



# Share-One



September – October 2000

Issue #27

## A New School Year!

The challenge of the new school year has arrived, and most Grade One teachers are happy and excited to be back in the classroom. It is wonderful to plan new programs and methods, and to think of ways in which our teaching can be improved this year. Each September we begin anew, with a bare classroom and new little faces coming in the door. We are lucky to have this renewal! Wouldn't an "ordinary" job be boring?

Grade One teachers are the most important people in the school system! If our children learn to read and love to read, they will likely do well all through school, and (is this extrapolating too much?) in life! We teach not only the beginnings of reading and math but the attitudes towards learning that will either help or hinder each child's progress.

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

Jean

### First is Best

Yes, I teach Grade One.

Where else would a handsome and very young man put his arms around me and say, "Do you know that I love you?"

Where else could I wear the same dress day after day and be told each time that it is pretty?

Where else could I walk up and down aisles and have warm hands touch me?

Where else could I have the privilege of wiggling loose teeth and receive a promise that I may pull them when they are loose enough?

Where else would the future look as bright as it does amid an energetic group to whom nothing is impossible?

Where else could I guide the first letter formations of a chubby little hand that may some day write a book or an important document?

Where else could I forget my own aches and pains because of so many cut fingers, scratched knees, bumped heads and broken hearts that need care?

Where else would my mind have to stay so young as with a group whose attention span is so short that I must always keep a 'bag of tricks up my sleeve'?

Where else could I feel such pleasure as I do each year when, because of something I have done, little children learn to read?

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# Poetry for September and October

## Fall

From September to December  
What's the season?

Fall!

Red leaves start to

Fall!

Brown leaves start to

Fall!

Gold leaves start to

Fall!

Orange leaves start to

Fall!

Yellow leaves start to

Fall!

After all, it's

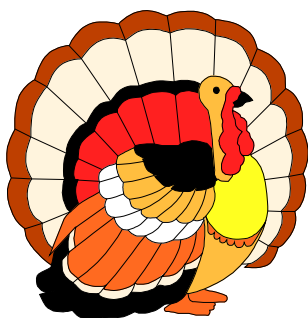
Fall!

Winter is cold.  
Summer is hot.  
Spring is wet  
And Fall is not.



## My Turkey

I have a turkey  
Big and fat;  
He spreads his tail  
And walks like that.  
His daily corn  
He would not miss;  
When he talks,  
It sounds like this:  
Gobble, gobble, gobble, gobble.



## Our World

*by Meish Goldish*

## Growing Tall

The yellow sunflower grows  
so high.  
It almost seems to touch the  
sky.  
Mother says I'm growing,  
too.  
Sunflower, will I be as big as  
you?

## School

School bells are ringing, loud and  
clear;  
Vacation's over, school is here.  
We hunt our pencils and our books,  
And say goodbye to fields and brooks,  
To carefree days of sunny hours,  
To birds and butterflies and flowers.  
But we are glad school has begun,  
For work is always mixed with fun.  
When autumn comes and the weather is  
cool,  
Nothing can take the place of school.

## October Time

October time is pumpkin time.  
The nicest time of year,  
When all the pumpkins light their  
eyes  
And grin from ear to ear.



## Happy Hallowe'en

It's late and we are sleepy,  
The air is cold and still.  
Our jack-o-lantern grins at us  
Upon the window sill.

We're stuffed with cake and candy  
And we've had a lot of fun,  
But now it's time to go to bed  
And dream of all we've done.

We'll dream of ghosts and goblins  
And of witches that we've seen,  
And we'll dream of trick or treating  
On this Happy Hallowe'en.



## A Pumpkin

*Pauline Peck*



# Poetry to Begin the Year

A B C D E  
 School is where I want to be.  
 F G H I J  
 Learning to read and write each day.  
 K L M N O  
 Boys and girls I want to know.  
 P Q R S T  
 Sharing books with you and me.  
 U V W X Y  
 Now it's time to say goodbye.  
 Z Z Z Z Z  
 I have letters in my head!



## Hurray Day by Patricia Hubbell

**To Be Six**  
 I can say the alphabet  
 Right through from A to Z.  
 And print my name, so nice and neat-  
 Do you want to see?  
 I can count  
 By ones and twos,  
 Ride a bike  
 And tie my shoes.  
 It's super duper  
 To be six-  
 So tall and smart  
 And full of tricks!



## Off to School We Go

(Tune: A-hunting We Will Go)

Off to school we go,  
 Oh, it's off to school we go,  
 We'll take our lunch and ride the bus,  
 With everyone we know.  
 Off to school we go,  
 Oh, it's off to school we go,  
 We'll learn our ABC's and more,  
 With everyone we know.

Here we are together,  
 Together, together,  
 Here we are together,  
 Back at school again  
 There's \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
 Here we are together,  
 Back at school again.



## Lining Up

Every time I get in line,  
 I stand so straight and tall;  
 I keep my arms down by my side,  
 I do not move at all.

My head is facing forward,  
 My eyes look straight ahead;  
 My lips are closed, my eyes are open,  
 Listening to what is said.

*A Grade One teacher says, "I plan to send the following poem home with my students the first day of school." This could also go in the first class newsletter sent home...*

## There's Nothing in My Bag Today

Today I did my math and science,  
 I toasted bread.  
 I halved and quartered.  
 I counted, measured, used my eyes,  
 and ears and head.  
 I added and subtracted on the way,  
 I used a magnet, blocks, and  
 memory tray.  
 I learned about a rainbow and how  
 to weigh.  
 So please don't say, anything in your  
 bag today?

You see I'm sharing as I play.  
 I learned to listen and  
 speak clearly when I talk,  
 To wait my turn, and when inside to  
 walk.  
 To put my thoughts into a phrase,  
 To guide a crayon through a maze.  
 To find my name and write it down,  
 To do it with a smile and not a  
 frown.  
 To put my pasting brush away,  
 So please don't say, what, nothing in  
 your bag today?

I've learned about a snail and a  
 worm,  
 Remembering how to take my turn.  
 Helped a friend when he was stuck,  
 Learned that water runs off a duck.  
 I looked at words from left to right,  
 Agreed to differ, not to fight.  
 So please don't say, did you only  
 play today?



# Getting Ready -Things To Do

1. Make name tags for desks, coat hooks, bulletin boards, door, necklaces, helpers; on magnets, clothes pins and/or tongue depressors.
2. Opening Exercises corner – Make or buy a calendar, weather chart, days of the week, months, today is ....., days in school chart, birthday chart, and tack up.
3. Charts – alphabet, colour words, numbers and number words, poems, direction words, etc.
4. Letters to parents and/or children.
5. Prepare your computer files for each child and a data-base with emergency numbers, addresses, birthdays, etc.
6. Rules chart
7. Review curriculum outcomes.
8. Prepare a data-base or binder for marks and remarks.
9. Know your programs and have at least one week's lessons, worksheets, flashcards, games, etc., ready.
10. Have art supplies ready and paper supplies organized.
11. Have plans for the handling of supplies.
12. Have a decorated bulletin board with the children's names.
13. One bulletin board should be covered and outlined, ready to put up children's work in the first week.
14. Organize the classroom library, displaying books.
15. Have books chosen to read to the class in the first week.
16. Have a handy shelf for teacher's manuals, curriculum guides and useful books. Put boxes of themes and teacher "stuff" out of sight. If you have no room to put them out of sight, perhaps there is another place in the school – or leave them at home until you need them!
17. Organize your own supplies – pencils, pens, ruler, chalk, scissors, glue, stapler, etc.
18. Have file folders labeled with the children's names and portfolios ready.
19. Understand your procedures – entering the room, bathroom, sharpening pencils, lining up, taking drinks, etc.
20. And after all that – relax and be rested for the big day!



**"My one bit of advice about Grade One (and any grade) - if you set high expectations for them and teach them to be responsible for their own work, you will be amazed at what they can do...even at this age."**

**"The best advice I was ever given is to be prepared for the next day before you leave. You never know when you'll be late or when the copy machine will be broken! This also makes it so much easier for a sub to come into your room."**

*Melissa*

**"At the beginning of the year we learn this song: (To the tune of: If You're Happy and you Know It)**

The first thing on your paper is your name! (2 times)  
The first thing on your paper  
The first thing on your paper  
The first thing on your paper is your name!

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

*Monica*



# Advice For a New Grade One Teacher



**Here we go!**

"Congratulations on the new job in Grade One! I am sure you have heard about 4-Blocks. I would suggest getting *The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks*, and *the Phonics Month to Month* for first grade. If nothing else, go for the Phonics one because it really does work!!!

"Is there another Grade One teacher in your school? If you can make friends with her/him and try to match what she is doing for a year....perhaps ask your principal to assign someone to you as a mentor/teacher so they know it is their "responsibility" to help you out....if you are the only Grade One teacher, perhaps you can find someone in a school near yours ... it is nice to have someone to bounce things off. If nothing else, talk to the Kindergarten and Grade Two teachers to find out where they are at the end of Kindergarten and where they should be at the beginning of Grade Two.

"You need to establish discipline, so know what you are going to do in that area. When the children first come in they are so eager and will really listen to you, so try to think about procedures and how you want to do things, where you want things to go, routines for collecting papers, etc.

"If you get a routine going, it helps...It makes you and the children feel more secure.

"You should think in short segments, especially at first. Try to have the children printing or working at their desks for a short time, then have them doing something active, or moving to the rug....just vary the activity.

"I always start out each day with some type of paper activity on their desk (called wake-up work). In the very beginning it is a colouring sheet to match my theme on my welcoming bulletin board and/or lockers. Those who finish early may look at books on the rug or read around the room. At my signal they are to put away anything they have out and to head back to their desks. Give lots of compliments when you see this happening... the others will want you to say nice things about them. After the announcements, etc., I do a morning sentence on the board about them. e.g. I draw a name from a can of popsicle sticks, or clothespins, or slips of paper...whatever so I have all of their names... Then I ask that child to tell me something about himself/herself, and I give examples at first like...What is your favourite thing to do outside? Where did you go this summer? What is your favourite cartoon? etc. Then I might write on the board, "Sam likes to ride on his bike." The child comes up and gets a pointer and points to each word as s/he says it. I help a lot here at first so they know how to do it. The first full day of school I put a sentence up about myself and use that. I put up a small picture to help them remember what it is about. I pretend I am a student and I go up and get the pointer and show them what to do. I take time to explain this because it is powerful for teaching students about word boundaries (as I write the sentences later, I talk my way through it and say things such as, "I need to leave a space here because this is a new word.") After the child reads it successfully with or without my help then we all clap, or do a silent cheer, or give a round of applause, etc. Then we ALL read it as the child points (I will hold their hand and help them point if they really don't get it yet) and we go SLOWLY and really point at EACH word. Then each child gets to pat his head or tap her shoulder and say, "Good Job!"...or something like that. I only do one sentence a day...4 days a week. The fifth day we do things with the sentence like colour the first letter green because it is the beginning of the sentence AND a person's name.....and green means go. We colour the period red because it is the end of the sentence and means stop. We MIGHT chose a sight word and colour it yellow every time we can find it. Keep it simple at first.

"Then we go to the rug for calendar time...(this is a whole big thing of its own and has lots of learning attached to it...counting, patterns...lots of things. I start phonics work right away...mostly letter identification and sounds at first...I try to find interesting ways to do this.

"These are just some ideas to get started. Use your curriculum guides. Make sure you fully understand the goals and objectives for Grade One. Get all of the manuals that are available for your grade. If you have someone to work with, find out if they have a yearly plan showing when to do certain things. See if they always do a certain unit at a certain time.

"At the first of the month, always do a fill in calendar WITH the children.

"I've been doing this for a long time, and I still get nervous on the first day/week of school....I think of it as positive energy...but those first days are important. You'll be fine!"

Ada



# Bulletin Boards To Begin the Year

## Grade One Fits Me to a Tee!

"The first day I take a picture of each child standing by a little easel type chalkboard on which I write, 'My name is \_\_\_\_\_.' Kids write in their names. There is a tee-shirt cut out of tagboard for each child. These tee-shirts are hanging on a clothesline on the bulletin board as the children come in the first day. On each shirt is a child's name inside a cloud like decoration. The children may add simple decorations and colour. The caption over the clothes-line is, 'Grade One Fits Me to a Tee!' The photograph goes under the completed tee-shirt. At the end of the year I put the pictures into their memory books."

*Eleanor*

## You Are My Sunshine

"This year I'm thinking of using this simple little poem about sunflowers and have the kids make sunflower masks (their faces in the center) and take a picture of them singing the poem together and swaying. Then I'll turn the picture into a screen saver for the computer. After the picture taking, the children will draw their faces in the flower centers and they will go up on the bulletin board."

## The Bookworms!

"Another year I cut worm shapes out of wallpaper, and put a little face on each one and a child's name. Then I put a big book shape in the center of the door with a few corners missing and the bookworms all around. I labeled the book 'Mrs. Smith's Bookworms'."



## Chicka Chicka Boom Boom – Welcome to Ms. \_\_\_\_\_'s Room!



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

"I did a rainforest board last year and I bought very colourful rainforest fabric and covered my tackboard with it. It had lots of rainforest creatures on it. Then I put up a coconut tree and put the kids names on coconuts."

## Here We Are!

"This is my favourite bulletin board!. This bulletin board can 'grow' as you make it. In each stage it looks good. I have a large bulletin board at the back of my room. I put a bright coloured paper on it and the letters to spell 'Here We Are!'. The background paper can be decorated with the children's handprints. I fasten a piece of 18" x 24" coloured construction paper for each child to the bulletin board."

"I print the names of each child on lines on a paper 3 inches wide and about 12 long. (I print the names since I find Grade One children are not yet able to print in a consistent fashion. In grades other than one the child could print his/her own name, of course.) Each child follows the outline of their name with glitter, sequins or even with crayon or neon paint, if I don't have glitter. This strip is glued at the top of the construction paper. I take a photo of each child. Information about the child can be added. Fasten the items up in the child's spot under the glittered name."

## Putting Your Best Foot Forward

"I have a bulletin board with this title. There is one footprint per child and their names are printed on the footprints. The bulletin board is used to display student work. Each Friday I pass out any work that the students did in class. They choose one thing (their favourite or best) to hang up underneath of their footprint. I love seeing what they choose to hang. Some choose artwork, others choose stories they have written. Then the parents get to see new things up there all the time. They also get changed often (every Friday) so they do get to take the other good work home before it is too out of date."

*Carol*

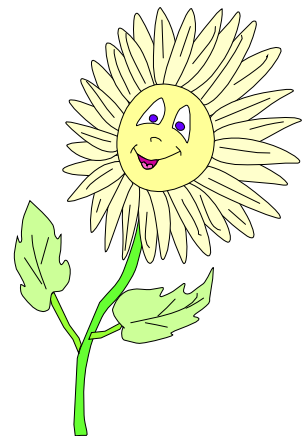


## Felt and Velcro

"I bought yards of felt (which comes in many beautiful colours) and instead of using butcher paper for the bulletin board background, I used felt. Then I went to the hardware store and bought yards and yards of velcro. (Get only the side that is 'sticky'. You can buy it separately.) I cut tiny pieces of the velcro, which is self adhesive, and stick them to the back of anything I want to display on the felt, such as my calendar stuff, sentence strips, student's work, etc. You can put borders around the felt on the wall, just as you would with butcher paper. In fact, I'm going to glue strips of contrasting colours of felt for the border so that when I want to change my boards I will be able to just roll my bulletin boards up and store them away. The velcro sticks to the felt like crazy, so remember to use only a tiny amount of velcro, or you'll be pulling your whole bulletin board down when you move the objects. With this method, my bulletin boards are interactive and I don't need so many pocket charts, as I use sentence strips continuously in my teaching. I teach my kids how to take the sentence strips off the felt without disturbing it unduly. I get to use every square inch of my wall space with my felt and velcro method."

## Watch Us Bloom!

"For the start of school, I use a 'Watch Us Bloom' theme. The board has light blue background, and has one flower for each child. I make the flowers and stems, and write the child's first and last name on each of the 2 leaves. After school starts, the children draw their face on a small white circle which I add to the middle of their flower. I tie this in to using the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. Put up the backing paper and border, and leave it blank. Write their names on sentence strip pieces (not all the same length, but instead cut them to the length of their name, so they can see that words come in different sizes) and put their names under their picture."



## And More Ideas.....

'Welcome to Our Pad' - little frogs on lily pads

Place student names on lily pads and add a large frog to a board titled, 'I'm So 'Hoppy' You Are Here!' - or - 'Hoppy to be in Grade One!' - or - 'A Toadally Awesome Class!'



'Blast Off for a Great Year' - rockets

'Mrs. \_\_\_\_'s Bunch' - balloons (you could have a clown holding them - the teacher!)

'One of a Kind Class' - handprints

'Mrs. \_\_\_\_'s New Crop' - apples on a tree or another harvest fruit or vegetable

'Stepping into Grade One' - shoes

Apples on a tree with 'We are a great bunch!'

A school of fish 'Swimming into Grade One'

Have students help create a 'Handy Dandy Class' bulletin board on butcher paper. Place a class list in the center.

# The First Day

## Activities

1. I like to read the book the *Important Book*. I have each child trace a head and shoulders pattern and decorate it as themselves with yarn hair. Then they complete the sentence frame, I am important. I can \_\_\_\_\_.
2. For the first day graph I have patterns of a bus, foot and car. The child chooses the one that represents how they came to school. This is an easy graph for the first day.
3. A 'Getting to Know The Teacher' Box: Fill a box up with things that tell about you. Sit on the rug and share them with the class.
4. Play the 'Getting To Know You' game. I find it works great with an edible snack like pop corn, pretzels, etc. Each child takes a handful, while sitting in a circle. For each piece they have they have to tell something about themselves, a delicious way to break the ice!
5. I like to have each child create a self portrait. I then put it away with the date on it and send it home the last day of school with a portrait they make that day. It is really a neat way to see how far they have come!
6. A great book for the first day is *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. To follow up you can make a graph of the number of letters in each child's name.
7. Before school starts write each child's name in 'bubble letters' to give them space inside each letter. They can draw things they like in each letter of their name.

Lori

## Class Books

"I make the cover in the shape of a school house. The title of the book is *The First Day of School*. Each child has a book page in the shape of a school with the frame 'Today is the first day of Grade One. I want to learn all about \_\_\_\_\_' We share each page before we put it in the book. The back page is a comment page. As each child brings the book home their mom or dad can write a comment on the back."

"Read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* and make a class book *Teacher, Teacher, Who Do You See?*"

"This simple story is also in a pocket chart, with simple illustrations. This is a perfect piece for modeling how to use the pointers when doing Read the Room, and it's great for teaching one-to-one correspondence. Later in the week, the children will get books with this story in them, to illustrate and put in their individual book boxes.

"I also have the words written on large computer paper, ready to be folded into a Big Book after the children have made illustrations on 8" squares of construction paper. I hang the computer paper story from a clothesline that runs beneath my chalkboard. We leave it there for several days as a Wall Story, before stapling it shut. I make many books of this type, and always make two or three copies, so that all the children can illustrate a page. These become a part of our class Big Book library, used during Literacy Centers, and are models for the smaller books the children will be making all year during Writers Workshop. At the end of the year, there are many books for the children to take home as keepsakes of a wonderful year.

### School

By Mrs. Smith's Class

A bus.  
A book.  
A pencil.  
A crayon.  
A child.  
A teacher.  
School!





When we are learning names in September we do a ditty that goes:

Hickety, pickety bumble bee  
 Who can say this name with me? (child's name)  
 Let's all say it (child's name)  
 Let's all clap it (child's name)  
 Let's all whisper it. (child's name)

Wyann



## Try This!

"You just have to try this thing I do the first day of school, and carry it out into the first week. It's so much fun. I hope you'll agree. I buy inexpensive shaving cream and have the kids write in it. It is such a big hit the first day of school. I do this in place of handwriting time. First I go over the rules with the kids. (Don't we have rules for everything?) Rules are simple....

1. Only one hand in the shaving cream - the hand they hold their pencil with. (The other hand must be clean to turn on the water or scratch or whatever.)

2. Smear the shaving cream in an oval on the desk (If they smear it all over the four corners of their desks and keep rubbing, the cream will rub in and disappear.)

"After rules are given, all long sleeves are pushed up, noses wiped, desks cleared, etc., I walk around and squirt the cream out in simple shapes – smilies, cars, flowers, suns, etc. When all have their blob I tell them to rub it into a long oval. They love the feel of it and the smell is great too! I tell them to make letters, shapes, numbers, names, etc., as I request. I walk around and watch who can do what. It gives me a feel of the potential of each student. I have done this since my first year of teaching and won't ever stop doing this. I also make shaving cream a station sometime within the first marking period. The kids come back the second day of school asking to do shaving cream. Clean up is tricky - but teach the kids right off the bat how to clean up quietly and thoroughly. Wipe shaving cream off with towels first and then wipe clean with a sponge. Great thing is, shaving cream will wash out of clothes. Have fun!"

Yvonne

## A School Bus

"After talking about school bus safety, we make up safety rules which I write on the board. The children make a school bus. I give the children a 9 x 12 piece of yellow construction paper. They fold it the hot dog way, then use scissors to round the 2 corners at the fold (this makes a flat-front bus, cut out a rectangle on a folded corner to make a bus with a hood over the motor). The children glue 2 black circles on the open edge of the paper to represent tires on the bus and use crayons to add windows, a door, and children in the bus windows. On the inside of the bus, they copy one or more of the safety rules that are written on the board. Younger students might want to draw a picture of someone following a bus safety rule. Sometimes I prefold the yellow paper and draw cutting lines for young children."

Charlotte



## "Mary Wore Her Red Dress...."

"I bought *Mary Wore Her Red Dress and Henry Wore His Green Sneakers* (by Merle Peek). It's a short, simple, repetitive book which I will read to the children. Then, we'll write our own in the same pattern as the book. The children will fill in the blanks on their page:

\_\_\_\_\_ wore \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ wore \_\_\_\_\_

on the first day of school.

*So, for example:*

Jenna wore her blue skirt,  
 blue skirt, blue skirt,  
 Jenna wore her blue skirt  
 on the first day of school.

"I will take a picture of each child and have it developed, then put each on the corresponding page, read the book to the class, then send it home to a different child each night until everyone has had it. Finally it will be put in our class library. (I do this with all class books.)"

Jenna

# Beginning of the Year Assessment

*The information in the following comes from Victoria Smith and other Grade One teachers.*

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

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

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

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

Before I start my assessment, I explain to the kids that "Mrs. Smith is CLOSED when she's working one-on-one with a child, and you can only interrupt me for 'B' emergencies." B emergencies are bathroom, blood, and barf!

They learn to respect my time with other kids, and they can almost always wait the few minutes it takes until I'm free to talk to them and help them with whatever they need. And they LOVE the idea of B emergencies.

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

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



## More Assessments

"*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* is the first book I read. Then I send them to their seats where a sheet is waiting for them. There are two blanks at the top with a comma in between, where the child will write his/her name (e.g. John, John). Beneath that are the words "who do you see?" Filling most of the page is a large empty rectangle wherein the child draws a head-to-toe self-portrait. At the bottom, it reads "I see \_\_\_\_\_ looking at me."

"After I've collected them, I put the pages together (some years in alphabetical order, sometimes not) with construction paper covers and I myself write the name of the next person on the bottom line. The last page says "I see the class looking at me." On the inside back cover I tape or glue a photo.

"This is not only our first class book, but it's also my first assessment:

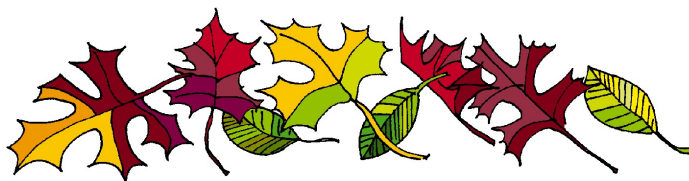
Can they write their names?

Do they know where to start?

How are their letters formed?

How advanced are their self-portraits? (These, by the way, are very helpful -- do they have bodies? hands and feet? mouths? hair? clothes? any width? what's the proportion to the paper? other objects in the drawing? etc.

A photocopy of this assignment starts their assessment portfolio for the year, along with running records, sight word lists, numbers to 100 from memory, alphabet from memory, anecdotal records, etc."



## The Survey

A survey was sent with the May – June issue of "Share-One", and I thought I would share the results with you.

1. 64% of subscribers teach Grade 1, 11% teach Grade 2, 6% teach a K-1 split, 14% teach a 1/2 split, and 5% other.
2. 54% surveyed are teaching in urban schools, 46% in rural schools.
3. Most teachers used all of "Share-One". The websites page is the least used, with 30% of teachers either not yet on-line or lacking the time to surf the net. (Actually this is a lower percentage than I expected!)
4. All but 3 teachers find the articles on reading useful or very useful.
5. In the "Favourite parts of the newsletter" and the "Would you like more on any subject?" there was a great variety of answers but some common themes.

- Some teachers want reproducible sheets. This really isn't the purpose of the newsletter. I would like to keep it full of ideas, rather than be that specific. It really isn't practical – from my viewpoint – but I will keep it in mind!

- Many teachers would like to have each issue earlier – and this I will try to do. I understand that it would help your planning to have the newsletter a week before the beginning of the month.

- You want lots of art, gym ideas, social studies and music ideas. Again, I will try! There were dozens of other things that you asked for, and I am going to keep them in mind and try to go into different areas.

- You like the "tried and true" ideas from other teachers.

- You like the poetry, art ideas, theme ideas and special days. You use the classroom management ideas.

Most of you truly appreciate the newsletter and seem to like it the way it is. Thank you for all the kind comments!

Jean



# Literacy Centres

## Reading

- Read a book and Big Books
- Wall Reading (Same as Read around the Room--with pointer and glasses without lenses)
- Alphabet Cards (I cut the pictures apart from my ABC strip, posted the strip below my chalkboard, and attached Velcro to the wall and the pictures, so that they can be removed, mixed up, and matched to the right letter.)
- Pocket Chart (I put poems, matching cards, etc.)
- Reading Games (Instant Word Bingo or Tic Tac Toe, phonics board games, etc.)
- Magnet Board (I got Magnet Poetry for kids and organized them into alphabetical sections on a file cabinet.
- Book Baskets (Books with corresponding props – commercially prepared sets as well as some I've created, like felt caps with Caps for Sale, paper operating room attire for Curious George Goes to the Hospital, etc.)



## Writing

- Writers' Workshop Folder – (work on something in progress)
- Typewriter – (I have an old manual typewriter – they love it!)
- Write a Letter – (We have mailboxes that we use often.)
- Copy words from the word wall into your word bank.
- Handwriting Practice – (They love writing on the extras from letters we've already done.)
- Write a Book about... – (I add post-it tape with a topic from the current theme.)
- Morning Message – (Students write a morning message on the easel board similar to the ones we do daily.)
- Story Cards – (Starters based on the current theme in a basket on the writing shelf.)
- Spin a Story – (Similar to story starters, but you actually spin for the character, setting and action and add details.)
- After a story has been read students may complete a journal entry using 'What I Read / What I Think of What I Read'.
- Copy poems/ words/ sentences from the board. Leave out part and allow the students to fill in the missing section.
- Build a sentence: kids choose sentence parts out of a bag and put them together to make a silly sentence which is copied onto a sentence strip and illustrated.
- Use word cards and picture cards to make sentences and copy onto paper.
- Students may correct sentences by adding editing marks later in the year.
- Computer generated stories.
- Make an alphabet book and illustrate.
- Laminate word searches that may be written on with a water soluble marker.
- Use reading workbooks to work on skills or use to make folder games.
- Illustrate words such as cat, dog, bus.
- Alphabet books. Groups make alphabet books by making a page per letter and drawing or clipping pictures and pasting to a page.



- See and do activities.
- Sight word games.
- Use stamps to make words.
- Cloze sentences using the overhead.
- Use play dough to make sight words or other words.
- Put picture cards and letters to make the word in a ziplock bag – then students unscramble.
- Sight word bingo

## Listening

Listen to directions on a tape to complete a skill sheet or complete another task (draw a monster with one head, two ears. . .)

Listen to a story (without a book to see) and illustrate one scene or the beginning,

middle, ending scene.

Listen and recall a sequences of letters, numbers, or words.

Listen to the beginning of a story only. Finish the story with your own words or pictures.

Listen to a story and follow along with your book.

# Teachers Talk About Literacy Centres

## Spelling

“One literacy center that I have used all year, and just love, is this one: I created a spelling counter, in which the student walks along a counter and learns how to spell and use a word in a sentence. I post the new spelling word for the day; then they take the written letters I have made on poster board and recreate the word in a pocket chart; then they move to the magnetic letters and they have to make it again; then they write it on a white board; next they stamp out the word; and lastly they have to use the word in a sentence.”

## Organization

“I have four main centers – Reading, Writing, Thinking and Creating – with choices of activities in each. I have four tables which give me four groups of 5 or 6 kids. I rotate table groups through the four centers on Monday through Thursday and leave Friday open for Free Choice. We have about 20 or 25 minutes a day for this. Depending on the week, I might have up to five choices at a center. And if there is something that is a must for everyone to do, I might only have one ‘choice’. At first, I start with fewer choices. A lot of the center ideas I use are great because I don’t have to change them every week. Also, the centers have to stay the same for a week for everyone to have them.”

## More Centres!

1. Literature circle – A group of students read together from our reading series stories.
2. Browsing Box – Each guided reading group takes the books read during group and puts them into a browsing box. They can look at the books as a group.
3. Independent Reading – Children can choose from our class library.
4. Buddy or paired reading – I have a box of two copies of books at all levels. They read with a partner. This can be familiar or unfamiliar texts. Then they work with their buddy to draw or write about their favourite part.
5. Writing Folder – This is where the children make books and write stories that they will share during group. In the box with their folders I have about 15 different blank books. They can publish them on the computer. (In the beginning of the year I type them.)
6. Journal Writing - (can be a teacher directed topic if you choose)
7. Pocket Chart. – I have an activity they work on.
8. Phonics Center – Phonics based literature, games, phonics desk, etc. I also found a great book that has activities for the 5 levels of phonemic awareness, I copied these and have them in an index card box.
9. Handwriting Center – I usually have a frame with blanks. I also have laminated alphabet cards for my lower kids to practice. They can use wikki sticks; pipe cleaners etc. to make letters. This is a good time to write seasonal poems.
10. Overhead – I put cloze paragraphs on there a lot (kids love working on the overhead).
11. Sight Word Center (which changes to vocabulary center later) - They make the sight words with rubber stamps, magnetic letters and I have letters written on shapes. I use this to reinforce letter and word manipulation. You could use the spelling words. I also might have them choose 5 sight words to use in a sentence.
12. Poetry Box – I have poems that are laminated, and another set that are the words cut apart. The kids put the words together and glue them and illustrate it. I also have pieces with magnets on the back for them to put in order, too. The kids use pointers to read the big chart and can stick wikki sticks or highlighting removable tape over words.
13. Listening – This is always followed up by a writing activity.
14. Big Books – They use pointers to read the books. They use pipe cleaners or wikki sticks to show specific words.
15. Computers – I usually have a living book or educational game. They have a log to record what CD they did and three new things they learned.
16. Stamp a Story – Kids use rubber stamps to make a picture, and write a logical story to go with it.
17. Build a sentence – Kids choose sentence parts out of a bag. They put them together to make a silly sentence which is copied onto a sentence strip and illustrated.
18. Post Office – I have all sorts of neat stationery, etc., for the kids to write letters on. I have a laminated class list and names of teachers there, too. On rings I have words that would be used to write letters like dear, how, etc.
19. Tape-A-Story – I have blank tapes so the child can tape themselves reading.



# How Children Learn to Read Words

By Dr. Bruce Murray, "The Reading Genie" and used with his permission. For more articles by Dr. Murray, go to: <http://www.auburn.edu/~murraba/>

Writing is a fairly recent invention, but powerful in improving human intelligence. The first writing was logographic, where a symbol represented the meaning of a word. This meant a vast number of symbols to learn. In a later system, symbols representing syllables were introduced, a shift to sound-based writing. With the development of the alphabet, writing used an economical group of symbols representing speech phonemes, the vocal gestures from which words are constructed in a language. However, using an alphabet requires sufficient familiarity with phonemes to recognize them in spoken words, and this can be a serious hurdle. Phonemes are produced very rapidly in ordinary speech (10-20 per second), and the vocal gestures overlap, making phoneme boundaries difficult to discern.

The alphabetic code allows a systematic way to read any word by following its pronunciation map. To sound out a word, you translate the letters into phonemes, blend the phonemes to approximate the pronunciation, and recognize the word. Phonics is simply decoding instruction – teaching beginners to understand spellings as phoneme maps. However, because phonemes are coarticulated, phoneme awareness must usually be taught explicitly, not just assumed.

We're used to thinking of two routes to word recognition: sight and decoding. However, all skilled readers acquire sight words, and all are expert decoders. Moreover, we can recognize words by analogizing, stringing together pronounceable word parts, or contextual guessing. Sight recognition means instant recognition without analysis. Decoding involves translation; although early decoding requires audible sounding out and blending, later decoding is fast and silent. To analogize, we recall a word with the same spelling pattern and make the unfamiliar word rhyme with the remembered word. The pronounceable word parts strategy requires a large store of sight chunks, such as ing, ight, and tion, that readers can string together to identify words. Contextual guessing is using the rest of sentence to guess unrecognized words. Because guesswork is slow, effortful, and not very reliable, readers rapidly abandon it as they gain decoding skill and sight vocabulary.

The problem in reading words is to access the lexicon, i.e., the store of words and associated information in memory. Before we ever learn to read, we store an incredible web of words with their pronunciations, meanings, syntax, and sometimes spelling data. The problem in reading is to access the lexicon, i.e., to locate the entry in memory from its spelling. Access routes of skilled readers are memorable (they can call up a word easily), reliable (they get the same word every time they see its spelling), and easily learned (in just a few trials). But accurate, reliable access routes are not good enough: To save resources for comprehension, we need effortless access to words. Thus sight word access is the goal of phonics instruction.

Children don't just jump into decoding and acquiring sight vocabulary. They move through predictable phases of using the alphabet more and more skillfully. Before children learn to use the alphabet, they employ a default strategy of attaching a visual cue to meaning. This visual cue strategy explains why very young children can recognize many words in their normal surroundings, for example, reading McDonald's with the arches logo. They are simply recognizing pictures. When children gain alphabetic insight, they begin to use phonetic cues instead of visual cues. They use some letters (usually at the beginning of a word) to cue some of the phonemes in the word, providing a systematic access route to the word in the lexicon (though not a reliable route).

Reliable access comes in the alphabetic phase, when children learn to decode words from spelling alone. Alphabetic phase reading allows children to rapidly acquire sight vocabulary. Contrary to past beliefs, sight-word learning does not depend on rote association. Children learn sight words in just a few quality encounters. Quality encounters connect letters in a spelling to phonemes in the pronunciation, usually by sounding out and blending. In other words, we typically learn sight words through careful decoding. Though decoding demands great attention in young readers, it sets up reliable access routes to retrieve the word. Once the access route is established, the tools to build it (correspondence rules) drop out. The spelling becomes a meaningful symbol of spoken word (i.e., it "looks like" the word). Learning to decode dramatically reduces the number of trials to sight recognition from an average of 35 trials to an average of 4 trials.

How do we lead children to the full alphabetic phase where they can sound out words? Phonics is designed to accomplish this goal. Phonics is simply instruction in decoding. It involves teaching correspondence rules and how to blend. Two types of phonics have been developed: explicit and analytic. Analytic phonics is designed to avoid pronouncing phonemes in isolation. This necessitates roundabout explanations, and it presumes phoneme awareness rather than modeling how phonemes are cued and assembled in decoding. In explicit phonics, teachers pronounce phonemes in isolation to model how to sound out and blend. Studies show that explicit phonics is more effective in leading children to early reading independence.



One other factor has been shown to be important in phonics: decodable texts. Decodable texts are simply texts in which most of the words can be decoded using correspondences children have learned to date in their phonics program. While such control temporarily restricts the literature value of practice texts, research shows that it induces a decoding strategy in beginning readers. Because the phonics they learn works to unlock the words in their stories, they rely on a decoding strategy in reading. This helps them gain sight words rapidly, and also helps them figure out patterns not explicitly taught in phonics lessons. As they expand their sight vocabularies and decoding power, controls on decodability can rapidly be removed, allowing them to read and enjoy children's literature.

The problem with alphabetic-phase reading is that it is slow and effortful. Fortunately, as children learn sight words and sight chunks, they learn shortcuts to word recognition. They remember chunks of spellings for quick assembly. These chunks are pronounceable word parts that can be recognized without analysis. Using chunks allows readers to decode polysyllabic words by stringing together the familiar parts. The key to expert decoding seems to be learning vowel correspondences--the heart of every syllable. Also, it takes lots of reading practice to acquire sight words and sight chunks. Children must be led to read voluntarily as a leisure time activity to take on this level of practice.

Should our goal for beginning readers be to remember words by sight or decode? The answer is both. To progress toward reading expertise, children must learn to decode and to read words by sight. However, sight word reading depends on decoding -- knowledge of our alphabetic system.

Thus, learning to decode must come first.



## A Class Book

"I teach the children's names separately, discussing each one like Pat Cunningham suggests in her books. We interview the child, and add the information to a class book - I write in a blank book, one page for each child. When pictures have been taken, we receive 2 small pictures of each child. I mount one of these on the child's page, and it becomes a favourite class book. The names and the cut apart letters become a center with a pocket chart, and the kids spell each other's names by matching the letters to the cards in the pockets. Since this is separate from the words on the word wall, we can proceed with that, 5 words per week."

*Debbie*

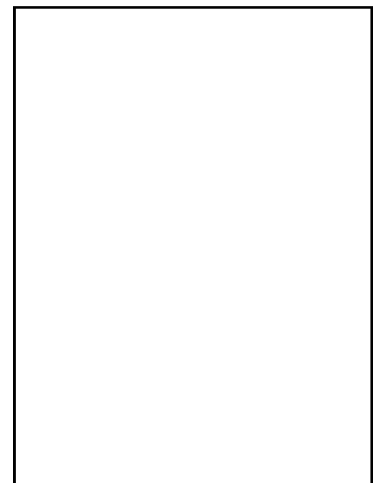
## Do Author Studies

"We feature a different author each month. At the beginning of the year I send home a list of each month's authors "for the refrigerator". I have a small bulletin board that says "Author of the Month" and I've made blow ups of one book for each author. There's a crate with many of his/her books. The kids are encouraged to bring their books too. I also have some stuffed animals, etc., of the characters such as Clifford or Arthur. Through the years I've accumulated activities to do with each author. I try to use authors that are still alive. We write to them and most always get a response. I always start out September with Mercer Mayer. The kids love his critters!"

*Carole*

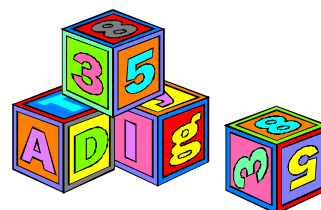
## The Best Author Website!

Go to <http://www.janbrett.com>! Click on the 'Activities' icon and have fun! The alphabet is wonderful and the pictures are great. There are dozens of art projects, great number cards to download, calendar pages, colouring pages, character masks, and lesson plans.



# The Four Blocks

Four Blocks is a multimethod, multilevel literacy framework developed by Pat Cunningham and Dottie Hall of Wake Forest University and utilized by thousands elementary classrooms. The Four-Blocks framework was developed by teachers who believe that to be successful in teaching all children to read and write, we have to do it all! Doing it all means incorporating daily the different approaches to beginning reading. The Four Blocks--Guided Reading, Self-Selected Reading, Writing, and Working with Words--represent four different approaches to teaching children to read. Daily instruction in all Four Blocks provides numerous and varied opportunities for all children to learn to read and write. Doing all Four Blocks acknowledges that children do not all learn in the same way and provides substantial instruction to support whatever learning personality a child has. The other big difference between children--their different literacy levels--is approached by using a variety of formats to make each block as multilevel as possible, providing additional support for children who struggle and additional challenges for children who catch on quickly.



**A Brief Description** – An overview of the blocks. The following comes from Joe Fuhrmann and is used with his permission. Joe Fuhrmann, the webmaster for [www.FourBlocks.nethop.com](http://www.FourBlocks.nethop.com), is a first grade teacher in Kankakee, IL and utilizes Four Blocks in his classroom daily.

## Guided Reading

- Exposes children to wide range of literature, teaches comprehension strategies.
- Teach children to read in materials that become increasingly more difficult.
- You can use a basal reading series, trade books, Big Books and/or other text-based material.
- 10 – 15 minutes – The teacher directs a whole group lesson to build on student's prior knowledge, leads shared, choral or echo reading, discusses key vocabulary in context of the story, and teaches to other identified needs.
- 15 – 20 minutes – Reading of text using flexible grouping – partners, small groups led by adult, play school groups or individual reading.
- 5 – 10 minutes – Teacher leads closing activity – discussion, acting out the story, writing in response to the story or other related activities.

## Self-Selected Reading

- To build fluency in reading, to build confidence by allowing students to work with text most appropriate to their reading level, and to allow students to read books that interest them.
- 5 – 10 minutes – Teacher reads aloud to students on a variety of levels, topics and authors.
- 15 – 20 minutes – students read from books in their group's basket. The teacher holds conferences with individual students at this time.

## Writing

- Modelling by instructor of the writing process, practice applying knowledge of phonics, and to build confidence as a writer.
- 10 minutes – The teacher writes and models the things writers do, including selecting a topic, spelling troublesome words and editing.
- 15 to 20 min. – The students write on a variety of topics. The teacher conferences with individual students.
- 5 – 10 minutes – Selected students share their work and answer questions.

## Working With Words

- Learn to read and spell high-frequency words and learn the patterns which allow children to read and spell lots of other words.
- 10 – 15 minutes – Five words are introduced each week. These new words and old words are practiced daily by clapping, snapping and writhing them.
- 20 – 25 minutes – Children learn how to use word patterns to read and spell using a wide variety of activities, including 'Making Words', 'Be a Mind Reader', 'Guess the Covered Word' and other exercises.

**For more information, go to:**

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

<http://www.wfu.edu/~cunningh/fourblocks/>

[http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/general\\_information.htm](http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/general_information.htm)

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

## A Teacher's View of the Four-Blocks Framework

"The four-block sessions are a little shorter in the beginning...and each of the 4-blocks are really in 3 or more parts. There is usually a type of pre, during, and after for each session. The writing and self-selected both have a sharing component after. There is lots of modeling!!! All have to fit into the time slots so you get everything in. One of the ways to get everything in is to integrate subjects.

"People have to look at the things they cannot change, then work in their blocks around that. The blocks do not have to be boom boom boom...and it depends a lot on teacher's personal preference. Also, there are no 4-blocks police (!) so you do a lot of fudging and 'learning' at first until you tweak it to get it right.

"One of my goals is to set up a schedule and make myself stick to it because I can get going on something and run out of time for something else. I will still allow myself to do that when something is going gangbusters...but on the whole I really believe in the balanced literacy part and want to give every student the opportunity to learn in the way s/he learns best. Besides the connections between the phonics and the writing and the phonics and the reading and how they work both ways to strengthen the whole language arts learning, I think it would be foolish of ME not to.

"The exciting thing is, it isn't so different from what you already do...it is just more of a structure that enables you to fit it all in, reach all learners and reach all levels...

"I am addressing this from a Grade One level.

"For the words block, there is so much to it that is exciting. In the beginning of the year you do the student's names (and there is a whole month of this and all of the things you can do with it). Children learn about each other, learn to make connections because of people's names, same beginnings, rhyming things, so much more than I can write here. This is already pretty long. When you start the full fledged word block, you start with 5 word wall words. You only do 5 a week. You choose them based on those you will need for the week that you will be tying in in other way, esp. writing and reading. Sometimes it can work the opposite...you work your words in whenever you see the opportunity. ***You do not put any words on the word wall until you have spent a week working with them!*** This is important. Each day you do something physical with each word and write the word. e.g. for the word ***and*** you clap each letter as you spell it, you can jump each letter as you say it, you can do a yo-yo motion for each letter as you do it, and before you write it, you do a printing lesson for each letter and have the student write the letter...you can practice the sound for the letter IF it makes that sound in the word...or mention how it does not make its sound in the word. (Some of my student's favorite actions to do for each letter included making a snowball...pick up a bunch of snow, and each time you pack it say a letter...when done with the word, throw the snowball as you say the word...they loved basketball shoot, picking a bouquet for Mom near Mother's day, etc.) You do these words every day in the first 5-10 minutes...the first 3 days exclusively...the last 2 days you add in other word wall words (review, not new) after you have some up on the wall that you spent 5 days with. I may stay with the 5 and add on a couple, especially depending on how difficult they are.

"Another activity in the words block that particularly addresses letter sounds is 'making words'. You start with one vowel words. e.g. sand. (There is a whole issue of organization of materials, etc., I won't go into here). On the desk of ***each*** child are the letters a d n s (the vowels are in or on red or pink). Before you start, have the students hold up the letter that is the d (or depending on the level of the students...hold up this letter...it is the letter d) You do this for each letter in the beginning. Tell them there is one letter that is a word by itself. See if anyone can tell you what it is. Have all students pull that letter down in front of them. Now tell them to make the word ***an*** by adding one letter. Someone comes up to the sentence chart and do it for the whole class. Then tell them to make the word ***and*** by adding one more letter. Continue this process. They can put all of the letters up and make the word ***as***. Here they can hear/learn that the letter ***s*** can make the sound of ***z*** sometimes.

"This doesn't even touch it all. There is so much cross checking and cross-learning going on...especially phonemic awareness with rhyming and word family activities...and it can all be done off the word wall. There are cloze activities. There are ***Guess the Covered Word*** activities. There is ***Be a Mind Reader***...on and on and on. There is a ***FEED ME*** monster that can be used for review of letter identity, letter sounds, sight words, rhyming words, even content review, math number review, color words, number words on and on and on....

"Once you get into it, you see so much more you can do!"

*Ada*

# Language Arts Bits.....

Do you know the song K-K-K-Katie? Well, we sing:

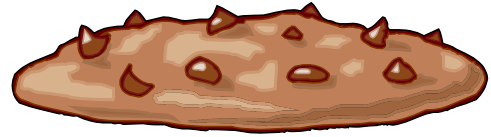
C-c-c-cookie, crumbly cookie,

How I love the way that you go crunch! Crunch! crunch!

C-c-c-cookie - starts with a C

Oh how I love the way that you go crunch!

Our hand sign is the letter C (or a hand holding a cookie) that we move in and out.



*Cheryl*

## I Can Read Colours

"I have this poem on the calendar wall, and we read it together. After we've read it several times, I give each student a copy and we read it again, slowly, letting their 'fingers do the reading', touching beneath each word as they say it. By the end of the week, we have made two copies of this poem into Big Books, illustrated by the kids. As we read through the poem, we use crayons to underline the colour words. I have a little drawing at the end of each line to help them remember the words. Every child leaves my classroom on the first day of school as a successful reader, and they take this poem home to read to their family. They get an extra copy for their poetry journals."

*Victoria*

Orange is an orange.  
Yellow is the sun.  
Brown is the bear and  
Purple is the plum.  
Red is an apple.  
Green is a tree.  
Blue is the big sky.  
Listen to me!  
I can read!

## Using Poetry

"I have this poem in a pocket chart in our reading area, with an extra set of words for matching. The same poem is on a large bulletin board, which is actually the paint easel area of my classroom. This will be the first poem in their Poetry Journals. I use three-ring binders to hold their poetry collection, and send the binders home at the end of the year."

### Friends

*by Jill Eggleston*

Friends share.

Friends care.

We need friends

Everywhere!

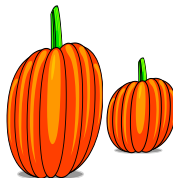
There are millions of people  
All over the place  
But nobody else  
With exactly my face.

"I have another poem by Jill Eggleston that I share with the children. I give each child a paper that has the outline of a head and shoulders on it, and they draw their self portraits. I cut freehand around their drawings, and display them on the bulletin board with the two poems. I write each child's name on a sentence strip cut to size, and place it beneath their drawing. After a week or two, I move these to a spot above our sink, where they remain for the rest of the year. We make self-portraits again during the last week of school and I mount the two portraits side-by-side on black paper and laminate them as a gift to their parents."

*Eleanor*

## A Printing Poem

Look at the letters, look at them all  
You will see that some are tall.  
You will see that some are small.  
And some dip down below them all.



Tall! b d f h k l t

Small! a c e i m n o r s u v w x z

And these dip down below them all! g q y j and p

That's ALL!

The first verse we would recite any time (because it's easily memorized).

The second verse is only done when we have the poster version of the poem in front of us.



# Autumn Art

**“I have the kids trace each other’s hand and upper arm on brown paper- thus making the ‘tree’ part.**

-Then you can use the eraser tip of a pencil and some tissue paper squares to add leaves. Take smallish square of tissue and cover the eraser of your pencil with it. Dip it in a bit of liquid glue or rub a stick of glue on it. Set the ‘leaf’ on the tree. The pencil helps to really stick the tissue down.”

*Nancy*

- “You can make autumn leaves for a small tree with torn construction paper or thumb prints in tempera paint with the fall colours.”

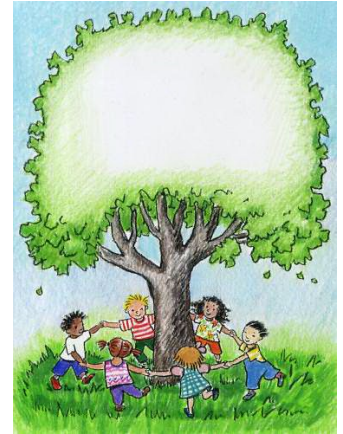
- “Then we cut apples in half and dip them into paint and make apple prints for the leaves. If we make apple trees, then we have the children dip their finger in red paint and press their fingerprint within the leaves to make apples.”

- “Sponge paint coloured leaves on the trees, or green leaves for apple trees.”

-“Use precut tissue that comes in fall colors. Cut into squares about 15 cm. by 15 cm. I would guess. Demonstrate how to make balls of each tissue...not too loose, not too tight, dip into a glue cup lightly and press onto plate to cover all the white. Glue a trunk that they trace and cut, or trace and tear for a more natural look....

You could buy green plates and make smaller tissue balls...about 2x2 and have each child ‘roll’ 10 apples...It’s fall...my favourite time of year!”

*Vici*



## Corn Cob Flowers

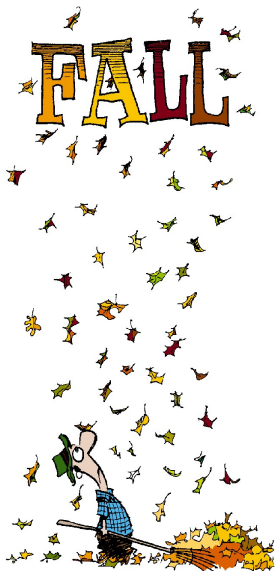
“Buy dried corn cobs from a feed store and cut them into 3 pieces; or buy ears of corn at the store, shuck them, cut them into 2-inch lengths and allow them to dry for a couple of weeks. Place shallow containers of tempera paints at each table. Show children how to dip the end of the corn cob into the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

## Falling Leaves

Cut spirals from brown construction paper.

Have the children trace real leaves, colour them and cut them out (or have the children cut leaves from coloured construction paper). Glue or staple the leaves to the spirals and hang them from the ceiling. The leaves will appear to be falling!

## Pressed Leaves



Take the class out to collect beautiful coloured leaves! Let each child pick a favourite leaf from his/her collection. Place the leaf between two sheets of waxed paper, with the waxy side facing inwards. Cover this with a soft dishtowel and press with a hot iron (no steam) until the wax melts. When they are cool, cut around the leaf leaving a 2 cm. border. Use these as bookmarks, hang them from the ceiling, or hang them in the windows for suncatchers.

## Cornflake Leaves

Have the students draw or paint a brown tree trunk and branches. Paint a small area with glue and sprinkle with cornflakes. Paint the next area and add cornflakes until the branches are covered. Mount the pictures on autumn coloured construction paper and tack them around the poem.

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

# Thanksgiving

“A really neat bulletin board idea for October is a turkey with the tail made out of old neckties. I asked each child to bring in one of Dad's old ties preferably in fall colours or dark colors, and then I made the head and a round body and cut the ties about in half and fanned them out behind the head and body for the tail. It is a beautiful turkey. The kids loved seeing dad's tie up there.... It will take a large bulletin board or wall. If you don't have this much room, cut the half ties shorter.”

*Marcia*

## Stone Soup for Thanksgiving

“Read the book *Stone Soup*. For Thanksgiving, my class brought in vegetables to add to my own homemade version of Stone Soup. It was so popular that my students asked me if we could make it again. It's very simple -- the students bring in some of their favourite vegetables. Begin with a rock, and make a big production of putting it in the pot. I add some boullion cubes secretly and water -- and simmer for several hours. Add some bell peppers to it - it adds lots of flavour.”

*Lisa*

## The Turkey Shuffle

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

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

*The teachers enjoyed this one as much as the kids!*

## Thanksgiving's A Wonderful Thing

*“My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)*

My uncle is eating the drumstick,  
 My auntie is chewing the wing,  
 My cousin is nibbling the stuffing,  
 Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

My daddy loves candied potatoes,  
 My mother, the cranberry ring,  
 My brother is covered with gravy,  
 Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

My grandfather's fav'rite is pickles,  
 That grandma preserved in the spring,  
 My sister has two plates of turnips,  
 Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing.

And if you should happen to ask me,  
 What gives me a zip and a zing,  
 For me it's a pie made of pumpkin,  
 Thanksgiving's a wonderful thing!

## Thanksgiving Turkey

“Stuff a brown lunch bag with scrap paper so that it appears full. Lay the bag on its side. Twist tie the bag closed leaving about an inch left to the top of the bag. This becomes the turkey's tail. Fold the opening of the bag back towards the twist tie and glue or staple brightly coloured construction paper tail feathers on this part. The part that is normally the bottom of the bag becomes the chest of the turkey. Fold a piece of red construction paper and place the beak/wattle part of the head on the fold. I added a little extra space at the neck to make tabs. Fold the tabs back and glue to the chest part of the paper bag. Add paper feet to the bottom. These make great centerpieces for the Thanksgiving table!”

*Charlotte*

# Newsletters for Parents

I do my newsletter weekly. It goes home in the student folders on Monday. I list our reading vocabulary and spelling words for the current week and the coming week. I talk about our current topics of study and also mention upcoming topics. I have had students write a summary of each day for the preceding week and put that in there, but haven't done that every year. I list special days. I ask for volunteers for various activities and projects if needed. I try to share tips with parents about how to help their children study at home. Sometimes I share a paragraph from an interesting article about learning or education. The contents vary. About the only thing I do absolutely the same every week is the Spelling and Vocabulary.”

***Boni***

“I send home a weekly newsletter and try to get it out on Fridays for the coming week. I use a desktop publishing program and generally keep the same graphics and just fill in each ‘space’ with updated materials, so usually I have 3-4 spaces to fill. Still, sometimes it's a stretch to find stuff to write about! I usually include what the week ahead will include in each subject and announcements that need to be made or dates to remember. I also include a space to record behavior for that child for the week. Later in the year I send the Spelling words for the week home.”

“I always include important dates, upcoming events, reminders, etc. I also tell parents about current and upcoming units. If I need supplies sent in for something special that we are doing, I put that in the newsletter. I also try to include just a sentence or two about a professional book that I am reading or an article that I have read. For example, I am looping to second with my class and the first newsletter will touch on the benefits of looping. I always end my newsletter with positive comments about my class.....how wonderful they are and how much I enjoy being their teacher.”

***Janice***

“I do a weekly newsletter...I made a form on my computer that has a rectangle with about 5 lines or so for each day of the week...then I just handwrite a few things we did for each of those days. It really keeps the parents informed. I have had VERY positive comments about this weekly summary of activities/lessons. I send it home on Fridays.”

***Jacki***

I've always sent a monthly newsletter home to my parents. I include the themes for the month....the skills we're working on in the different subjects....dates for projects and activities during the month....thank you to any parent volunteers for the month (field trips etc.).”

***Marion***

“My newsletter is two columns, with a set format. I have a narrative space to tell them things about our upcoming week. There is a section where I list the spelling words for the week. I am revising my set up for this year, but I had a section for reminders of events. I call it “Mrs. Simon Says...”, and the parents look forward to it. We also have to submit a copy to the principal.”

***Peggy***

“I, too, do a weekly newsletter. I know it builds better communication. In my newsletter I include what concepts we have been learning this week, our theme, and what we did in Learning Stations. At the end of that section I say ‘Looking ahead...’ This is where I tell them what concepts we will be working on in the days to come. I also have a section that I call Parent Info and Special Dates. Here, I include things such as ‘Picture Day’, ‘Fall Festival’, ‘Grade One Field Trip’, etc. I also include a ‘Tip of the Week’ as well, such as; “Allow your child to work through an unfamiliar word by encouraging them to use their reading strategies”. I also include the next week’s spelling words, vocabulary words and word wall words in the newsletter. I send mine home on Fridays in the Friday Folders. I also have comment sheets in their Friday Folders that I fill out weekly. Sometimes it's just ‘Johnny had a good week’....or ‘Phil is having trouble focusing this week. Perhaps you have some suggestions to help him focus’. I have found these weekly comment sheets to be truly beneficial.”

# Classroom Management

## Transitions

"I always use music for my transitions. I find that by the second week of school the children know exactly what to do when the song comes on. Makes it a piece of cake for subs, too. I choose specific songs for each transition and begin using them on day 1 and continue for the entire year. After a while when my kids see me go over and start to turn on the music, they begin to clean up even before the music starts. If I want their attention during a work time, I just say "STOP, LOOK and LISTEN". I also find that when I use a regular voice, I never raise my voice, they respond more. Just start your management routine on day 1 and don't change it. Children need the routine of knowing exactly what is expected."

*Cathy*

## Nobody Loves Me.....

"At the beginning of the year, I make a basket with a sign. The sign is a sad puppy with the words, "Nobody loves me". Papers without names are placed in the basket. The students have until Friday to check the basket and adopt their paper. Papers that are unclaimed are put in the trash can in front of the students. This visual has a big effect. After a few weeks, students have fewer papers in the 'nobody loves me' basket. With older students I have started the year with this procedure but took the basket away. They had to put their names on the paper or it would go into the trash. Without some system, the problem will not stop. This may not have ended all of the problems but it sure cut down on the amount of unclaimed work. I also had a check list by the basket or in their work folders .. 1. My name is on my paper, etc."

*Sarah*

## Papers

"I like to keep a big magnetic clip on the blackboard next to my desk and I keep all extra papers in that clip. At the end of the week, I pitch the papers that are no longer in use. Anything from worksheets from memos to the office go in the clip."

*Wilma*

"I send a folder home every night. Each child has a mailbox where all corrected work, notes, calendars, notes from office, party invitations, anything goes during the day. Then I load the folders at night and send them home. Inside each folder I have glued a monthly calendar that lists library days, field trips, etc. Every morning the children unload their folder and put their homework in my mailbox."

*Kris*

"The way I get my kids to walk quietly in the halls is like the mystery walker idea except I don't pick the students before we go. I have a can with popsicle sticks with each child's name on one. When we get to the classroom, I pick two or three sticks. If those kids didn't talk, they get a treat. I also do this when we have silent reading. I have never been able to get Grade Ones to silent read before, but now that I choose a couple of names each time, everyone reads silently!"

*Marilyn*

## Numbers and Names

"I think my number one idea is writing my student's names in my grade book by their first name first not the last name first. For some reason, I can find Tommy Jones quicker in my grade book than Jones, Tommy. I also assign each child the number that is by their name in the mark book – they use this number on all papers that are turned in to me. Just have a student shuffle the papers in order by number and I'm ready to check and record marks straight down the page."

## Tidiness – and the Clean Desk Fairy

"My kids frequently get visited from the Clean Desk Fairy. A former student (who also happens to be a teacher's kid so is around after hours) comes in and selects one desk each day that receives a small certificate and a reward of some kind. As the kids get better at personal responsibility, we don't have the fairy visit every day, but still every once in a while, she appears. The kids LOVE it."

*Stephanie*

# Behavior Management

## Intrinsic Awards

"I don't use candy, stickers, and other individual rewards. At the beginning of the year, we discussed what kinds of behaviors we felt were kind, respectful, and responsible. We listed when these looked like, sounded like, and felt like. We practiced them, role played situations when we needed to use them, made class books about them, and so forth. We had to practice a lot at first, but we did it. We focused on the positive - what we wanted, not what we didn't. We do lessons on how good it feels to be nice (because it does feel good).

"We do a lot of class celebrations for working well together, for helping each other, for being respectful of others, and so forth. I do positive phone calls and notes home, little notes to the kids about a particular behavior I noticed or good effort in their work, etc. The kids keep these notes and really treasure them. They last a lot longer than a piece of candy or even a sticker. I do give treats to the entire class at times when we have made a lot of appropriate choices, with the understanding that we have earned it because we've been working hard.

"It's interesting to hear my kids comment about other classes that go by our room being loud. If we have to close the door, my kids will say, "They are being rude." We know it's not OK to be rude and noisy. We are by far the quietest class in the school when walking around the building.

"I can speak from experience - children like to behave. Of course, there are lots of time when problems come up, but we take a problem solving approach rather than a punishment. It does take time and effort, but I think it's much more satisfying. It also is building lifelong skills."

*Anne*

## Six Inch Voices - *Can you change this to 15 cm. voices?*

"An idea that I have been pleased with is to ask the children to use 'six inch voices' during reading group time. At the beginning of the year I show them a six inch ruler and demonstrate the size of voice one needs when talking to someone who is six inches away from them. I give them liberty to talk if they use their six inch voices. Understandably they need many reminders throughout the year but often I'll just hold my two pointer fingers six inches apart and they'll say, "Oh yes, we need to use six inch voices."

## Class Rules

"One of things we have to do on the first day of school is talk about school rules and safety. First we brainstorm a list of rules the kids think we should have in our class -- I always get lots of 'no hitting, no pushing, no spitting' responses. I list all of their ideas on a Language Experience chart, using different coloured markers on alternating lines. After we discuss their ideas for a few minutes, we talk about our school's official rules and also the rules in our classroom. I have the following poem on chart paper, attached to the front chalkboard all year long: We usually agree on the following rules for our class. Those two rules seem to cover most situations, and they're easy to remember."

**Be nice.**

**Do what you know is right.**

**We raise our hands to speak.  
We work quietly at our seats.  
We use voices soft and sweet.  
We keep our places tidy and neat.  
We are helpful, friendly, and fair.**

## Mystery Walkers

"It works really well. You secretly pick two kids. A boy and a girl. Let them know that you have picked your 'Mystery Walkers' and you keep a close watch on everyone. Always remind them you are going to pick and you have to be in line in the first place to be picked. The children have to walk quietly all the way to where you are going to win. When you get where you are going, if the students picked walked really well give them a reward right then. The reward can be a sticker, a certificate, a classroom benefit (leader next time, etc.) or even a piece of candy. Sometimes if the two I picked were noisy in line and I had to talk to them I usually told them that they were the mystery walkers and then give the reward to someone who did an exceptional job. But most of the time I just keep it a secret and look for some one else next time. We also use it at assemblies and when we have guest readers at the school."



# Classroom Helpers

"I've always had enough jobs for everyone to have one. The first day I have them posted on the bulletin board. I plan the jobs ahead of time and know where I can use additional multiple workers so that if I get new students at the last minute, I still have enough spaces for everyone. I let the kids choose and we pin up their names next to the job. They keep the same job for a week. I usually use this system for the first two or three weeks. Once I know things are working smoothly I make a 'Job Dial'. I draw two circles with enough wedges to accommodate the number of jobs/students. I cut one enough smaller than the other to allow space to write the jobs on the rim of the larger circle along with an icon or picture to help non-readers. I then put student names on the wedges of the smaller circle. Each Monday, we turn the inner circle one wedge clockwise. (I usually put one pushpin through both circles to keep them from turning before the next week. Early in the year we take time for everyone to come forward and find their name/job on the wheel and discover what their job for the week is and to review what the duties of that job are. Usually by sometime in October everyone is able to check the Job Dial on their own to see their job for the week. If someone assigned to a solitary task (i.e., taking notes to the office) is absent, the person who had that job last week takes does it again as a substitute.

"Some jobs can accommodate more than one worker so they are listed the appropriate number of times – each time in a separate wedge. (For example, librarians straighten the bookshelves in the room at the end of the day. Depending upon the number of bookshelves, this job can accommodate multiple workers, so there might be anywhere from 2-6 librarians each week.) I scatter them around the circle. And, DON'T FORGET...After you finish your outer wheel including labeling the wedges with jobs, make a photocopy of it. That way, should the need arise to add or delete a job, you can do it using white-out and not have to redraw all those little icons from scratch.

"Jobs I have/had in my classrooms:

ERRAND RUNNER (1-2)

GARDENER (1-2) depending upon the number of plants) (waters the plants)

BOARDS (2) (this is usually a popular job)

MAIL (2) (I usually have student mailboxes for papers to be returned and papers to go home. I have student helpers to help with distributing papers into the appropriate boxes.

CENTERS (?) I usually assign 1-2 students to 1-2 centers (depending again on numbers) to check them at the end of center time or the end of the day to make sure everything is picked up and/or to dust, etc.

FLOOR PATROL (2) I always have them check the floor. They collect any lost items and put them in the lost and found box.

KP (1) This isn't really 'Kitchen Patrol' but it has more pizzazz than 'sink cleaner'.

HOST/HOSTESS (1-2) A couple of years I worked in schools where we had a lot of visitors. The Host/Hostess would greet them, make them welcome, show them around, answer questions, etc.

LIBRARIAN (2-6) This group is responsible for straightening all the shelves and bringing books that needed repair to my attention.

ZOO KEEPERS (1-2) When I have hamsters, guinea pigs, fish or other pets in the room, this group is responsible for their care.

INSPECTORS (1-2) - Check the classroom for untidiness or jobs not done well.

## The President's Vest

"The first time, I had my vest made by one of the aides at school. She sews beautifully. I told her to create to her heart's content. When she came back with it, it was orange. Not my favourite colour! Now, I am on my second vest and I LOVE the orange. The child stands out in a crowd and you never have to wonder who is President. She wrote 'President' on the back and puff painted some cute things on the front. It is machine washable - very important. I take it home each Friday and wash it. I don't allow the President to wear it to lunch and the children are fine with that."

# On-Line Resources

*As it is the beginning of a new year and there are teachers who are not yet familiar with my favourites, these are the websites that I return to over and over again. They have all been built by primary teachers!*

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

**Marcia's Lesson Links** This could be 'one stop shopping'! Grade One teacher Marcia Goudie has everything here. Finding good sites is her hobby and her passion.

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

Because there is so much on Marcia's site, you could miss this. It is a great place to find ideas to enhance literature.

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

**CanTeach** from Kamloops, BC. Check out the poetry collections and classroom management. Thanks, Iram!

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

Make your own crossword, word search and other puzzles. Easy to use and your children will love them!

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

Cathy-Dee Brand's site. Cathy teaches Grade One in Ft. Vermilion, AB, and she has built this site for her school. There are lots of good links and ideas.

[http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Fields/7444/inside\\_the\\_nook.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Fields/7444/inside_the_nook.htm)

Lots of good ideas! Check the 'back to school' section.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Hollow/1213/index.html>

**KinderKorner** has great ideas on so many subjects for Kindergarten to Grade 2. Check out Victoria's 'back to school' section, too!

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

**Teaching is a Work of Heart** is another great site with collections of ideas.

## A "Helping Apple Tree"

*There are often things you need in the classroom that you buy out of your own pocket. Most parents wouldn't mind donating small items – they just have to know what you want and need. Make an apple tree bulletin board. On each apple write one thing that a parent could donate.*

If you pick an apple from our tree,  
How very happy we will be!  
If you want to do some more,  
You could pick two, or three, or four!  
The items on the list are small,  
But they would really help us all.  
If we each will do a part,  
We'll have lots of learning, fun, and art!

*Please put your name on the list beside the number of the apple you chose.*  
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Ask for:

- small and large size zip lock bags (with the 'zipper') - several apples can have this on them
- paper plates
- cotton balls
- baby wipes
- art supplies
- flash card sets
- ????

You can even ask for older computers! Books! Games!

# It's Hallowe'en!

## Miss Viola Swamp

"I dress up as Miss Viola Swamp from the story *Miss Nelson is Missing*. In the morning I hide in the office and the children are told by the principal that I am ill and while she is finding a substitute a parent or teacher aide will read them a story. The secretary and I are listening in on the P.A. system to see when she finishes the story and then the principal ushers me, as Miss Viola Swamp, to the room. I can be a fairly funny but strict teacher (really helps keep them settled down in the a.m.). For the party I just put on a witch's hat and look great. I have done this for years and so the older children see me and all say, "Hi, Miss Swamp!" and it really is interesting to watch the Grade One students because they are not really sure if it is me. All the teachers go along with this, too. If any of the students are frightened of me I do whisper to them that it is really me."

## Hallowe'en Math

Play bingo with candy corn as markers.

"Do all your activities with your pumpkin and then after all the seeds are out and dried, make miniature paper pumpkins. Glue 10 seeds to each mini-pumpkin. Then take all the mini pumpkins and glue or tape them on in tens to a giant paper pumpkin. Circle each group of 100's and write the exact amount on the bottom in big numbers. Display it for parents and everyone to see. Before you do this, have the kids estimate and write down their estimates. Give a prize to the person who was closest. Happy Halloween planning!"

**Rochelle**

On a piece of watercolour paper probably about 8x11 I am going to have the kids "watercolour" paint using red, yellow, orange and brown paint in waves over the whole page. Kind of like a sunset but using wavy lines. The once the paper dries they will make a tree out of black paper, probably by tracing hand and arm and glue it on top. Or for a more authentic look they could make the tree using Y's with crayons or pastels. The end result looks like a tree without any leaves in a harvest moon/Halloween type of sunset. They look great and kind of spooky too.

We make ghosts on Halloween. The most economical way I've found to do it is to buy 2 yards white fabric. Cut in 12" squares. Give each child a square. Using a Rub a Dub laundry marker have the children fold the square into a triangle. At the wide end of the triangle in the center, draw a face. Soak the fabric in liquid starch. Drape it over a bottle with two smaller bottles on the side for the hands. Let it dry overnight. The next day the little ghosts will be frozen in that position. They all look different! Put a small pin in the top, some fishing line tied on and hang from ceiling. They look like they're flying! Happy Halloween! Vickie

I read about the spaghetti webs also. I didn't try it but am glad to know it worked so well. I'll try it next year. I also got an idea from this list or a site someone suggested. I had the children use white glue to make a web on black paper. Then we sprinkled glitter on the glue. It was GREAT! The glue dried clear so the webs were formed of glitter. We also had a lot of people stopping by to see our webs. You folks are wonderful!! Thanks for all of the ideas!!! Jerilyn

somewhere on this ring or on a spider website, I got this great idea to make webs out of spaghetti and glue. I did this on Friday and it was a great hit. The whole school was visiting my room to see these things. Here's what I did: I made 2 lbs. of spaghetti the night before. ( more than enough for my class of 18) Next morning I mixed it with glue. (I didn't measure any mount, just made it sticky.) Then in small groups the kids rotated through 3 different "Spider" centers, so I was able to work with just 6 kids. We had previously learned how to draw webs, so they didn't need instruction on forming the web. I put them on waxed paper that was on top of black 11 x 14 paper (the idea that I read said that they should harden enough so you could lift them off the paper and hang them, but I was worried that that wouldn't happen so I put the black as a background. Then the kids sprinkled the clear "angel dust" glitter onto the webs. They were wonderful. I'll see how they dried when I go in tomorrow, but even if they don't work when I lift them off the wax paper, at least they'll be on the black background. Annette/1/NJ

Don't forget the ghost project I posted a few years ago! I just tried it again at home and it worked well. Have the children cut out two identical pieces of waxed paper...I have them do it at the same time. Then, have them make eyes and a mouth from black construction paper, and iron them together with a newspaper on top, waxed side down. Punch a hole in it, and put a string through it. I am also giving them a little sticker with their initials on it to identify it. Corinne

Today my student teacher came in with a new Halloween song she got from the Grandpa Tucker site to the tune of She Be'll Coming Round the Mountain. Too cute. I'll post it if you all want it. Also, we've been singing "One Little, Two Little, Three Little Pumpkins," to the tune of "One Little Indian." Finally, next week we will do a craft where we take a paper cup that I've poked a hole in the bottom, put a drinking straw through the hole and two kleenexes around the straw fastened with a rubber band to make a ghost. The ghost can then slide up and down the inverted or upside down cup. Then you have a "poke" or "cup" puppet. We sing this song to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel". Sometimes I like to walk in the dark,

I like to shout and scream,  
I sneak behind somebody I know,  
Boo! it's Halloween.

On the boo, you pop your ghost up. I hope this clear. Dinene

Creepy  
When I go out to trick-or-treat  
I feel a little fright.

## Odds and Ends

I am a natural organizer and have lots of little things I do that I don't realize everyone else doesn't do until a fellow teacher says "what a good idea". One very easy trick I do to treat all students "fairly" is to write each student's name on a craft stick and put all names in a cup or holder. Every time I need a student to do something, read in the book nook, etc. I just pull a stick from the cup and everyone is happy. When the cup is empty, all the sticks go back in. The kids always remind to pull out a name when we need a helper. They all feel the fairness in the selection process.

Gail

I just went blank. I would love to share ideas with others. If you can think of anything else that can be added to the helping tree send it to me and I will collate it and post it to the ring. I guess I didn't make the idea of the tree clear. What I plan to do is draw

a tree on the chalkboard and cut out apples (definitely will use the Ellison machine for this) to attach to the tree. During our evening I will mention that this is our helping apple tree. On this are some of the supplies our class will need this year. If you would like to help us out, please pick an apple of your choice. I am hoping to have enough for everyone to take at least one. A bag of cotton balls will not be enough so I will put up a couple of apples with this on it. Does this sound clearer than what I first posted? It is late and I am not thinking too clearly.

Barbara

I try very hard to keep my room neat. I also tell the students that they are old enough to clean up after themselves and that they should NOT expect someone to clean up after them. I also keep my desk neat - actually, I keep very little on it. I tape my class list, the room schedule, the teacher's schedule for bus duty, any "special" notes regarding the special needs of any of my students (i.e. medications, who attends speech and what time, etc.etc.) and then on top of that I lay a clear sheet of Plexiglas. I rarely keep anything on my desk for long - it is usually a work station kind of thing for me - I'll put glue out for the students to use, or the stapler or scissors, etc. I rarely spend any time actually SITTING at my desk, so I keep it pretty much cleaned off and we use it for an extra work space. I am also BIG into plastic storage containers (I prefer Sterilite brand from Wal-Mart, the 58 gallon size,) Ziploc bags and LABELING. After 20 + years in teaching, I do have A LOT of STUFF, but I do try to get rid of what I really don't need every once in a while. It just gets to be too much!!!!!! It's tough, but I do try to keep everything neat and in it's place. If you don't have any room in your room, perhaps you could "beg" the principal or the custodians for a little space in a storage area to keep your extra stuff.

Karen Carmichaels

We learn each other's first and last name because of the way I do Daily News...which could be called Student News, probably. In the beginning of the year, one student a day (I go in order of the birthday chart) tells us something special. I write it out starting with the child's name.. e.g. John Martin got a new puppy. John then goes up to the board and reads the sentence by pointing to each word with a pointer. I help if needed, then John may read the sentence again. We



## Odds and Ends

### Self Portrait

Here's a new thing I am trying this year: In addition to my normal listening center, I have on a separate desk a boombox that will be used as a music/reading center. I have some CD's of different types (classical, various instruments, various cultures, etc.) and children will have one to listen to each week and a box of books to read while they listen. I just bought a 1.99 CD at Circuit City of Indian sitar and flute music--not bad. We are going on a field trip around April or May to hear the Vt. Symphony Orchestra, and I thought I would work on a little music exposure to prepare them. The last time I tried this I had a bunch of boys that used to fight over the Mozart and Beethoven tapes. I asked parents if they might lend me a CD for a week if they have anything interesting. Only caution is to watch that you don't get inappropriate lyrics. I'm mostly sticking to classical, jazz, and other cultures, so I don't think it will be a problem. Eleanor

## Great Advice!

1. Run to the store and buy *Month by Month Phonics* by Pat Cunningham. It will get you through the first 6 weeks. It is a great resource through the whole year but the first months are outstanding. If you feel rich you can also buy *With a Light Touch*.
  2. Plan lots of little things to do- about 15 min per activity.
  3. Read lots of books- some with a follow up activity ,some to enjoy, and some to choral read after they have read them with you. Plan on reading the same books several times.
  4. Start repeating to yourself **THEY KNOW NOTHING, THEY KNOW NOTHING**. You will teach them everything. Assume nothing. Start with the most basic instruction. This is how we walk down the hall. This is what I expect you to do when your pencil needs sharpened. When you cut this is what you do, this is how you get rid of scraps of paper this is how you paste. This is how you tear a page out of your workbook (do not be surprised if it takes you 45 min. to an hour to teach this).
  5. Do all group work until you find out what you have and have routines established.
  6. Plan all learning for the morning - after about 10:00 they will be dead in the water. Keep afternoons less stressful and light for the first month.
  7. Get ready for the longest week of your life. The first day is exhausting for the children and you. It does get better.
  8. I call all my children the week before school starts, introduce my self and ask them to bring a favorite book with them on the first day for me to read. The first week we read as many of these as we can. I also have a pile of classic books in my room for those children who have no access to books. Talk to the parents also and **FIND OUT HOW THE CHILD GOES HOME**. This is a real biggie because the children worry about getting home all day and usually you are responsible if they don't make it.
  9. Prepare yourself for the most rewarding year of teaching you will ever have. First grade is a mission and a calling. At they end of the year proudly repeat to your self **I TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNOW I TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNOW!**
- \*Note: this is only good until August first when you go back to repeating to yourself **THEY KNOW NOTHING, THEY KNOW NOTHING.....** *Beth*

Here's an idea for getting the students' attention:

- >\*Clap once if you're listening
- > Clap twice if you're listening
- > Clap three times if you're listening
- >
- >\*One, two, three - eyes on me!
- >
- >And I still use the "mystery walker" idea! Choose one child to be the
- >mystery walker. Don't tell the students
- >who you have chosen until you reach your destination. Then, reward the
- >child with a sticker, etc.
- >Vickie

Dear Colleagues,  
I

*Jean*

Searching for Gold

by Jean Warren

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