sticky note, date it, and add it to their space on my clipboard. At the end of the week/month, I put the sticky notes onto pages in a binder - (one page for each child). It is really helpful when it comes to parent-teacher interviews or report times.

I have a set of file folders in my desk drawer labelled with the numbers 1 - 31. When I photocopy things in advance I simply put them into the folder of the date I want to use it. If I know that I want to make apple headbands on Sept. 15, I put the pre-cut paper apples in file 15. It also makes it easier to set up for a substitute teacher because I just pull the file for the day and leave it on top of my desk.

I have the children make math kits and we put them into large ziplock bags. Once they are made, we stick a long strip of magnetic tape on the top of the bag (just below the "zipper") and stick them to the sides of their desks.



I have a chair that sits by a wall with the following things posted above it:

When I'm feeling angry I can
Stomp my feet
Squish my anger out
Draw what's making me angry
or Sit and breathe

On the chair are a little basket with a white board, white board pen, eraser, and a squishy stress ball in it. On the floor beside the chair are two little footprints for stomping on.

I designate an 'engine' and a 'caboose' each day to be our line leader and end person. If you are the caboose one day, you will be the engine the next day. It solves the problem of children all running to be first in line or refusing to get in line because they want to be last! (The caboose also turns out our light when we go somewhere).

'Split' Classes

Split classes in the primary grades are difficult to teach. The core curriculum in each grade is very different and the students lose some teaching time that they would have in a straight class. Whole class teaching whenever possible gives the child more 'teacher time'. This is not always possible in a split class.

The make-up of a split class is important. There are many arguments for the different levels that are possible - high students in both grades; lower students in both grades; lower students in the upper grade; higher students in the lower grade; etc. Whatever the choice of the class make-up, it is best to pick relatively homogeneous learners in each grade, if that is possible. This is because there will obviously be grouping of the two grades in the core subjects, but when there are wide levels of achievement in each grade, you will feel the need to have too many groups for optimum efficiency.

Try to teach whole class lessons in Science and Social Studies. Discuss the curriculum with the other teachers of these grades as you don't want to teach a subject that the child will repeat the following year, or has learned the previous year. You will not be able to accomplish everything that the straight classes do in both grades. After the beginning of the year and introduction to the subject, writing lessons may be taught to the whole class with different expectations for the grades.

Kindergarten - Grade One splits are difficult! Both groups really need your complete attention. Especially in the beginning of the year they will be unable to work independently. It is suggested that the first month be spent training the children to do specific independent tasks at their appropriate levels, so that you can take grade level groups and the other grade level will be able to do a task for at least 15 or 20 minutes, quietly and without interruption. Independent tasks with a definite purpose need to be developed in both Reading and Math. The time spent at the beginning of the year will be given back to you! Once the children are able to work independently, you can take groups to teach specific skills each day.

One benefit of a K / 1 split is that the Kindergarten children are usually at school for half days. This gives you a small class of Grade Ones for the other half, and the possibility of individual and specific lessons with lots of one-to-one help. It would be nice if the Ks would come in the afternoon to give the Grade Ones the optimum morning teaching time, but this is not always possible. Afternoon teaching is sometimes less than best, as the children are tired, but the small group helps this.

Grade One / Two splits are also difficult. The Grade Ones need a lot of attention at the beginning of the year and the Grade Twos may feel left out until the Ones are able to do independent tasks. Some teachers compare the curriculum in math, for example, and try to teach one lesson differentiating for the grade levels. This is often less than satisfactory, as the skills are rarely taught at the same time of the year. Sometimes this will work - if you are teaching counting by 5s to the Ones, the Twos can expand this to multiplying by 5.

Split classes often have complaints from parents, usually from the upper class level. The parents feel that the children will be receiving less challenge because of the split. When the classes are being formed, pick children who will benefit from the split and be able to articulate this to the parents. Without parent support the year will be more difficult.

Something to Ponder



Overheard in the Staff Room

“Do you think the kids are getting more poorly behaved all the time? I am sure the ones in my school are getting worse each year. There seems to be more children with ADHD and ODD than I have ever seen before. We do have some classes that are quite well behaved, but over half of the classes in our school have severe behavioural problems.

Then we see more children with autism and mental difficulties. One of our older teachers thinks it is because these kids are getting diagnosed and in past years they just were in the classroom without any medical diagnosis or assistance from aides, etc.

The teachers in my school talk about the changes in the classrooms a lot. Is it because of working parents who don't see much of their kids, is it too much TV watching? Is it junk food and less sleep than children used to get? So many children seem to have problems!”

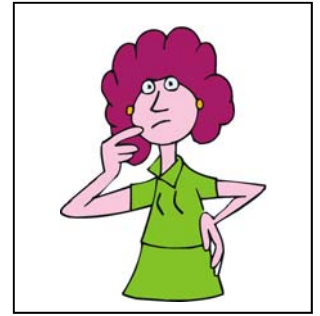
“In the past year we started doing something different to teach reading. We put all the primary students 1-3 into homogeneous groups regardless of grade level. The groups of children having problems are much smaller than the ones with quicker learners - so the groups have from 5 to 14 students. The groups are as flexible as we can make them - children are often moved to a faster group, or to a group that moves more slowly. We begin the groups at 9:15 every day of the week and go for 90 minutes. In that time the teachers teach phonics, guided reading and literature. It is working so well, everyone is very enthusiastic! We have pulled in everyone in the school who is trained and capable to handle a group - the principal, the librarian, the Sp. Ed. teacher and the top aides. We are seeing great progress in reading throughout the grades, and it is fun to see the children responding so well!”

“Our school is having financial problems all the time, it seems. We are restricted on the amount of paper we can use, how much photocopying we can do, supplies, text books, on and on. We lost a teacher in the primary grades because the numbers went down, so now our class sizes are larger, too. There seems to be millions of dollars spent on education - who is getting it? Someone needs to understand that the early grades are the most important time in a child's education! More dollars spent in Pre-school, Kindergarten, Grade One and Two would save lots of money later.”

“My brother-in-law teaches Grade Eight English. He says that the students coming to Jr. High are coming with fewer skills all the time. He says that many can't read well, can't spell and he hasn't discovered whether they can write because he can't read it - messy printing instead of handwriting and the spelling and sentence structure so bad that they wouldn't be allowed in Grade Three. He blames it on the Elementary Schools..... and I guess that has to be the place to lay the blame.”

“We have a book in the staff room where we write down and record those cute, strange, hilarious or touching things that our students say or write. We have been doing this for three years now, and the book is a wonderful collection. Every one of us picks it up often and reads and re-reads, laughs and sometimes cries at the great entries! Kids do say the darndest things.”

“We have a principal who is fanatical for cleanliness and tidiness. He has been at our school for two years now, and we spent the first year disliking him, as he would come into the classroom and make the kids pick paper up off the floor, hang up their coats properly and keep their desks neat. He would tell the teachers to tidy their desk top and keep the shelves organized - and his particular annoyance was piles of paper (a problem for me). But most of us fell into line rather than fight the issue, and most of us are finding that we are really enjoying being tidy! By the end of last year we thought he was great, and I know I will never go back to a messy disorganized classroom.”



Welcome Bulletin Boards

A Bright Bunch

"On the first day I take a digital photo of each of my kids wearing sunglasses. I print off a copy of each on circles - my photo editing program has this option - about 6 inches (15 cm.) in diameter. I mount the pictures on suns, and label the bulletin board 'I have a hunch, This is a bright bunch!'"

A Spotlight

"I made a picture of a large spotlight, and then yellow paper for the light widening across a black background. Then I have the names of all the students at the end of the light. You could have photos or self-drawings of the students, too. I titled the board 'Grade Two is in the spotlight!'"

Acrostics

"I have my Grade Three students write acrostics using the letters in the first names. They print their names going down the page in fancy print - bubble letters are usually the most popular - and then print a word or words beginning with each letter that describes the student. For some letters we brainstorm ideas."

My Summer Vacation

"I have my kids decorate a paper plate with their name and pictures of what they did on their vacations. I make a bulletin board look like a picnic table, with a red and white checkered cloth and then set the table with the plates around the edge. In the middle was a list of vocabulary words. Then we decorated the whole thing with small black ants!"

Fall into Grade One

"I made a tree with falling leaves with the students' names on them. The leaves could be hand prints in fall colours."

"I set up a white background by putting up white paper on the wall and the floor. Then I took photos of the kids pretending to fall. They had great fun with this! Some pretended to fly, and others pretended to fall forward or bent backwards. Then I printed the pictures and we cut around them and then mounted them on a white bulletin board with falling autumn leaves. The pictures were adorable, and I got a lot of compliments and laughs from the parents!"

Apples for the Teacher!

"We do an apple theme in September, so I do an apple bulletin board to greet the kids. I cut out a lot of large apples - maybe 6 inches across - in red, yellow and apple green. On the first day we talk about the colour of the apples and the children tell me their favourite coloured apple. I print the names on the apples. Then I put them in a big apple tree on the bulletin board. We graph the colours and do some math with the numbers. It gives me an idea of the math knowledge the children have."

You are Tee-riffic!

"I put up a 'clothesline' across the back of my classroom. I pre-cut t-shirt shapes in different pastel colours of paper, and on the first day each child chose a shirt and decorated it with their name, pictures or other designs. We hung the finished shirts on the clothesline with coloured clothespins. They are very cute!"

Me!

"I have my Grade Threes write a story about themselves but without their names, and while they are doing this I trace their silhouettes on black construction paper, using the overhead projector. Then they cut out the silhouette and it is mounted with the anonymous person description. I put them up on a bulletin board in the hall, and the parents read the board and try to find their own child."



Nice

Always on time

Terrific

Actress

Likes to read

Interesting

Everyone's friend!

Things To Do Before School Begins

1. Prepare a class list
2. Get students' information - addresses, birthdates, parents' names, etc. Put this into files, hard copy and the computer.
3. Send a postcard or letter to the students (optional)
4. Make name tags for desks, coat hooks, cubbies, mailboxes, etc.
5. Make a welcome bulletin board
6. Arrange desks and other classroom furniture
7. Make a seating chart that is easily changed (with Velcro, wipe-off, etc.)
8. Put up the alphabet and numbers
9. Decorate the classroom so it looks welcoming and attractive
10. Prepare the word wall
11. Prepare the calendar and opening exercise area
12. Thoroughly prepare lessons for the first day - over-prepare....
13. Prepare lessons for the first week - tentatively
14. Prepare student files
15. Organize supplies
16. Make sheets of computer labels for each student to put on books and other supplies
17. Begin a folder or binder for substitutes
18. Organize the classroom library
19. Know what the classroom rules will be
20. Know your strategies for handling classroom and hall movement, pencil sharpening, washrooms, etc.
21. Make a computer template for weekly newsletter
22. If you have a class handbook, edit and photocopy
23. Understand school rules and emergency procedures
24. Have books picked to read to the class.
25. Make the classroom attractive with plants or flowers
26. Get a good night's sleep!



Making Tables

Tables can be used for your planbook, for making flashcards easily, and for making class lists and mark sheets to print and put in a binder. Here's how:

Open Word. Go under 'Table' and then to 'Insert Table'.

It will ask the number of columns and the number of rows. Click on OK.

You can also choose the Table AutoFormat to make different looking tables.

You can move any line in the table by putting the cursor on it and clicking when you see two little lines. Hold down the cursor and move the line.

Change the number of rows or columns by putting your cursor on the table beside what you want done, clicking on 'Table' and then go to 'Insert' or 'Delete' and then to the row or column, before or after.


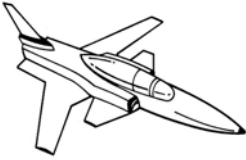
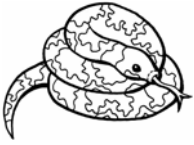


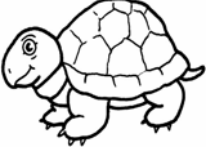






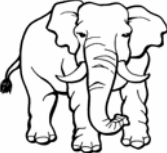







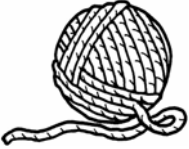





Change the font and font size as you would in Word, highlighting the entire table first. Center the print. Print in the desired cell and use the tab to move from cell to cell if you wish.

To make flashcards, pull the corner of the table until it completely fills the page, and test to see the large font size and how many cards you want on the page. You may want the page in 'landscape' rather than 'portrait' - change it under 'File' and then 'Page Setup'.

Before you begin to write anything in a completed table, do a 'Save as...' and then write in the new one. This way you will always have the template.

my	the
go	to
street	park
house	car

Key Words

Aa 	Jj 	Ss 
Bb 	Kk 	Tt 
Cc 	Ll 	Uu 
Dd 	Mm 	Vv 
Ee 	Nn 	Ww 
Ff 	Oo 	Xx 
Gg 	Pp 	Yy 
Hh 	Qq 	Zz 
Ii 	Rr 	

Phonics

Key Words and Pictures

“The teachers in our Kindergarten and Grade One classrooms have all decided to use the same key words for the letters. Some teachers have these words and pictures up on the wall, and two of the grade one teachers uses a sheet that goes in the student’s writing folder / office. Occasionally a child is transferred to a different class, and when the Kindergarten children go to Grade One the same key words are there to provide continuity.”

A /a/ /a/ apple grows on a tree.
E /e/ /e/ elephant is bigger than me.
I /i/ /i/ igloo made of snow and ice.
O /o/ /o/ octopus - eight arms would be nice.
U /u/ /u/ umbrella keeps off the rain.
These are the short vowel sounds - say them again!



http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1phonics.html

This is an interesting website that tells what the research in teaching reading shows, and the best ways of teaching phonics.

The Short Vowel Song

Where is short a? Where is short a?

Here I am. Here I am.

I am in a hat rack, cracker jacks and fat cats.

/a/, /a/, /a/..... /a/, /a/, /a/

Where is short e? Where is short e?

Here I am. Here I am.

I am in a red bed,

Jelly eggs and jet sets.

/e/, /e/, /e/..... /e/, /e/, /e/

Where is short i? Where is short i?

Here I am. Here I am.

I am in a big fig, silly Rick and pig wig

/i/, /i/, /i/ /i/, /i/, /i/

Where is short o? Where is short o?

Here I am. Here I am.

I am in a hot pot, rocky top and stop clock.

/o/, /o/, /o/, /o/, /o/, /o/

Where is short u? Where is short u?

Here I am. Here I am.

I am in a dump truck, lucky duck and skunk bump.

/u/, /u/, /u/, /u/, /u/, /u/

Onset and Rhyme?

Should we teach phonics through onsets and rhymes? The natural way to decode is from left to right through a word. It seems as if it is easier to remember the letter sounds and blend them from left to right to form words than to divide a word into onset and rhyme, remember the rhyme and then rebuild the word. There are many word endings to learn, and exceptions to the rhymes.

Let’s make it as simple as we can. Teach the simple sounds and blending techniques and there is no need for onsets and rhymes!

Things to Ponder



Word Walls

A word wall is only useful if it is used and practiced daily so that the students know every word that is there and where to find it.

Putting Up the Word Wall

First, think how you want to use the word wall. Will all the students be able to see it from the desks? Will you want them to be able to remove a word and take it to their desks? Will you remove words during the year or move words around to keep the words in alphabetical order? If you want to remove words and move them, the word wall will be made differently than if you print words to be permanently under the letters. Do you want a word wall at all - or do you want the sheet in the mini-offices? (Page 11)

Here are some ways to display the word wall.

1. If you are going to print the words with felt pen under the letters, you may want to decide what words are going to go up during the year to see how large a space should be left under each letter. When you put up the paper, make it two or three layers thick so there is no chance of the ink going through to the board itself. Make columns with a long ruler and a pencil so each row is straight and the first letters of the words in each column will be in neat lines.
2. The alphabet letters can be stapled to a tackboard, and then words stapled under. Many tack boards are not large enough to display all the words unless the words are fairly small, so test out the size with all the year's words.
3. If your whiteboards or chalkboards are metal, you can easily put a magnetic strip on the back of the letters and the words. This makes the word wall very easy to change, and the children can remove words and replace them easily. Keep the board looking neat by straightening the words frequently.
4. You could staple felt to a tackboard (staple it every few inches) and then put a small piece of the hook Velcro on the back of the words. They can be moved easily as long as the felt is really secure.



Some hints:

- Make sure all children can read the words from the desks or from where they work.
- Laminating the words may make them glare from window light so the children can't see them.
- Some teachers use different colours for the words to show different skills. Make sure the printing shows up on the colour.
- Some Kindergarten and Gr. One teachers cut the word shape around the words. This is probably not useful in Grade Two or Three.
- Make the words on the computer, using a primary font (see page 7 - Tables to make words). Use a 'bold' font, and make sure the print is large enough to be seen. You could also print these on coloured paper, or make the letters or words in bright dark colours on a light background.
- Make sure the word wall is always tidy! The children will use it easier and it will add to the room's decoration.

Teaching the Words

The following website gives a good description of teaching the word wall:

http://www.k111.k12.il.us/LAFAYETTE/FOURBLOCKS/word_wall_routine.htm

There are also word wall lists for each grade level on this site.

- In Kindergarten and Grade One many teachers begin the word wall by adding several of the children's names each day until they are all up. This is a good beginning reading experience.

Word Wall Fun!

- Read all the words in different ways.
 - Read all the words from a to z.
 - Read all the words in different voices - a whisper, with squeaky voices, beginning very soft and ending loudly, etc.
 - Read the wall as quickly as possible. Read it backwards as quickly as possible, from z to a.
- Swat the words! One child can read a word and another child can swat it with a flyswatter. This can be done as a team game, or the watchers can count seconds until the swatter hits the word.
- Use a flashlight to show the words. The kids love to do this in the dark.
- Spell words in different ways.
 - As the word is spelled, stand up for tall letters, sit for short letters and crouch for letters with tails.
 - Chant the words with a rhythm.
 - Have the girls say the consonants and the boys the vowels. Stand up to say the letters and sit when the other group says their letters.
- Play 'What's My Rule?' Read several word wall words with the same characteristic (vowel sound, silent letter, consonant or digraph sound, prefixes, etc.) The students try to discover the rule. They must touch each word wall word in the rule as they guess.
- Play 'I'm Thinking of a Word'. Give clues and the children try to guess the word. The person making the guess must go to the word wall and touch the word they are guessing, or all the students can print the word they are guessing on individual chalk boards or white boards.



Mini-Offices with a Portable Word Wall

- Children really like the privacy of mini-offices. They can be made by using two file folders. Open the two, and overlap one side over the opposite on the other file so there are now three sections. Staple them or use the wide clear packing tape on both sides to make the two files into one. They could be laminated, and then the pockets slit open after. Make sure that both sides fold into the center. This can be used to hold a sheet with the word wall words, a letter / key picture page for Kindergarten and Grade One, A math number line, a printed alphabet, etc., depending on the grade level and the needs of the students. If you laminate, the key words and number line, etc., can be glued on before lamination.
 - The offices can stand up on the desks or tables and the child can work in the privacy afforded. This is especially useful if the students are sitting at tables or with desks pushed together.
- "I have the word wall on a computer page, and each week I add the 5 words and print off the new page. The students put this into the pocket on their mini-offices and also have a copy to take home."
- "I put the new words we are studying on a chart each week. Then instead of putting the word wall list into a folder, I tape a new list to the desktops every Friday afternoon, after we have completed the week's teaching of the five new words. I find the students use the word wall list easier and more efficiently when it is always on the desks than when it is up on the wall."
- "When we are working on a theme we have words lists that are added to the pockets in the mini-office. We also have seasonal and holiday words lists. The students love to use them in their writing!"
- "I gave my children a word list of the cumulative words that would be taught all that year. We made a big deal of finding the five words each week. The more advanced children were able to have a lot more words sooner that way to use in their writing."

The Website page has addresses of sites where you can see pictures of mini-offices.

Ideas in Language Arts

Making Words

Here is a description of 'Making Words'.

<http://www.readingcenter.buffalo.edu/center/research/word.html>

"I use small foam squares. I print the lower case letter on one side and the upper case letter on the other side. I keep all of these separated in a small cabinet used in workshops to keep small nails and screws, etc. I have my students help to hand out the squares on Mondays that we need for a weekly lesson. Then the week's letters are put in small ziplock baggies for the other days of the week."

"I make a weekly sheet with the letters in small squares. I do it on the computer - I have a page set up for this. I save each one I do, so the second year they are all made up! The students cut out the letters and put them in a baggie."

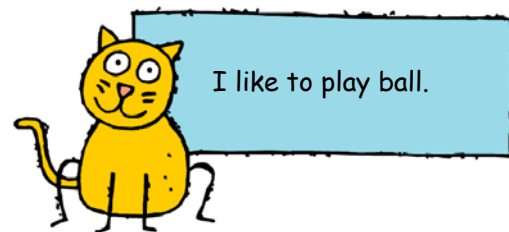
Sentence / Fluency Strips

Sentence strips (sometimes called fluency strips) are great to develop early fluency and to promote phrasing. Make sentences using the sight words you are teaching at any grade level and cut them into strips. You can use sentences or phrases from poems or stories to improve word recognition or word meaning.

Some teachers use large ones - there are strips that you can buy that are inter-lined and perhaps 36 inches long. You print the sentence on them. There are problems with these, however - they are not easy to store and as the paper is quite light they may become bent and torn easily.

Another easier idea is to make them on 8 1/2 x 11 tag. You can do them on the computer by turning the page to 'landscape' and make a table (page 7) with one column and perhaps 5 rows, filling the page. This can be adjusted as you wish. Use a primary font and print a sentence in each space, print on tag then cut them apart. These are easy to file, they fit on the child's desk or table, and the words are easier to read in phrases as the eye can take in more at one glance than in the larger sized ones - necessary for phrasing correctly.

I like to play ball.
Will you come and play with me?
I have a bat and a ball.
Let's play at my house.
Bill can come to play ball, too.



Oral Reading

"I think it is very important to have my students oral read to me every day. They oral read as part of the reading group. I have every child follow the words in the book with the finger so I can see that he/she is in the correct place. I ask one child to read, and when I want them to stop, I say, "Thank you, ____!" and then ask another child to read. As they are all following silently, the next child can just continue the story.

It is important because the oral reading focuses them on accuracy, and I can diagnose any problems. I can also listen for phrasing and fluency and watch this develop. Oral reading is a very useful skill, too. It is different than silent reading, because others are listening and the reader wants to use expression and read as a story teller would read."

<http://home.att.net/~teaching/litcircles.htm>

This is a good website with different models of literature circles.

More Reading Ideas

"I went to a garden center and bought a pair of very cute gardening gloves. I wrote the five Ws on the fingers and thumb - who, where, what, when why. At least once a week we use it after reading a story or after I read a story to the class to re-tell the story. The children are reminded to discuss the characters, setting, timing, the story plot and the reasons for the problem and solution."

"I am always on the prowl for more books for my classroom library. In the summer I go to yard sales and often get good books, I visit the second hand stores regularly, I talk to the local library about donations of books that they are weeding out and they have been pleased to give me these books and know that children are enjoying them. Scholastic book sales are super, and I really talk up the sheets that come out to encourage the parents to buy the books - and then I get lots of free ones.

As I have so many books, I put out different ones through the year. The kids are always very excited when the new books come out!

I sort them like this:

- I keep theme books packed away until I do that theme. The books for the theme we are currently studying are displayed on the chalkboard ledge.

- I have a special shelf for science books. I find there are a number of students each year that just love these books.

- I have tubs of levelled books. I put a coloured sticker on the front and the spine, and all of that colour go into a tub.

- We do author studies, and all the books of the current author are displayed on a rack."

"One summer I made a database (*page 33*) of my library books, and now I add any new books to the list. This was a huge amount of work, but it is so handy! I put in the book title, author, fiction or nonfiction, subject (if any), story type (fairy tale, fantasy, school, etc.) or key word, and reading level. A key word might be 'dragon' or 'dog'. With a database the information can be sorted, so with a click of the mouse I can find all the books of a certain level, by a certain author, all the fairy tale books, or all the books about dragons.

My students often ask about books on a subject, and I just go to the computer and find what they want. It's great!"

"I have my library books in alphabetical order. I put a sticker on each spine with the first letter of the author's name on it. Part of the clean-up each day is making sure that all the books are in their proper place. It also helps with alphabetizing, and learning the authors' names."

<http://jmeacham.com/centers.literacy.corners.explanation.htm#downloads>

This website gives a good explanation of various literacy centres.

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/browse/rzn2000/>

Here is a list of on-line books and ideas! There is so much here that you can use.....

The First 30 Words

The following words are one list of the first thirty words that the students need to know how to spell, because of the frequency that they are needed. (*There are other frequency lists with different words. I would add 'play' and 'like' and 'go' and lots more to the list!*)

the and a to in is you that it he for was of on are as
with his they at be this from I have or by one had not



Fine Motor Skills

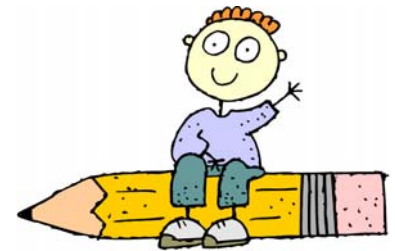
You will likely find a few students in Kindergarten and Grade One who have great difficulty with fine motor skills. These children may have to be taught how to hold a pencil and scissors, and need specific direction to learn how to form the letters. In all cases, practice makes perfect, and lots of fine motor exercise, gradually making the printing smaller and smaller as they become more proficient. Check to make sure that the kids are able to see the lines - sometimes a child has vision problems and if he can't see the lines on the page they will be unable to print where you want it.

If a child also has gross motor problems, he may have DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder) - a disability that makes it difficult for a child to do simple physical tasks. This is a form of dyspraxia. Do a gross motor test of simple skills, and if this is poorly done or the child is unable to do the skills - ask for a test through the school psychologist or physiotherapist. It is good to have this done, as there are psychological, emotional and neurological aspects to this disability that the school and parents should know.

<http://www.canchild.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=497>

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

"I have a child in my Kindergarten class who has been diagnosed with DCD. His occupational therapist told me to have him use wax crayons and practice colouring darkly, pushing the crayons as hard as he could. This will help with control. We also do a lot of work on the individual chalkboards and using the finger to trace large letters in the correct formation. I do see improvement!"



Printing Exercises

All children must practice printing daily in order to improve the speed of printing. There should be high expectations for neatness and control for each child - differing between children, of course. The goal is to get them to the point of fluent printing, just as we want them to read fluently. Then the child will be able to write fluently, too, and let the ideas flow onto the paper without thinking about the mechanics.

Copying poems or sentences will improve the printing skills but many children will print letters and words without thinking about what they are actually putting on the paper. It is much more beneficial to have a purpose for printing so the students read and think about the printed work.

Teachers with reading groups often want something for the other students to do that is a valuable learning exercise and quiet so she can teach groups without noise or interruption. A printing exercise is perfect for this. Here are some ideas:

- Give the students cloze exercises. They must choose a word to complete a sentence and then print the complete sentence.

I went to _____ at his house. can like play

This can also be done with a list of words, each fitting in one of the sentences.

- Print a good sentence from the mixed words: play like ball. to I

This also reinforces capital letters and periods.

- Match words: these can be the parts of compound words, contractions with the long form, synonyms, etc.

- Add endings: ed, ing, or plurals to a list of words.

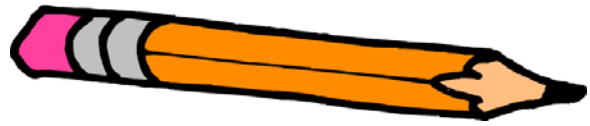
- Answer questions in complete sentences:

- Who lives in the house? 'Who' questions are easy to answer, as the student takes out the 'who' and puts in the answer.

- Where does Bill live? When did Bill go? What did Bill do after school? 'Where', 'what' and 'when' questions are answered by beginning with the person or thing in the question. All the examples will begin with 'Bill', of course. This must be taught so the students don't print phrase answers.

- Why did Bill go home? 'Why' questions are the most difficult. There is usually the word 'because' in the answer, but as a sentence can't begin with 'because' there must be part of the question first. Again the answer should begin with the person or thing, tell part of the question and then 'because'.

Printing



Kindergarten

It is very important for Kindergarten teachers to teach the letter formation correctly. Kindergarten is where those habits get formed - and once formed may be there forever. Grade One teachers are upset when they receive students who print using upper case letters, so it is important to teach lower case letters as the most important way to print. All letters and numbers should be formed from the top down. Do a lot of very large practice. Make letters and numbers in the air, on the chalkboard, on the carpet and on individual white boards. Stress direction by verbal cues, too. Always ask, "Where do we begin?" with the answer, "At the top!"

Many Kindergarten students will be ready to print on lines using inter-lined paper and can be taught the correct spacing of letters and words. Some students will be having fine-motor difficulties, and will need more directional work and practice gradually making the letters smaller and smaller as their skill grows.

The Grade One teacher will applaud if you have trained the children in printing basics!

Grade One

For many years children were allowed to make their letters any way they wished and they printed without lines. Thankfully, those days are over! Students need to be taught correct and neat printing, and then to practice it daily until they print fluently. As creative writing is a large part of the Language Arts program, the students who print fluently, neatly and correctly will be miles ahead in creative writing. When the printing is automatic they will not be held back by the lack of this skill, and will be able to write fluently - and will write a much larger quantity with higher quality. Have specific daily lessons in letter formation, and daily printing practice other than in the writing block. Grade One students should be able to print four sentences neatly on interlined paper by November, with correct letter formation and spacing, and some students will be able to print up to ten sentences by January. Praise neat careful work, and help the students that have difficulty.

Grade Two

The Grade Two teacher will hope that in the previous year the students were taught to print fluently and neatly! If not, spend time at the beginning of the year to teach your high expectations. Again, practice makes perfect. If your students do a lot of printing and you expect neat work, by the end of the first term you will find your students developing more of their own style, still within your framework of letter formation and spacing. In January or February, if your students are fluent printers, start them doing cursive handwriting. They love it, and it can be taught here slowly and methodically. Check with the teachers in the upper grades to see what kinds of handwriting they teach - if they do at all - is it becoming a lost art? Do one cursive letter every three days, for example, stressing correct formation and practicing joining letters carefully as the letters are taught. Teach the simplest letters first - usually the 'undersweep' letters, and gradually increasing the difficulty. This is great fun, and by June your students will be able to write. Don't use cursive writing to do work in Grade Two - they will not be fluent enough to do this.

Grade Three

There are children arriving in Grade Three still printing poorly - simply because the teachers in the lower grades haven't treated this as a priority. This makes written work at the Grade Three level so much more difficult! If so, spend September getting the printing into the quality you want. It is sometimes difficult to achieve this after they have been allowed to print poorly for several years and formed bad habits - but it can be done if you have the highest expectations and insist on quality work. Teach the students to use the formats that you like - headings on the work, lines under the work with a ruler, spaces left where you want them. Teach specific lessons to train the children. If the students are printing fluently and well, and have not been taught to do cursive writing in Grade Two, begin this when you think it is suitable. If the students did cursive writing in the lower grade, continue in the same writing style.

The First Day

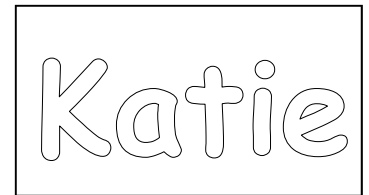
Fun With Names

"I read the Kevin Henkes book, 'Chrysanthemum'. We talk about names. Who has the longest name in the class? Who has the shortest name? How many letters are in your name? We graph the number of letters in the names. Then we decorate our names on bubble letters."

"I like to give each of my students their name in bubble letters. I have it set up on my computer, so if I have unexpected students on the first morning, I can easily print off the names. Here's how I do it:

Open Word, and choose a font. I like Comic Sans and I also have a primary font that I like - but any font that has the simple primary a and g will do. Turn the page to 'Landscape'. I print the name and make the font size as large as possible - usually between 200 and 300. Then go under 'Format' to 'Font' and then down and check the square in front of 'Outline'. This makes the bubble letters. I print them off, and have the children colour them. When I taught Grade Two, I had the kids colour them in fantastic ways, cut them out, too, and assemble them again slightly overlapped from top to bottom - but early Grade One kids are not usually that good at cutting!

I cut out the name shapes (after school) and make a bulletin board of them."



"In my Kindergarten class I have lots of die-cut letters in different colours. The kids pick out the letters in their names and then glue them together vertically, just barely overlapping. This is interesting, as I can soon see who knows how to spell the name, who can read but not spell it and who does not know the letters at all. When they are assembled, I laminate them and then they are hung from the ceiling."

"On the first day of school, I read 'The Important Book', by Margaret Wise Brown. It's a fun, repetitive book that tells the important thing about many things. We talk about the format, and re-read, the kids helping to 'read' the pages. Then I give the children a page format with 'The important thing about (name) is' and they complete it with a picture above the words. Then we do the last page, which is: But, the most important thing about our class is We brainstorm all the ideas why our class is so important, and then vote on the favourite. We put the book together and put it in the classroom library."

"In Grade Three I introduce a 'Word of the Day' each day. This is to increase their listening, oral and reading vocabularies. I try to find words that will be new to most of the students. The first day I use the word 'unique' and the sentence 'Everyone is unique'. We discuss the meaning of the word and then each student prints a paragraph explaining how he/she is unique.

I sometimes get stuck thinking of the word of the day - and find that this website helps!

<http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/wordofday.asp>

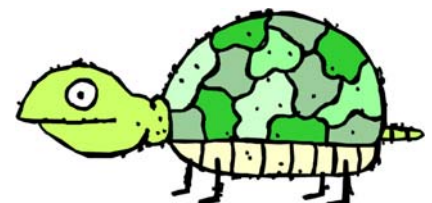
I also go into the favourite books of the class and find tricky words - palatial, levitation, scarlet, organic, etc."

"If you are a Jan Brett 'Hedgie' fan, there are some colouring pages for back-to-school on her website: **www.janbrett.com** Go to 'Colouring Pages' and then 'Friendship'."

Have a look at these two, or explore more on the main site.

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

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



Class Management



“I have an Ikea nearby, and I buy lots of neat organizational things there. I especially like the drawers with the metal frames - some of the drawers are plastic and some are wire mesh. I like the shoe holders for the kids mailboxes, too. There are hanging shoe bags and other hangers with places for toys, etc. that I hang in the kids’ coat area.”

“Every student has a ‘Take Home’ file folder that they decorate and then I have laminated. One inside pocket is labeled ‘Leave at home’ and the other is ‘Return to school’. I cut open the pockets, after lamination. They put all the papers in the correct pocket. It is easy and efficient.”

“I bought the heavy cardboard boxes from Staples with 12 x 2 inch openings to use as mailboxes. I think they are called ‘Literature Sorters’. The paper we use fits easily, and each compartment holds all that is needed for take-home mailboxes. I made labels for each child and put a label with the name and number under each box. They are very neat and attractive. Mailboxes can be so messy!”

“Instead of having to clean off transparencies for the overhead I just use a dry erase marker and write directly on the overhead projector. I wipe the top clean with a tissue - and use a baby wipe if any marks are left.”

“Over the years I have discovered the importance of having all the children facing me when I want to tell them something or teach a whole class lesson. I really dislike having children with their backs to the front of the classroom - it is so much harder to get their attention. Now that I have a Grade One class, I sit them in a semi-circle facing me. I put them into separated rows when I want them to do independent work without looking at each other’s assignment.”

“I have a plastic box with a hanging file for each student. Any work that isn’t finished in class time goes into the file. When the children finish their work, they can go into their file and finish other work. They are not allowed to draw or play until the file is empty. At the end of the day they take any work still not done out of the file and take it home to complete.”

“I am going to work on my transitions in the coming year. Last year I found that the children were taking too long and were too noisy when we were cleaning up from one activity and going to another. I am going to model the behaviours I want and see if I can save those precious minutes!”

Student Helpers

“I don’t have student helpers. I say that we have all helped to make the mess and we should all help to clean it up. At the end of the day I simply give two tables the floor to clean, one table the shelves and book-cases, another table to check students’ desks, etc. I find it is all done in 30 seconds and without any fuss.”

“I have one student helper for the day. That person does all the jobs - is line leader, hands out papers, takes messages, etc. The children are always thrilled when it is their day.”

“I have these jobs that rotate on a chart: floor superintendent, computer assistant, pencil sharpener, board cleaner, line leader, line ender, paper filers, librarian, plant and pet person, desk inspector, and chair supervisor.”



Math - What's Important?

Kindergarten

You will have a wide range of skills, even on the first day of Kindergarten! Some of your little dears may be rote counting to 100 and counting many objects accurately - and some may not be counting to 10 or counting objects accurately at all. You will have children who can visualize up to four or five things and others that can't 'see' that there are even two blocks without counting. Some children will have an interest in numbers and others may have no apparent interest.

By the end of Kindergarten it is important that all of your kiddies have fluent use of the numbers to 10. That does not mean addition and subtraction - although many of your students could do that - but your students should be able to group numbers and recognize what a group of four (for example) looks like. They should be able to count forward and backwards to 10, and be able to 'go on' from a number - if you say '6', they should be able to say '7, 8, 9, 10'. The children should recognize the numbers to 10 and be able to print them correctly (top to bottom), and be able to accurately count up to 10 objects.

Grade One

There are lots of facets to the Grade One math curriculum. The students are supposed to learn shapes and fractions and money and time and oodles more, but these things can be easily caught up later if not mastered. The most important thing the children should learn in Grade One is a complete understanding of the numbers to 10. By the end of the year the children should have a thorough understanding of addition and subtraction to 10 and be able to manipulate the numbers. They should also have an understanding of place value to 100, and be able to count objects to 100, making groups of 10.

They should understand that adding $4 + 5$ is the same as $5 + 4$. They should understand that when they add $2 + 8$ it is easier to think of it as $8 + 2$. Then they should not have to count out the 8 as they know that they already have that many. This is called 'conservation of number'. Without this the child does not have a true understanding.

Because the Grade Two math curriculum is built on the understanding and the working knowledge of the number facts to 10, it is important that the students have memorized these addition and subtraction facts after complete understanding, and are able to work quickly with them. With a good understanding of place value to 100, your students will do well in Grade Two math.

Grade Two

Grade Two students must learn to manipulate numbers to 18. As addition and subtraction with re-grouping is taught here, the memorization of the number facts to 18 is a basic necessity. The students should be able to see number relationships and be able to visualize changes in number groupings. For example, they should understand the relationships between 3 numbers - 7, 8 and 15 have addition and subtraction relationships. They should be able to see that if $6 + 6 = 12$, then $6 + 7 = 13$. They should understand subtraction as 'take away' and the 'difference between' and use the easiest method on a given question. They should be able to re-group numbers: $8 + 6 = 8 + (2 + 4) = (8 + 2) + 4 = 10 + 4 = 14$ and $15 - 7 = (10 + 5) - 7 = (10 - 7) + 5 = 3 + 5 = 8$ Or..... have other strategies to find the answer quickly.

By the end of the year Grade Two students need to have memorized the number facts to 18 or have a strategy to find the answers immediately.

Grade Three

Grade Three students will now use these number facts and strategies to do more difficult questions. In this year they need to learn about multiplication and division, and have most of these number facts memorized for the more difficult work in the intermediate grades. If the students can understand numbers well enough to manipulate them to find answers, and have the basic facts memorized, the primary teachers will have succeeded!



Math Ideas

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/sharonmacdonald/jingleinmypocket.htm>

A song called Jingle in My Pocket, about coins.

Math in the Opening Exercises

"We put in the number of the days in school and discuss the place value by adding one straw to the total. We talk about today's date and say it - 'Today is Thursday, September 18, 2006.' Then we write it as 18/09/06. We learn the days of the week and the months of the year. We do several questions about the calendar: What will be the date in 5 days? How many days until Peter's birthday? Then we chart money daily by adding a penny, changing to nickels and dimes when possible, with the days in school total. We know that there will be 180 days in school this year, so we find out how many days we have left. We use the calendar date and make equations equaling it. The students can make equations as complicated as they are able to do. We count by 5s, 10s and 2s in Grade One. In Grade Two we used to count by 3s and 4s, too."

Probability

"We discuss the ideas of certain, maybe, and impossible. We talk about things that would fit in each. Using the weather is perhaps the easiest..... It would be impossible for it to snow in August. It is certain that the sun will go down. Maybe it will rain today."

"We use 'likely' and 'unlikely' and 'probable' and improbable'. We brainstorm lists of things that are in the students' daily lives."

"We do some experiments. I show the students a coin, and ask them how often they think it will come up heads or tails in maybe 20 tosses. They make predictions. Then they rate the guesses as likely, somewhat likely or unlikely. Then each pair of students goes and tries it twice. After they are finished we bring all the results together and look at them. We talk about unlikely scenarios - is it possible to get heads 10 times in a row? Why is it unlikely? Is it possible?"



Simple Addition Practice

Here are some easy ideas for students to practice addition:

- Have egg cartons with numbers 0 to 5 printed in the bottom of the cups. Put two beans in the egg carton and shake it, open and write a number sentence using the numbers where the beans have landed.
- Use playing cards with the face cards removed. Use the numbers Ace to 5 for Grade One, and to 9 for Grade Two students. Turn over two cards and write the number sentence.
- Use dice and add the total. This can be done when playing Chutes and Ladders.
- Use dice and add the total outdoors on the playground - have two children together - one with the dice and the other the player. Begin with backs to a fence and take the number of steps that are rolled on the dice.
- Play addition war. Two players each turn over two cards at the same time. The player with highest total takes all four cards.

One-To-One Correspondence

Sometimes we assume that all our children can do this – and then find that a few children are really having problems with manipulatives. Every morning have one child count the boys, the girls, and the children at school today – have him go around the circle touching each person as he counts (emphasize this), and remembering himself, of course. Take egg cartons, and print a number in each pocket with a felt pen – 0 to 10 in mixed order and with each egg carton different than the others. The children can go in pairs. One child puts the correct number of beans in each pocket, and the other child takes them out as a check. Do estimation jars, and have children count the objects. Watch the counting to make sure it is accurate.

If a child is having difficulty, have him drop rocks into a can. The sound adds another modality to the exercise. Have the children tell one another what they are doing as they count with one-to-one correspondence.

More Teacher Tips

"I tied wind chimes from the ceiling with cord. I walk by and ring them when I want the students' attention. They make lovely small sounds, and the children get quiet to hear them."



Cheryl's Tips

I put nails along the top of my chalkboard using chart paper as a template. That way if I want to move a chart off my teaching easel I have lots of options to quickly hang it.

I colour-code all the notebooks and folders - and then I hang a list so I remember which colour is which. The kids have a duo-tang for each subject - that way loose papers always have a proper home.

I use magazine boxes to store a class set of notebooks or duo-tangs - they fit in nicely and don't take up a lot of room. My kids keep their everyday stuff in their desks - but some things I'll keep for them.

I always keep a picture of my family close by - helps keep this job in perspective!!

I learned this from the show 'Neat'. I have 3 baskets - Read - File - Act, (and of course there's Toss!). Papers now have a 'home' until I get to them. I didn't do too well last year - and did not like the random every growing pile that I ended up with. I'm going to try and do better this year. I know some people say only handle each paper once - but that doesn't work for me at all.

Heather's Tips

I give every child a number. I have my record keeping binder with dividers in it and used to write new name tags each year, and put new names on a folder I keep for work samples and.... What a lot of work! I memorize their numbers quite quickly - and the students are even faster than I am. On a field trip, my daughter's teacher had them line up 'in their number order' and then count off so he could easily tell if everyone was there - no need to dig out the class list from the bottom of your back pack.

Use a yellow highlighter pen to mark your 'original' copy of worksheets etc. When I do this, I almost never hand out my original (and if I do the child who receives it almost always notices) - when I don't - I almost always lose it. Just take the yellow highlighter and make a scribble across it. It does not show up in any copies you make.

Barb's Tips

This is my version of a math kit: each child has a little white board, wipe off pen and polar fleece eraser, 2 dice, 10 digit cards 0 - 9, a paper number line, a film canister with lima beans that have been painted on one side in it, a small cardboard clock (that they make when we do a unit on time).

I also have a tub with little tiny containers of playdough. At the beginning of the year we use these a lot in math.....We play 'pancake'...everyone rolls up their playdough and then we say "1,2,3 pancake!" at which time the kids smack their playdough onto their desk. I then say "show me 3" and they poke three holes in their pancake and I quickly walk around and see who actually has 3. It's amazing how many of the kids don't! It's also interesting to see how they choose to make bigger numbers like 8. We talk about how it's easier to count when you make it in groups of 2 as opposed to just poking 8 random spots in the playdough. Sometimes we walk around and see how everyone else makes a number. If I ask for 10, for example, some kids make it in two rows of 5, others make two sets of 5 like on a pair of dice, others make 10 dots in a row and others do random patterns. We talk about which they find easier to quickly count.



White boards: My husband made them. We went to the hardware store and bought a sheet of white bath-tub surround. It comes in 4'x8' sheets and we cut it into little boards...they are 5" x 7". They ended up costing just under a dollar each. (I took a wipe off pen with me to the hardware store to make sure it would work, just a teeny, tiny little mark in the corner, honest!)

Behaviour Management

Be safe.
Be kind.
Be responsible.
Be courteous.

"I like to have my rules as simple as possible. My favourite is 'I Care'. We brainstorm all the things in school that we should care about, each other, the learning, the classroom, belongings, etc."

"I feel that good behaviour management should have the students doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do. I try not to bribe with rewards or punish at all if I can help it. We talk about keeping our class the happiest place in the school, and we try to smile and laugh a lot. This works most of the time with most classes! We discuss manners, watching out for our classroom friends or younger children, we do the 'wrinkled heart' and leave it up all year. We talk about the behaviours that please us and make us proud.

Occasionally, later in the year, things get too noisy or the students begin to have problems. I have given out rewards, by giving good points to the rows or tables - and there is nothing wrong with this once in a while. I do find it takes time out of my lessons so I have to balance the better behaviour with the time spent. I do worry about the 'fairness' of these games. It is all very subjective!

I do feel that I have gained pleasure in my work when the students are happy and calm, and when they are noisy or cranky my pleasure diminishes and I am sure the students feel it, too - so it is worth while to put some effort into producing the behaviours that improve the classroom tone."

Note: If you are not familiar with the 'wrinkled heart', e-mail Primary Success and we will send the information to you.

"I always call my class the best in the school. The pride in this gives them something to live up to."

"I use a variety of rewards. I give some class rewards - an occasional movie, extra gym time, etc. The favourite individual reward is having the room mascot on the desk for the day. The mascot is a very fuzzy owl that I bought in London - I couldn't resist him - and the kids love him, too. To have Whooeey on the desk for a whole day is just the best thing to happen!"



"I let a student winner sit at my desk for part of the day. This is a favourite prize."

"For team prizes, I get really neat things at the dollar store - fancy pencils and erasers, stickers, puzzle books, etc. I bought about \$20.00 worth and it lasts a long time!"

If you have a 'whole school' behaviour policy, it should have the following guidelines:

- The method should be simple and easily understood by the staff, students and parents.
- The management methods should be set out clearly so that everyone understands them, from small infractions to the large ones.
- The policy should have a positive leaning, but there must be consequences for breaking the rules.
- The rules must be consistently applied.
- The policy for infractions should be simple so every staff member can use it.
- The policy should be devised by everyone concerned and approved by all. The staff, students and parents should all feel that they 'own' it.
- Special lessons should be taught at every level in the beginning of the year, and repeated as needed so that everyone continues to use the guidelines.
- New students will need to be taught the rules, and new staff trained to use them.
- The policies should be reviewed often and tweaked if necessary.

Thanksgiving

“About three weeks before Thanksgiving my class take home their Tom Turkey cutouts. During the next week they will decorate/disguise their Tom Turkey, write a story about what the disguise is and why they chose it, and present to their classmates when they return it. Then they go up on a bulletin board for the two weeks before Thanksgiving. Some of the families go all out decorating their turkeys, and disguise them in really clever ways! He is disguised, of course, because he doesn't want to become Thanksgiving dinner....”

A Turkey

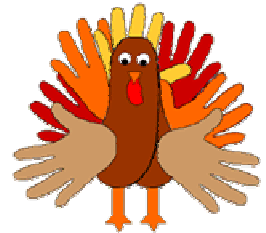
1. Colour a coffee filter for the tail. Use paint that is quite liquid, or dampen the filter first as you want the colours to run a bit. Make lines of colour outwards from the center of the filter. Use bright colours for an artistic turkey and browns for a realistic one. Have the students trace around a bare foot on brown construction paper and cut it out. The heel is the turkey's head. Glue the body to the tail, and add eyes, a beak and a wattle. You can see a picture of a similar turkey here:

<http://www.kinderplans.com/content.cfm?pageid=176>

There are other turkeys on the same site.

2. <http://www.spacestation42.com/pt/turkey/turkey.html> Print this and have the students assemble it. This is a good project for Grade 2 or 3 students.

3. Trace hands and cut them out, and two feet. Assemble as in the picture.



Make a list of Thanksgiving words: Thanksgiving, thank you, giving, sharing, dinner, celebrate, turkey, family, etc.

Research the origins of Thanksgiving. Why is the Canadian Thanksgiving celebrated much earlier than the U.S. one?

A great bulletin board decoration is to ask each child to bring one of Dad's old ties, the brighter the better. Staple them up in a fan shape on the board for the tail, and then cut out a body, neck and head from brown paper and add eyes, the beak and a red wattle, and orange feet. This is very cute!

Make a fruit salad. Bring in one or two of many different kinds of fruit. This is a very good language experience, as you pass each around and ask how it feels, how it smells, how it looks, etc., and elicit interesting words. Then everyone gets a taste and other pieces are added to the salad.

A Thanksgiving Mini-Theme

1. The first day do the 'Know' and 'Want to Know' sections of a KWL chart. What do the children already know about Thanksgiving? What would they like to know? This gives the unit a good starting point, and may take you off in different directions - researching the origins of this day, etc.

2. Talk about being thankful. What are we thankful for? Do all children have the things that your students have?

3. Thanksgiving is in the autumn. Why? Discuss the harvest and farmers. What crops are harvested in the fall?

School-Wide Themes

Many schools use a school-wide theme as a way to build community. If the theme is general, the classes can go off in all directions still under that umbrella.

First, decide on the goals for the theme. Perhaps the school wants to improve reading or writing or fitness. There may be a wish to teach the geography of the country or connect with the Olympic Games. Once the goal is decided, then a theme can be chosen. The broader the subject, the more ways the theme can be explored.

The following ideas may be used for the whole school for the yearly theme, or as a yearly theme in a single classroom.

Changes

This is a very broad topic. It can mean changes in the students, positive changes in the school tone or academic achievement. It can mean seasonal changes, changes in weather or life cycles. There are lots of ideas to explore!

Exploration

With this could be taught maps and space. You could explore books, numbers, or your community. It can be taken in many directions. The older grades could learn about the explorers and the world.

Teamwork

This is a good theme if you wish to improve discipline in the school. Teamwork can produce good results to help learn, and to improve reading and math. Working together we can achieve great things!

The Road to Success

"Our school did this one - we made a yellow-brick road that began at the front door and went along the walls connecting all the classrooms. The teachers put good work samples up on the 'road', and examples of excellence. We had reading races, where little cars were moved along a track as books were read."

BEAR

"Be Excited About Reading! We decorated with bears and used that word for the SSR time each day. The older classes researched bears and wrote reports on the findings. Our emphasis for this year was on reading. We put aside more time each day for silent reading and reading lessons. It worked very well!"

Sailing to Success

"As we are near the ocean, we decorated with ocean scenes, animals, boats and lighthouses. We had a reading marathon, and moved whales along the hall wall to show the number of books read in each class."

Let's Soar Together

This theme can have birds and planes and also space ships as decorations.

Adventures

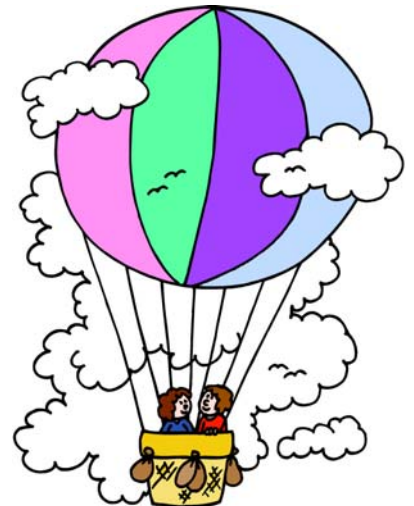
This is also a broad theme. Each class could 'go' on a different adventure - learn about the ocean or space or another country. Read adventure books and write adventure stories, too.

Our Country, Our World

Learn about your country. Do map reading. Learn about the continents and oceans. Study animals, habitats and peoples. Have penpals or e-pals from other parts of the world. This ties into many different parts of the curriculum.

Smiles

See if the school can become a happier place! Use smiley faces for awards, on newsletters and for decoration. Try to use positive discipline.



Autumn Art and Activities

Barb's Ideas

"I've had the kids print the poem, Fall, in the middle of a white paper (once proofed, they went over their poem with a black fine point felt) and then we've gone out and collected different shaped leaves. The kids then did an art project where they would put a leaf under their poem paper and do a crayon rubbing of the leaf with either orange, brown or yellow crayons. They did several leaves and the affect was quite pretty.



**Leaves, leaves
Falling down
Leaves, leaves
Some orange,
Some brown.
Leaves, leaves
Falling down
Leaves, leaves
All around town.**

I've also had them glue little pieces of tissue paper (in fall colours) all over a piece of overhead acetate. They would brush on a thin layer of glue, place the tissue on top and then paint a layer of glue on top. The glue helped the tissue colours bleed into each other. When they were dry we cut the acetate into one large leaf and hung it on our class tree. They were really pretty.

One year all the kids brought in a small soup can. We then went out and found little branches that were lying on the ground that could be used as mini fall trees. They stuck the branch in the soup can and filled it with rocks. Once that was done I had some precut papers that were the size of the soup can and the kids did splatter painting with fall colours on the paper. It was used to wrap around the can.

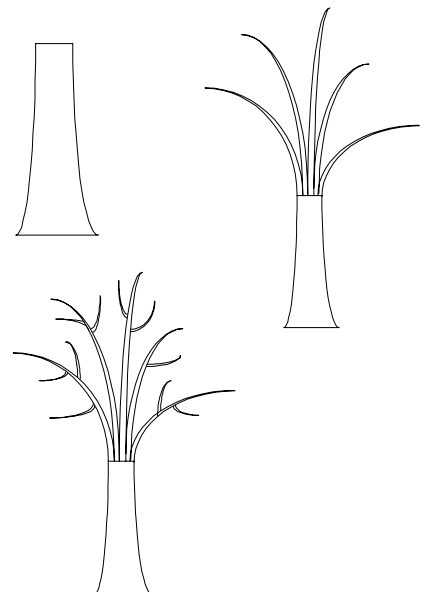
Finally, we made coffee filter leaves...dropping eye droppers of fall coloured dyes onto the filters and when they were dry, cutting out leaves....and carefully attached them to our mini trees with bits of clear tape. I must have done this around October because they went home as Thanksgiving center pieces.

Leaves and Trees

Trace a leaf shape on black paper. Go outdoors and find leaves that are crispy and brittle - the more colourful the better. Take the black paper and glue sticks or white liquid glue outdoors. Crumple the leaves until they are in tiny pieces. 'Paint' a small part of the leaf shape with the glue, and press the leaf bits to it, then paint another section and add leaf bits, until the leaf shape is all covered. Let dry, and gently shake the loose bits off. These look very attractive in a bulletin board display.

One day have the students paint large trees. Give each a paper that is at least 18 inches tall - larger is even better. Paint a tree to direction and demonstration: First, paint the trunk in the bottom third of the paper. Then put the tip of the brush up at the top of the paper and come down to the center of the trunk. Then put the brush tip out at the left side and curve a line to the top of the trunk, and then do the same from the right edge of the paper. Do another large branch between these and the center one. Make these branches wider at the trunk so it fills the top of the trunk and 'grows' out of it. Then, to make smaller branches, put the tip of the brush on a branch and curve outwards towards the paper edge. Only do about two small branches on each larger branch.

When these are dry, the next day, put coloured leaves on. This can be done with torn paper leaves, sponge prints with bright coloured paint, daubed orange, red and yellow with bingo markers, cut out traced leaves, or any other medium you wish. These look very good, and make a nice display for the hall or your classroom.



Autumn Ideas

<http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/leaves.html>

<http://home.ccil.org/~kmiles/dln/10-95/octleaf.html>

The above two websites are great to teach the science for the colour of autumn leaves.

Make an autumn leaf scrapbook. Bring in a book showing the kinds of wild deciduous trees in your area. Go out and identify the trees and the leaves. Bring in one coloured leaf for each. Press it and put it in the scrapbook. If you want a permanent book, cover each leaf with clear contact plastic, or lay the leaf on Saran wrap and put another piece on top, smoothing it down. Trim the edges leaving a border to seal it and tape it into the scrapbook.

Collect autumn leaves and then sort them by species, colour or size.

Make corn cob flower prints. Buy a few cobs of dried corn and cut them into slices. Use the end of the slices to print fall flowers - the kernels look like the petals on a small sunflower.

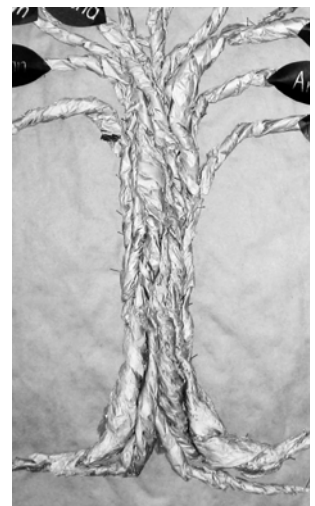
Make hangings. Cut pieces of wax paper about 24 inches (60 cm.) long. Put each piece on an individual chalk board or stiff tag. Have the students lay a couple of brightly coloured autumn leaves, tiny bits of yellow, orange and red wax crayon, bits of autumn coloured construction paper or tissue paper to make an interesting pattern. When each pattern is complete, cover with another piece of wax paper. Then it can be lifted on its under support to an ironing station, and you can lay a cloth over and iron it until the wax paper bonds with the items. When it is cool a border can be put on both sides of both ends.

These can be put up on the windows or hung with fishing line from the ceiling.

Preserve your best leaves with clear contact paper. Have your students pick the prettiest leaf or leaves that they can find. Lay them artistically on black construction paper. With two children working together, take a piece of clear contact paper and CAREFULLY lay it on top of the leaf picture. There are no second chances! Try to keep the plastic sheet out flat, with a hand on each corner and lay it down in one motion.

This tree is very effective! The teacher rolled butcher paper in varying tightness to make the branches and trunk of the tree. The ends are glued, and then the rolls are glued together.

It is pinned onto the bulletin board and can be taken down and stored until the next autumn.



Halloween is Coming!

"The kids love it when I dress up for Halloween! I have been a witch - but maybe I overdid that one, because a couple of kiddies were scared... I have been the Cat in the Hat - I used a black jogging suit, and white and red felt for the tummy and the tie, and I bought a hat and wore white gloves. One year I dressed as Miss Viola Swamp!"

"I have the students colour and cut out pictures of bats, ghosts, witches, broomsticks, black cats, pumpkins, and jack-o-lanterns, and then glue them onto strips of black butcher paper in abab, abb, abc, abcd, abac, etc. patterns. Then we put these up around the bulletin boards as borders, and they make cute decorations as well as doing math."

Houses to AVOID while Trick-or Treating

Have your students brainstorm a list and draw the houses that should be avoided! The following list is an example.....

Any house made of food. Any house that sits four feet above the lawn. Any house that makes weird noises. Any house where green lights flash out the windows. Any house with realistic statues in the front yard of people in 'running away' poses.



Witches and Wizards

"I have an inexpensive digital camera, and I let the children take pictures of each other against a white background. Then we looked at them on the computer, turned them into black and white, and printed them. Then the students cut out a witch or wizard hat that would fit the picture head, and glued it on. They used a green or yellow crayon, and softly coloured the skin to make the face look like a witch. The kids had such fun with this! Next year I think I will have a black robe for them to wear and a wand, and they can do full length portraits. Then they filled in the white behind and put themselves into a spooky scene."

3-D Ghosts

Cut out a ghost shape from white copy paper, about 8 inches (20 cm.) tall. Have a 12 x 18" piece of black construction paper for the background. Put a strip of glue at the top of the ghost's head and stick that down. Lift the rest of the ghost, and put a strip of glue at the ghost's neck. When this is stuck down, slide it upwards so the head loops forward a bit. Now do this two or three more times down the ghost's body, leaving 'waves' of the paper between each row of glue. When finished, the ghost should have a wavy 3-D appearance. Decorate the rest of the paper with cut-out pumpkins or other Halloween items. Some of these can be glued the same way.

"I got large plain white plastic shopping bags, the kind with doubled holes for handles. The students used felt pens to decorate them for trick or treat bags."

"I had my grade threes draw a witch's head in profile on construction paper - pale green, yellow or brown - then they had to cut it out without scissors. They tried to tear on the lines, but of course it wasn't always perfect. Then they crumpled the face up and opened it again. This gave the witch face lots of wrinkles and lumps and bumps!"

"My Kindergarteners love to make ghost drawings - they colour a ghost shape (I made very soft pencil outlines for some of them) with white wax crayon on white paper, then we paint over the whole sheet with dark blue paint. They are very excited to see the ghost appear!"

Three Little Witches

Three Little Indians

**One little, two little, three little witches,
Fly over haystacks, fly over ditches,
Slide down moon beams
without any hitches,
Hey ho Halloween's here!
Horned owl's hooting,
it's time to go riding,
Deep in the shadows
are black cats hiding,
With gay little goblins, sliding, gliding,
Hey ho Halloween's here!
Stand on your head
with a lopsided wiggle,
Tickle your little black cats
till they giggle,
Swish through clouds
with a higgledy, piggle,
Hey ho Halloween's here!**

Halloween

"We start by using 8 x 11 pale blue background paper. Draw a horizon line with brown crayon. On the top of the horizon line draw a tree shape, moon, bats, witches, owls, etc. Colour in fully.

Below the horizon line: using a fluorescent orange bingo marker, carefully made an assortment of sizes of pumpkin shapes. Let them dry overnight.

Add crayon details - lines on pumpkins with black crayon, vines and leaves with green crayons. Using small broken bits of brown crayon without paper, carefully rub on the side of the crayon, going all around the pumpkin shapes. This gives the effect of brown dirt."



Karey



"I usually tie a science unit in with the Halloween fun. We talk about and name the different bones and discuss the make-up, shape and the way they fit together. For fun, we practice drawing bones (more like cartoon bones) and then we print our names in bones and draw pictures with nothing but bone shapes."

For Grade Threes - expand the usual Halloween activities to include research into the origins of Halloween and Halloween customs in other countries.

Write a story:

Last night I carved my Halloween pumpkin. It was a very unusual pumpkin because _____. When I finished it, _____.....

Sponge paint a white ghost on black paper.

Before carving your class pumpkin, so some on-line research. There are a number of sites that give ideas for carving.

<http://www.pumpkincarving101.com/>

Make a hanging ghost! Blow up a big white balloon and then put white fabric over it. Tie it loosely around the neck. Use black marker to make a face or add them with black paper or felt. Hang it with fishing line from the head, and also put a thread from one or two corners of the skirt outwards to give it some flare!

<http://canada.kidsdomain.com/holiday/halloween/stories.html>

Your kids will love these stories - especially the personalized ones!

Hang orange and black crepe paper streamers over your classroom door like you would a beaded doorway - it adds a lot of character to your Halloween décor!

Make easy spiders by pressing a finger onto a black ink pad and then onto paper. Put eight legs on the spider and big eyes with a fine black marker.

Collect used Bounce drier sheets. Cut ghost shapes out of them. Add eyes. Attach them to the window with a tiny piece of clear tape on the head of each. The light will come through them and they will look very ghostly!

The Parents Page

Why do many districts have a delayed Kindergarten entry? A high percentage of children have been to pre-school and are quite mature about being away from Mother and handling new places and people. Having the week or longer delay and coming in just for an hour at first is very disappointing. Most children are eager to go to school, and expect to go when the older kids do. The whole beginning of school ends up being a disappointment instead of a thrill. The little ones have such high expectations!



Have a list of items that the parents can bring or do that will help the classroom. many parents are willing and able - even eager - to help, and you should be prepared with a list. Here are some favourite ideas:

- Ziplock bags in different sizes
- Kleenex
- Books for the classroom
- Stickers
- Crayons, markers, fancy pencils for rewards, etc.
- Box of 'popsicle' craft sticks
- Coloured paper
- Plastic containers (specify the kinds - baby-wipes containers, margarine, etc.)
- Art supplies - cardboard roles from Christmas paper or aluminum foil, egg cartons, etc.

"I always ask the parents to write me a letter about their child. I get some great ones back! Many of them are very useful and I quickly find out things that I might not discover for some time. It also says something about the parents! I leave it quite open-ended, but do ask about the family make-up and the child's likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc. I put these in the children's files."

"We have Expectation Meetings at the end of September. The class/grade times are all scheduled so they don't overlap, and each teacher gives a 30 minute presentation telling the parents what the students will learn in that grade in the different subjects, her philosophy of teaching reading, her expectations for behaviour and work habits, the classroom rules, and shoes and lunches and other class business.

We find that the parents really like them, and the teachers know they are valuable but do not look forward to doing it!"

Notes to the Parents:

Have your child's eyes and ears checked each year. Some children have difficulty in school because of sight or hearing problems.

Try to read to your child every night. Read books that interest the him/her and try reading books that are more difficult but have a good story line. Children increase their listening and spoken vocabulary by hearing new words that might not be spoken in daily life.



Be positive and supportive when your child reads to you. If he/she stumbles on a word, just tell him what it is. Give praise for reading and keep the session happy and fun. If the book seems too difficult, both of you can read together, your child following you. Make a weekly habit of going to the public library to find many interesting books.

There are words all around. Show your child that he/she can read words in the environment. Store names, restaurant names, street names may all be familiar. Read words on the TV or computer. Older students can read directions for games or toy assembly. They can try to read recipes or newspapers. Let your children see you reading and writing, too!

Computers in the Classroom

"I teach in a higher socio-economic area, and all of my Grade Two students have computers at home. Many of them have been playing games and doing other things on the computer since they were three. I have to scramble and learn in order to keep ahead of them! Many are used to using the internet in a small way and going to sites that interest them.

Because they have the basics of computer use and know how to use the mouse, I bypass a lot of the usual beginning computer skills and go directly to word processing. I made files for each student, and they open a new page in Word when they begin a story, and then I give them a small choice of fonts - Times New Roman, Comic Sans and Arial. I teach them to choose the font and the font size, and we discuss using the bold, italic and underline functions.

I have a photocopy of a keyboard, and we practice finding letters and memorizing the letter placement away from the computer. They pretend to type on this, and I talk about proper placement of the hands. When they come to the computer, they write stories - slowly at first, but their typing gradually increases in speed as they learn the keyboard. Of course they learn to make capital letters with the shift key and to use the tab to indent paragraphs. I teach them to cut, copy and paste. When they are finished their time, they title and save their work to their individual files. I let them print two copies - one for me and one to take home. They can illustrate their stories later.

I do a five minute mini-lesson each day, reviewing previously taught skills and adding new ones.

We also play educational games - math drills, reading on-line stories and doing research. I find that the computer time is very valuable and the students have made great advances by the end of the year. The Grade Three teachers are always impressed!"

"I teach skills to the whole class, then teach the brightest ones next, and then partner them with the next and so forth. One of my favourite uses of the computer when we are all short of time is to have spell check turned on but auto correct turned off. They open Word and type the word, hit return and can immediately tell if it is correct.. then if it is not, they can try different things that might work. Guess whose spelling my brightest students are checking half the time.. MINE!"

"I have peers that do Powerpoint with the kids, and Kidspiration and all sorts of other things. I prefer to skip the kiddy stuff and go straight for typing, cut and paste, file, save, edit, undo, spell check, grammar check, inserts later on.. and they also 'google' stuff for research. We have filters in our district so I can let them do that safely. I have some that find it all, click the photos, enlarge, print, copy and edit."

And for teachers....

"I am using the computer now more than I ever did. I often surf for things for my classroom, and when I find a good site, I put it into my 'Favorites', and I keep these sorted into files so I can find what I need quickly. I copy poems from the internet into files on my computer, sorted so I can directly go to the ones I want. I keep the sites for children's games in my 'Favorites', and on-line books and lots more!"

Making databases

Most of you have Word on your computers, and with Word usually comes Works. Open Works, and go to Works Database. Open a blank data base. A 'field' is a column of names, numbers, etc. For example, if you are putting your classroom library books into a database, you would have a field for the titles, another field for author, etc. Name each field in order and click on 'Add'. If your field is a date or a number, etc., define it by choosing that kind of field rather than 'general'. You can always add more fields later by going under 'Record'. Fill in the information for each book across the fields. When you have a number of items filled in, you can sort them by going under 'Record' and then to 'Sort Records'. Databases are easy and very useful! Use them for test results - put your students' names in the first field and then each test in a separate field. Then you can add the numbers across for every student by making a report that gives you the sum - or even average all the marks. It's a great time-saver!



Websites

Many primary teachers are doing some form of the MOOSE books - Management of Organizational Skills Everyday. This is a book that goes home every night with the students and returns every morning. The following websites have a good description of the MOOSE books - or in the last one, a BEAR book.

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

http://www.madison.k12.al.us/mtcarmel/0_kindergarten/solley/moosebookpage.html

<http://www.geocities.com/jbaker2404/moose.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/jankwv/beabooks.html>

Page 11 has a short article on mini-offices. These two websites have pictures and descriptions of these.

<http://www.mrsdryzal.com/minioffice.html>

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

Here is a simple discussion of the Writer's Workshop.

<http://www.mrswright.com/2005-2006/authorsworkshop.html>

This site has some good shape books - an apple, pumpkin, turkey and a ghost for the autumn.

<http://teacherview.com/WritingCenter/index.html>

<http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/goodies.html>

If you are using the 4 Blocks format, look through these goodies. Scroll far down for lesson plan formats.

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/default.aspx>

Go down to 'Browse Templates' and then to 'Teachers'. There are lots of wonderful awards, graph paper, lesson plan formats and other templates to print.

<http://www.geocities.com/learningcenters2003/>

If you do centres, this is an excellent site that gives a wide variety of ideas.

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/Interactive.aspx>

This is a great UK site to use in your Kindergarten and Grade One classroom!

<http://loneoak.mccracken.k12.ky.us/les/Teachers/dcook/home.htm>

This is a wonderful Kindergarten site. Check out the Literacy Bags link - and many others.

<http://www.kinderkornet.com/assess.html>

Here is a simple assessment for beginning Grade Ones.



Odds and Ends

Tattling....

“My teaching partner uses the 3 Bs - blood, barf or being hurt (or bathroom) - the only things they can tell about. She asks, ‘Does your story begin with B?’ - and if it doesn’t, she won’t listen....”

“We talk about hurt. Telling is good if someone is hurting themselves (had an accident), is hurting someone physically, is hurting someone’s feelings or hurting something solid - writing on the wall, tearing someone’s possessions, etc. There are many ways things can be hurt - and we brainstorm a list of important hurts. So when a child tattles, they must explain how the hurt is occurring and tell why this hurt is important enough to involve the teacher. Soon they are telling others that the problem isn’t a big enough ‘hurt’!”

“We practice telling nice things about others. After recess we share good things that people did - someone who helped another, who asked another child to play, who did a kindness. Then, when someone comes up to tattle, I ask them if they have something nice to report. This soon stops a lot of the tattling.”

“We talk about the difference between a tattle and a tell. We tell something nice and we tell when something important has happened - something dangerous, hurtful or destructive. A tattle is when the person wants to get someone else into trouble.”

“I have a box like a mailbox with a slit on top in my Grade Two classroom that is titled ‘Problems’. If a child has a problem, he writes it out and puts it into the box. Every day after school I check it, or if I see a child put a message into the box during the day. I ask the tattlers to write their problems out and put them in the box, and if the problem is not important, they usually don’t bother or see that it looks silly when they print it. And the box sometimes gets really serious personal problems, too, and is a good way for the children to tell me things without embarrassment.”

“I have a big picture of an odd creature with big ears. We named him Oscar. When there are tattles, I ask the kids to tell Oscar. Strangely enough, some of my Kindergarteners do!”

“I have a split 2/3 class. We spend a lot of time on problem resolution. If two children are having a problem, I have them go apart and try to work it out. If they come back without a resolution, I have another child go with them and they tell the other person both sides and the third child tries to resolve it. We have roll-played this, so they know the format they have to use to resolve problems. It works for me!”



A-B-C-D-E

Grade One is the place to be.

F-G-H-I-J

School is great fun every day.

K-L-M-N-O

Reading, writing, watch us grow.

P-Q-R-S-T

Adding numbers 1-2-3.

U-V-W-X-Y

Everyone likes to try, try, try!

We finish with the letter Z.

Now it’s time to go to bed!

A Good Idea ...

“I use canning jar lids (the flat part) with my students’ pictures on them (I take digital pictures and print them and they are glued on) and a magnet on the back. For attendance I used the side of a filing cabinet. Their lids were on the left edge. When they came in in the morning they moved their lid under a label of their lunch choice, or whether they brought lunch from home. I had just drawn a chart on the side of the cabinet for this. The student who was doing attendance could just look at the lids that weren’t moved. Of course, most of the time they’d have to say Johnny, Susan, Tim you forgot to move your lids, but they could quickly then do our attendance count and lunch count. It is very handy.”

More Odds and Ends

“On the first day we make birthday bags. I print the child’s name and the birth date on the bag, and then they decorate it. I put some treats in each bag with they are finished (a birthday pencil, stickers, an award for the birthday, a balloon, and other things from the dollar store). The bags are twisted shut and put up on a special birthday bulletin board. On the birthday, the child gets to take down his/her bag. The children who have birthdays in the vacation times we celebrate at ‘half-birthdays’, so everyone has a special day in the classroom.”



“I put string up on my door with the words: Look Who's Hanging Out with Mrs. Sandahl. Then I use those tiny clothespins and hang a t-shirt up with each child's name on it. I take them down, and the kids glue the t-shirt onto a 12x18 piece of construction paper (manila coloured, but you could vary the colour). Then they draw in their body and pants or skirt. I tell them it should use most of the height of the paper. They turn out so enjoyable! Last year I made them a year long project. I put September in the corner of it, then laminated each child's clothes once they had their body done, and we had written what we did in September on it at the end of the month. Each month we added another t-shirt. I just stapled each one over the previous ones. They wrote down what we learned about each month. Just the first one was laminated, to help the body last all year. They took these home at the end of the year.”

Cindy

“I am a scrounger! I go to all the carpet stores and ask for free carpet pieces - scraps or sample squares - the samples are better because they have the edge, but I tape the scraps and that works, too. I talk to all the grocery stores to get their decorations after all the holidays or when the seasons change. I ask grocery stores for fruit and vegetable samples when we make our salads. Sometimes they say ‘no’, but I just go on to the next one! I talk about having spent hundreds of dollars of my own money for my classroom, and say that I cannot do that any longer and that I hope they can help the children.

I go to Value Village and the second hand stores. I find games, puzzles and books at yard sales. At a yard sale I bought a loveseat, and at another a soft chair. Sometimes people donate when they know it is for the class.”

“I videotape some of my lessons. It doesn't bother me, because I know I will be the only one to see it. I find it really helpful! I found I had some annoying repetition of words, and that sometimes I had an unpleasant frown when I wasn't feeling cross. It taught me to be aware of what I say and how I look to the kids. I could see what worked really well, and what was not effective. It is a really good idea!”

“I have a duck for a class mascot. He is a funny looking creature, and my Grade Twos always love him. A great treat is to have him on the desk for the day. I make bulletin boards with ducks, too.... some ideas for ducky BBs are ‘Waddle happen in Grade Two?’, ‘Waddle we do this year?’, ‘Get your ducks in a row’, ‘Duck into reading’, ‘We're fire quackers’, etc. The kids love the puns.”

“I found that some of my Kindergarten moms had separation anxiety on the first days, and it rubbed off on their children. They were wanting to stay with their children. I firmly tell the parents, ‘I'll see you later, and if there are any problems I will phone you.’ and usher them out the door. Once they are gone, the children are usually fine!”

“We call high frequency reading or spelling words ‘Popcorn Words’, because they keep popping up.”

**I have two friends
And they have me.
Two friends and ME
Make one, two, three.**



**Friends can be big.
Friends can be small.
Friends at school
Are the best of all!**

Teaching the Little Books

The Autumn Alphabet

- Photocopy each page as large as you can – 11 x 18 would be a x200 enlargement. Staple the pages into a book.
- Show the title page. Read the title to the children, touching the words. Have the children repeat the words.
- Read the book to the children with a rhythm, touching each letter or word as you read.
- This is a different way to say the alphabet letters. Practice saying them to this rhythm.
- Have the children memorize the pages by saying them several times as you read and touch the words.
- Give each child a small book, stapled in the centre.
- When the children open the little book, ask, 'Where will we begin to read?' and discuss beginning at the top left, and then continuing to the right hand page. See if the children can use a pointer to touch each word as you read together.
- Can the children remember the words by using letter and sound cues? Find rhyming words.
- Can they say and match the alphabet in this way?
- Find letter sounds that have been previously taught.
- Read the book in small groups and partners, touching each letter and word as they read.

Trick or Treat

- Make a large copy of the book pages. Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- Discuss the title. Talk about Halloween and going out for Trick or Treat. What does this mean?
- Give a little book to each child.
- Read the book to the children and discuss each page. This is a poem. Print the poem on a chart to see the lines beginning with capital letters.
- Discuss different costumes, and whether they would like to wear any of these. Are they scary?
- Teach the high frequency words appropriate for your class or group.
- Go through each page, and isolate vocabulary words.
- Put these words in phrases and sentences and practice reading them
- Find these words in the book. Have the students highlight them if you wish.
- Memorize the poem and read it in pairs and groups.
- Use the words in the story to discuss the phonics you are teaching.
- Other activities: use this story for interesting reading the days before Halloween.
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.

Apples

- Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- This will be good to use with an Apple theme or on its own.
- Read through the book together.
- Give a book to each child.
- Read the book to the children and discuss each page.
- There are questions on each page. Talk about possible answers, and make a list of vocabulary the younger students might need.
- Taste apples to see which ones the students like best.
- When the students can read the book, do the work and answer the questions.
- Share the answers.
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.



Teachers' Slogans

Discover wildlife! Be a teacher.

The two best reasons to be a teacher:
July and August.

If you can read this, thank a teacher!

Home Sweet Classroom!

Old teachers never die, they just lose their class.

Kindergarten teachers enjoy the little things in life.

Behind every successful student is an exhausted teacher.

Teachers have class.

Teachers take a lot of live-wires and make sure they are
well grounded.

Teaching is like being pecked to death by a duck.

To teach is to learn twice.

You can't scare me - I teach school!

I will not yell in class.

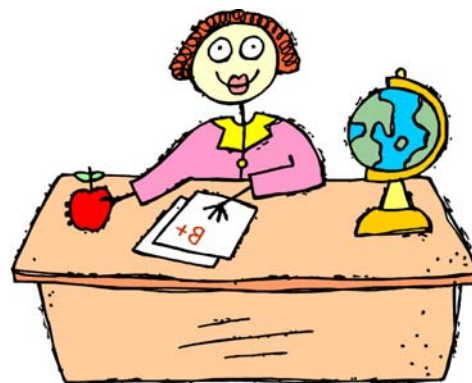
I will not throw things.

I will not get mad.

I will be good because I am the teacher.

"One can always tell it's summer when one sees school teachers hanging about the streets idly, looking like cannibals during a shortage of missionaries."

Robertson Davies



Dear Colleagues,

A big 'thank you' to the teachers who donated their ideas to the magazine! Your ideas are what keep this going. Every writing time I wonder what I will find to fill the pages, and your help is so appreciated.

Everyone has good ideas, and it would be so wonderful if you would help, too, and send in ideas that work well for you - any subject and any level. Just a paragraph by e-mail would be super!

Thanks in advance!

Jean

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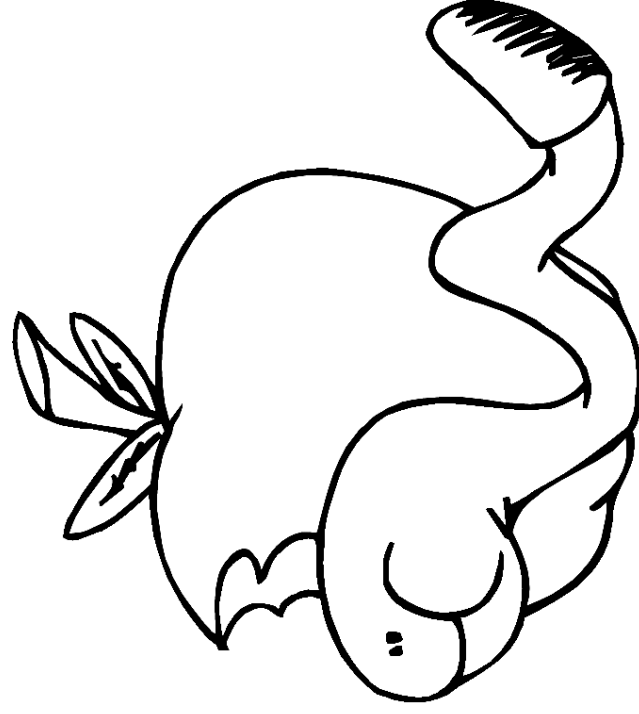
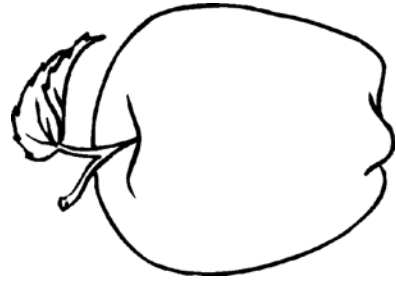
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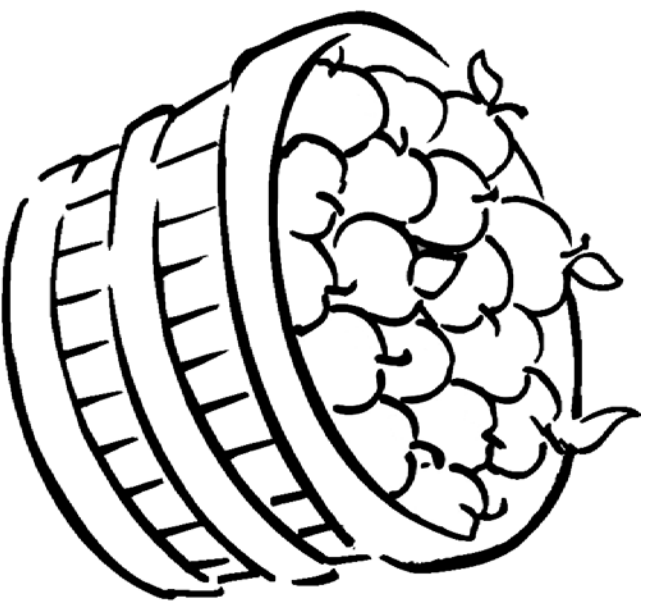
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Apples



Apples are red and yellow
and green.

What one do you like best?

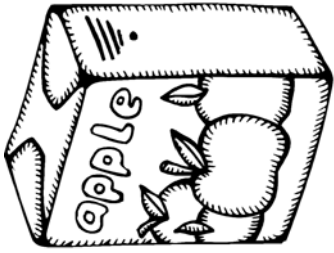
I like _____ apples.



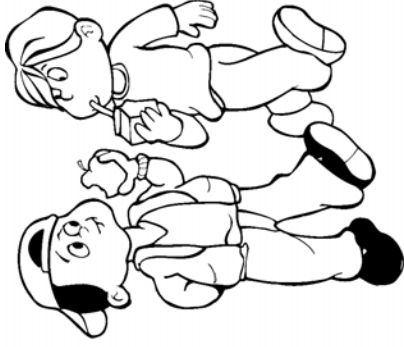
Apples are ready when it is time
to go back to school.

Will you bring an apple to school?

What will you do with it?



Apples can be a healthy snack and
they can be a yummy treat.
How do you like to eat apples?



We like apples!

Animals like to eat apples, too!
Match the words and pictures.

raccoon



horse

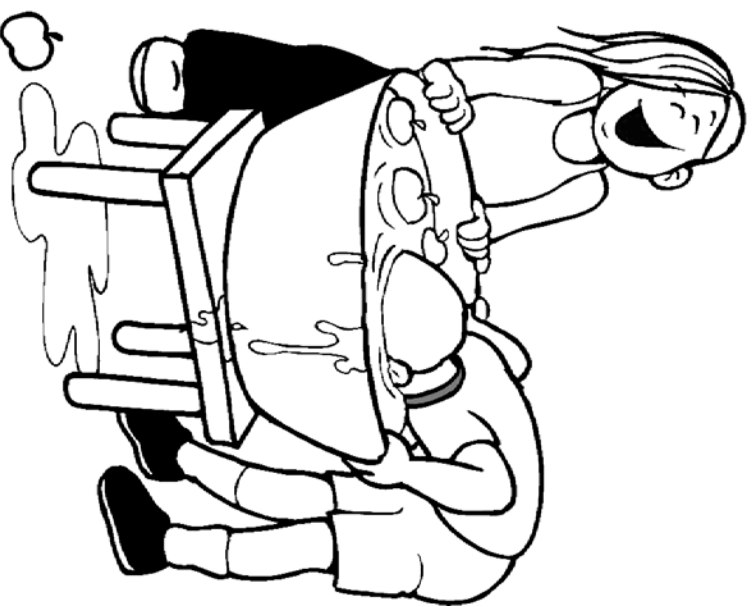


pig



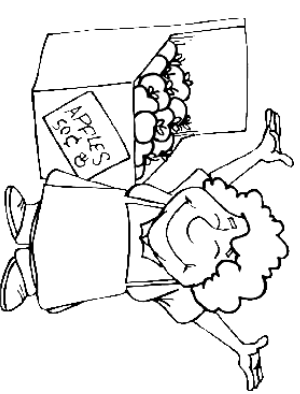
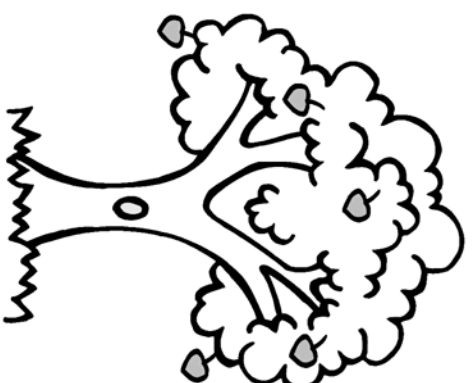
worm





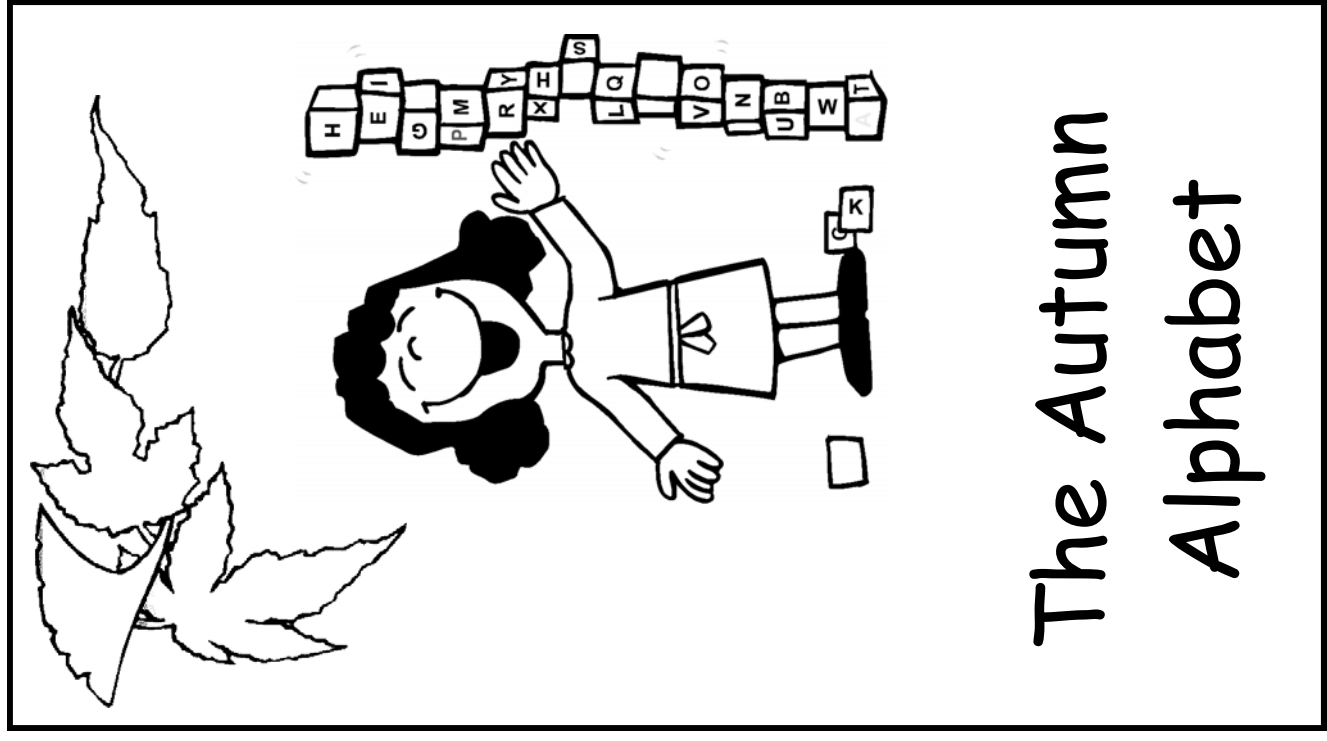
Apples can be fun, too!
At Halloween we can bob
for apples.
This boy will be all wet!
Do you like to do that?

4

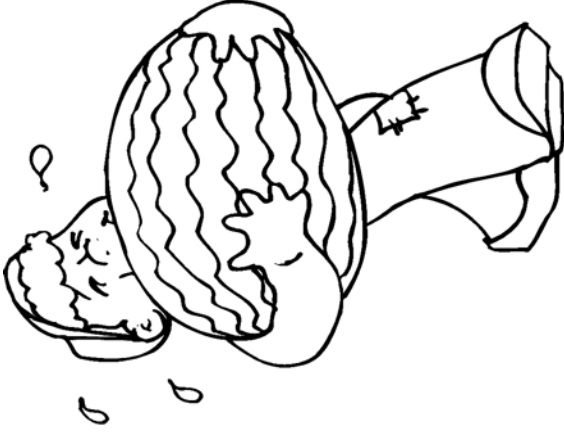


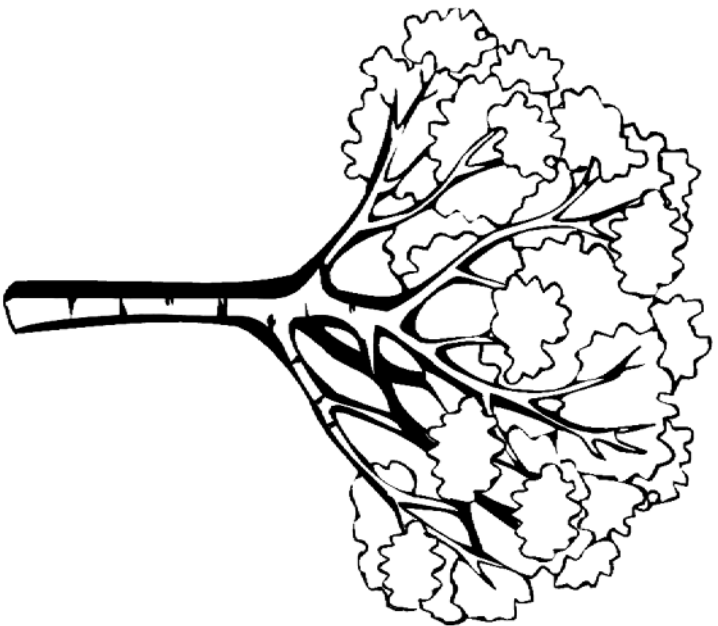
Apples are picked from a tree
on a farm.
Then the apples go to a store.
Where do you get apples?

5



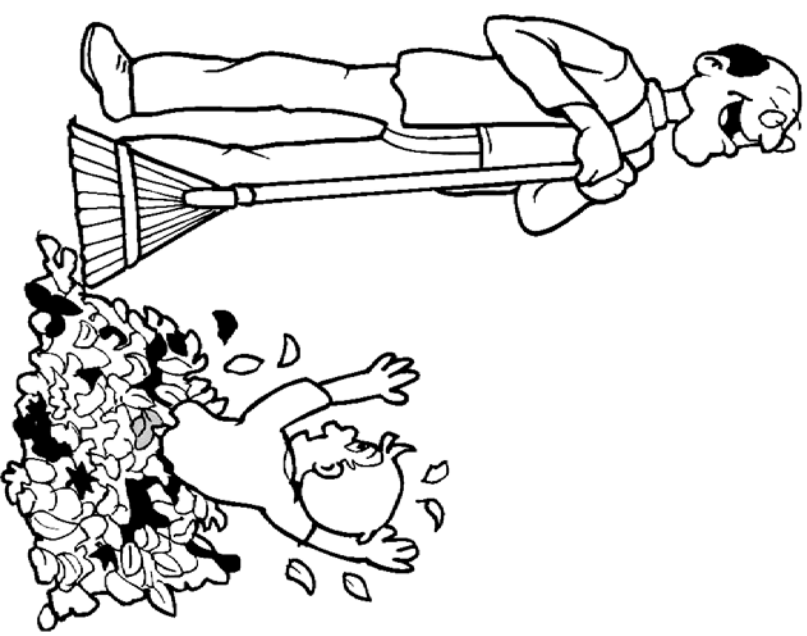
The Autumn Alphabet





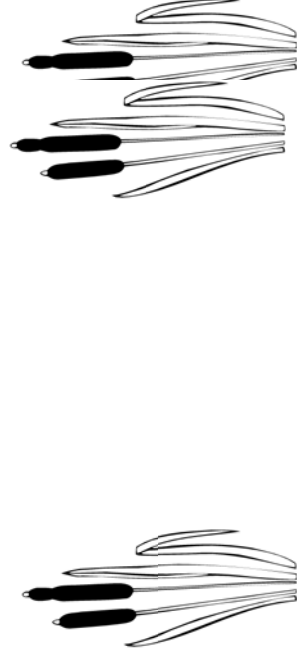
a - b - cde

Coloured leaves are
on the tree.



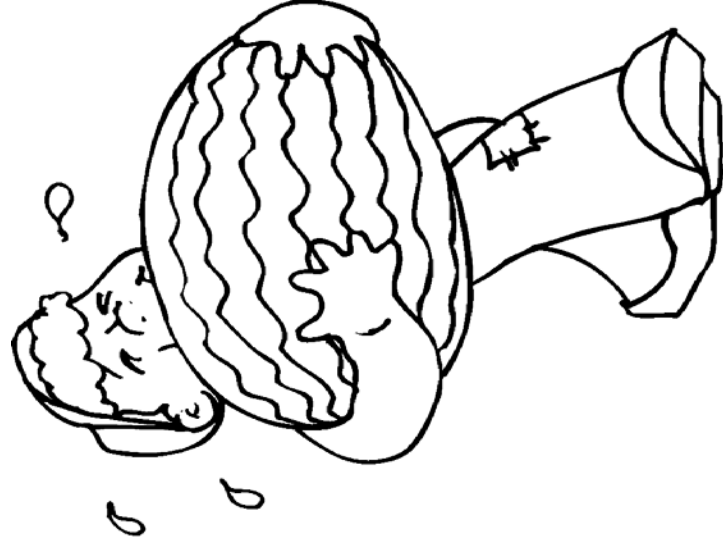
z - z - zzz

Leaves of orange and
yellow and red!



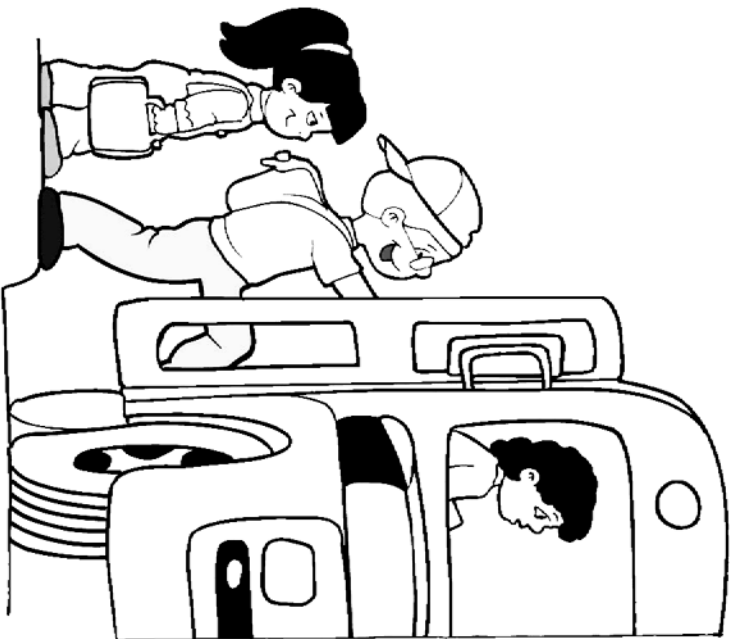
u - v - wxy

Geese fly south
in the sky.



f - g - hij

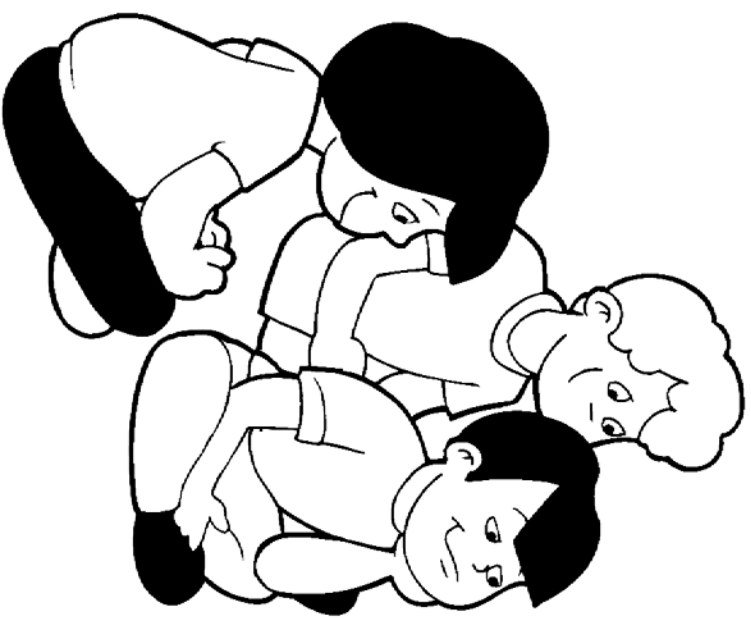
I like watermelon
every day!



k - l - mno

Every day to school
we go.

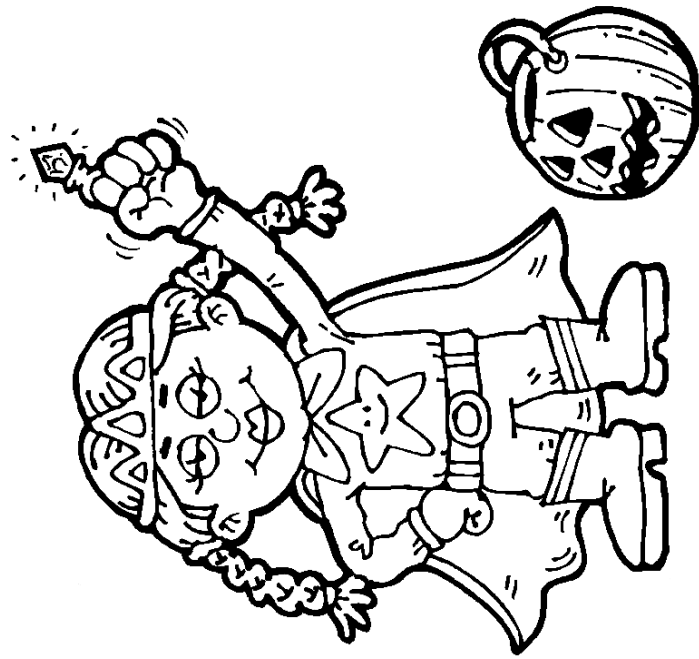
4



p - q - rst

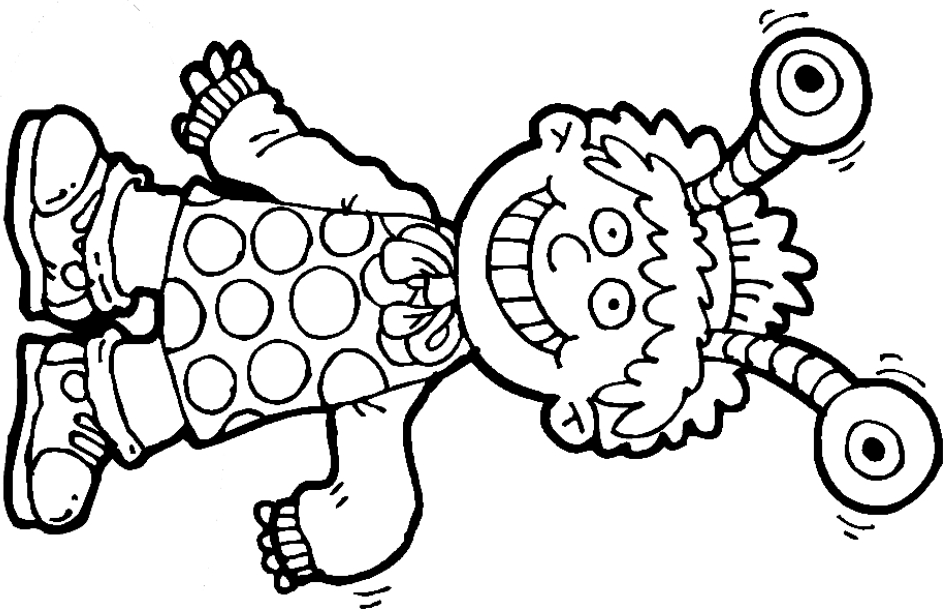
It is fun for you
and me.

5

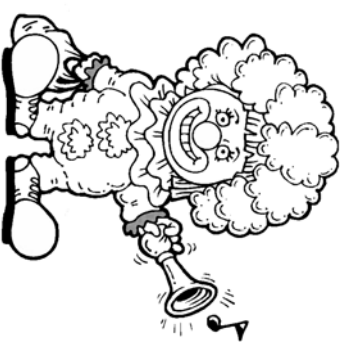
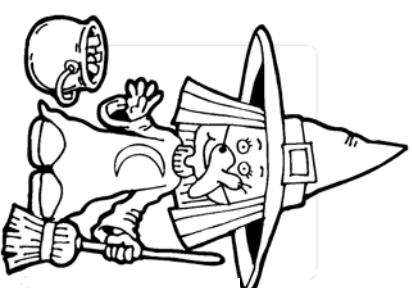
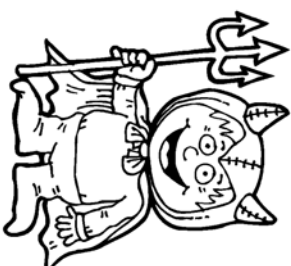


Trick or Treat!

Here comes a space creature,

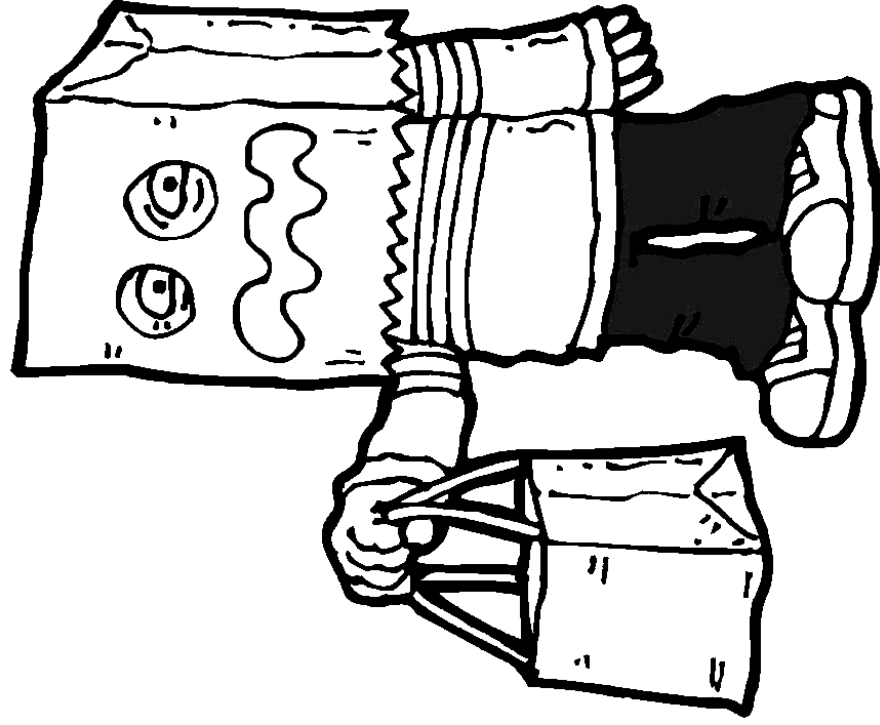


What a lot of funny things
to see -



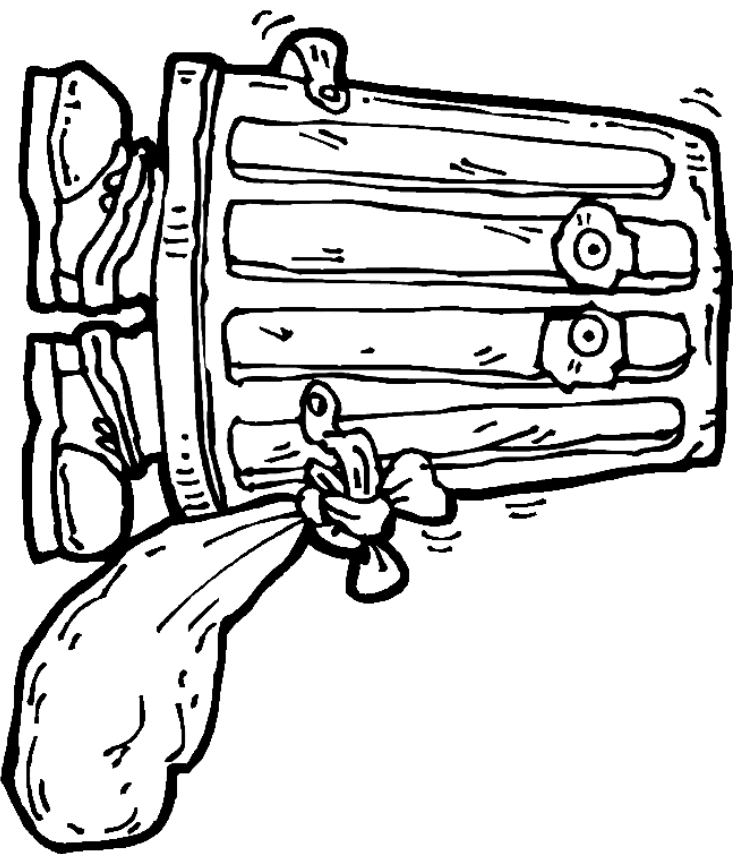
Trick or treat!
It's Halloween night!

And this is a scary sight,



And this gave me a fright!

Here comes a silly garbage can,



Trick or treat!
It's Halloween night!



Here comes a superhero,