



# Share-Two



September – October 2003 Issue #16

Wrinkled was not one of the things  
I wanted to be when I grew up.



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## A New School Year!

We are so lucky to work in a profession that renews itself every 12 months! By the start of the new school year in the autumn, we are eager to begin again with a new class of children. Have at least one 'New Year's' resolution – something to improve. Improve your reading program, classroom neatness or organization!

Remember that your Grade Two students are still Grade Ones. It will take a period of review and re-teaching before they actually will be doing Grade Two work. As a consolation, consider that they will be almost Grade Threes in ten months! Have a great school year!

*Jean*

### Have you heard about the next planned Survivor show?

Several businessmen and women will be dropped in an primary classroom for 6 weeks. Each businessperson will be provided with a copy of the curriculum, and a class of 25 students. The class will have five LD children, three with A.D.D., one gifted child, and two who speak limited English. Three will be labelled as severe behaviour problems. They must complete lesson plans at least 3 days in advance with annotations for curriculum objectives and modify, organize, or create materials accordingly. They will be required to teach students, handle misconduct, implement technology, document attendance, correct homework, make bulletin boards, compute grades, complete report cards, document benchmarks, communicate with parents, and arrange parent conferences. They must also supervise recess and monitor the hallways. They must attend workshops, (100 hours), staff meetings, union meetings, and curriculum development meetings. They must also tutor those students who are behind and strive to get their 2 non-English speaking children proficient in English. If they are sick or having a bad day they must not let it show. Each day they must incorporate reading, writing, math, science, and social studies into the program. They must maintain discipline and provide an educationally stimulating environment at all times. The business people will only have access to the golf course on the weekends, but on their new salary they will not be able to afford it anyway.

Lunch will be limited to 30 minutes. On days when they do not have recess duty, the business people will be permitted to use the staff restroom as long as another survival candidate is supervising their class. They will be provided with two 40-minute planning periods per week while their students are at specials. If the copier is operable, they may make copies of necessary materials at this time. The business people must continually advance their education on their own time and pay for this advanced training themselves. This can be accomplished by moonlighting at a second job or marrying someone with money. The winner will be allowed to return to his or her job.

# Poetry for September and

## September Chant

Sep--tem--b-e-r X , (clap)  
 Sep--tem--b-e-r- X,  
 Home from school, rake the  
 leaves,  
 Allergies can make you sneeze!  
 Ah-Choo, Ah-Choo, Ah-  
 choo, Bless You,  
 Thirty Days X X,  
 Thirty Nights X X  
 Thirty Days X X,  
 Thirty Nights X X  
 Sep- tem- b- e- r- X ,  
 Sep- tem- b-e-r---X  
 I like September!!



## October Chant

Oc - to - b-e-r X,  
 Oc - to - b-e-r X  
 (clap on the X)  
 Thanksgiving, Halloween,  
 Glowing pumpkins can be seen.  
 Trick, Trick, Trick-or-Treat,  
 Give me something good to eat.  
 The 31st XX is Hallowe'en XX.  
 The 31st XX is Hallowe'en XX.  
 I can't wait!

We say hello to Autumn leaves  
 New teachers and the school.  
 We say good-bye to vacation  
 time  
 And swimming in the pool.  
 We say hello to shorter days  
 And longer, darker nights.  
 We say good-bye to family trips  
 And seeing all the sights.



The leaves are falling  
 One by one.  
 Summer's over  
 School's begun.

I'd rather be a person  
 Than an animal in the fall.  
 It doesn't seem that  
 Animals have much fun at all.  
 Some work so hard to store up food,  
 While others hibernate,  
 Cold and snow and ice are things  
 They don't appreciate.  
 But I can run and play with friends  
 Through fall and winter, too.  
 I'd rather be a person having fun.  
 Wouldn't you?

## The Leaves

The leaves are falling  
 From the trees  
 Yellow, brown, and red.  
 They patter softly  
 Like the rain~  
 One landed on my head!



A very different teacher,  
 With a strange sounding name.  
 I want my last year's teacher -  
 Things will never be the same!

## School Days

The alarm clock rings,  
 You open your eyes.  
 The day begins,  
 You have to rise.

Brush your teeth,  
 Comb your hair.  
 Brand new things  
 For you to wear.

Look both ways  
 As you cross the street.  
 Get on the bus  
 And find a seat.

Today is the day  
 That school begins  
 You can hardly wait  
 To meet your friends.



## First Day

Shiny, sharpened pencils,  
 Desks all in a row.  
 It's the first day of school and  
 I (really) (don't) want to go.

## Alber Galber

Alber Galber is a turkey,  
 He is feathered and he is fine.  
 He wobbles and he gobbles,  
 And he's absolutely mine.  
 Alber Galber turkey lurkey,  
 He is happy in his bed.  
 So for our Thanksgiving dinner  
 We had Chinese food instead.



# More Poetry .....



## One Fat Turkey

One fat turkey went strutting by,  
He shook his feathers and  
Winked his eye.  
He flapped his wing and  
His head gave a wobble,  
As he looked at me and said,  
"Gobble, gobble, gobble!"

Gobble gobble turkey  
Big and fat  
I want food and  
That's that!

## Three Ghostesses

Three little ghostesses,  
Sitting on postesses,  
Eating buttered toastesses,  
Greasing their fistesses,  
Up to their wristesses,  
Oh, what beastesses  
To make such feastesses!

## Monsters

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

## Three Little Witches

One little, two little, three little witches,  
Fly over haystacks, fly over ditches,  
Slide down moonbeams 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 higgedy,  
piggle,  
Hey ho Halloween's here!



Look where you go on Halloween night,  
Some scary things will give you a fright!  
There's ghosts and goblins here and there,  
Scary things are everywhere!

It's getting scarier all about,  
You're starting to wish you'd never went  
out.

Panic now, what will you do?  
Then something jumps right out at you.  
BOO!



I love...

a just right  
stormy night  
shutters banging  
webs hanging  
doors squeaking  
floors creaking  
goose-bumping  
strange thumping  
candles flickering  
witches snickering  
groans and moans  
and bunches of bones  
shadows creeping  
lightening leaping  
bats flying  
ghosts sighing  
ghouls mumbling  
castles crumbling  
a scary ending. . .  
but just pretending!



## A Number Poem

O-n-e, one  
We have just begun.  
T-w-o, two  
Blue glue in my shoe.  
T-h-r-e-e, three  
A banjo on my knee.  
F-o-u-r, four  
Knock, knock on my door.  
F-i-v-e, five  
Bees in a hive.  
S-i-x, six  
Let's do tricks.  
S-e-v-e-n, seven  
Going up into heaven.  
E-i-g-h-t, eight  
Rhode Island is our state.  
N-i-n-e, nine  
Feeling mighty fine!  
T-e-n, ten  
Let's count again!  
Z-e-r-o, zero  
You are my hero!

# Guided Reading

Many teachers are doing Guided Reading lessons. Some do these as the only reading lesson, and others do guided reading as part of the 4-Blocks Literacy Program. When teachers say that they are doing Guided Reading, they may mean quite different things. There are two basic philosophies of guided reading; 4-Blocks and the Fountas and Pinnell philosophy. Here are some guidelines to help you through this maze!

## **Guided Reading – the 4-Blocks (Patricia Cunningham)**

The objective of these reading lessons is to gather meaning from print. The four blocks are ‘working with words’, ‘guided reading’, ‘self-selected reading’ and ‘writing’. The ‘working with words’ blocks teaches phonics and spelling. The guided reading block is the time when children apply skills to reading in trade books. The teachers focus on a specific skill or strategy each day. This is usually taught to the whole class, regardless of the reading ability.

There are pre-reading activities – teaching necessary vocabulary, setting a purpose for reading and asking for predictions. All children read the same book. Some books chosen will be too easy for some children and some will be too difficult for others, but support is given so that the children can hopefully be successful. The lessons are really about ‘how’ to read rather than focusing on ‘what’ the children are reading. After the children read the specific skill is discussed.

## **Guided Reading – Fountas and Pinnell**

F&P Guided Reading lessons are similar to the above, but the children are placed into small fluid homogeneous groups. With the children at a similar level, more explicit skills can be taught to a small group that need this lesson and all children are reading at their specific level.

## **The Guided Reading Lesson**

### **Pre-Reading**

- Give an introduction to the book
- Why the book was chosen
- The purpose of the lesson – the skill to address
- Introducing vocabulary necessary to understanding
- Discussion of prior knowledge
- Author and illustrator – the cover picture
- A picture walk
- Prediction

### **Reading the Book**

- F&P suggests that the students read the book orally, not to the teacher but to themselves at the same time and the teacher listens for strategies used and needed. As this is a small group, this is possible.

- With 4-Blocks, it depends on the book level. The teacher may read the book aloud first, or the children may read, or try to read, with the teacher. If the book is easy, the children may read individually or in small groups.

### **After Reading**

- Discuss the reading process and the strategies used. Did the children use the strategy taught in the pre-lesson?
- Discuss the story, asking questions
- Do a mini-lesson or re-teach vocabulary in an inter-active way.
- Independent reading
- Exercises – cloze exercise, sequencing, written response, etc.
- There may be reinforcement through art, music or drama.

## Teachers discuss Guided Reading

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

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

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



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

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

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



# Bulletin Boards

## Bees Everywhere!

An information bulletin board with the headline: **What's Buzzing in Grade Two?**

School or classroom rules titled: **Bee Your Best!**

A large attendance hive with a small Velcro square for each student to attach their own bee when they arrive.

A jobs bulletin board: **Worker Bees** with individual beehives labelled with jobs and the students names.

A classroom newsletter: **News from the Hive.**

A sheet to record homework for absent students that says **While you've BEEN gone.**

A puzzling morning question called **The Bee Stinger.**

A showcase for students work called **Bee-utiful Work.**

Display quotes around the room and replace the word be with bee.

Student of the week called King Bee or Queen Bee.

Make bee or beehive nametags for each student.

Decorate the outside of your door like a large hive with a big banner **Grade Two – A Hive of Activity!**

Make a large honeycomb area to set class goal for books read. Gradually fill in honeycombs as books are read.



## Autumn

**Awesome Autumn** can be the title of a fall or back-to-school board. Decorate with coloured leaves and a rake on one side.

## Checkers and Checks

“I made a huge checker board using black and white construction paper cut to 9” squares. I bought plastic plates in red and black in the dessert size and placed them on the grid. The title was **Check in and check us out. Welcome Back!**. The students drew themselves (only the head) and glued them to the plates.”

Cut out big check marks, one for each student. Have them write a biography and take a digital photo of each child. Mount the three items on a bulletin board.



## An Ocean Theme

**An ocean full of good work** for displaying work samples.

**Welcome to our school** Each child's face on a fish, some funny ones thrown in, including your own

Make a big shark with lots of teeth – **Take A Bite Out Of This!** with a book in its mouth.

Use a real net, goggles, flippers and shells, etc. surrounding a board.

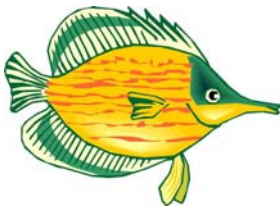
Use a real net, starfish, goggles, flippers, surrounding a board.

**Catch of the Day:** person with a fishing pole for display of good work, writing samples

**Something's Fishy in Grade (or Room) \_\_\_\_** for your newsletter

**Oceans of fun in \_\_\_\_.**

**We're up to something fishy.**



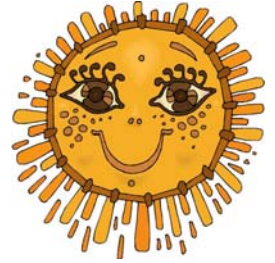
“Have a bunch of fishies (school of fish) with the kids’ digital photos on each - maybe an octopus or ray (as in Nemo) with the teacher's photo. The kids could do rest with paper seaweed, shells, etc.”

“I cover all my boards with black felt. I change the borders to go with the theme. The black looks crisp and provides a visual rest for the eye. It never fades or shows staple marks.” *(Try other colours of felt, too...)*

# More Bulletin Boards

“Our theme this year is sunshine, and my window says, **Time to Shine in Grade Two!**”

“As a back to school activity that will also become a bulletin board, I am going to do a puzzle and a bulletin board titled **We Fit Together**. I will cut very large puzzle pieces. I will have them outline the puzzle piece in crayon or marker (about an eighth or quarter of an inch or so) to emphasize the ‘puzzleness’ of it and then allow them to decorate inside with their name and face or doing something to show togetherness or co-operation, sharing, etc.... Number the pieces on the back for easy re-assembling, and put a mark on the front of each piece to show which edge is up so the pictures will all be ‘looking’ in the right direction. A piece with the picture upside down will spoil the affect. Re-assemble the pieces by gluing them to a large piece of mural paper.”



## Going on a Safari!

“My bulletin board will say **Swinging Into Grade Two** with vines and palm leaves. The children’s names will be on monkeys. I am going to make a sign for the door that says: **Warning! It’s A Jungle In Here!**



A bulletin board will be titled **We Are Wild About Writing**. The BB will be covered with fabric or gift wrap with animal fur print – leopard skin, zebra print, etc. To ‘Read (or write) the Room’ the children can use binoculars, flashlights, or small nets, and wear helmets.”

## Who’s Who in Grade Two

“I take pictures of each child on the first day of school. For the first week I do mini-writing lessons, reviewing the basic skills, and the children write their biographies. I get a story that looks something like this:

Megan Jones

Megan Jones is 7 years old. Her birthday is on June 17. She lives in a house on Maple Street. She has 2 brothers and no sisters. She likes to read. Her favourite food is pizza. She doesn’t have a pet, but she wishes she had a cat.

Then I type up the story and print it out. I put the photo at the top of the page and the story at the bottom and put them up on a ‘**Who’s Who in Grade Two**’ bulletin board. At the end of September I take them down and put the page into a plastic sleeve and put them in a binder. The kids love to look at the book and read their stories.”

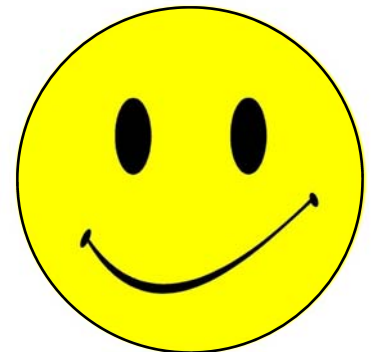
## Smiley Faces

**Work Worth Smiling About!**

**I’m happy to be back at school!**

**Doing good work** (doing our best, being a good friend...whatever) **puts a smile on our face!**

You cannot give a smile away,  
No matter what you do.  
Every time you give me one  
I’ll give it back to you!



# The First Day

Some interesting things to do on the first day:

- Welcome the students then and give them a little talk about what to expect in your class. Go over the schedule with them, discussing lunch, specials, recess, etc., and put the information on a chart or on a weekly timetable that they can refer to.
- Show them where you will have class meetings and calendar groups, then role-play how they should go there. In the group spot, discuss rules for behaviour during meetings (taking turns, hands off others, listen when others are talking, etc.) As the children tell you the rules, write them on a chart.
- Begin your calendar and opening exercises. Today is 'Day 1' on the 'Days in School' chart.
- Practice some of your routines – model your expectations.
- Read a special story, a favourite.
- Play a name game or other circle game to learn all the names: Give each child a name tag or the name on a cord around the neck. Play, for example, 'Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?' Go through this until the children are comfortable with the sequence and words – then put it to rhythm by slapping the knees with alternate hands.

## Who Stole the Cookie?

Leader: Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?

Group: Amanda stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Amanda: Who me?

Group: Yes, you.

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

Group: Then who?

Amanda: Thomas stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Thomas: Who me? Etc.



- The children are always eager to see the new classroom books, so do two DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) times.
- Write in the journals at the end of the day. Today they can tell all about the first day of school and what they enjoyed. It will be a nice remembrance later on, when they go back to read what they wrote.
- Do a class Time Capsule. You could use a Pringles can that has been decorated for the capsule. Each child gets a paper and has to write out their answers to a few questions about their favourite colour, book, food, etc. They copy a sentence or poem in their neatest printing and draw a picture of themselves on the first day of school, and then they trace and colour their handprint on the back. When everyone is done, collect the papers, roll them up, stuff them in the can, and put it away in a place that is out of reach, but in their view. On the last day of school take the tube down and pass back the papers. The children like to see if any of their favourites have changed, and you can encourage them to put their hand on top of the 'old' print to see if they've grown during the year.
- Set aside a place where you can collect items during the year for the end-of-year bulletin board. The last week or so of the school year, put a header (Remembering the Year... or something like it) on top and hang up all sorts of things that remind you of the year together. Items include: sample of projects you've done, brochures from field trips taken, a fancy napkin from a class party or birthday, an empty butterfly garden box, a book jacket from a favourite read-aloud, thank-you notes, etc. It is a nice way to look back at the end of the year! Try to do one each month and each special day.
- Go around the classroom and read all the charts and poems, etc. Then give the children some time to 'read the room' themselves. Have magic wands, pointers, glasses, binoculars, flashlights, magnifying glasses, etc. to focus in and help them read the words.
- Give the children clip-boards and interlined paper. Have them 'write the room', printing words they know. Have them hand these in and you will be able to see the level of printing accuracy.
- Play 'Name Bingo'. Each student gets a blank bingo board. They walk around the classroom and have other people sign theirs until it is full - and then play bingo (with M&Ms as markers).

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



# Literacy Committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

good mourning boy and grils

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

luf mrs b

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

# Literacy Centres

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

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



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

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

# Working With Words

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

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

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

## Word Wall Activities

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

### Be A Mind Reader

You need to have at least 20 words up on the wall before you do this activity. Number paper from 1-5. Write a mystery word from the wall and fold it up and tell them they will guess my word from the clues. The first clue is always the word is on the word wall. Other clues can be 'it has \_\_\_\_ beats' (syllables). 'It begins like \_\_\_\_.' 'It ends like \_\_\_\_.' 'It is a noun, verb, etc.' 'It has a \_\_\_\_ for a vowel.' The last clue is usually a sentence with the word missing in it so everyone can get it.

### Add Endings To Words

Practice adding endings to new or old word wall words. For example, have the students number from 1-5. Have them find, clap, chant and write the word 'help'. Then have them add the ending 's' to make helps, then 'ed' to make helped, then 'ing' to make helping and finally 'er' to make helper. This is a good way to practice word endings.

### Guess The Covered Word

Have a word covered on the overhead. The students try to guess the word by revealing one letter at a time.

### Wheel of Fortune

The teacher or a child picks a word from the wall and draws lines on the board or overhead for each letter in the word. Children can guess vowels or consonants. Correct letters are written in the lines and incorrect ones are listed in the used letter box. They MUST guess all the letters before saying the word.

### Wordo

Wordo is a variation of Bingo. All you need are photocopied sheets on which 9, 16 or 25 blocks have been drawn in. Have students pick words off the word wall they want included in the game and each picks a block to write it in on their Wordo sheet. You write the word on small index cards. When the sheet is filled up you are ready to play. Shuffle the cards and call out one word at a time. Have students chant and spell the word as they cover it. The first person with a row covered calls out 'Wordo'!



### Spelling Rhyming Words

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

### Theme and Word Wall Dictation

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

### Practice Your Spelling Words:

Quick exercises to make spelling practice more interesting!

- Write each word 5 times.
- Write the words in ABC order.
- Write a sentence using each word. Can you write a sentence with two or more spelling words?
- Illustrate the words.
- Write the plural of each word.
- Write the opposite of each word.
- Create a crossword puzzle with the words.
- Have someone scramble the words, then you can unscramble them.
- Take a practice test.
- Make a wordsearch using the spelling words. Share with your classmates!
- Write each word on two index cards to play a matching game. Use Scrabble tiles to spell your words. Then

add up the score for each word. Which word is worth the most points? The least?

### Spelling Homework

“My students are to write each word four times on Monday. On Tuesday they pick five of the words and put them into sentences. On Wednesday they pick four of the ten spelling words and write three rhyming words. It's a bit more challenging and the parents check the work and help the students spell words that rhyme, but are spelled differently. I have also challenged some of my students to write a story using all ten of the spelling words. The parents like to help with that, and that is fine! The students like to share their silly stories. I usually have the students write the words in alphabetical order in class sometime during the week. The students are exposed to the words quite a bit during the week. I give the parents a spelling homework sheet that explains the weeks homework for the year. On Thursday night I suggest they test their child on the words then write any words they get wrong 3 times.”

## Poetry and Song Books

“My students love their poetry and song notebooks. I add poems or songs whenever I start a new unit, or find a poem or song that is pertinent to what we are doing. I add songs often, too.

We highlight parts of the poem or song for word families, parts of speech, rhyming words, etc. I could usually pick out teaching points for entry.

I put 2 blank table of content pages at the beginning of the notebook for easy reference. We number and enter the titles as a class.”



“I use poetry notebooks and my students truly enjoy them. I use a spiral notebook. At the beginning of the week I introduce the poem or song on a chart or overhead transparency. Each day we read or sing it together. One day we may highlight rhyming words. One day we may circle nouns – whatever we've been working on in class. By Wednesday or Thursday I give them a half page size copy of the poem. They glue it in their notebooks and illustrate it. On Friday, the students get to request a poem or song to do together or they may read one for the class individually. Sometimes I only do one poem or song a week or sometimes more if they fit into science or social studies units. The poetry notebook was a favourite with my kids.”

# Writing Ideas

Do a mini-lesson every day at the beginning of the writing lesson. A mini-lesson is usually a short, 5-10 minute lesson, is on one subject, and gives the children a useful 'tip' on the writing process. Pick a topic that your children need.

Examples of mini-lessons are:

- the teacher's expectations
- using whisper voices during writing time
- what to do when a writer is 'finished'
- how to use writing folder – purpose and organization
- teacher/student conferences
- editing techniques
- peer editing - how to edit a partner's paper
- publishing choices
- use of computer for writing/publishing
- understanding the writing rubric and levels
- qualities of good writing
- using the stages of the writing process
- getting ideas - topic selection
- different genres and kinds of writing
- prewriting strategies – brainstorming, webbing
- what to do when you are stuck
- use temporary spelling in draft if word is unknown

- finding words – spelling tips
- using the word wall
- using personal dictionaries
- concept of story- beginning, middle, and end
- organization - story sequence, writing on one subject
- leads, endings
- adding descriptions, using interesting words
- using punctuation and capitalization
- dialogue – quotation marks
- sentences – expanding sentences, no run-on sentences
- how/when to revise: adding on, inserting, changing, moving
- reread previous days work
- choosing a good title
- doing suitable illustrations for publishing
- paragraphing
- margins in stories and poems
- stretching a word to hear the sounds

## A Writing Rubric

- \* I remembered to start all of my sentences with a capital letter.
- \* I remembered to end all of my sentences with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- \* I have spelled all the words correctly.
- \* My writing is on one topic.
- \* I used interesting words.



## Writing Hallowe'en Poems

Brainstorm Hallowe'en words, then add an adjective to each. Try to choose interesting words.

Halloween is . . .  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 and me!  
 BOOOOOOOOOO!

Halloween is . . .  
 a spooky graveyard,  
 an ugly black cat,  
 a mean ghost,  
 and me!  
 BOOOOOOOOOO!

Halloween is . . .  
 a spooky Frankenstein,  
 trick-or-treat candy,  
 a scary haunted house,  
 and me!  
 BOOOOOOOOOO!



# Flat Stanley, Etc.

“**Flat Stanley** is a book written by author Jeff Brown. This book is about a young boy named Stanley who is accidentally squished ‘as flat as a pancake’ when a bulletin board falls on him. Stanley is very, very flat but otherwise fine. The story goes on to tell how Stanley discovers some real advantages to being flat. He can slide under doors, go down into sidewalk grates, and even fold himself up small enough to fit into an envelope and be mailed to California for an exciting vacation.

After you read the book to the class, you can also send Flat Stanleys away on trips! This is an exercise in writing a letter, and then in learning about other places as the Stanleys come back to you with lots of information. This can be done between classes or every child in your class can send a Stanley to someone he/she knows who lives in a far-away place. The Flat Stanley goes on an adventure with the person or class, and they write back sharing this adventure and information about where they live. They can take photos of Stanley in interesting places!

The actual Stanley may be used. You can photocopy the picture from the book on tag and colour his clothing or scan the picture to have the original colours. Some teachers prefer that the children each produce a paper figure of themselves, and Flat George and Flat Madison can be sent to a relative or friend in another part of the country or world. A letter such as the following goes with the Stanley:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

In school we read a book about a boy who got squashed by a bulletin board. His name is Flat Stanley. He wanted to go on a trip, so his family folded him up and mailed him to California.

I am mailing my Flat Stanley to you. Please take him somewhere and write me back telling me where he went. If you have pictures or postcards, please send them too! I will take Flat Stanley back to school and share his adventures with my class.

Thank you for helping me with this project. I wish I could fold myself up and visit you!

Love,

When Stanley arrives back with a package of information and other goodies, the class can put a pin on a map to show where he had been and display the information, postcards and photos. This is a good way to learn about other places! Then the class writes a ‘thank-you’ note to the person that sent Stanley and the information back.”

## Pen-Pals

It is good to have a number of valid writing projects during the year. One way to do this is to have pen-pals with a class in another part of the country. To make it more interesting, try to find a class that is rural if you are in an urban school, or urban if you are rural. A class in northern Alberta will find it interesting to write to a class in Toronto and vice versa. Each class can write individual letters, or the class can compose a letter and information to send to the other class as a whole group. It is better not to pair up the children in the two classes, as this may lead to disappointment – rather the class writes to the other class and everyone shares the letters.

Teach correct letter writing form. Discuss interesting things to say and have the letters printed neatly.



## E-Mail Projects

The children can learn the etiquette of e-mail and practice writing on the computer – or you can type their letters into an e-mail message. This saves mailing, and many teachers find it easier to do. The children love to receive messages and like to read them.





# Math

## Beginning of the Year Assessment

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

- Have them print the numbers to 100. Look for children making numbers incorrectly – bottom to top or reversed. See if there are children who have difficulty sequencing numbers.
- Take the children individually or in small groups and give them manipulatives. Show one addition question ( $4 + 5 = \underline{\quad}$ ) for example. See what children do not need the manipulatives and have the answer memorized or can do the sum mentally. Watch the children to see how they use the manipulatives. Children who show the 4 and the 5 with manipulatives, and then count 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 may be having difficulty with understanding, or need to be shown ‘conservation of number’ as they don’t need to count out both numbers, of course.
- Give the children manipulatives and the question  $8 - 5 = \underline{\quad}$ . Watch the children’s methods of reaching the answer.
- Give the children a number line and a similar addition question. Do the children count out the first number and then the second or go directly to the first number (or, preferably, the largest number) and then count on the other number?
- Using the number line, give the children a subtraction question. Again, do they count out the first number or go directly to it? Are they counting down correctly?
- Give the class a drill page of addition questions to 6. Give them 2 minutes to complete it. Then try a page of subtraction questions to 6 and again, give them 2 minutes. Then do a timed sheet of addition questions to 10 and then subtraction questions to 10. Give the children 5 minutes to do each.
- Give the children a ruler and have them measure a pencil. Do they know the word ‘centimetre’?
- Can they tell time to the hour and half hour?
- Have them estimate the number of objects in a jar. Put approximately 25 objects in the jar.
- Ask each child privately how he feels about math. Does he feel he does well at it or does he think it is difficult? If the child feels he has a problem, can he explain why? Sometimes children have a very accurate description of their abilities.

## A Good Idea!

“You know the sounds that manipulatives make on desk or table tops? It can be really nerve racking when the whole class is involved. Well, I have cut the cloth shelf liner material into 12 inch chunks and we use those to soften the sounds. It also makes a convenient way to define the space in which the manipulatives belong. So whenever counters, pattern blocks, number cubes, etc., are needed the students know to get out their ‘math manipulatives work space.’ And they can just be thrown in the wash when necessary.”

## Math Centres

- File Folder Games
- Play ‘War’ with number cards. Play ‘Adding War’ - Child A has a 2 and a 3 ( $2 + 3 = 5$ ); Child B has a 4 and a 6 ( $4 + 6 =$  total of 10). Child B wins. Play ‘Subtraction War’: Child A has a 3 and a 2 (total of 1); Child B has a 6 and a 4 (total of 2). Child B wins. They can play ‘Add the Dice’ or ‘Add the Dominoes’ (same as ‘Adding War’).
- Estimation Station: Have a jar of something and student estimate how much is in the jar.
- Add 2 sides of dominoes and write a number sentence.
- Number words with flash cards. Example: students gets the card ‘ $4 + 3 = 7$ ’ and forms ‘four plus three equals seven.’ with word cards.
- Addition and Subtraction dot-to-dot pictures
- Play ‘Addition Concentration’: Example – flip a ‘3’ over and a ‘ $2 + 1$ ’ over to match.
- Play ‘Subtraction Concentration’: Example – flip a ‘3’ over and a ‘ $4 - 1$ ’ over to match.
- Make geometric houses out of paper. Students are given a certain number of each shape.
- Measure using unifix cubes
- Create patterns using unifix cubes or tiles



# Pumpkin Estimation

- Display the pumpkin.
- Have the students estimate the number of vertical lines on the pumpkin, and record their estimations on chart paper.
- Count all of the lines with the class and record the actual amount. Whose estimation was most accurate?
- How tall is the pumpkin? How many unifix cubes tall is it? (or other non-standard measure)
- How tall is the pumpkin? Have each student record the estimation in centimetres. See who has the closest estimation.
- Discuss the word 'circumference' and trace your finger around the 'fattest' part of the pumpkin.
- Each child cuts a piece of string based on his/her estimate of the circumference.
- Wrap string around the pumpkin and cut it to length. Tape it to a chart. Have each child come up with their piece of string and let them try to wrap it around the pumpkin. The children's strings are now taped in the correct place on a chart labelled 'too short', 'just right' and 'too long'.
- How much does the pumpkin weigh? Weigh several other items and discuss kilograms. Let the children lift the pumpkin and the other objects and estimate the weight.
- Write the predictions in order on a chart, weigh the pumpkin and see who is the closest.
- Cut out the top of the pumpkin and have students come up, look inside, and estimate how many seeds are in it.
- Record estimations.
- Clean out the pumpkin, dry the seeds, and count them the next day with the class. Whose estimate was the closest?
- Let everyone design jack o'lantern faces, using only squares, triangles and circles. Vote for the favourite face and cut it!



# Pumpkin Groups

“Each parent has a group of 4 students and 1 pumpkin. The groups do the following.

- Estimate if the pumpkin in their group is the largest, smallest or the in-between size of all of the pumpkins in the room.
- Estimate the weight of your pumpkin.
- Estimate the number of seeds in your pumpkin.
- Do a group writing activity that begins with 'My pumpkin looks like \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Tell how you would measure around the pumpkin. What materials/tools would you use?

After this is done...they then

- Measure height, distance around, distance across the widest seam of the pumpkin and the length of stem.
- Weigh the pumpkin.
- Cut hole in the top of pumpkin, scoop out the pulp and seeds. Weigh the pulp and the seeds and weigh the empty pumpkin.
- Measure the thickness of the pumpkin meat.
- Estimate the number of seeds after you scoop them out.
- Count the exact number of seeds. (groups of ten)
- Compare estimates to actual measures/counts
- If the pumpkins were donated, write a thank-you note.

This whole process takes about 1 hour give or take 15-20 minutes, depending on the groups. The parents are completely in charge. I just go around and answer procedure questions when needed.”

# Trivia!

“A grade four teacher wanted her students to understand the number one million, so they started counting popcorn kernels. Do you know how much one million kernels of popcorn is? It fills up a child's 6 foot diameter wading pool with 12 inch sides TO THE VERY TOP!”

# Autumn

## Sunflowers!

“I bring in a sunflower from a local field. We compare the seeds in the head to processed sunflower seeds, doing a Venn diagram. I have some paintings of sunflowers, by VanGogh (who did 7 or 8) and another artist, a postcard of O’Keefe’s sunflower, a poster, and fabric with sunflowers. Then the kids draw and paint a sunflower. At the end of the plant unit, we have a plant eating party. I tell the kids we are going to eat roots, leaves, stems, seeds, flowers, and fruit. I send a note home for the parents to send in any vegetables or fruit. I usually bring cauliflower or broccoli so we have flowers. We discuss what part of the plant we are eating.”

*To find ‘O’Keefe’s sunflower’, do a websearch for “A Sunflower From Maggie” by Georgia O’Keefe.*



“I have my class cut out brown circles and trace petals on yellow paper and cut them out, as many as they want. They glue them to the brown circle and then when dry, they flip them over and glue sunflower seeds on the other side. Glue on a long stem with leaves and it looks great!”

“I’ve done several sunflower projects, but like to use yellow handprints instead of regular shaped petals. It looks effective and the kids get a kick out of it. The children trace and cut out their hand-prints.”

“I have discussed Vincent Van Gogh with the sunflower unit. I have the children make a sunflower by doing yellow finger painting for the petals and using a brown construction paper centre which we fringe and glue on sunflower seeds. Add a stem and a couple of green leaves to complete that part. Draw a big vase and add the children’s sunflowers and you have the Grade One Sunflower picture. I have also done the centre the same as above and then added yellow construction paper petals to it until they are big enough to be a sunflower. They turned out very nice and take a little longer to make. I put them along the wall so it looks like a field of sunflowers as you walk down the hall. It was the focal point when parents walked down a hall to the gym for our art show.

There is a book out called *Camille and the Sunflowers* that I like to read to the children when I am doing this unit. I also like to bring in a sunflower for the kids to see but if you can go where they are actually growing it amazes the kids to see how tall they can get (we saw them 12 feet tall one year).

I like to finish Van Gogh by doing the ‘Starry Night in October’. Instead of doing the trees, etc., at the bottom of the picture, I do a fence and pumpkins in the field. All is done in crayons and then washed with thin black paint. It looks lovely.”

Ann

## Easy Autumn Poetry

“We brainstorm about all the summer things that we will say goodbye to and all the fall things we will say hello to. Then they write and illustrate. They are all different and charming. I make a big book and leave it on display for parents who are waiting in the hall for the parent/teacher conferences in October. They are always a big hit!”

Hello, leaves  
Hello, new teachers  
Goodbye, beach  
Goodbye, vacation  
Hooray,  
Hooray!  
It's fall!



## A Name Glyph

“Everyone starts with a circle for middle of the flower with their name on it. Paint or colour craft sticks green - to use as stems. The petals on the flower represent how many letters are in their name. The leaves on the stem represent how many syllables are in their name. You can display them in a pot with floral foam.”

# Autumn Leaves



To preserve the beautiful fall leaves, you can laminate them. You can also use clear contact paper. Peel the paper off one sheet and lay the leaves on it carefully. Then peel the paper off the other sheet and lay it on top of the other. The result is a clear sheet of plastic with the treasures in between. Cut them out and hang them in your windows.

Have the students paint the back side of a real leaf with tempera paint in autumn colours of yellow, red, or orange. Then they press it onto dark coloured paper- preferably black. They may use more than one leaf and different colours of paint in their picture. There is a little trick to it – not too much paint, and when you press, rub away from the centre all the way to the tips. Keep the leaves pliable – don't let them dry out. You can mount the black paper onto another larger piece of red, yellow, or orange for a frame.

Place coloured leaves between two layers of wax paper. Cover with a cloth. Press the fabric with a warm iron sealing the wax paper together with the leaf in between. Cut them out, leaving a narrow margin of wax paper around the leaf edge.

You also can preserve fall leaves in your microwave oven. Choose fresh leaves with the brightest colours. You don't want fallen leaves that already have started to dry. Take the leaves and place them in the microwave on top of two pieces of paper towel. Cover them with one sheet of paper towel. Run the oven for 20 to 60 seconds. The drier the leaves, the less time they will need. Be careful; you could start a fire in your microwave if they cook too long. Let the leaves dry for a day or two, then use a sealant, such as an acrylic craft spray.

Don't forget the children's favourite! Gather a variety of perfectly shaped leaves and place them vein side up on the table. Cover with a sheet of white newsprint or photocopy paper. Remove the covering on broken orange and red wax crayons. The children hold the crayons horizontally and colour over the hidden leaves to reveal the pattern.

## Chrysanthemums

Cut out a vase by folding paper that is cut the height you want the vase to be. With the fold on the right side, draw a very large letter 'S' that begins at the centre of the top edge and ends at the centre of the bottom edge. Cut the folded paper. Glue the vase onto a large paper and draw flower stems. Cut strips of yellow or orange paper 1 -2 cm. wide and 6 -10 cm. long. Glue ends of strips into the centre of the flowers in a circle pattern. When the glue is dry, curl the ends of the strips toward the centre around a pencil. Add green leaves.

## A Tree For All Seasons

This 'Tree for All Seasons' is easy to make and very effective. Cut a strip of brown paper from the large paper rolls 60 – 80 cm. wide and approximately 1 1/2 times longer than you want the tree height to be. Cut 5 cm. strips from one end, ending these 'branches' at the height the 'trunk' begins. Now gather the trunk gently but firmly and crush the paper to make longitudinal wrinkles. Then crush each 5 cm. strip, again to make long wrinkles. Staple the trunk to the bottom of a floor length tackboard, leaving ridges so the trunk is about 30 – 40 cm wide. Staple the branches across one another and weaving in and out so the tree looks full and interesting. Clip off any branch ends that are too long. Decorate the tree with work samples, art projects, leaves and flowers. This can be used all year by continually changing the tree decorations. This is interesting and has a three-dimensional look. Golden and red leaves in the autumn, snowflakes in winter, and flowers or Easter eggs

will make it colourful.



	see	_____.
	feel	_____.
	smell	_____.
	touch	_____.
	hear	_____.
It's Fall!		

# Behaviour Management

## Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful

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

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

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

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

### Classroom Expectations

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



## Give Me Five!

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

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

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



“I have used the *Raise Responsibility* system all year last year with my students and was very happy with it. I have always had a problem with the rewards and punishments, cards and points and marbles in a jar, etc., and knew there had to be something else that would help kids develop accountability and an internal locus of control. I like the Love and Logic philosophy and I think Dr. Marvin's extends and compliments Jim Fay very well. I also use the concepts of a book called *Ways We Want Our Class To Be*, which is a guide for class meetings (which I believe are essential) as well as many of the components of *TRIBES*.

It took about three weeks to introduce the system to the kids last year, and I will follow this same schedule next year, if it fits the kids' needs, of course.

During each class meeting we have a common greeting, which changes from time to time. We then have a topic to address individually. This might be something to do with a social skill (tell about a time someone did something nice for you), a science topic (name your favourite animal and tell why), or perhaps a cultural activity (how does your family celebrate birthdays). We would then have a mini-lesson or a discussion about a topic the class would like to address such as problems on the playground or how we can work more co-operatively.

For the first 12-15 meetings, I do a lot of the leading because they are still learning what to do and because I have specific topics I believe we need to discuss and procedure lessons we need to learn in order to function smoothly. It is a lot like Debbie Miller's gradual release of responsibility, now that I think about it. The one thing I want to do next year is to really turn the meeting over to the kids more than I did last year.

The ‘schedule’ I have outlined for the first few days is:

Day 1 - Discuss and list the ways we want our class to be.

Day 2 - Show how ‘the ways’ fit into the agreements as outlined in the *TRIBES* program. I admit that I have predetermined these (or at least follow the ones in the curriculum of *TRIBES*), but I think it is necessary at this age to do so. After all, I am the teacher and the adult. I do know what it takes to have an environment that contributes to their learning. I believe it is my job to guide them to that knowledge, too, just as I guide them to increase their academic knowledge.

The great part of this is that they always come up with the appropriate behaviours in discussion. Knowing them mentally and doing them actively are two different things for many of them, though, which is where the ‘management’ part comes from for me.

The agreements are: show mutual respect, listen actively, behave politely, appreciate each other, and do our personal best.

Days 3 - 7 - Discuss, record, and role play how each agreement looks, sounds, and feels.

Day 8 - Introduce and discuss the behaviour levels of the *Raise Responsibility* system and link them to the ways we want our class to be and the agreements.

Days 9 - 12 (or however long it takes) - Read and discuss literature that shows the levels of behaviour and our agreements.

Meanwhile, we learn and practice a lot of procedures and routines and do lots of bonding activities. We do this for at least six weeks, but revisit any of these topics or concepts as needed all year long, especially after long breaks.

*Anne*

<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/> **Raise Responsibility System**

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

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

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

# Thanksgiving

“We read the story of *Stone Soup* and each child brought one vegetable. When we put it all together we had a vegetable soup and a good message of community and of being thankful for each other.”

“Send home a big cut-out of a turkey feather made out of tag with each student. Send directions explaining to cover the feather with anything they want - macaroni, feathers, magazine cut-outs, strips of paper, stickers, leaves, wrapping paper, tissue paper, photographs, anything they can imagine. Draw a large body of a turkey on the overhead and cut it out. Staple the different feathers they brought in behind your body to make a magnificent turkey.”



## Turkey Glyph

Each child colours an individual turkey that tells a lot about his Thanksgiving dinner. On the turkey's body the child can write some things he is thankful for.

Here is the key:

### Head

orange - eating Thanksgiving dinner at your house

red - eating Thanksgiving dinner somewhere else

### Body

dark brown - likes dark meat

light brown body - likes light meat

yellow body - doesn't like turkey

### Wattle

red - likes gravy, orange - doesn't like gravy

### Beak

orange - having guests for dinner

yellow - not having guests for dinner

**Feathers** - use only the colours that are true about you

red - likes cranberries

green - likes green beans

yellow - likes corn

dark brown - likes stuffing

light brown - likes mashed potatoes

blue - likes buns

orange - likes pumpkin pie

## And Another .....

“I made turkey body patterns, heads, beaks, feet and feather patterns from tag. The kids traced the patterns on the correct coloured construction paper and cut them out and assembled them.

1. For the head – How long do you read each day? 0-10 min. (brown), 10-20 min. (orange), 20 or more (red)
2. For the beak – How do you like to read? by yourself (orange), with a friend (yellow), or your parents read to you (brown)
3. For the feet. What do you prefer to read? fact( red), fiction (orange) One girl really couldn't decide as she reads both consistently so she made one foot red and the other orange!
4. For the body – Would you like to receive a book as a gift? yes (dark brown), no (light brown)
5. They could choose the feather colours from orange, red, and yellow construction paper. On the feathers they wrote the titles of their favourite books.”

## Food for the Feast

“We make butter in little babyfood jars. We put whipping cream in the jars and the kids shake them until butter forms. I usually put on jazzy music so they shake with rhythm – it seems to make the time go faster! Add a bit of salt when it is done.”

“We talk a bit about cranberries and how you can tell they are ripe by bouncing them. We'll do some bouncing and graph the number of ripe ones and not so ripe ones. Try to get the video ‘Cranberry Bounce’ ..it's fabulous! It shows life on a cranberry farm and shows how they flood the field to harvest their crop...and of course they have a wonderful song about how cranberries that are ripe bounce! Try putting cranberries in a glass jar and then have the kids predict what will happen when you add water to the jar....it's fun!”

*Barb*

# Information for Parents

## Information Packets

“I make a cover sheet to glue onto a file folder for each student. (I always make extra folders for move-in's to use during the year). Each year the cover sheet has a title page decorated with my year long theme and my name, the year, and a welcome.

Inside I place the hand outs from the school. I also make sure I have a bus rider/car rider/walker form so I know how they will travel. There is a welcome letter and I also include my classroom procedures/rules sheet, and each student and parent must sign that form. I also usually include some kind of back to school poem and information on how important parents are. There is a page on the importance of reading at home and the daily expectations for reading and homework.”

## Wish Lists

“I usually make an apple tree with requests written on apples and the parents are asked to ‘pick an apple and donate the item’ if they would like to help out. Some are things to purchase and some are ‘free’ - containers from margarine or sour cream, egg cartons, etc.”

“My year-long theme is going to be “Travelling to New Heights” and I am going to make a bulletin board with hot air balloons and put my wish/requests on make small clouds above them – I might even be able to find post-it clouds already made at Staples or a teachers’ store. You want to have something that can easily be ‘grabbed’ by adults to remind them of what they have offered to donate.”

“I have a ‘Please Lend A Helping Hand’ Bulletin board outside my room. On small die-cut hands I write things that need to be purchased, things that can be done at home (stapling, cutting, etc...), and when I need volunteers to come into the classroom. This way there is something for anyone who wants to help. I have a sign up sheet and whenever an adult takes a hand, they sign up on the sheet so that I know who has volunteered for what. I have done this for about four years now and it has been wonderful!”

Here are some ideas for a wish-list! Disposable cameras, water-colour markers, bottled water, pencils, glue, used puzzles with all of the pieces, buttons, old keys, game pieces (for math tubs), kleenex, baby wipes, old cookie sheets, magnetic letters, hotel sized soap, ziplock bags, clothespins, clear bingo chips, old calendars (for the pictures).

“I’d ask for a used microwave, Ziplock freezer and sandwich bags, shoe boxes (for dioramas), clean, mismatched socks (to hold chalk and be used as small chalkboard erasers), plastic spoons (for those that forget to pack them in lunches), wrapping paper, curling ribbon, used greeting cards (the fronts of the cards only, they can be used for art, or as story starters), styrofoam egg cartons (great for using and storing paint), fabric and ribbon scraps, bread clips, all kinds of seeds, beans, potting soil and plastic cups.”

## The Class Parent

“Your class parent will be a volunteer. I ask my class parent to think about the tasks that I do that are non-instructional that they could do. For example, they organize the class parties within my guidelines. I give them the time block and I am specific as to food and what will happen. The class parent calls other parents to arrange food, etc. I've also used class parents to make reminder phone calls about a special event and find volunteers if needed. Class parents also arrange for any items that I need contributed for a special project.

My room moms co-ordinate field trips, handle scholastic orders, organize parent volunteers for craft projects or other projects, call parents, plan parties, etc.”



# Tips From Teachers

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

## Iram's Tips

- I snip the top corner of all my master copies so I don't ever accidentally hand out my last copy of something. *(Note: clip the corners off flash cards, too – if you do they are always right-way-up.)*
- I keep a list of parents' names and phone numbers by the phone in my classroom as well as a pen and a notepad (I know this is simple, but I learned this one the hard way, writing on skin...)
- I keep an extra pair of kid-sized jogging pants and a t-shirt. You would not believe how many times I've had kids fall in mud, throw up on themselves, etc. I just give the clothes to the kids, they change in the bathroom, and their parents wash them at home and return them a.s.a.p.
- I put a piece of tape on the floor about 3 feet away from the class sink and this is where the kids begin their line to wait to use the sink. This is so they don't crowd around the person who is using it. It encourages them to use it **one** at a time.
- Keep scissors, glue stick and a felt pen in your mail box in the office. My classroom this year was miles away from the photocopier, and having these supplies close by saved me so much time.
- Do a unit on nutrition right away. I always get my kids disgusted by junk food, so most of them never bring it in their lunches. Even if their parents pack it for them, they are too embarrassed to take it out of their bags! I don't even let them bring juice boxes (most of them are sugar anyway and I hate the sticky mess), they bring water instead.
- Put a dry erase note board by the door to write down upcoming events. I used to write reminders on paper posters and then throw them away. What a waste...
- Get your kids to make their own lunch/snack mats. They draw a picture on a piece of paper, glue it on a larger piece of tagboard, and get them all laminated. This way, your tables/desks don't get dirty. The kids clean their own mats.



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

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

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

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

# More Tips

## Tips from Sharon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I do my daily plans on the computer for the week. It is easy to make quick changes and the finished copy always looks perfect!”





# Hallowe'en

"We were donated enough small pumpkins so each child could have one. The kids decorated their pumpkins with glitter glue, glue and glitter, feathers, paper, felt, materials, etc..., everything we could find!"

"My class did a service project last year that was fun. We co-ordinated a Halloween costume drive for poor children. We must have collected boxes and boxes of mostly used but some new costumes. It's a great way for parents to find something to do with outgrown costumes, old dress up clothes, etc."

[http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/reading/Halloween\\_RT.htm](http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/reading/Halloween_RT.htm)

This is a wonderful Reader's Theatre script for Hallowe'en, called *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything!*

"To make a neat ghost: Use a toothpick to attach a small styrofoam ball to the top of a styrofoam cone. Use popsicle sticks for arms. Dip a square of white cloth (handkerchief size) in liquid starch and then drape it over the ghost shape. Let dry over night. Add googly eyes the next day! These make great ghosts. Try making a really large one!"

## Spiders

"I love doing a spider unit, and always start it with the reading of 'Charlotte's Web'. I love to see kids who are terrified of spiders (and creepy crawlies) actually start looking for the critters during and after our study of spiders!"

Are you afraid of spiders? That fear is called Arachnophobia.

Spiders are not insects. Spiders have 8 legs and insects have 6. Most spiders have eight eyes, and they do not have antennae or wings. Spiders belong to a class of animals called arachnids. A spider's body is divided into two sections, the abdomen and the cephalothorax. The legs, eyes, and mouth parts are all in the cephalothorax. Most spiders have poison glands and fangs in their jaws, which they use to inject poison into insects. The venom paralyzes or kills their prey. Spiders usually have six fingerlike silk glands called spinnerets located beneath their abdomen. The silk comes from inside the spider's body as a liquid, thicker than water. When a spider wants to make a web, it squeezes the silk out of the two small holes at the back of its body called spinnerets. The moment it hits the air, the silk dries into a line that looks like a long strand of hair.

### What's for Lunch

A spider invited  
a fly for lunch  
crunch  
crunch  
crunch.

### The Spider

The spider loves to entertain  
Her neighbours and relations,  
But woe to any bugs or flies  
Who accept her invitation!  
So have a care, be wary of  
The most accomplished spinner.  
When she murmurs, 'Be my guest!'  
What she means is, 'Be my dinner!'



No wonder spiders have bare feet  
To run their cobweb races.  
Suppose they had to have eight shoes,  
How would they tie their laces?

Trace around the left hand and the right hand with the fingers spread, leaving out the thumb. Cut them out and glue them together, overlapping the palms with the fingers to the sides as there are the spider's legs. The palm is the body. Add googly eyes.

Talk about all the different webs that you have seen. Then ask the children to make a web using spaghetti or yarn on black paper.

Make a glue and glitter spider web (make glue lines thick) using the extra pieces of laminating sheet as a base.

1. Glue a big plus sign. 2. Glue an X in the middle of the plus sign (like an asterisk \*) 3. Glitter and let dry. 4. Glue a Spiral from middle of plus and X sign ( like the @ sign). 5. Glitter and let dry. 6. Carefully peel spider webs from laminating and hang in window. 7. Don't forget to make a lovely paper spider to sit on the web.



# Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

You have a boy in your Grade Two classroom. He is a slightly withdrawn child who seems to be a 'loner'. He appears to have an average or higher intelligence, and he may have slightly inarticulate speech. You notice that his pencil grip is immature and he appears to have difficulty with simple fine motor tasks, although he can explain to you how the task should be done. Even after a year in Grade One he seems to have difficulty printing letters accurately on lines. His drawing is very immature, while his vocabulary is well within the average range for his age. He may simply refuse to participate in P.E. exercises or games. He runs awkwardly. He becomes stressed or confused if routines change. His parents tell you that he has always been a bit shy and that he is "just not athletic".

It is very possible that the student described above has Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). Developmental Co-ordination Disorder is described as an impairment, immaturity or disorganization of movement. The term DCD is now replacing the labels "Clumsy Child Syndrome" and "motor learning difficulties". In the past these children may have been described as "klutzy", or "nerdy". Up to one child in 10 is affected by DCD. It is therefore likely that every class will have a child with this disorder in varying degrees of severity.

Teachers may recognize the following symptoms in the classroom:

- Immature speech or articulation.
- Immature fine and gross motor skills. The child will have difficulty learning new motor tasks. He/she may appear clumsy and awkward. The child may run awkwardly and not have understanding of his body in space. He may have small motor problems with printing and drawing.
- A child with normal intelligence may have difficulty in planning and organizing his thoughts. He may have difficulty processing more than one request. He cannot multi-task.
- The child may have difficulty with reading, writing and spelling and some math.
- Behavioural/emotional problems – difficulty joining in with peers, low self esteem, P.E. avoidance, acting out during art lessons, trouble coping with free time, isolating. This area is especially important. Children with DCD are capable of growing into fully functional adults, however, confidence and self esteem issues can lead to larger problems than the disability itself.

If any of the above symptoms are noted it is important that the child is assessed by a paediatrician and an occupational therapist and physiotherapist.

It is quite possible for a child with DCD to be successful in school. It may be helpful to have a meeting with the parents and any other professionals working with the child to discuss the specific difficulties and strategies that work. Some strategies that are helpful working with children with DCD in the classroom are:

- 1. Allow extra time:** Try to provide the child with enough time to complete fine motor activities such as math, printing, and artwork. If speed is necessary, be willing to accept a less accurate product, or adapt the exercise. Children with DCD do not deal well with tasks when they are feeling stressed, so timed tasks may be especially difficult.
- 2. Use repetition:** Children with DCD do not learn physical skills naturally as other children do, and need a significant amount of repetition and practice before a new physical skill or movement becomes automatic.
- 3. Allow for variability:** It is important to remember that a child's ability will be variable day to day, sometimes even hour to hour. They may not be able to do something today that you saw them do perfectly well yesterday.
- 4. Provide motivation and praise success:** Motivation is key – a child with DCD may be quite ready physically to learn a new skill, but he may be overly cautious. A behavioural reward program can be quite effective in getting over "I can't do it".
- 5. Create an appropriate learning space:** A desk that allows the child to sit with his feet flat on the floor and to maintain good posture is important. The immediate workspace should have minimal distractions. He works best in a private space that he can organize in his own way – other children may disturb his task planning.
- 6. Remember the goal:** It is important to always remember the goal of any activity. For example, if the point of an exercise is not printing, do not ask a child with DCD to copy from the board or from a book. If the goal is creative writing, ignore messy handwriting.
- 7. Break it down:** In all tasks, both in the classroom and the gym, ensure that each task is broken down into small, achievable parts. Simply including a child with DCD in the class explanation of a game and then expecting them to join in will only cause anxiety and/or isolation or acting out. Children with DCD need to learn things in small steps, where complete understanding of one concept is the foundation for learning the next.

Of particular importance is the child's reaction to functioning at a lower level of competence than his peers, despite his intelligence level. It is important to focus on the individual strengths that he will have. As the child learns each new skill, he will maintain it. At a point in adolescence or early adulthood, the signs of DCD will become much less intrusive. However, loss of confidence and self-esteem can be carried into the teen and adulthood years. Teachers, along with parents and others involved, can play a vital role in both the skill acquisition of these children as well as the growth of their confidence and self-esteem.

# Websites

<http://www.ezschool.com/games/alienaddition.html>

<http://www.ezschool.com/games/aliensubtraction.html>

If you have classroom or computer lab internet access, these are good sites to practice math facts to 18.

<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/math/moremath.htm>

Great games your kids can play on-line to reinforce math skills

[http://www.theteacherspot.com/readers\\_theatre.html](http://www.theteacherspot.com/readers_theatre.html)

This gives you some links to Reader's Theatre scripts and information.

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

Try some M.O.O.S.E. books this year! Here is a lot of useful information.

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems.html>

Go to Iram's site for poems.

[http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/sites\\_for\\_teachers.htm](http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/sites_for_teachers.htm)

Look under Cathy's 'Classroom Management' section!



# Using Technology

Using a database is great! If you have MS Word on your computer, you will also have MS Works – and Works gives you the database. When you use a database for marks, for example, the children's names would be in Field 1, and then each set of marks goes into a separate field. You can pop the marks in easily with the database in 'List View', and then you can sort the marks in one field into ascending or descending order, etc. You can sort each field in numerical order or alphabetical order.

This is also great for your library book list. Put the book name in field 1, author in field 2, subject in field 3, and levels in field 4. Add other fields if you wish. When you are finished and would like all the books in Level 7, just sort that field and there they are. You can sort the authors list alphabetically, and all the books by that author will come up. The books can be added in any order and at any time. This is a great resource when it is finished!

"I have my library books on a database and update it frequently. I have these fields (some of the fields are shortened to one word): title; author; theme; location (school or home); AR level – not important to me, but sometimes helpful; how many copies we have; and whether we have an audio tape to go with it. I print out an alphabetical title list and a theme list. These two lists are in notebooks in my room and at home. Every two years I check the lists against the books."

## Using the Computer in the Classroom

The teachers on the 'grade\_one' listserv were asked how they use the computer in the classroom and these are some of the answers.

Newsletters to parents, dayplans, weekly schedule, yearly plans, letters to parents, writing report cards, banners and posters for the classroom, cards for the children and staff (Print Shop), worksheets, keeping in touch with parents via e-mail, keeping inventory, staff communication, Principal's messages, keeping records of children's marks and anecdotal remarks on a daily basis, nametags, flashcards, class lists, typing and printing books for the children to read, and making books from their stories, attendance, certificates, spelling lists, photos from the digital camera ..... etc.!

On the internet they find poetry, worksheets, units, awards, and great ideas.

# Odds and Ends

## Word Families List

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

## Morning Five

“The ‘Morning Five’ is what the students do when they first arrive in the morning. 1. Unpack their book bags. 2. Leave their homework folder open on top of their desks. (I check book logs on Mondays also so they have them out on Monday. On Wednesday they have out their poetry notebooks for me to see the current poem decorated.) 3. Put their name on the lunch count. 4. Check in their home reading books. 5. Hang their book bags in their cubbies. They then begin working in their math boxes while I quickly check homework, notes, lunch money, etc.”

## Sharing

“The children are invited to bring in things anytime that relate to what we are learning in social studies. Once each term the children decorate a lunch sized paper bag and these are sent home. The children are to put an item in the bag that tells something about themselves. We have a ‘sharing day’ and I hope all children will take a turn. For each sharing turn, three questions or ‘kind comments’ are taken from the audience. The child sharing chooses the friends to ask questions. I find that the items brought in get more interesting as the year goes on.”

“I do a rotating schedule, with two children sharing each week on Tuesday and Friday. The students know in advance their share days for the rest of the year, and they then prepare something special to teach the class. It can be something they know how to do or make, or something they've prepared, or a special collection with a real explanation. Some things we've seen have been: one child brought in and played his keyboard, another made an exploding volcano, one did a little research report on Egypt, one taught us how to do finger weaving and we all made belt-like things, one taught us all about coin collecting and had a book w/coins and showed how to research each kind of coin. This week the share was a book of poetry a girl had written – the kids are so intrigued and listen intently and ask questions and give compliments and then the ‘sharing’ child gets to be famous for something, like being the ‘Egypt expert’ or ‘volcano maker’ or whatever. It has been so great. and it is only two days a week, and each child gets a turn every two or three months.”

“I have the kids write the letter their show and tell starts with (on the white board). They then are to read three clues about their item (which is to be hidden inside a bag). They are to do this writing activity at home. It's a great writing activity for them to do. The kids then guess what it is. Some kids bring in great clues – and if they don't have their written clues, they can't share it!”

## Dictionary Skills

“I photocopy a couple pages from a dictionary and pick a word from them. I show my kids how to use the guide words at the top to help them narrow down where exactly the word would be. I show them everything that the entry contained. After that, I throw them to the wolves! I give them three words each week. I pick ones from our science book. They have to give the part of speech, definition, guide words from the page and the page number they found it on. They have to finish it before they go to centres, and it is amazing how quickly they catch on!”



# More Odds and Ends

The teachers of the 'grade\_one' listserv gathered this amusing and useful list of things to keep in your desk.

## **The Things That Saved You Because They Were in Your Desk**

***Inspirational:*** Pictures of family and friends (don't forget pets!), pictures of MY kids (I suppose I should have one of my husband, too), framed certificates/diplomas/credentials, a book (my friend gave me) with inspirational stories about teachers and teaching, an assortment of cards: birthday (for friends you forgot), thank you, congratulations (baby, etc.), sympathy and my favourite moral support cards (everybody needs one now and then)

***Office Supplies:*** Box of envelopes, extra pencils already sharpened, small hand held pencil sharpener (I can sharpen a pencil and keep teaching, too...), stickers and awards, extra printer ink for those emergency printing needs, string, scissors (at least 2 pairs as I lose one all the time), pen (extra one that I wear around my neck so I don't lose it), extra stapler

***Food Needs:*** CHOCOLATE!! (why not start with the most important – M&Ms are good, they don't melt or go funny), treats for self and kids such as gummi bears, mints/TicTacs/ hard candy, snacks/granola bars, tea bags/herbal tea bags, change for the coke/snack machine, lunch money, pop/water bottle/juice boxes, gum, can of soup (for when you forget your lunch)

***Emergency:*** First aid kit, band-aids, pain medication, (Tylenol, Advil, Excedrin, Aspirin), ricola throat drops, cough drops, Imodium A-D, Echinacea, safety pins, Goo Gone, some spot remover (packaged in individual towelettes), a spare vehicle key taped up on the underside of one of the drawers (just in case I accidentally leave the lights on, but have already locked the keys inside, or, um, something dumb like that), a long distance phone card - because you can't use the school phone to call long distance, hammer, screw driver, needle-nosed pliers, tape measure

***Toiletries:*** Lip gloss/lip balm, hand lotion/cream, sunscreen (for when you take those wigglers outside), hand sanitizer (kills germs without water or towels), perfume, hairbrush/comb, nail file/fingernail clippers, toothbrush/toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss, travel size contact lenses solution/case, baby wipes, mini bottle of eyeglass cleaner, mirror, ponytail holders/a scrunchy to pull up my hair, hair bands and barrettes (for those little girls who need their hair put up), deodorant, feminine hygiene products, a can of Lysol (I sometimes spray the room once they leave at lunch just to freshen the place up)

***Clothing Related:*** Key chain that goes on my wrist or hangs around my neck, extra pair of reading glasses, needle and thread, sunglasses, cardigan/ sweater/ shawl, Cling Free Spray, mittens, hat/scarves, a smock or apron for messy work, a clean shirt, extra pair of hose, extra pair of socks, pair of comfy shoes (for when you make the mistake of wearing those stupid shoes that hurt your feet to school), pair of slippers (under the desk), extra underwear, an umbrella

## *The P. S. L. System*

Primary Success is working to perfect a system where the learning needs of every child in the class will be targeted. We call it the Primary Success Learning System, and the P is also for Phonics, the S for Sight Word Reading and the L for Literature. With these three separate strands taught every day, teachers will find that the children will be better readers. The teacher will be able to see the strengths of each child and teach to those strengths. The skills taught in the phonics and sight words strands will come together in the literature session and all the children will be reading sooner and with greater skill.

If you have been teaching only one of these methods, teaching three different reading strands each day may seem like a difficult task! We like to schedule phonics for 30 minutes immediately after the calendar time in the morning, teaching the whole class. The sight word strand is then taught until recess. The sight word strand may need grouping, depending on the children's abilities. The literature strand will include teacher read-alouds, a guided reading lesson and independent reading. This is usually taught for the first hour in the afternoon.

Teachers who begin to use this system will use the 'Successful Phonics' and the 'Sight Reading – Start Right' programs for the first two strands. Both of these are comprehensive programs and are easy to teach. The literature strand gives the teacher autonomy to choose books that are suitable for the class and teach them in his/her own way.



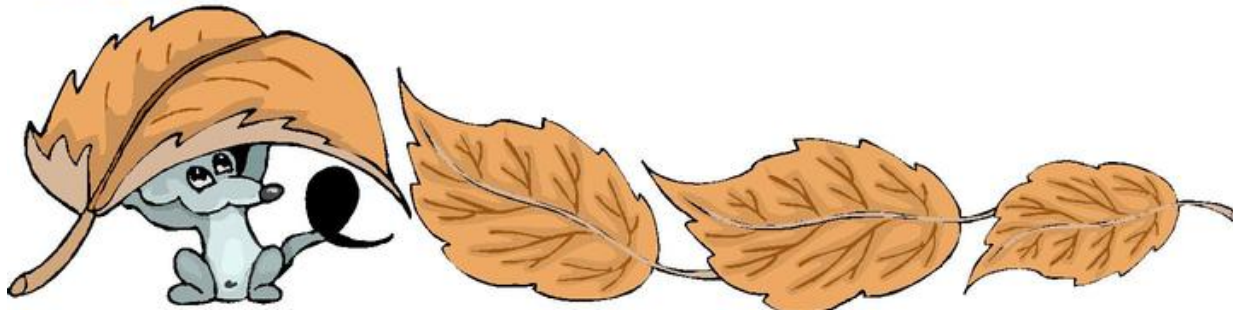
Dear Colleagues,

This has been busy summer, with all my family visiting and new resources in progress. Most of the summer has been spent at my computer, but as my desk looks over the sea it hasn't been too taxing.....

I have also been doing work to organize the PSL System so that it will work efficiently. I am looking for teachers who would like to try the three strand reading program. I need feedback and suggestions as people actually do it. If you are interested in piloting the PSL program, I would help out in any way possible and be your associate through e-mail. Contact me if you are interested and we will discuss it further. I would appreciate it very much!

The Canadian Primary Success website is being properly set up with a shopping cart and safe credit card entry. It should be functioning by the end of August, all going according to plan. Stop by and have a look!

Jean



**T'was the Night of Thanksgiving**

'Twas the night of Thanksgiving, I just couldn't sleep.  
I tried counting backwards, I tried counting sheep.  
The leftovers beckoned - the dark meat and white -  
But I fought the temptation with all of my might,  
Tossing and turning with anticipation,  
The thought of that snack was infatuation.  
So, I raced to the kitchen, flung open the door  
And gazed at the fridge full of goodies galore.  
I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,  
Pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.  
I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,  
'Til all of a sudden, I rose off the ground.

I crashed through the ceiling, floating into the sky  
With a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie.  
But, I managed to yell as I soared past the trees,  
'Happy eating to all, pass the cranberries, please!'  
May your stuffing be tasty, may your turkey be plump.  
May your taters and gravy have nary a lump,  
May your yams be delicious,  
May your pies take the prize,  
May your Thanksgiving dinner stay off of your thighs.  
And may your Thanksgiving be blessed.

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**Primary Success**  
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cess@shaw.ca  
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