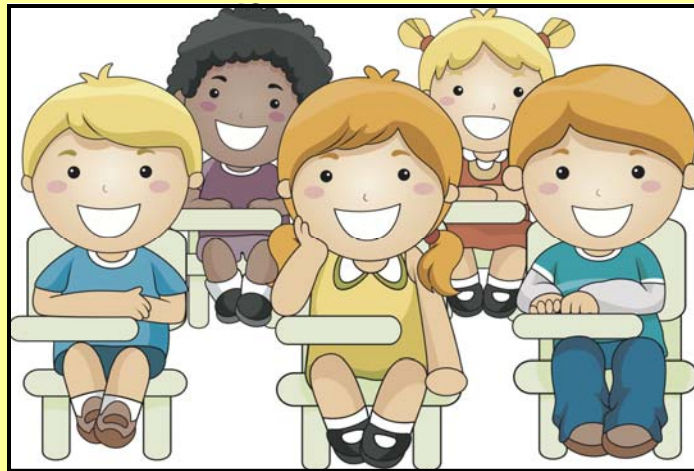


The September to December Freebie



Ideas Collected By
Jean Roberts
With Thanks to
Primary Teachers Everywhere!

Introduction

Primary Success had a magazine from 2004 to 2009. It was filled with great ideas from teachers - ideas that are as useful now as they were then.

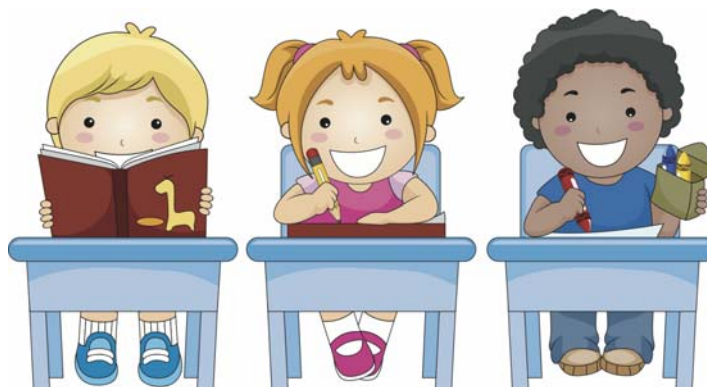
To make this book, pages have been taken from the September/October and the November/December issues and sorted into areas of the curriculum. I hope you will excuse the occasional repeat of ideas.

The graphics are seasonal, depending on the issue, so some pages may have pumpkins or Santa, even when there isn't any connection to the articles.

I hope you enjoy this freebie and find interesting things to use in your classroom! You are welcome to print this book if you would like it in hard copy.

Primary Success has a history of helping teachers. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to ask!

Jean



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Before School Begins

Bulletin Boards - In Kindergarten and Grade One it is expected that there will be a calendar board - the alphabet and numbers and colours. There should be a bulletin board that has backing and a border but left empty waiting for the students' work on the first week. Leave room for your word wall. Often there is a board with the students' names and pictures. Try backing your boards with plain fabric stretched tightly. It fades much less than the butcher paper.

It may not be Autumn yet in your area, but it will come soon. Use the Fall colours of yellow, orange, red and brown in your decorations. If you back all your bulletin boards with orange, it can be left up for Halloween! Decorate your door on both sides! It is a nice welcome to your classroom.

Desk Tags - If you are computer literate, make up personal desk tags for each student. Have the name in primary print, the student's number, a number line and the alphabet in lower case. Laminate them and attach with the clear packing tape. Have some without the names and numbers as you will get new students during the year.

Homework - Decide how you want to manage this. The monthly homework calendars save you a lot of work. You will also be allowing the students to take books home. The large baggies with the zipper are good for back-and-forth protection.

The Word Wall - Have the letters up, and the students' names ready to put up. If you have the year's words ready it would save a lot of time. File them in order. Most teachers do not laminate the words, as that can put a glare so the children can't see them clearly. If you don't have a list of words, use the Dolch list. In Grade Two or Three you may not want a word wall. You can make a computer list of words for each letter, and the students can glue each letter's words to the correct page of their personal dictionaries.

The Coat Place - Students bring jackets, backpacks and lunches. This area can be a mess if there isn't directed organization.

Library - It is not necessary to put out all the books. Have an attractive variety out for the first day.

Classroom Behavior Plan - Decide on your plan. If you have a good class, you may not need a system of rewards or punishments. Do not reward or punish unless you have to! Let praise be the reward, and a 'teacher's look' be the deterrent. You may want to start out this way - and with most classes this will be all that is needed for several months. But..... know what you are going to do if a child does not respond to this and causes disturbance.

Personal Numbers - Assign each student a number. That number is used all year and is very handy! Put it at the top of work for easy filing. See at a glance who has not handed work in. Number coat hooks and other personal spaces. They can line up by number and do jobs by number. Use them for addition and subtraction, too.

Math Manipulatives - Put them in plastic containers with lids, and label them. Only have out what you will need and put the rest in a cupboard. Do not let the students use these as toys or they will become mixed, lost and damaged.

Daily Plans - There is a lot of repetition in our daily plans. If you do them on the computer, you can cut-and- paste the basic things you do every day and add the day's specific lessons. This will save you lots of time! Print it out and put it into a binder. Computer plans are also very easy to change.



Tip:

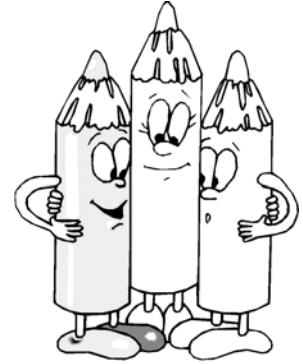
"I shake everyone's hand at the door in the morning and at the end of the day. I expect eye contact and a polite response. If you expect good manners the classroom will be a nicer place!"

Before the First Day

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The First Day

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

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

Dear New Students,

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

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

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

Good luck!

Sincerely,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sing to the tune of London Bridge -

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

This is <George>

We're glad he's here.

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



More First Day Ideas

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

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

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

Who Stole the Cookie?

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

Group: Amanda stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

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

Group: Yes, you.

Amanda (*shake head*): Couldn’t be.

Group: Then who?

Amanda: Thomas stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Thomas: Who me? Etc.



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

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

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

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

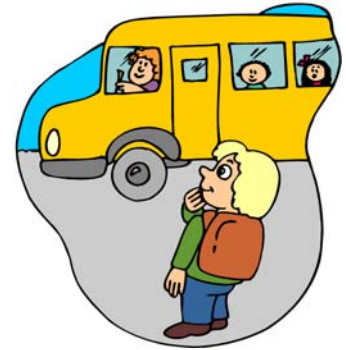
Do ‘All About Me’ math. How many numbers are part of your life? Your address, phone number, number of people in the family, number of pets, age, etc.

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

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

Getting Ready - Things To Do

- Make name tags for desks, coat hooks, bulletin boards, door, necklaces, helpers; on magnets, clothes pins and/or popsicle sticks. Or..... instead of name tags, put up numbers permanently and give each student a number on the first day.
- Calendar corner – Make or buy a calendar, weather chart, days of the week, months, today is, days in school chart, birthday chart, temperature, etc., and tack up behind your meeting circle spot. Have a handy place to put all the things needed - perhaps a plastic box with drawers that could sit on a table beside your chair.
- Charts – alphabet, colour words, numbers and number words, poems, direction words, etc. Different grade levels have different needs.
- Set up the word wall, ready for the first week's words. Having the year's words ready is a time saver.
- Letters to parents and/or students. Last year's Primary Success September/October issue had a good outline for a class handbook. A great idea is to have the parents write a letter telling you about their child.
- Prepare your computer files for each child and a data-base with emergency numbers, addresses, birthdays, etc. Prepare data-bases for marks in different subjects and a place for anecdotal remarks.
- Know what your classroom rules will be and have a rules chart prepared if you wish.
- Know the school rules and procedures if you are new to the school.
- Review curriculum outcomes. Cut and paste the outcomes for your grade from the provincial website into files of your own, and separate into months if possible.
- Prepare a binder for marks and anecdotal remarks that is useful to use on a regular basis.
- Have at least one week's lessons, worksheets, flashcards, games, etc., ready.
- You will want to have your students tested in the first week or two. The Successful Assessment K-2 book is very useful - it provides tests at each grade level and check sheets so you can have a good idea of each student's level of knowledge.
- Have art supplies ready and paper supplies organized.
- Have plans for the handling of supplies.
- Have a decorated 'Welcome' bulletin board with the children's names.
- One bulletin board should be covered and outlined, ready to put up the children's work in the first week.
- Organize the classroom library, displaying books.
- Have books chosen to read to the class in the first week.
- 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!
- Organize your own supplies – pencils, pens, ruler, chalk, scissors, glue, stapler, etc.
- Have file folders labeled with the children's names and portfolios ready.
- Understand your procedures – entering the room, bathroom, sharpening pencils, lining up, taking drinks, etc.
- Ask another teacher for help if you need it, and be always willing to help others. Share ideas, poetry, books, units and give support when you can.
- And after all that – relax and be rested for the big day!



Before School Begins

Setting up the physical classroom:

1. Think where the teacher's desk will go (if you have one). Most teachers prefer it at the back or side of the classroom, with clear room to approach it. Many teachers have bookshelves for curriculum guides, etc., near the desk, and a computer for your use either on the desk or nearby. If you have a computer, consider electrical outlets, cords, etc. Organize things on the top of the desk so it will stay tidy.

2. How will your children be seated? Desks or tables can be placed in groups of 2, 4 or more, or placed individually. Once you have found a seating arrangement that works well, you can place small bits of tape on the carpet or floor under the table legs. This way the students can easily put the tables or desks back in this ideal position accurately. If you have a lino floor, you can make small spots with white-out or other washable marker to show the leg positions.

3. If you have tables in the classroom, make sure they have a distinct purpose. Tables that don't have a specific purpose collect papers and books and impede traffic.

4. All Kindergarten and Grade One classrooms, and most Grade Two and Three rooms have a meeting area. You will likely use this for morning calendar activities. You will either use this same area for group lessons or have another area with either chalk board (or white board) access and a chart paper stand.

5. Plan your library area. Will you be able to display the covers of a number of books to lure students into reading them? Is there a place to sit and read? Are your bookcases adequate and attractive?

6. Consider the traffic - where will the students walk to get to the meeting area? Where will they line up to leave the classroom? Is the path clear to the coat area? How will they walk to get to the class library?

Decorating your room:

1. You will want a word wall. This must be seen clearly from every desk. If the distance from the desks is great, the words must be made larger. Do not laminate the words as there can be glare, and do not print the words on dark coloured paper.

2. As you decorate your home so that you live in a pleasant space, decorate your classroom pleasantly. You will spend more time there than in your living room, so make sure it is attractive! Do not under-decorate or over-decorate. The decorations should be relevant to the students. Put charts, pictures, alphabet, numbers, etc. up in an orderly way. Plants and/or fresh flowers add a pleasant touch.

Organizing your teaching 'stuff':

1. Put all books and teachers' materials that you will not be using frequently out of sight.

2. Many teachers fill plastic tubs with the things needed for each month. The ones that are not being used can be kept at your home or in another part of the school if you do not have out of sight storage.

3. Be tidy! Keep the top of your desk free so it can be used for doing your work.

4. If you are susceptible to piles of paper that need to be filed, put a plastic tub under your desk or other inconspicuous place and put the filing into it. Do the filing at least once a month.

Know your rules and routines:

Make a list of all the rules and routines you will need in your classroom. You will need to know how you are going to handle children moving around the classroom, drinks, restroom visits, passing/collecting papers, lining up, fire drills, computer use, etc. You must have routines and rules for handling supplies, sharpening pencils, using rulers and glue, turning in finished work and many more. Especially in Kindergarten and Grade One these must be taught thoroughly, modeled and practiced. In Grade



Tip:

Number your students alphabetically using the first names (or last name if this is more convenient). Use this number on supplies, coat hooks, personal items, mailboxes, etc.

Use the number to file papers quickly and easily—even the students can do it. Use the numbers on your computer, too.

Off to school
We go together,
In September's
Sunny weather.



Two and Three these expectations must be clear and thoroughly understood. Don't make any rule/routine you are not prepared to enforce or re-teach each and every time it is broken.

The First Week

1. Have your Dayplan Book done thoroughly for the first week or more. Have lots to do — more than you think you will possibly need. Your students will either do far more than you think they will or much less.

2. Do all photocopying, make flashcards, and have everything ready.

Name Tags:

“I laminate my name tags. I have a primary font program on my computer (with lines and an inter-line) and I typed each child's name on their desk nametag. They look much neater this way!”

My name is _____,
I'll be your teacher soon.
I can't wait to meet you,
And show you our new room!

There's so much to learn in grade __,
We've lots of great things to do,
It is going to be a very special year,
For an awesome child like you!!

Love, _____

“I made my own desk tags (we call them license plates!) on the computer and printed them on coloured construction paper. They each had the student's name, a number line and the alphabet. I covered them on both sides with clear contact plastic. Then I put a piece of Velcro tape on the back and the matching piece on the table. That way, the tag stayed put but when the students changed desks they could take the tag with them. The velcro comes off with a little Goo Gone.”

“I mail one piece of a 25 piece puzzle to each child on my class list. I buy two identical puzzles in case someone forgets to return the piece. I number the pieces first so we know if any are missing. I send the piece home with this little poem.

On the first day we complete the puzzle. “See how we fit together? One student missing would ruin the picture!”, etc. This is the first step to building community in the classroom.”

Meghan's Ideas (K):

“I cut up strips of paper and put the kids names on them. Then the first day of school the kids decorate the strip with felts and a sticker and I staple it into a hat. I keep the hats for a few days until I've learned everyone's name.

I have a circle paper necklace that is really easy to make that says ‘I survived the first day of Kindergarten’ that they get to wear home that day. It could also say ‘I survived the first week’. The kids just colour in the little picture and cut out the circle (after I've talked about scissor safety).

For the first few days, I set up a mini-chalkboard, chalk, a brush and their name tag on the carpet for each child. The children learn that this is the first thing that they do every time they come in to the classroom. Initially, I have them print their name once and then they can draw a picture but eventually we do lots of things on our chalkboards - print our names, letters, numbers, shapes, and directed drawings.



Tip:

You will likely have a label program on your computer. Make up labels with the children's names. Use these on books, supplies, coat-hooks, library cards, - there are so many uses! You can colour the background on the computer or buy coloured labels. Peel-and-stick labels are a big time-saver!

I like to have a theme of greeting, and something I did that I thought was cool was to have the large bulletin board animals (about 24 + inches long...but most sizes would work) and I would fill up some spaces with them and have word bubbles coming out of their mouth. I would put them like where I put the word wall because otherwise it would be empty. I would put them in places where I wanted to have children's work up as soon as we could create some, and I also wanted the children to be part of where things went in the room. This way it looked cute and inviting, but I had things up that weren't meant to stay. An example was a squirrel carrying a nut...and he said something about he couldn't wait until lunch...or he was glad it was ___:___ (whatever time your lunch is) because he was hungry. I had an animal with a book and he said, 'I can't wait until reading time!' or 'I can't wait until I learn to read' ... something appropriate. I had one say something about math, writing, etc.



I copied their pictures from last year off the permanent record folders and put them on whatever my greeting bulletin board was. For example, TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STARS and I had their pictures in the middle of stars. You could put their pictures on bees for 'Busy Bees in Room_____'. I always thought they liked seeing themselves and the people in their class right away.

I sent home a welcoming letter in the later part of summer and told them to bring a special thing on their first day back. I always took pictures on the first day of them with their special thing. We did sharing at the same time we reviewed listening circle-time rules. I would break it up into groups. I let them keep their special thing with them the first day (if it was appropriate), and they knew it was just for the day. It made some of them feel more comfortable coming back to school that first day.

I always had a welcoming pencil on their desks WITH their name on it.

I did the 'Monster Comes to School' story and did follow-up activity about why we need rules."

The First Days

Make a Time Capsule:

"I teach Grade Two. On the first day of school we make a time capsule. The students are asked to bring an empty paper towel roll (I have a few extra) or a Pringles can and begin their first day by decorating a piece of construction paper that will cover the roll with their name and a picture. Then they spend the day doing the things that go into the capsule.

They put in a tracing of their hand, a self-portrait and we measure each student and put in the height. This can be in a number or cut a piece of non-stretchable string to show the height. The students fill in a sheet that asks about their favourite book, movie, toy, shoe size, friend, activity, TV show, etc.

Then the items are put into the tube, the ends are sealed and they are put away until the last day of school. It is fun to remind them of their time capsule goals throughout the year. They have such fun on the last day opening them!"

Make a seating chart:

Buy the smallest pack of sticky notes that you can find. Then make a wall chart that shows your desks or tables, with room for the size of note for each one. When you have the students settled, write a name on each note and stick it into the desk space. These are fast and easy to change and your seating chart will always be up-to-date.

A name puzzle:

Go to www.puzzlemaker.com , select 'wordsearch' and put in all your students' names. This is a good 'getting to know you' activity for Grade 2 and 3.

Tip:



"At the end of the first week of school I give each child a tiny bag that says, 'You have had a great first week of school - you deserve kisses and hugs!' I put two Hershey Kisses and two Hugs in each little bag. This is always a hit!"

The first day in Grade One

“We discuss the school and classroom rules and talk about being safe and being good friends to one another. We go on a tour of the classroom and I read all the charts and poems. (We will do this every day until all the students have memorized the words and the charts and poems can be used for ‘read the room’.) We tour the school.

We begin to enforce the routines on the first day, too. They need to be repeated and repeated and practiced until the students do them automatically.

I begin my phonics program on the first day by teaching the letter A. We talk about the letter name and the letter sound. The children practice making the letter - lower and upper case - on the individual white boards. We brainstorm words that begin with the /a/ sound. We do a chart with the words ‘I’ and ‘am’, and the children fill in a paper with their names - ‘I am ____.’ and draw a picture of themselves. We read this over and over, and they touch each word as they read.

I have the children play with the math manipulatives, and I go around and ask each one to count a group of manipulatives. This gives me an idea of who will need help with this.

I read a couple of books, too. This is a full day of things to do, and the students feel that Grade One is serious and that they have done lots of work! I make notes of the things I see - my first idea of their abilities.”

Take digital pictures:

On the first day, take digital pictures of your students. For Kindergarten or Grade One children, print each picture with the student’s name below on 8 1/2 x 11 paper. (If you don’t have access to a digital camera, you could also take a picture of each child holding his/her name and have the photos ready to share the next day. Glue each picture to a larger sheet of paper.) Bind these together into a book. The kids will love looking through it and learning the names of their classmates.

For Grade Two and Three students, take the photos and have them write several sentences about themselves. You could type these sentences below the photos and print them. Again, bind them into a book that all the students will treasure.



A school tour



We do this in the morning on the first day of school. I take my class on a tour. I have done this in Kindergarten and in Grade Two, so it adapts to any grade level. In Kindergarten I invited the parents to join us.

We began by visiting the office to meet the secretary and the principal. I took a digital picture of each person. Each person we met said a few words about their job and the children asked questions. Then we went to the library and met the librarian, to the computer lab and met the teacher there. When the students had different teachers for PE or music, we went to meet them.

Then we visited the gym, the playground and even the bathrooms!

During lunch hour I downloaded the pictures, put each onto a simple outline of a school. The older students had a sentence or two with each picture, and the younger ones had a word or two. Then I printed them in black and white. I photocopied them and we made a shape book, with a page for each place we visited.

Things To Do Before School Begins

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



Making Tables

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

my	the
go	to
street	park
house	car

The First Day

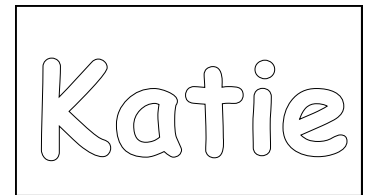
Fun With Names

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

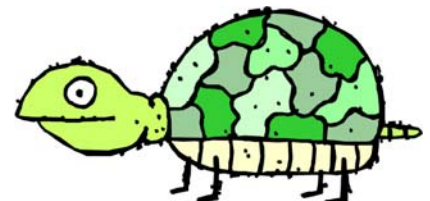
I also go into the favourite books of the class and find tricky words - palatial, levitation, scarlet, organic, etc.”

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

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

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

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



The First Day

Will you get your last year's class on the first day of school? Have them write about their year to tell your new students what they will be doing and learning. Begin sentences, such as 'Ms. _____ likes to _____.' 'She gets upset if you don't _____.' 'In math we learned _____.' It was _____.' Etc.

Then for your first day with your new children, here are some ideas:

Play the 'Name Game': Sit everyone in a circle. The teacher begins with, "My name is _____, and I like to _____". The student to the right of the teacher repeats, "Her (the teacher) name is _____ and she _____." My name is _____ and I like to _____." Repeat just what the person before you said, around the circle.

Read **Chrysanthemum** by Kevin Henkes. "*Chrysanthemum is a cute mouse with a very beautiful name. Chrysanthemum is the name of a flower. She is happy to go to Kindergarten. Her name has 13 letters! That is half of the letters in the alphabet, one of her classmates points out!*" Discuss the length of Chrysanthemum's name. How many letters are in each of your students' names? Give them their names in bubble font, and have each count the letters. Can they read the letters out to the class? Make a simple graph to show the number of letters in the names. Ask grade suitable questions: How many children have names with 5 letters? Who has the most? Who has the least? How many more letters does ___ have than ___? Decorate the names for a bulletin board graph.

"Each week one of the students is the 'Star'. On the first week of school, I am the start person. I have a star student board, and each week that person fills the board with information about his/her family, friends, pets, favourite things, favourite places, etc. to share with the rest of the class and bring in pictures and show and tell things. I do it the first week to show how it is done, and the children learn a bit about my life."

Take the students' pictures the first day. Now with digital cameras, these are easy to do and can be used immediately. Take them against a plain background. These can be printed either in colour or in black and white and in a variety of sizes for different purposes - large and in colour for bulletin boards, small for graphing, black and white to make a book of classmates for the first week, memory books for the end of the year, etc.

"Writing Activity - Read *Today I Feel Silly, and Other Moods that Make My Day*, by Jamie Lee Curtis. This is a very funny story and the children always get a kick out of the main character's moods! After reading this story, have the children write about how they are feeling. Start them off with: "We read Today I ... today on the first day of second grade. Last night I felt _____. I felt _____ when I was getting ready this morning. Right now I feel _____ and I am feeling _____ about second grade. I then have them add on a couple more sentences on their own...Once they are finished, I let them illustrate their mood on a blank face die-cut. The children are then allowed to share what they have written. This is also a good informal writing assessment to see how they are writing. Before starting this activity, tie it in with the first Writer's Workshop mini-lesson to let students know expectations for their writing."

For grade two of three classes, do a class survey. There is a sample survey at <http://www.abcteach.com/Backtoschool/classsurvey.htm>
The students go around the room and find out things about their classmates.

Of course, younger students may need a tour of the school. Practice lining up and model how we walk in the halls and what to do in the washrooms, etc.

Make a class book. It could be modeled on the book *Mary Wore a Red Dress* by Merle Peek. Make a book with each page saying a child's name and a self-portrait: _____ wore a _____ on the first day of school.



More First Day Ideas

“I want to tell you what I do on the first day of school with my new students. At our school this happens on the second day of school because on the first half day, our last year students come to us. It is such a great time to see the kids and find out what they did for the summer. It also puts the children under less anxiety as they are going back to their old classroom and teacher and it seems to be easier for them to come to school under a new situation. But anyway, it always seems that the children are comfortably sitting in their chairs ready to listen to me for instructions and the classroom walls are lined up with anxious parents not knowing what to do. So I say to the children to go give Mom and Dad a hug and kiss, say goodbye and we will see you after school. So the children get up and do just that and the parents leave wondering what to do with themselves now that the children are at school all day. I have only had one dad ever say to me that ‘you sure got us out of there’. I responded that he was welcome to come any time he wanted to join us but it looked like most of you were kind of uncomfortable and didn't really know what to do but were having difficulty leaving the children who seemed to be comfortable, settling in and ready to spend some time with me and able to let mom and dad go for a while. It really does work and even some reluctant children follow the pack and say good bye for the short time that they are at school. It also seems to set the tone for the rest of the year for most parents and children. I have told many teachers what I do on the first day and they seem pleased with the idea and have tried it and let me know that it works. I am sure that this is not a new idea but possibly someone has not heard of it and wants to try it.” *Carol*

“We always read the room on the first day, and every day or second day after that until the students are able to do it themselves. I use a ‘magic’ wand to point to the words as we read. After that I encourage the children to read what words they can and they can use the wand or other fancy pointers or glasses to help them. (The Dollar Store is a big help when looking for these!)

“I always have my Grade One students do some ‘work’ on the first day. I have them print their names, and as many letters and numbers as they can - and even words if they know any.

When I taught Grade Two and Three, I had them write a story about their summer. We talk about it first and think about the most exciting or important things that happened during the holiday. The stories gave me insight into their writing levels.”

“First, I introduce myself and tell the children something about myself. We go over the class and the school rules. We go over our classroom procedures - how to look after supplies, how to line up, how to come to the reading corner and how to behave there. We discuss after school procedures, too. We read the room and talk about the different areas in the classroom.

I always do some ‘work’ on the first day, and some art or craft project, too, and this goes up on a bulletin board to make the classroom personal. We play ‘Heads Up, Seven Up’ (an old favourite), and ‘Sparkle’ to practice counting.

We begin our calendar activities - as this is Day One, and go through the calendar procedures. I always have at least one book to read to the class and a simple activity to go with it.”

“I introduce my students to my number system - every child gets a number in alphabetical order and keeps it all year. We practice finding that number on the coat hooks and cubbies, and line up by numbers. Number One is the leader of the line today - tomorrow #2 will be the leader and #1 goes to the back of the line.”

“I read *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. The children trace their head and shoulders and decorate them to look like they do. Then they fill in this prompt:

The important thing about me is that I am _____. I can _____
and _____. I like _____ and _____.
But the important thing about me is that I am _____.



Getting To Know You

Names, names (K, 1):

Buy foam letters and the students make a name plate for their desks - or - have the students use alphabet beads to make bracelets. Make the names using different stencils. Use the computer to make names using primary font.

Print the names in fingerpaint.

Use alphabet sponges to print names.

Names, names (2, 3):

Assign each letter of the alphabet a number (a = 1, b = 2, etc.). The students print their names in the code and put them in a hat. Then each takes one out and spells the name and takes it to the original student. They can add the numbers to make their own totals.

Do a name glyph. The student follows directions to complete his code. The student traces wide letter stencils to spell his name on a paper strip or two strips taped together. Trim any excess length. The student decorates his name by the code, using desired colours for the indicated patterns.

After all students have completed their glyphs, they can challenge one another to interpret the glyphs. These can be laminated and used as desk tags.

The Code:

First Letter of your name: Are you a boy or girl? If you are a boy make diagonal lines across the first letter and if you are a girl make a grid pattern

Second letter of your name: Do you have any brothers or sisters? yes = red, no = green

Third letter: Do you have a pet? no = make dots on your letter, yes = colour the letter the colour of your pet

Fourth letter: Which subject do you like the most? reading = red, math = blue, science = green, social studies = purple, art = orange, music = yellow, other = brown

Fifth letter: How do you get to school? walk = yellow, bus = purple, car = red, van = orange, other = green

Sixth letter: Do you like to read? yes = make small coloured circles on the letter, no = make small coloured triangles on the letter

Seventh letter: Do you like sports? yes = make small yellow stars on the letter, no = make small black stars on your letter.

If you have more than seven letters in your name, colour the eighth letter like the first one. Colour the ninth letter like the second one, and so on.

You can put this code onto a sheet and have the students circle the answer to the question and then do the colouring of their stencilled name.

Chrysanthemum

Read the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. The students discuss why their name is absolutely perfect. Write: My name is _____ and it is absolutely perfect because _____.

This can be displayed with a picture on a bulletin board to begin the year.



Name Math

Make a class graph of the numbers of letters in the names. Find out how many letters are in all of the names together. Sort the names and then guess how they have been sorted. (vowel sounds, number of letters, number of syllables etc.)

Getting To Know You!



Student's Full Name: _____ Nickname: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Address _____

Phone Number _____ Alternate Phone Number _____

The following information will be kept private, and is only to help me to understand your child better.

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

Does your child have any medical conditions or allergies that I should be made aware of?

What are some of your child's favourite things to do? Does he/she have any hobbies?

What are your child's special interests?

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

Write a few adjectives that come to mind that describe your child (include strengths and weaknesses).

What are your child's talents?

What time does your child go to sleep at night? Is he/she frequently tired by afternoon?

Does your child have any siblings? If yes, what are their names, ages, and grades if they go to school?

What else would you like me to know about your child? Do you have any concerns?

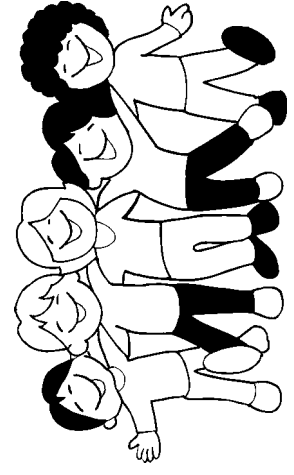
(Use the back of the page.)

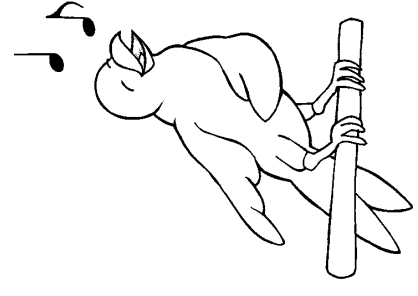
Thank you! I appreciate your confidence. _____

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9





A Class Handbook

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

THE ABC'S OF GRADE 1 !

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

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

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

- Backpacks They help your child carry books, messages and information to and from school, you are asked to provide a backpack.

- Birthdays
- Breakfast Please ensure that your child has eaten a healthy breakfast. Children need this energy to learn.

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

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

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

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

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

- Fire drills These are held once each month.

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

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

- Health Please let me know of special circumstances which may affect your child. These could include medication, allergies or other conditions.

- Home Reading Discuss your home reading program.
- Homework - We expect that the children will read at home each night. Other homework may include work not completed in class, learning spelling words, doing math drill sheets, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Website Our class has a website at

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

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

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

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



Beginning Assessment - Grade One

“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?"

Teaching from K to 3



Teaching **Kindergarten** is exhausting! When you first get these wee ones, they are still pre-schoolers. They will need to be taught everything, from how to sit in a circle to how to use the washrooms. Some will have an attention span of only a couple of minutes, and those who have watched a lot of fast moving TV will be bored and fidgety if there isn't movement or action.

Five year olds are generally good, helpful, and conforming. They need a lot of attention, affection, and praise. Hugs are needed. They may not want to try things that are new. They are very energetic. They may show opposite extremes of behaviour and may become less well-behaved as the school year progresses. They are still learning socially, and may need direction in sharing, politeness and behaviour in social situations.

Kindergarten teachers have a lot of patience and love! The Kindergarten curriculum is changing, and now there is more that the children are expected to know by the end of the year. This means less play and more teacher-directed activities. It is physically draining and Kindergarten teachers should be applauded!

Grade One teachers are often dedicated to this special grade! There is a huge reward when you see the progress the children make. They are like little sponges just soaking up everything you put out there for them to learn. They are enjoyable to teach and very funny. They like silly jokes and silly stories. They come to you as Kindergarten children, and it is up to you to transform them into readers and writers. At the beginning of the year you must assume that they know nothing (where were the kindergarten teachers last year?), and any skill you may discover they have is a bonus. You will spend the first month teaching them how to cut, how to use glue bottles, how NOT to sharpen a pencil, and how to tear a page out of the math book - this may take more than an hour. Grade Ones still need hugs, help to find missing books and assistance to do up zippers. Tattling is second nature. Everything is new and exciting and their enthusiasm is contagious.

It is hard work. Grade One teachers learn to put all routines and lessons into simple steps, and repeat everything over and over. Attention spans are still short and lessons must change direction every ten or fifteen minutes or you lose them. Silence rarely happens - a six year old is murmuring even when quiet, and twenty six year old students produce a hum that is difficult to extinguish. You will never have time in class to think about what you are going to do next, and inexperienced Grade One teachers find this difficult.

After saying all that, Grade One is the most rewarding grade. What they know at the end of the year - you have taught them! You need lots of patience, a good sense of humour, a big bag of tricks for getting and keeping their attention and lots of energy. Even then, you will be drained at the end of the day.

Grade Two teachers will receive children who are still Grade Ones. Some will not know how to read, so you wonder what the Grade One teacher was doing. You must be able to teach beginning readers beside the good readers in your class. Many will not know the basics, so much of Grade Two is spent teaching Grade One skills again. Grade Two children are chatty, helpful, fun, whiny, tattletales, teacher worshipers, non-readers, chapter book readers, non-writers, story book writers.... You'll get a bit of everything! Grade Two is a transitional year and a wonderful age. They are somewhat independent but mostly still very innocent. They are cooperative and eager to please. They are old enough to understand jokes.

You will take these little Grade One people who come to you at the end of the year and turn them into Grade Threes! By the end of the year they are much more mature and capable. Grade Two is fun to teach!

Grade Three children are changing. They can work on their own, and the teachers can have time each day to think ahead while the children are working. Grade Threes are sometimes young children. They will still listen raptly to a picture book and do crafts with pleasure. But now you can see changes - sometimes boys and girls will hold hands and you must make a rule that there cannot be violence in their written stories. There may be bullies in your group, and this may cause hurt and upset in the class. Grade Threes love to write long stories and read the simple chapter books. They will work independently and love to learn difficult math procedures.

Most Grade Three children are very sweet. They are still primary kids, but by the end of the year you will see the independence and maturity grow. You will love this grade!

Welcome Bulletin Boards

A Bright Bunch

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

A Spotlight

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

Acrostics

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

My Summer Vacation

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

Fall into Grade One

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

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

Apples for the Teacher!

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

You are Tee-riffic!

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

Me!

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



Nice

Always on time

Terrific

Actress

Likes to read

Interesting

Everyone's friend!

Bulletin Boards

Our Apple Orchard or The Apples of My Eye!

Make a large tree from brown butcher paper. Make the branches wider than you want them and then scrunch them in your hands lengthwise so they look three dimensional and have ridges along them. Cut out large apples, one for each child. Put a child's photo on each and the names.

Here's a Great Bunch!

Cut out purple circles about 9" (22 cm.) in diameter. Outline with black pen. Print a student's name on each. Pin them up to form a cluster of grapes. Add a green stem and leaves. Take several 3" green circles and cut to the centre in a spiral. Add these to the stems.



Fall into Reading!

Print this poem: The leaves are falling One by one. Summer's over School's begun. Cut out (or purchase) brightly coloured autumn leaves and print a child's name on each. Staple these falling leaves at random over the board. Or.... in the first week have the students fingerpaint on 9 x 12 paper in orange, yellow and red. When dry, cut out leaves as large as possible. (You can draw the shape on the back of the paper and they can cut them out.)

Grade _____ is Hopping With Excitement! or Leap Into Grade _____!

or Welcome to Our Pad!

On a blue background, cut out light green lily pads and dark green frogs.

Swinging into Grade _____

Have the students draw themselves on a swing... or go out to the playground on the first day and take a digital picture of each child on the swing, pretending to be swinging high. Print them out on plain paper - and if you want to save ink, in black and white.

Welcome to School!

May this school year bring You happiness galore, And may you enjoy it Right to the core!
Have a large apple core on the bulletin board and add the students' names.

Welcome to Our Bear-y Wonderful Class! or You Are Bear-y Special!

Print each child's name on a picture of a bear or teddy bear.

Blast Off into Grade _____

Draw a very large rocket ship with lots of windows. Put a photograph of each child's face looking out a window. Make the background black or dark blue and decorate with stars and planets.



A Class With Many Flavours!

Have ice-cream cones with a great variety of ice-cream colours.

Our School!

Photocopy an outline of a cute fish. Print each child's name with black felt pen, and then have the students colour them as brightly as possible.

Bulletin Boards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Welcome!

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

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

Here are Ms. Peter's new fish!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Bulletin Boards

Take pictures on the first day of all the students with big smiles, or have them draw their smiling faces. Talk about smiles being catching. Can you catch my smile?

"I do a bulletin board with fish. The slogan is 'One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish. Welcome Mrs. Capra's new fish!'"

For an ocean theme: "Making a big splash in Grade ____!"

"Make a frog bulletin board... 'I'm so HOPPY to be in (Grade One, Three, etc.) or 'Welcome to Our Pad' - little frogs on lily pads, or 'A Toadally Awesome Class!'"

"I used a red and white picnic table tablecloth, and cut out ants and the food bowls were math, spelling, reading, writing, etc....e.g. Grade Three will Be a Picnic...."

"Make stars with the children's names and a place to put a picture on them after you take them the first day of school...and the heading... 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Stars'."

"I am getting a combination Grade 2/3 class this coming year. I want to do a BB with combination locks. We will talk about how to use the real combination locks - and then I can tie in math combinations, word combinations in compound words, etc. We could brainstorm a list of different places you might use a combination lock."

"I'm thinking of doing an Autumn themed bulletin board to welcome the students. I could title it, 'I'm Falling for You!' with the word 'falling' printed down as if the letters are falling. The children's pictures and names are on big leaves, also falling."

Trace and cut-out hands, with photos or self-portraits of the students make a cute bulletin board, with the title, 'Meet our HANDsome Class!' or 'Meet the Handy-Dandy Class'.

"I made each student's name in big bubble letters. In Word, go to 'Format' then to 'Font' and then check off 'outline'. I used Comic Sans for the font. I made them as big as I could on legal paper and printed them. Then they decorated the letters with crayon, or the fancy pens that I don't use other times - glitter pens, etc. I cut out around the names and put them up on a bulletin board the first day. They had great fun with this and the board looked nice!"

"I like using the *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* tree, with the letters of their first names and their photos. I teach the book in the first week."

"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!"

And..... 'Blast Off for a Great Year' - rockets

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

'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!'

**You cannot give a smile away,
No matter what you do.
Every time you smile at me
I give it back to you.**



More About Bulletin Boards

“I like to put up several layers of paper on the bulletin boards before school begins. I put a spring colour on first, with a border, then cover it with blue for winter (or red for Christmas and Valentines Day) with its border, covered with an Autumn colour - orange for fall leaves and Halloween. Then all I have to do is pull down the top one and the second one is fresh behind it. I have more time in the summer to do this, and it is such a treat to be able to change boards quickly the rest of the year!”

“When I teach Grade Two or Three, I have a special bulletin board where I put up posters to help the students who need clues to different parts of the curriculum - how to subtract with re-grouping, the meanings of the words synonyms, antonyms, etc. These are there for the kids to refer to when needed.”

“I have a small bulletin board, too. It has an up-to-date seating plan, a weekly schedule with times, a calendar with things to remember - meetings, holidays, birthdays, etc.”

Use a variety of backgrounds for your boards - fabric, wrapping paper, newspaper, aluminum foil, wallpaper, etc.

Make sure your bulletin boards are up-to-date and relevant. Tidy, too! If you have problems putting things up in straight lines, make them deliberately angled.

Every student should be able to read all the print around your classroom - this may take some time in Kindergarten and Grade One, but words are useless if they cannot be read. Go over the print every day until the children are all perfectly familiar with the words. Then they can 'read the room' and these words become part of their reading vocabulary.

Don't decorate every inch of your classroom. It can become too busy and may bother some students' concentration. Think of your classroom as your home, and decorate it with attractiveness and simplistic charm. As in your home, everything should be beautiful, meaningful or useful.

Make single bubble letters on your computer - see the previous page - and print them on bright coloured paper. Parents and volunteers could cut them out for you. These are great to name bulletin boards.

Try making three-dimensional bulletin boards! Objects such as feathers, dried flowers, old ties, masks, hats, and costume jewelry can all be added to your bulletin boards. Strive to use multiple textures to make the bulletin boards more attractive. Use corn or leaves on your autumn BB, costumes or masks or other costume accessories for your Halloween board. Old ties pointed outward make great turkey tail feathers for a Thanksgiving BB.

A local teacher has several strings of the tiny white 'Christmas' lights that she has up all year. They go around a special bulletin board. She also has a white painted bare tree held by a bucket of sand, with the lights strung on it - and then seasonal decorations are added - fall leaves, bats and owls for Halloween, hearts for Valentines, eggs for Easter, etc. The students especially remember Halloween Day, when she dresses as a witch, pulls the blinds shut and turns out all lights except on the little tree and reads spooky stories.

Put up Velcro dots on your boards, and then things can be moved about and taken down or moved around to make the board interactive. Post a daily question with a graph and the students can move their names by matching the Velcro dot to the one on the back of their names.



Bulletin Boards

Something to Ponder

“I have a very different approach to ‘walls’. I feel it is the kids’ and my room so I only put up what is necessary to begin the year - letters for the word wall (not the words - we build that together), and the calendar. I tell the kids that we will work together to make it our room and the very first day of school we do a small and simple craft that I immediately put up. They are very excited and proud of our room. It feels odd as everyone puts up things - but I feel the kids are young and don't really look at the stuff on the walls until it is their theirs and their friends’, not mine. It’s like the idea of ‘breaking bread’ together - cementing a relationship...”

Janice McCarter



“I have spent many days in the summers giving up my much needed free-time to decorate the classroom. I used to hang up lots of charts and create all kinds of clever boards. The kids hardly ever used my charts or read the poems. Now I start each year by hanging colourful paper or fabric on my boards and I put up colourful borders. I decorate my door and put nametags on the cubbies. I later fill the bulletin boards with the children’s work or with things I have taught.”

That being said, if you do create an amazing classroom in any primary grade before school begins, it will be useless to the children unless you spend a great amount of time referring to the charts or poems that you have put up. In Kindergarten and Grade One the charts should be memorized so the children can use them when they ‘read the room’ and refer to the charts in work times.

Smile! “My door will say, ‘Smile, you're in Ms. ____’s class!’. I will put the names on smiley faces.”

The Olympics These are great for Grade Two or Grade Three classes: Going for the Gold
An Olympic Year Carrying the Torch for Learning A Winning Class Do
Your Best! Award-winning Students

Chicka Chicka

Decorate your classroom from the book ‘Chicka Chicka Boom Boom’. Try these sites to see how other teachers made a large palm tree.

<http://www.kinderfriends.com/palmtree.html>

<http://www.mrspohlmeyerskinderpage.com/chickachickatree.htm>

Sunflowers Put the children’s faces (a photo or a drawing) in the center of sunflowers and label with the names. Title it ‘Welcome to Our Kinder - Garden’, or ‘Watch Us Grow’, ‘A Place To Grow’, etc.

Empty Boards:

Put up a very nice title that says ‘Invisible Art’ and watch people stop and look!
Make a sign that says ‘Under Construction’.

And more

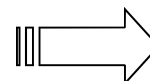
Using pencils: ‘Pencil us in for a great year!’ or ‘Welcoming a sharp bunch of students’

Do a ‘We're Hoppy you're here’ door with frogs..’

Using feet or shoes: ‘We're starting off on the right foot’ or ‘Step into Grade Two’.

**C3
B4
ME**

The following page may be photocopied and sent home for your parents to complete. Put the completed sheets in the students’ files.



Class Management



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Student Helpers

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

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

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



Organization



“I take a 1” binder to all staff meetings, and I keep all notes, directives and messages to the staff in it. Often I want to check something that came out previously, and I can go to this book and find it quickly. I have a different binder for parent notes - I have a section for each child, and I put notes of all phone calls from the parents, notes from them and parent teacher conference feedback. Often the parents tell me things about the children, and I write them here and if the information affects the student’s work or behaviour, I type it into the student’s file on my computer. In the computer file I keep all the anecdotal notes - I try to do at least one set of anecdotal notes on each child each week. I find I do this quicker and easier by typing things into these computer files, rather than having them in longhand. I go to the computer after school and put in a few things from that day when the information is fresh in my mind. The computer files are wonderful with it is report card time or parent conference time - I try to have lots written in the files so these are so easy and the facts are very relevant.”

“I try to take a minute in between lessons to put things away. I used to just toss everything on my desk because I was afraid to waste time on task - but I would have to stay after school organizing my desk. As we all know we need to stay after school for plenty of other things. While I am tidying my things, I have the students do a quick tidy, too. It keeps my room from ever getting untidy, and this is good because people are often walking in to visit.”

“I have a five level stacking tray, so there is one tray for each day of the week. I put my new copies in each section/day.”

“Try this! If you use desks and they are pushed into groups, put the adjoining legs into large coffee cans! This prevents them from scooting around. If you have four desks in a square, put one leg from each desk in the can. This really helps to keep the desks together and neat.”

“My desks and tables made loud squeaky noises on the floor when they moved, so I slit old tennis ball just enough to slip over each foot. Silence is wonderful!”

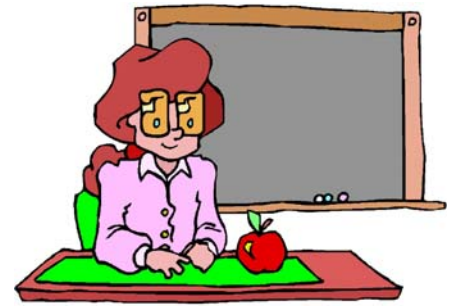
“I organize my stickers in the plastic sleeves for photos to put into a binder. There are six pockets on each page and they can be seen through the front and back. I put them in by holidays, birthdays, animals, fancy ones, etc. You could also put them into baggies, punch holes in the side and put them into the binder.”

“I bought a metal box, open on top, for hanging files. I have dividers for each day of the week and then files for the different subjects. I do my photocopying a week in advance, and put the copies into the correct file folder. Then the copies are never lost and it looks neat and tidy, too.”

“For years I stored all my school ‘stuff’ in containers in my classroom. Even if the paper and books were in containers, the containers themselves were not attractive, and they were taking up far too much space. So I carted them all home and put them away there, making sure they were all labeled carefully. I have themes and holidays in separate containers, and other things in months. I take only the containers I need to school, and bring home the ones not in use. I find my classroom has so much more shelf space and looks much more organized!”

“I take a few minutes in between lessons to put things away. I used to just toss everything on my desk because I was afraid to waste time on task - but each day I would have a big mess that increase through the day. It is nice to keep things looking nice all day!”

Keep your teacher's desk almost empty of things - a marking pen and pencil, scissors and other tools in a can or caddy, a vase of flowers or a plant, your day plans - and that's all! Now you have a lovely surface to use for many things - marking, doing paperwork, discussing work with a student, etc. It also gives the students the incentive to keep their own desk tops tidy. Set a good example!



"I photocopy multiple copies of sheets with the student's names down the left side and a space beside. I keep one on a clipboard. These are very handy for making notes, checking off students as their work is completed, putting in marks, etc."

Have special places for the students to hand in finished work. Shelves with shallow tubs of different colours to hold different assignments are a neat, organized way to keep these messy papers or exercise books.

"I have a tub under my desk where all my filing goes. It isn't visible to visitors or class members, and I put papers in there until I have time to do the filing."

Buy a rolling cart. In it put everything you need during the day. It can be rolled to your groups, to the front of the class for a whole-class lesson, beside you as you mark, etc.

Eliminate distractions in your classroom, especially if you have ADHD kiddies. Put things away and don't over-decorate. Hanging decorations that wave in the breeze are not helpful! Centres can be put away into plastic containers and stacked when they are not in use so the tables and other areas are not covered at other times.

"I have a binder for substitute teachers. In it I have a class list, a seating plan (and I try to keep it updated), attendance routines, a weekly schedule, the groups if any, my behaviour plan, games and songs the students know,

"I have a section of bulletin board that is mine. I put up lists of things I have to remember, schedules, seating plans, meetings, phone numbers, etc. It is amazing how often I go to it and it saves a lot of time to have these things in plain view."

"I keep a very large monthly calendar as my writing pad on my desk. There is a good space for each day, and I jot down notes to myself, meetings, parent conferences and much more."

Do you use data-bases? These are great! You will likely have MSWorks on your computer - and some other programs have this. Have a data-base with all your children's names down Field 1, and leave several other fields empty. Then when you want to do one for a specific purpose, just 'save as' and re-name your new one. Use it for marks - pop in the marks for a test, and then go to the top to 'Sort Records', and change the database to put all the marks in order - highest to lowest. Put in the students' addresses and phone numbers, birthdays, etc.

Use data-bases to catalogue all your library books. Put in the name, the author, the level, subject, etc., of each book, and re-sort to find all the books by one author or on one subject. It is a lot of work, but worth it!

"I am one of those people who seems to need to take things home after school. I bought a small suitcase with wheels. I keep it open all day, and when I plan to take something home I toss it in the suitcase. Then I can just drag it to the car - much easier on my back!"



Class Management

"I have tables with 4 children at each. Each position at the table has a number. Each number has a job assigned to it and the kids rotate through the jobs each week.

1- paper passer (I count out four papers and lay them in front of the 1s, who then take one and pass the rest to #2, who takes one and ...so on).

2 - The second person looks after the supplies - keeps them tidy and makes sure there is enough for the group.

3 - The third person washes the table after we eat lunch and at home-time if it is needed.

4 - The fourth person collects completed work and puts it in the correct tub."



"I have a coloured dot at each table spot, and they have a rotation of colours for table captain. The captain for the day handles all the jobs that need doing at the table. They get the caddies, hand out papers, put the caddies away making sure all the supplies are accounted for, put the chairs up after school, etc."

"I have a box of ear protectors (the type you see airport crew wearing). The children go and get a pair if they need quiet to concentrate. It's always interesting to see who goes and gets a pair. Most schools have old listening posts in the basement because nobody seems to use them any more and the old earphones that comes with them work well as well."

Barb

"I use the 5 Bs! If a child wants to tattle, I ask: is there blood?, barf? bee stings or bites?, broken bones, bullying? If it doesn't apply to this then I wave bye-bye. It has helped a lot this year."

"I assign my students numbers which they all put in the right hand corner of their papers. When I take up any test papers I quickly put them in order and I can see easily if I am missing a paper - it also makes it easy to record marks and file."

Names on Papers

"We sing the 'Names' song to "If You're Happy and You Know It"."

If your name is on your paper, raise your hand

If your name is on your paper, raise your hand

If your name is printed there, put your hand up in the air

If your name is on your paper raise your hand. (*snap, snap, clap, clap,*)

Hoo-ray!

"I have the children draw a happy face, heart or a cat or some simple drawing after their name so that they enjoy the name task. I often go around with stickers in the first 2-3 weeks of school and give one to the children who have their name already printed. I tell them that I will expect it always! Then I go around with just a date stamp or picture stamp for a few days and then I have a helper who gets to go around with the date stamp. They like this job!"



The first thing we do is always the same:

We pick up our pencils and write our names!

"I use those dozens of teacher mugs I have been given to store pens and markers, jumbo clips, loose change, etc. When I was painting my home, I painted a number of coffee cans, too, and use them to store rulers and items for 'read-the-room.'"

Great Ideas!



A rolling cart with drawers is very useful! Keep all the things you will need during the day - marking pens and pencils, scissors, stickers, stamps, etc. Keep files and flashcards and photocopies you will need. There are lots of uses!

Use your chalkboards!

For beginning printers, give each student a section and have them practice the letters.

Put your morning message and announcements on the chalkboard.

Print poems on the chalkboard for the students to print.

Print the spelling words on the board.

Keep homework assignments up for all to see.

Print questions on the board for the students to answer.

If your boards are metal, use magnets to hold up charts, etc.

Keep your chalkboards clean and tidy! Clean the chalk off your boards with a Puffs Plus tissue with lanolin.

If you are a teacher who takes lots of things home each night and packs them back in the morning, buy a small suitcase on wheels. Pack it up and it wheels along behind you! Don't risk a back injury

Students' dry erase boards or individual chalk boards are great! You can get a building materials store to cut a sheet of the shiny bathroom wallboard into individual pieces for dry erase boards. Sand the edges.

Use them in calendar time, for making words or spelling, printing or writing practice and math drills. Everyone can be involved in the lessons! The students can hold up their boards to show you their answers or turn them over to hide the answers.

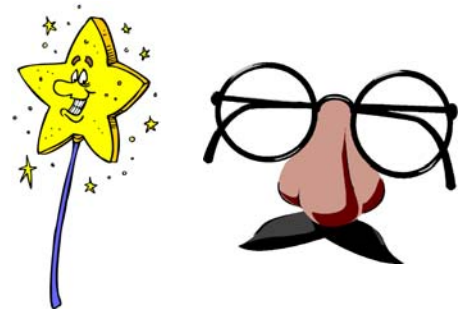
Tissues or paper towel can erase, or give each student an old sock and they keep the dry erase pens or chalk in the toe. The sock is used for erasing. Shake them out once a week or give them a wash (the students can wash their own in the classroom sink....)

Buy a large box of craft sticks at Michaels or other craft store. These can be used for math manipulatives, especially for place value as they can be piled in groups of ten. Print the students' names on them and draw from a can to do jobs, to answer questions, to help out, etc. They are great for art projects - put frames on pictures or make designs with them. Make 'Space Men' with the sticks to space printing between words. The kids love to build structures with them, stacking them like logs.

Another great craft store idea is to buy the tubs of foam cutouts. They are different colours and have different shapes, so they are very good for simple sorting by colour or shape. They can be used for counting one-to-one correspondence in Kindergarten.

Go to the Dollar Store and look for interesting things. You will find funny glasses and magic wands to 'read the room', many things that are useful for math manipulatives, plastic containers with lids, decorations and much more!

If you have problems with your desks or tables being moved about and looking sloppy, put a small round sticker on the floor where the front two legs of the table or desk should go. If you have carpet, use a tiny piece of Velcro (the hook part). Then when the tables get crooked, just say, "On your mark!" and the room looks tidy in seconds.



Classroom Helpers

"I have a list of jobs so everyone has one. They keep the same job for a week. I have made a 'Job Circle' - which is actually two circles, one smaller than the other. Both have lines radiating out from the centre making enough spaces to accommodate all the students/jobs. I write the jobs on the rim of the larger circle along with a picture to help non-readers. I print the students' 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 Circle 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."

Classroom Jobs:

Attendance Taker

Errand Runner/Messenger

Gardener - water the plants

Boards - keep the chalkboards clean

Mail - to file the papers to go home in the mailboxes

Centres - It may take several students to keep the centres tidy and organized

Floor Patrol/ Scrap Monsters- keep papers and other items off the floor

Librarian(s) - keep the shelves tidy

Math Helper - Keep the math shelves tidy

Zoo-Keepers - if you have pets

Pencil Sharpener

Desk Inspectors - check for untidy desks

Inspectors - Check for tidiness in the classroom

Chair Stacker

Homework Monitor

A "Helping 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.

Ask for:

- small and large size zip lock bags (with the 'zipper')
- paper plates
- cotton balls
- baby wipes
- art supplies
- flash card sets
- film
- tissues
- plastic containers, etc., etc.

You can even ask for older computers or books or games.



**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!

The Structured Classroom

The Physical Environment

Things to Ponder

The way your classroom is arranged says a lot about your expectations for learning and behaviour. The classroom arrangements and structure will affect both the learning outcomes and the behaviour of both the students and yourself!

Some teachers have very structured environments that support very structured instruction. Other teachers have freer environments that promote more social interaction between students, but the classroom structure is just as important in this environment, too.

The physical arrangement of the classroom can improve learning and help to prevent behaviour problems. This is especially important if you have students with learning or behavioural problems such as ADHD, FAS or autism. Many other students do not have much structure in their home life, and structure and routine give them a feeling of security and reassurance that increases their ability to learn. A poor arrangement in the classroom will increase behaviour and learning problems for these students and many others.

This environment refers to the seating plan, the movement of students, the position of the teacher, the placement of materials and the neatness and order of the classroom. A well structured classroom will have the following:

- Desks or tables should be set so that every student can see the teacher, and the teacher can see every student and what he/she is doing. Setting desks in separated rows will increase independent written work and improve listening, and seating at tables or desks pushed together in groups increase social interaction. Whatever the pattern, these should be set in neat order. Marks of tape on the floor can show the students the correct desk position and prevent untidy desk patterns. Students in the early primary grades really like to have a desk of their own, and when changing seat places may prefer to keep this familiar desk and personal space and move it, too.
- The teacher should be closer to 'high maintenance' students when he/she is teaching a lesson. This is to monitor behaviour, work and for positive reinforcement, too. Students who are easily distracted should be seated away from pencil sharpeners, doors and high traffic areas.
- Classrooms should be set up with different areas that are used for different purposes; the calendar teaching area, an area or table used for teaching reading groups, a library area, etc. The movement to these areas should be practiced and the behaviour in each area must be thoroughly understood. There may be a quiet area for students to work. There will be different areas with different rules for interaction.
- Classrooms should be well organized and neat and orderly. Clutter is a distraction for many students and may prevent them from learning to their potential. Things that are not being used should be neatly boxed and out of sight, if possible. Some students will be very sensitive to visual as well as auditory stimulation. Classroom decorations should be attractive and not over-done. Having stimulation in every possible space is distracting to many students. In fact, it has been proven that students with FAS and ADHD learn much easier in an environment with little or no stimulation. This isn't possible, of course, in a regular classroom but it is important to keep this in mind.
- The teacher's desk should be always tidy. This sets a good example! Have only what is needed for the day - the plan book, pens and pencils in a container, note pad and perhaps a plant or flowers. Now the desk can be used to mark or plan, and when the students are cleaning their own desks they can look at yours as a model.



Classroom Management

“I bought a three-drawer cabinet on wheels. I take this with me when I teach groups, am marking or planning. The top drawer has pens, pencils, markers, erasers, scissors, paper clips, stamps and stickers, etc. The second drawer has flash cards, sentence strips and other things I use for my groups. The bottom drawer has paper and worksheets that I will need that day. Everything I need is always close by!

I also bought one of those drawer organizers for tools. This is great to hold all the little things I need.”

“I have two small rectangular plastic boxes to hold the sharpened pencils and the dull ones. I put a smiley face on one and a grumpy face on the other!”

“I have a shelf in a handy cupboard with containers filled with all those little things we need so often. I use those teacher coffee mugs that I get for Christmas, and other handy sized containers to hold pens, pencils (coffee cans), coloured pencils, markers, elastic bands, sticky notes, band-aids, paper clips. In this cupboard also go my ruler, scissors, hole punch, staplers.

Everything is in one place and I can take out a container to use.”

“I put all my stickers in a photo album with the clear plastic pages with 6 pockets. One page might be Halloween stickers, another for animal stickers, another with sayings, etc. They are always easy to find and keep tidy.”

“My computer is on one side of my desk. I keep it ready to pop remarks into the students’ files and to open a series of data-bases to enter quiz results. I try to write a remark about each student several times a week. I find if I sit down right after school things are fresh in my mind and I try to do about 8 kids each day. I also use the computer and printer to quickly type up students’ stories, too.”

“I bought a 5 tier stacking shelf. The shelves are for each day of the week. I put all the photocopies for the week on the right shelf as I plan ahead. It is great to have all the copying done for the week and it is good for subs, too.”

“My desk is near a chalkboard. I needed a place to pin up things I need to have handy - schedules, meetings, calendar, memos, etc. I bought a large framed tackboard, covered it with fabric and tacked my things up there. A friend bought a metal pan (could it be a car’s oil pan?) and put her own things up with small ladybug magnets - cute!”

“I bought one of the small inexpensive hanging file holders. I have a file for each student that is numbered with the alphabetical student numbers. They put their numbers at the top right corner of all work, and then file the papers in their files after they have been marked and corrected. If the papers are collected, a student can file them, too - the numbers make it easy. Finished work goes in the files and then the students clean out the files and take home all this finished marked work.”

“I keep files in my desk drawer for all the school memos, the minutes of staff meetings, the school handbook, the school calendar, etc. Important things I put on my computer in my ‘memos’ list.”

“I have a special plastic tub where we keep scraps of coloured paper. I have the students decide if the leftover piece is bigger than both hands together. They cut off any stingy bits and put it in the tub. Tiny pieces aren’t kept. The students can use these to make their own projects on in-days.”

“I made book bins. I went to the dollar tree and purchased about 20 tubs, like the dishwashing tubs we use when camping. On my computer I made labels with the reading level and taped them onto the end of the bin with the clear packing tape. Other tubs have printed labels with the name of a theme or author - for example, Dr. Seuss, Space, Animals, etc.- and a picture. Each label has a coloured dot, and a matching dot is on the book so the books go back into the right tub. I have found that this works well. The kids can go through the tubs and make sure all the books are in the right place, too.”



Class Management

“My overhead projector is on a moveable cart. I can wheel it to different places in the classroom. Luckily, I have lots of electrical outlets! The lower shelves of the cart are used for a tray of erasable pens, felt pieces for erasing and my transparencies.”

“I laminate blank tags for cubbies and desktops. Then I use felt pen to write on top of the lamination. These can be wiped clean and used again and again.”

“If you write over top of permanent marker with a dry erase marker and then erase, both the dry erase and the permanent marks come off. You sometimes need to do it twice, but it works.”

“To do name tags on desks, I put a piece of packing tape on the desk, write on it and put another piece of tape on top. To change name tags I just lift the tape and do it again.”

“For our December open house I put up a bulletin board tree. On it are ornaments with suggestions of things the parents can donate to the classroom. Most parents want to help but don’t know what we need. There are things to buy, such as books, games, skipping ropes, etc., and things that do not cost money - such as wrapping paper rolls, margarine containers, bits of ribbon and fabric. There are also ornaments with jobs that the parents can do - volunteer to listen to children read, bake for class parties, etc.”

“I always send home thank you notes to parents who donate to my classroom - I bought a cute ‘thank-you’ pad and I try to add something personal. Classroom volunteers are given a thank-you note that all the children sign. It is good for the class to see the thank you notes.”

“I bought a class set of baskets that fit into the desk spaces. All the supplies go into the basket. It is easily slid out, it is easy to find what the person is looking for, and easy to slide back in. We tidy them quickly every day before the students go home. Moreover, the baskets are quiet when they are moved!”

“I bought a lot of clear plastic containers and put math manipulatives in them. They stack easily and neatly, and they don’t have to be labeled as you can see what is in them.”

Passing Out Papers

“I have a specific lesson in the art of passing out papers! My Grade Twos sit in rows, but I would do a similar lesson for tables. I hand enough papers for the students in the row to the front person. He/She takes one and hands the pile back, and the next person does the same. Handing in papers is the opposite. The back person hands his paper to the person in front of him, that person adds his paper and hands the two forward, etc., until all the papers reach the front. The front person puts the pile where it should go.

This sounds easy and obvious - but for some reason it never goes as smoothly as it should until I teach the specific lesson!”

“I designate two students to hand out papers for the week as part of the ‘helpers’ board. At the beginning of the year I model getting the papers, handing them out and collecting them and putting in the proper place.”

“I train my helpers to hand out papers in a specific order and direction. They walk through the same path each time - this way no-one is missed or gets two papers by accident.”

“I have a plastic tray that the students use to hand out the papers. The papers are put in the tray and as the ‘passer’ comes to each person, he/she takes one paper from the tray. I find this words very well. We do the opposite with collecting papers - the children put the papers into the tray as the passer goes by.”



Classroom Management Ideas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1st strategy - Tell how you feel

2nd strategy - Walk away

3rd strategy - Ignore

4th strategy - Ask a friend for help

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



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

More Classroom Management

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



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

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

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

Fingernail polish remover gets permanent marker off whiteboards and desks.

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

Shower Curtains

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Classroom Management Ideas

“My idea is an old one. I know a lot of teachers will ‘number’ their students (usually alphabetically). Years ago, I took a set of numbers from an old calendar bulletin board set, and put the numbers at the coat hooks. I covered the numbers with book/packing tape, and there they remain . . . years later. No putting names up each year at the coat hooks. And easy to follow by the children.” *Debra*

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

For the first week of school, make two sets of name tags – one for the child's table space or desk, and one for the child to wear around the neck to special classes. This is not only helps you learn the names, but it helps other teachers, too. And keep these neck tags - they are great to pull out when a substitute teacher is there. These could be hung on a hook - handy for these other uses.

“I don't assign jobs to certain children and rotate them. I think it takes too long for some children to do certain jobs. Before each break and the end of the day I assign tables or rows to do certain things - clean up the floor, straighten desks, tidy the books, etc. So there are at least four children doing a job and it gets done in seconds rather than minutes. I often count to 10 and see if they can have the job done by then. We all make the mess and we all need to clean it up!”

One of the messiest places in the classroom is where coats and boots are kept - this is especially bad in the Canadian winter with all the outside clothing needed. Teach your children to hang the clothes carefully and put the boots or outside shoes just so. Model what you want every day for the first week and at least once a week after that.

“Every day the last thing we do before going home is talk about what we did that day - what we learned, what we read, what we sang, etc. Then the children can go home and answer the question, “What did you do in school today?”

Having set routines is very comforting to insecure children, and ones who have behavioural disorders - the more formally set routines, the better. Some children cannot handle change easily, and become nervous or excited and act out when things don't go according to plan. If there must be a change in the daily schedule, talk about it so the students are ready for it.

Model what you expect for every activity, whether it is reading or walking in the hall. This takes a lot of time in the first weeks of school, but pays off handsomely later.

Teach your students the expectations in assemblies and concerts and other activities where all the students gather.

Children love to use a little broom and dustpan, and the inexpensive carpet sweepers, too. It will be a treat to clean-up!

Certificates for good work or good behaviour are always favourites! Parents love them, too.

Class Management

Organization before school begins:

1. Have lesson plans done for a week. Overplan! It is much better to have too many activities planned than not enough. Plan a variety of activities by putting a game, singing or movement between work or listening activities.
2. Make 'Day of the Week' folders - Label tag folders in different colours with the day of the week. Laminate them. Place lesson plans and materials for each day in these folders.
3. Prepare a substitute folder - Include: procedures and detailed daily schedule, class list, seating plan, emergency directions, math practice sheets, journal topics, a book for guided reading with lots of activities, etc. Add to this through the year.
4. Posters with the class/school rules, the daily schedule, etc., and the room decorated pleasantly.
5. Make files for important school forms, staff meeting notes, principal hand-outs, etc.
6. Organize files in your filing cabinet so you can find things easily.
7. Have procedures for supplies prepared.

Ideas from teachers

Inexpensive chart holders:

"I bought some of those white plastic hooks that hang up on the wall with sticky tape backs. I have also used the kind of spring loaded hooks you can use to hang Christmas wreaths on metal doors and used them on my metal chalkboards. They hold up pocket charts perfectly. I use one for my 'Making Words' lessons."

"I hot-glued clothes pins to the wall and hung poems and charts. They won't hold anything heavy, but they are fine for a single chart."

"Skirt hangers with a number of clothes pins hold many charts in my cupboard."

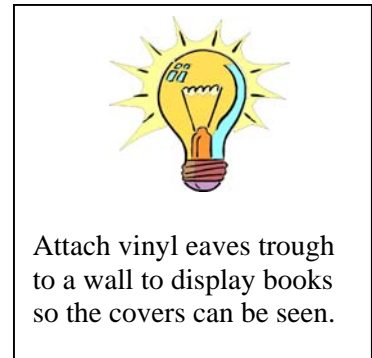
Using glue:



"This may be dated and the children won't understand where it came from, but we say 'A little dab'll do ya'."

"Carefully pry off the little orange cap on the top of each new bottle of liquid glue. Take a Q-tip and coat the inside of the orange cap and the tip of the bottle where the glue comes out with a thin coat of Vaseline. (Or.... spray it with Pam....) Then snap the cap back on. This prevents the glue from sticking to the bottle and the cap."

"I spend time in the first week teaching the students how to use the glue bottles and how to use the glue sticks, too. I am tired of the problems when they don't learn to use them properly!"



Classroom Management



“My class sits in teams and throughout the week they earn team points for various things (the team that is quiet first, desks cleared first, etc.). One of the things I use every day is the mystery item. This is how I get my room cleaned up - pronto! I quickly write on a scrap of paper 5 - 6 things that are not where they belong. This could be a scrap of paper, a pencil on the floor, a chair at the art table, someone's coat, my scissors, etc. When I say ‘go’ the students SILENTLY take care of anything they see that is out of place. I write the name of the person who takes care of each item on my list. When the room is spic-and-span I announce the names of those students on my list. They earn points for their team if they are on the list. They absolutely adore this activity! It takes just minutes to do and I use it a couple of times a day.”

“I have certain jobs that I do each day of the week to try to keep my classroom organized and my work up to date. On Monday I run off the copies for the week and organize my own desk, on Tuesday I file things and clean the shelves, on Wednesday I make sure all my marking is up to date and filed and I do bulletin boards, Thursday I write the weekly newsletter for the parents and on Friday I plan for the following week and update my sub file. Every day I do anecdotal notes on 4 or 5 students and enter the notes on my computer so I can get through every student each week. Sometimes it is difficult to keep up with all these things, but when I can it really makes life a lot easier!”

Mary

“We sing Write your name on your paper, write your name,
Write your name on your paper, write your name,
Ms. _____ wants to know who did this work and so....
Write your name on your paper, write your name!”

If your students have numbers, sing the same song with “Write your number on your paper etc.”

“At the beginning of the year in Grade One we just write our names on papers (we sing ‘The first thing on my paper is my name.....’ to *If You’re Happy and You Know It*). The next thing we add is our number. So the song then goes, ‘The first thing on my paper is my name, the next thing on my paper is my number, First is my name and then I write my number, The first thing on my paper is my name....and my number.’ Later, when we add the date we will sing, ‘Put your name on your paper, write it down (x2), put your name on your paper, put your number on your paper, put the date on your paper, write it down.’

“I call it ‘Quiet Cleaning’. When I say ‘Quiet cleaning has now begun....’ the kids start their jobs. Everyone has a job on the job chart that they must do without talking. The inspector walks around and looks to see if anything needs to be done, he/she is the only one who can talk and nicely tell people what they missed or what has to be done. They love that power!”

“I never let my kids use the pencil sharpener. I have two cans - one with newly sharpened pencils and one where dull pencils are put. The students take a sharp one and place their dull one in the other can and I sharpen all the pencils after school. Pencils are community property. I find they last a lot longer this way!”



“Only one boy and one girl may be in the restroom at a time. They write their name on the board when they go and erase it upon return. That way I know who is missing in case of emergency and there is no one from our room to play with when they are in the bathroom. When I taught Kindergarten, I had a ‘bathroom bear’ that the student put on his/her chair when going to the bathroom. As there was only one bear, only one child would be away from the classroom.”

“I use the tune of *Are You Sleeping.*”

Morning meeting, morning meeting,
Come sit down, come sit down.
Empty hands and big smiles
Let us make a circle,
Join us now, join us now.

“Magic 10 count – On the board I have a small chart that has my name and the class on it. Whenever I want my students to move quickly to a new activity or back to their desks I just have to say magic 10. If they can get to the next thing I’ve asked them to do without running before I get to 10 (or sometimes I count backwards) they get a point on their side of the chart. If they do not make it then I get the point. On Friday afternoon we count up the points and if they have more points than I do they get to vote and choose an activity for the end of the day. (extra recess, centers, video, colouring pages, etc..) If I have more points then I get to choose.” *Cathy*



Have a can of large craft sticks with the names of each student. You can draw names by pulling a stick when there is a special job to be done. When all the sticks have been pulled, put them all back and start again. This gives every student a fair chance!

“I use the ‘secret walker’ plan when we move to another part of the school. I tell the line that I am looking for good behaviour from my secret walker. Only I know who it is and that person gets lots of positive reinforcement and a sticker if he/she did a good job. If not, I just say that I am sad that the person I had in mind didn't earn the sticker and I don't reveal their name.”

“I use response chants to get their attention – For example I say AB-C-D-E, my students reply AB-C-D -E and then they are silent waiting for my next words.”

“I use the ‘lining up and walking’ poem:

We are so quiet,
Quiet as a mouse.
No one will know
That we're in their house.

We begin in normal voices and then get quieter and quieter to a very soft whisper.”



I'm giving myself a great big hug
I'm standing straight and tall
I'm looking right in front of me
And I won't talk at all!

My hands are hanging by my sides
I'm standing straight and tall,
My eyes are looking straight ahead--
I'm ready for the hall.

I'm giving myself a great big hug
I'm standing straight and tall
I'm looking straight ahead of me,
I'm ready for the hall.

Focus Walls

Many teachers have focus walls. This is a bulletin board that is frequently changed and shows things that the teachers wants to bring to the students’ attention. Here are some things that can be on the focus wall:

- Spelling words for the week
- The phonics pattern the class is studying
- The ‘book of the week’ - with title, author, key vocabulary, etc.
- Reading strategies
- Word patterns
- Theme outlines
- Math concepts
- Science concepts

To see some focus walls, go to:

http://www.smbd.org/district_programs/reading_/teacher_idea_sharing/focus_wall/index.html

Class Management

"In" Days

"I find that limiting the options for the students when in the classroom on in-days helps to keep order. I often have a large jigsaw puzzle on a table, and I bring out the math games. They can play Chutes and Ladders, card games and simple board games. I teach the directions first, so there are no arguments about rules. Then they can read on comfy cushions. I also put out puzzle sheets and I encourage the children to bring an empty scrap book or other book to draw in. For the first few in-days, I either stay in the classroom or pop in frequently to make sure all is going well.

After the bell goes and it is school time again, we have a drink of water and do exercises for a few minutes."

"I have a list on my computer of all my favourite read-alouds. I add to it whenever I find another great book. Each year I bold and underline the entire list, and then put each book into regular print as I read it to my children. This way I am able to look at my list, choose a book that has not been read, and go to the library and grab it quickly. I find that this saves me lots of time of hunting through books to find one that might be suitable."

Silent Reading

Tired of calling reading time SSR (sustained silent reading) or, as my school called it U.S.S.R (even worse - uninterrupted sustained silent reading)? Here are a few more acronyms that are more interesting:

BEAR - Be Excited About Reading

DEAR - Drop Everything and Read

WEB - Wonderfully Exciting Books

OTTER - Our Time To Enjoy Reading

GRAB - Go Read a Book

RABBIT - Read a Book Because it's Terrific

RIOT - Reading is our thing

ZYLAR - Zip Your Lips And Read



And more....

"I keep free standing wind chimes on my desk. They are the signal to stop what you are doing and listen. And the students do stop and listen because of the lovely sound."

"My washroom signal is a W - three fingers up to form that letter. I either nod or hold up my hand, fingers up and palm toward the child, meaning 'wait a minute'. When they do go out, they take the bathroom bear (a small stuffed toy) and put it on their desk. That way I can immediately see who is out, and only one child can go at a time."

"We use hand-sanitizer, but the kind that has a hand lotion base. Some sanitizers will sting if there is an open cut, and the lotion helps to prevent this and the children like it much better. Of course, dirty hands must be washed."

"I made banners each with a polite word or phrase - please, thank you, I'm sorry, you're welcome, and excuse me. I put one banner up each day and each time a classmate hears someone use the word of the day, they get to put a marble in the treat jar. This helps the students to think of the polite words to use."

Make a chart on the wall that shows how you want printed exercises set up.... margin, leaving spaces, headings, etc.

Behaviour Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Behaviour Management

<http://www.marvinmarshall.com>

Marvin Marshall's book *Discipline without Stress® Punishments or Rewards* is very useful to understand ways to collaborate rather than discipline your students. Go to the articles on the website for an overview of the program.

"When I went home unhappy or stressed, it was because the discipline got out of hand. It began to affect both the way I handled the kids, too, as it became a vicious cycle. The worse it got, the more I didn't handle it well because of my stress and the worse it got. This is very difficult to recover from! Finally I read some books on the subject, and I found that the book by Marvin Marshall gave me ways to handle situations without the stress - and as things improved, my stress lessened and things improved more. I would recommend it to anyone!"

"I don't like the management systems that take time from teaching! I begin each year simply expecting my kids to behave, and I model the behaviour I want and we practice it. This only works for the whole year if I don't have serious behavioural problems in my class. Sometimes I am lucky, and I have a class that is happy and cooperative all year - but this isn't as often as I would like. I try not to use the management systems with rewards and/or punishments unless things are not going well."

"I give each student one of the library card pockets. Each child gets 3 or 4 craft sticks, depending on how many stages of discipline you want to have. Each stick should have the child's name on it. The pocket either stays on the top of the desk or moves with the child around the classroom. Each time a student is off task, ask them to give you a stick. Make it very clear why s/he must give you a stick so there is no question and have the child repeat it. Students who lose sticks may gain them back by working hard to give acceptable behaviour. Children with all their sticks at the end of the day get a sticker or other tiny prize, and those who lose all the sticks must phone home and tell about their day."

"I have a behaviour notebook. This is a binder that is kept on a table at the side of my desk. Each child has his/her own section. If there is a problem, the student goes to his/her section, writes the date and what he did wrong. We discuss the offense and I have the child tell me verbally what he did, and then I have words and phrases by the book that they can write to be specific with the offense. This book is very useful to show parents on conference times, and as it is in the student's handwriting there can be no argument!"

"I am instituting a 'STOPLIGHT' classroom management this year and made three painted stoplight trays out of cookie sheets. I bought a happy/sad/puzzled face stamp to go with that."

"I use the 'flip card system' together with positive encouragement. Each student has a numbered card with four stickers on it: green, yellow, red, blue. There is a sticker on each end of the card and on each side. They are encouraged to stay on the green team. There are various consequences for flipping their card. If I turn their card to yellow it's just a warning, although then they do not get a ticket at the end of the day. (Friday I draw 5 tickets for prizes) If they get to red they must write their parents a note telling what they did. I started doing this last year and I love it! It forces the child to take responsibility for their behaviour. Then I stamp the note with a 'parent signature' stamp and make a copy of it. They must return it the next day signed or I will call home. This year if they get to blue the parents must come in for a conference."



Behaviour Management



“When working with my guided reading groups, I keep the noise level under control by using coloured circles. If I want the class to stay on task and be very quiet, I put up a red circle. If they may talk softly in whispers, a yellow circle is put up. When more talking is allowed, there is a green circle. I find they will calm back down quickly when the circles are changed.”

“I have a small kitchen timer to get my students to pay attention to the task at hand and not waste time. I set a specific time limit on many tasks and I've noticed a great improvement in finished work. This is especially helpful for the students with learning disabilities.”

“Sometimes children bring toys or other things from home. I created a ‘Safekeeping Box’. I found a medium-sized box with a lid, decorated it, and put a label on the box that said 'Items in Safekeeping, To Be Returned Later.' When I see children playing with something that is distracting them, I ask them to put it in the Safekeeping Box and let them know that they can retrieve their item at the end of the day. This validates their important personal treasures and assures them they will be returned. Additionally, it cuts down on the distractions in the classroom, as the students learn quickly to avoid having things put into the box.”

“I teach my children to give and receive compliments. I choose a student of the week and make a colourful poster on which I write a few specific compliments about the student. My class takes time out at the end of the day for the children to give compliments to the student of the week. As I write the compliments on the poster, the students respond with ‘thank you’ and ‘you're welcome’. We continue to do this every day that week. I find they are now complimenting each other more often and using the polite words to respond. It is very nice to hear!”

“When I have two quarreling children who come to me, each telling me their side of the story, the first thing I ask them to do is to sit together somewhere away from the other children so they can have privacy. Next, I tell them to talk between themselves about what happened, and then come back to me when they both have the same story as to what really happened. Many times, through this discussion, they will conclude that it was just a misunderstanding, and they will come back to me and say they have resolved it by themselves. If this is not the case, then when they come to me, I know I will hear what is probably the 'truth' about what happened, and I am able to handle it from there. This teaches the students the importance of communication, and that many times they are able to resolve their own problems without my interference.”

“While the students are eating lunch I play soothing music, usually classical, and I also play it very softly when they are doing independent tasks. They really like it! We discuss the composer and they soon have favourites.”

Classroom Rules

Involve the students when fixing the rules.

Have class meetings to discuss outcomes. How do you want to treat others? How do you want to be treated?

Have a few simple rules that are easily understood.

Have the rules stated positively. Talk about expected behaviour rather than the breaking of rules.

Identify rewards and consequences. Doing what is expected should be its own reward, of course, but sometimes other simple rewards help to reinforce the rules. Rewards might be: doing a particular job in the classroom, being first in line, helping the teacher, being the leader in a game, etc. The consequences should be thoroughly understood.

Post the rules in the classroom. In Kindergarten and Grade One read the rules frequently and discuss them.

Model the expected behaviour and practice it.

Tell the parents about your rules and the expected behaviour.

Be consistent. If you allow poor behaviour one day, it will be much more difficult to prevent it on subsequent days.

Getting Their Attention

Children have perfected listening to a fine art! They shut out what they don't want to hear and can hear a whisper of something they want to hear. For example, they shut out a parent or teacher who nags, saying things over and over - and they can hear a whisper of 'ice cream' or a treat from across the room. This being true, we want our attention getters to be interesting, varied and fun - to make it worth while stopping and listening.

"I hung wind chimes from the ceiling over my desk. Then I have a 'magic' wand and when I want attention I use the wand to tap the chimes. There is a lovely sound, and the students all become quiet to listen."



Here is a list with a variety of attention getters:

- Say: 1, 2, 3 - Eyes on me!
- Ask the children to smile at you - or wink, or wiggle their eyebrows or put a finger on their noses, etc. The motion must be silent and not too silly.....
- Say: 'Repeat after me.....' and then a sentence that describes the behaviour or action that you want. This gives a repetition of the direction as the students say it back.
- Turn off and on the lights to signal clean-up time.
- Buy a doorbell with a remote button. Put the remote in your pocket and ring the doorbell when you want to get the students' attention.
- Tap a cow-bell with a small metal rod or ring it.
- "We made rainsticks from cut pieces of gift-wrap rolls, filling them with beans and rice and decorating them. I shake the one I made for an attention getter."
- Do clapping patterns - e.g. - clap, clap clap clap, clap (1-3-1), etc. The students repeat the pattern that you clap.
- Say softly, "Put your hand up if you hear me." As some of the nearer students do this and become silent, repeat it softly so the rest of the class hear. Vary the order - put your hands on your head, clap once, sit on the floor, put your hand on your mouth (or eyes), etc.
- Use seasonal toys that talk - a black cat that meows for Halloween, a laughing Santa for Christmas, etc.
- Get a tap-on battery-powered wall light at Home Depot or similar store. Attach it at the front of the classroom. When you want attention, tap it and turn on the light. This is a nice quiet way to get attention.
- Say, 'Give me five'! One is to be silent, two is to sit down, three is to fold the hands, four is to have feet on the floor, and five is to look at the teacher.
- 'Give me five' can mean the five words 'stop and look at me!'
- If you want instant quiet, say 'Freeze!' - with eyes on you.
- Softly begin to sing a song that the class knows, and they begin to sing with you.
- Use a variety of musical instruments to get attention.
- Begin to whisper so the students have to be very quiet in order to hear.
- Give verbal recognition to students who are listening well, sitting quietly or other desired behaviour.

"Thank you, John, for sitting so quietly!" "I see that Emily is ready for sharing time!"

Behaviour Management

1. Be firm, fair, friendly, respectful, with a sense of humor.
2. A cheerful, organized classroom encourages good student behaviour.
3. Learn to anticipate problems before they begin.
4. Make learning interesting, fun and relevant. Even the most scripted lesson can be fun if the teacher makes it so.
5. Discuss, but never argue!
6. Have only a few classroom rules and state them simply, clearly, and often. Have the students help to establish the rules.
7. Act, don't threaten. Follow through on what you say.
8. Let your students know that you care about them.
9. Have your rules and expectations the same as the school's rules and expectations.
10. Parents can be important allies and resources.

"I have rewards for my children, but I don't believe in giving them prizes or treats. That is bribery! The rewards on my list are ones that make the child feel special for his/her good deeds. For example, when they get ten smiley faces on a behaviour sheet they can select one of the rewards from my list. I often add to the list so they have lots of choices.

1. For a day, use a fancy pencil from my box or very special pencils.
2. Choose the book that I will read to the group that day.
3. Sit at my desk with me to eat lunch.
4. Be the teacher's helper for the day.
5. Read with the stuffie of your choice.
6. Get extra computer time.
7. Move your desk to where you would like it for the day.
8. Go on a special visit to the library.
9. Be the line leader.
10. Read to yourself for an hour.

My kids are just as happy with privileges that do not cost anything!"



"Our school has a 'caught being good' board. All the teachers and school personnel who do not have a class participate. If they see a class or an individual being extra good or doing a good deed, they fill out a simple slip in duplicate with the name, date and behaviour. One copy goes to the classroom and the other gets put up on the board for all to see. The kids are very delighted to get a 'caught being good' notice and love to look at the bulletin board."

"We are not allowed to take away recess time. Because of our shortage of gym time, we use this as P.E. time. The kids really need this time as a break and a time to get some much needed exercise."

"When my whole class is due for a privilege, we have a 'Cuddle Up and Read' afternoon. The children bring blankets or light sleeping bags, a favourite stuffed toy. We have done it with pajamas and slippers, but that isn't necessary. I collect a selection of great books from the school library. The desks are moved to one side and we cuddle up and read and read and read. It is great to promote the idea of reading as a wonderful treat and the kids love it."

"I like to make 'good' phone calls to the parents. The children are very pleased and so are the parents, especially when they hear my voice on the phone they are expecting news that is not so positive! I also send happy notes home with the students."

"Make sure you document EVERYTHING that a troublesome or difficult student does every day - good things and bad things. Put it into a sequential file or a book. Discuss the notes with the parents and the Principal. You may need these for a diagnoses or to get help for the student at a later time. You may also see patterns - time of day, food, school work, home problems, peer problems, etc."

Behaviour Management

“I like to use the book *Chrysanthemum* (Kevin Henkes) at the beginning of the year to talk about inclusion and bullying. In the book, the children in her class make fun of Chrysanthemum's long name. I enlarge a picture of her from the book and give one copy to each child. Every time Chrysanthemum is made fun of in the story, we stop and crumple the picture a bit. By the end, our picture is crumpled into a ball. Later we talk about how we can say we are sorry if we hurt someone (and smooth out the paper) but the hurt will still be there. Illustrated by the wrinkles still left in the paper, even after we try our best to smooth it out.”

Aleesha

“Here is a very brief behaviour management teacher tip I've used for years and found it works really well in my K-2 class. I have a desk tucked behind my classroom door we call the 'Privacy Desk'. On the side of the desk, I have attached a sign, upon which is written; 'Privacy Desk: If I am sitting here, please don't talk to me because I need some quiet time to think. Thank you'. If kids come in off the yard upset and unwilling to talk, or have a meltdown in the class, I encourage them to go to the Privacy Desk to cool off and/or take a break to think. I always check on the students after 5 or 10 minutes to make sure they're O.K. and want to talk. Students often go on their own, and will sometimes choose to do their work there if they need a really quiet spot. At the desk we keep a 'feelings' poster, headphones, a chart of strategies they can use to solve small problems, and a small stuffed mascot from our conflict resolution program taught at the beginning of the year (called 'Kelso's Choices', an absolutely fabulous program for teaching kids how to make choices to help them solve small problems). If there is a conflict between two students, I send them to the privacy desk together to try and solve it on their own (I check on them after about 10 minutes, or if there's excessive giggling, after which I tell them I can help them with it later).

I've found the 'Privacy Desk' is respected by the students and empowers them to solve their 'small problems' independently. It also gives them a safe place to sit in peace where they won't be bothered, which is sometimes hard to find in a classroom and it gives me a positive place to send someone who needs a time-out.”

Jennifer

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

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

1. Realize that the children are suffering too. No one likes them, they seem to always be ‘in trouble’.
2. They often can't see past their impulse to do something in order to focus on the consequence of their actions. Having to focus on a whole day can be too overwhelming for them to even contemplate.
3. I find at least one positive thing about them and make that my focus.
4. I've found that behaviour contracts work extremely well with ADHD children. If I break our day into smaller, more manageable chunks of time, the child is able to focus on one chunk at a time.



Behaviour Management

Give the tools to problem solve

“We talk about problems being little, middle-sized or big. Little problems can be solved by the child: my pencil broke, I finished my book, someone bumped into me accidentally. Middle-sized problems are ones where minor hurt is involved, either hurt feelings or minor scrapes, arguments, etc. Large problems are bullying, serious injury, blood, sickness, a stranger on the playground, fire, etc. Brainstorm problems and write them on a chart in the right column after discussion.

Little problems should be able to be solved by the person. With middle-sized problems, the person should try first to solve it by speaking to the other person involved, but if it doesn't get settled the teacher can be told. Big problems must be told to an adult immediately.

Every day do 'what if' questions and ask the children what they should do. If problems arise in the classroom or playground with the students, talk about the solutions. Ask what they did about the problem and how it could have been solved in other ways.”

I feel sunny!

“I have a chart with pockets and the students names on these. Inside the pockets are cards.....sunny, cloudy, rainy, stormy - with the pictures. The students start the day being sunny, and the weather deteriorates if the behaviour does. If a child ends on stormy for the day, we go to the phone in the classroom and the child phones the parent to tell them about it. The children do not want to have to do this! They also have a chance to improve the weather, if the behaviour noticeably improves through the day.”

Tattling

“I have my students 'talk it out'. When the kids come in with problems, I have them go out into the hall and take turns telling each other their side of the story. They must be quiet while the other person is talking. This usually solves the problem.”

“I have Grade Twos and Threes. I tell them that if they come to tell me something, it must begin with the word 'I'.”

“We ask these main questions:

1. Are they trying to hurt me?
2. Could someone get hurt by their actions?
3. Are they in danger by doing what they are doing?

We discuss hurt feelings, and I always do the 'wrinkled heart' to show how hurtful things stay with us.” (If anyone doesn't know about the wrinkled heart, drop an e-mail to me.... Jean)

We Have Rules

We have rules. We have rules.

Rules to keep us safe at school.

We use inside voices and walking feet,
(point to mouth, then to feet).

We don't touch or bother the friends we meet.

(Hug self and shake head)

And when we're eating we stay in our seats,

(sit and pretend to eat)

'Cause we have rules

At our school.



Beginning Phonics

Activities to Teach the Sounds

Action; food snack; make tactile letters; praise

Aa – asking apples (set an apple on a desk and ask it questions!); apples, applesauce, asparagus; Apple Jacks, aluminum foil; astounding!

Bb – bouncing a ball; eating a banana, bread, beans; buttons, beans, balloons; beautiful!

Cc – cutting a cake; eating carrots, cake, cookies, corn; cotton balls, crayons; commendable!

Dd – digging in dirt; eating doughnuts, dates, dips; dots, dominos, dishes, plastic dinosaurs; delightful!

Ee – exercise; eating eggs; egg shells; excellent!

Ff – finding funny frogs (hidden around the room); eating fruit; feathers, foil, fingerprints; fabulous! fantastic!

Gg – gobbling grapes; eating grapes; coloured glue, glitter, grass; gorgeous! great!

Hh – hopping hundreds (count by hundreds as they hop); eating hotdogs, ham, honey; hearts, hair, handprints; heavenly!

Ii – move like inchworms; eat Indian corn; plastic insects; impressive!

Jj – jumping jacks; eating jam and jelly, jelly beans, juice; jelly beans, jewels, jigsaw pieces; jazzy!

Kk – kingly kisses (we practice kissing in the air - very funny!); eating kiwi; keys, kleenex; Kingly Kids!

Ll – looking at leaves; eating lemon, lasagna, licorice; lace, leaves, lollipops, letters; lovely!

Mm – munching marshmallows; eating muffins and milk; money, macaroni; marvelous!

Nn – nibbling nuts; eating noodles, nuts; nails, newspaper, nylon; nice!

Oo – obstacle course; eating olives, omelet; Cheerios (or other 'o' shaped cereal); awfully good????

Pp – punching pillows; eating pancakes, pie, pickles; peas, popcorn, puzzle pieces, pipecleaners; perfect!

Qq – quietly questing quarters (hidden in the room); eating quiche? (sound isn't correct.....); quarters, quilt squares, Q-tips; quite _____!

Rr – racing rockets (balloon and straw rockets on a string) or rattling rocks (put rocks in a container and rattle if you can stand it!); eating raisins, rice, radishes; rice, rocks, ribbon, raisins; really _____!

Ss – sipping sodas; eating soup and sandwiches, salad; sand, seeds, sandpaper, string; smart!

Tt – tapping toes; eating tea and toast, tomatoes; toothpicks, tape; terrific!

Uu – putting umbrellas up; eating upside-down cake; ugly _____; unsurpassed! unusual!

Vv – voluminous voices (singing loudly!); eating vegetables; velvet, velcro; very _____!

Ww – weaving webs (from string); eating walnuts, water, wieners, watermelon; wire, wool; well done!

Xx – do eXercises; eat ????. x-rays; eXcellent!

Yy – do yoga or play with a yo-yo; eating yogurt (yummy!); yellow yarn; YES!

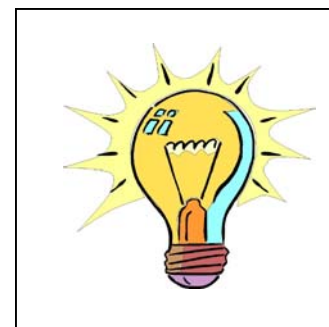
Zz – zany zippers (glue a zipper on a piece of paper and then draw a zany picture around it), zipping zippers; eating zucchini; zig-zag braid; zippy!

Reading Ideas - Grade One

Alphabet Chant

The second letter shown represents the letter's sound. All vowels have the short vowel sound. Also, the song is sung as a call and response. The teacher (or child leader) says one line and then the class repeats it. If you are teaching sign language the children can make the letter sign with the chant.

Sung to Frere Jacques



(letter) (sound) (object)

A	/a/	apple	(Children repeat)					
B	/b/	ball	“					
C	/c/	cat,	“					
D	/d/	doll	“					
E	/e/	elephant	“		Q	/q/	queen	(Children repeat)
F	/f/	frog	“		R	/r/	rain	“
G	/g/	goat	“		S	/s/	snake	“
H	/h/	hog	“		T	/t/	train	“
I	/i/	insect	“		U	/u/	umbrella	“
J	/j/	jet	“		V	/v/	van	“
K	/k/	kangaroo	“		W	/w/	wagon	“
L	/l/	let	“		X	/x/	??? (be silent)	“
M	/m/	mouse	“		y	/y/	yo-yo	“
N	/n/	nurse	“		Z	/z/	zero	“
O	/o/	octopus	“		Now I know my ABC's			“
P	/p/	purse	“		I am a hero!			“

“I have always been interested in finding out the ways my children learn. Some will learn sight words easiest, some learn best through phonics and some need to use printing and body movements. I think about this whenever I am teaching a reading lesson, and try to do all three - they are supposed to be especially effective when all are used at the same time. For example, if I am teaching the word ‘look’, the students see the word, say it and make ‘glasses’ with their fingers over the o’s - all together. We stretch the letter sounds, too, and talk about the sounds we hear while looking at the word and pretending to ‘strreeetch’ with our hands. Then we ‘look’ for the word around the classroom (I have put some around before the lesson), saying the word as we find it. It seems to work well!”

“Some Grade One teachers in my large school use the onset-rime method of decoding. I don’t - I think it makes decoding more difficult rather than easier. The students must know the letter sounds, and also be able to recognize the word parts. I think to do the onset-rime, the child must look at the end of the word and the beginning consonant as separate parts.

I simply teach them to blend from the front of the word to the end. There is nothing else to know but the letter sounds, and they slide the sounds together from left to right. They learn to do this as they read, and it doesn’t interrupt the eye flow across the page.

Just my opinion!”

Mary

Reading Ideas - Grade Two

“Once a week we do ‘Popcorn Reading’, sometimes whole class, sometimes in teams. Here's how it goes: every child must have a copy of the same book/story. One child begins to read, he reads 1-3 paragraphs (whatever he wishes), when he finishes he says ‘Popcorn to...(Joe, Jane)’ The person named must keep reading another 1-3 paragraphs, and so on. My children have always enjoyed doing this. Also, it makes sure they are all paying attention.”



“During SSR my students select books to read from the tub on their table. The tubs are filled with all sorts of reading material, at all different levels. A few items that the students really like are reading the basal at that time. (I rarely use it for instruction, so they are excited to read from it at SSR). They love going back and reading all the books I have used for guided/shared reading. These are books they have ‘mastered’ and feel very confident reading. My students also love nonfiction books and they often put their weekly library book into the tub. Lots of choices! I rotate the tubs each week. Also, one table a day has the choice of going to the book area and selecting books from the theme tubs or books from the shelf. This has worked really well in my classroom.”

I have recently become aware of a great Canadian publisher of books. My granddaughter is beginning Grade Two this year and is reading well, and her Grade One teacher suggested these chapter books for summer reading. It seems that many chapter books have plots and word usage that are above a 7 year old’s comprehension, and these books are suitable, interesting, and keep the attention of Grade Two kiddies. I recommend them!

http://us.orcabook.com/client/client_pages/Orca_Echoes_Info.cfm

Orca also publishes books for ‘reluctant’ readers in middle school and higher. They specialize in books that are at a suitable reading level but have a suitable interest level, too.

Book Responses

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

I start at the beginning of the year by asking each student to bring in a favourite book and each shares why he/she likes that book. I model this first. After everyone shares we make a chart of the different types of responses. You will probably get things like: My favourite part is . . . / I liked it because . . . information about the characters the theme (humour, adventure, mystery, etc.). We write these on a chart called ‘What we Can Write About Books’. (This stays up and is added to throughout the year.)

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

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

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

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

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

Teaching Printing

“My students came in printing all over the place. Their letters were formed incorrectly and were anywhere but on the lines.

In the beginning of Grade One I teach one letter every day. I am fussy about the correct formation - all letters must be printed from the top down. We make huge letters with the fingers on the desktop, the carpet, in the air, etc., before putting them on paper. One thing that has helped them see the difference between well-formed and sloppy letters is that I model correct and incorrect letters myself on the overhead. I show them, in fine detail, what the correct letter formation looks like and how to write it. Then I do some that are not resting on the ‘floor’ or that don’t touch the ceiling, maybe that go down into the ‘basement’ and so forth. We talk about what is wrong with them. Then I do a few more that are correct.



I always ask for quality rather than quantity. I would rather they print three or four perfect letters than a dozen sloppy ones. They put a two finger space between each letter they print. I then ask them to pick out the one letter they have printed the very best. Why is it the best? Why are the others not as perfect?

I also have been fussy about colouring within the lines. This isn’t an art activity; this is a fine-motor development activity. We don’t do a lot of colouring, but it does come up sometimes in math or in other content areas. I will not let them scribble or turn in sloppy work. They now know they will have to do it over if it’s not neat. I can see an improvement in everyone’s handwriting because I have set the standards and stick to them. They are learning what ‘quality work’ looks like and how to do it.

Of course, I have my share of immature writers who need more time and I make individual allowances for them, but even they are getting much better.”

“When I teach handwriting I tell the kids that the lines are like a peanut butter sandwich. The top line is the top slice of bread, the dotted line is the peanut butter, and the bottom line is the bottom slice of bread. They like this and it makes it easy for them to visualize what I mean. I often wonder what another adult might think if they walked into the classroom while I was saying, ‘The letter ‘m’ begins on the peanut butter. Did you put your pencil in the peanut butter to begin ‘m’? The kids understand totally...an adult might think I was nuts!’”

“I say that letters in a word must ALMOST touch - they show me by the thumb and forefinger what that means - and words must be separated by a space big enough for a finger - but no bigger. We look at our printing to see if we are doing that.”

“For a finger space, decorate a popsicle stick like a finger – nail, nailpolish, rings, etc.”

“Use a popsicle stick and decorate like a ‘Space Man’!”

“I tell my kids that if they leave too much space within a word - I will draw a jelly bean there. I do this when I check their work - with various colour markers. Letters or words that are too close get peppermint sticks – just two vertical lines next to each other in red. If they leave too much space between words I draw rainbows to connect the two words. They seem to really like this idea! I just give reminders like – ‘watch out for the jelly beans and the peppermint sticks’ and it seems to help.”

“I rarely let my students print on un-lined paper. For some reason, children can’t seem to visualize lines, and their printing is all different sizes and it runs downhill.”

“I have my students practice printing every day, and I gradually increase the amount. We do cloze sentences, we print poems, and do other exercises so they must read what they are printing. My goal is to get every-one printing fluently. Once they are, their creative writing improves as well.”

Writing

Writing is a very difficult task as it involves many different skills. To write a sentence, the child must first form it mentally. Then the sentence must be broken down into words. The child must take the first word and think about the spelling. He will have to think about the sounds, or be able to find the word in the classroom. Then he must print it – another set of skills – putting the letters in order. Then he must remember the original sentence and think what word comes next, and so on. When the sentence is printed, the child must be able to read it to himself and another person.

Many small children find writing a formidable task. Some of your students may be ready to do this early in Grade One or even in Kindergarten, but most of your students will not have the skills necessary and will be very frustrated if they are asked to write too early. There are prerequisites to writing, and giving the children time to gain these will make the writing process much smoother.

That does not mean that you do not teach writing! Every day the teacher should model the writing process, going through the steps and vocalizing the writing process. Each day discuss topics, sentences, using interesting language, capital letters and punctuation. Talk about the sequence of words. Discuss the spelling of the words and the strategies for spelling that can be used. Teach the children to print fluently and neatly on lines, and give them lots of printing practice. By the time they are ready to write, they will be reading simple material, will be able to spell a number of words accurately or phonetically or find them on the word wall. When the children have the prerequisite skills they will be anxious to write and because they understand the process you will find that their writing is much more fluent and interesting.

Up C Daisies!

“I like to say ‘Ooopsy-daisy’ - an old-fashioned term. I use it when there is a spill, or someone falls without getting hurt. Then I use this silly saying to help the children remember to edit their stories.

U = understanding - do your sentences/story make sense?

P = punctuation - did you remember periods at the end of sentences?

C = capitalization - did you put a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence?

D = Did you spell words correctly?



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

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

“My favourite activity is very simple, and also helps with correct form in writing questions. The kids find a magazine picture that they like. Then they think up a ‘Why’ question about the picture. They glue the picture on the front of a folded piece of paper, and write their question above or below the picture. I insist on correct punctuation, capital usage in the question. I often use legal size paper for this. They unfold the paper and write an answer to their question on the inside. Using the word ‘because’ in their answer sentence seems to help them direct their thoughts. For example, one child found a picture of a boy wearing a raincoat and boots and playing in the rain. His question was ‘Why is the boy wearing boots?’ On the inside of the ‘booklet’, his answer was, ‘He’s wearing boots because it’s raining’.”

Capitals and Punctuation!

“Ask the children to go through their sentences and trace their capitals with a green highlighter, periods and question marks with red (for stop), yellow for commas, etc. They will erase and fix a mistake if they will get the reward of using the markers.”

“We do lots of shared writing. A really effective way of demonstrating where we need punctuation and capital letters is to use the 'Traffic Light' concept. Green means 'go' when we use a capital letter to start a sentence, Red means 'stop' which is when we need a period. I have a green pen to print the capital letters and a red one which the children can hold and they hand them to me when I need to use them. Sometimes I let them use red and green crayons in their own writing for a special treat and they use them for the beginning capital letters and ending punctuation.”

“One of the ideas that has worked well for me is to ask if your sentence has its shirt and pants on.....the shirt being the capital and the pants the punctuation. You tell the children you can't bear to see a naked sentence!”

“Sometimes I go on 'Punctuation Patrol'. I tell the students that I am the punctuation policeman and I am coming to inspect their writing. I give them some time to make sure they have all the periods in, and then I go around to see if any are missing.”

“I like to do sound effects for the punctuation. At the end of each sentence, for example, they could clap, or say 'BEEP!' or make some other noise. If there aren't any periods in the writing, they can't make any noise....”

“During modeled writing, we always say 'End of a thought, a polka-dot called a period.’”

“I often will read their story and 'act like' I am out of breath – because there was no place for me to stop and take a breath. Then we re-read it, and when I stop and take a breath, they 'hear' where the period needs to go. After a few lessons and practicing, they soon will do this by themselves.”

“When my students are writing, I walk around the room and I tell them that if I tap their desk with my finger, it means that I see a place that needs fixing. It causes them to stop and look for themselves. I have them write a sentence over 3 times if they turn in a story that has a sentence that lacks a capital letter at the beginning or punctuation at the end. I also dictate a sentence every Friday as part of the Spelling test and I take off points for capital letters and punctuation.”


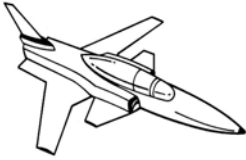
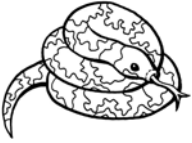


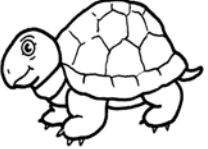






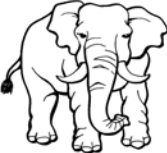













“To teach quotation marks, I begin by using cartoons and have the children speak the words in the balloons and act out the sequences. Then they put quotation marks at the beginning and end of the words in each balloon, and finally make sentences. Batman said, "Let's go, Robin!"”

“You can use four pieces of elbow macaroni to make the quotation marks on sentence strips. The kids love to do this! Macaroni can also be used as apostrophes.”

“I find the best way for the students to see the errors in their writing is to read it aloud. I have them first read it aloud to themselves (quietly), correct anything that they see needs changing and then read it to another student. We talk about being careful to read what is actually printed, not what they think is there. Finally, I read it out loud to them just the way it is printed and see if there are still things to be changed.”



Key Words

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

Word Walls

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

Putting Up the Word Wall

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

Here are some ways to display the word wall.

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



Some hints:

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

Teaching the Words

The following website gives a good description of teaching the word wall:
<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/wordwall/>

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

Word Wall Fun!

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



Mini-Offices with a Portable Word Wall

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

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

Ideas in Language Arts

Making Words

Here is a description of 'Making Words'.

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

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

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

Sentence / Fluency Strips

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

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

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

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



Oral Reading

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

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

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

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

More Reading Ideas

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

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

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

I sort them like this:

- I keep theme books packed away until I do that theme. The books for the theme we are currently studying are displayed on the chalkboard ledge.
- I have a special shelf for science books. I find there are a number of students each year that just love these books.
- I have tubs of levelled books. I put a coloured sticker on the front and the spine, and all of that colour go into a tub.
- We do author studies, and all the books of the current author are displayed on a rack.”

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

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

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

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

This website gives a good explanation of various literacy centres.

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

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

The First 30 Words

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

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



Fine Motor Skills

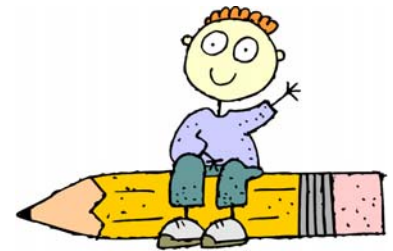
You will likely find a few students in Kindergarten and Grade One who have great difficulty with fine motor skills. These children may have to be taught how to hold a pencil and scissors, and need specific direction to learn how to form the letters. In all cases, practice makes perfect, and lots of fine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

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

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

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

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



Printing Exercises

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

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

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

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

I went to _____ at his house. can like play

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

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

This also reinforces capital letters and periods.

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

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

- Answer questions in complete sentences:

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

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

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

Research

Doing research assignments is a great way to introduce and teach strategies for reading non-fiction books. Begin research in early Grade Two, and increase the difficulty as the students' reading ability increases.

Have several simple non-fiction books on a single topic - dinosaurs, insects, space, etc. Discuss the parts of the book - the title, index, illustrations or photos, subtitles, chapters, etc. Explain that when you are researching a topic you do not need to read everything in the book - if you are looking for specific information use the index, chapter headings and sub-titles to find what you need to know.

Share that it is just as important to choose a book to give you information at your reading level as it is when you choose a fiction book. Some non-fiction books are very difficult.

Begin very simply. Perhaps the students could each choose an animal, and try to find specific information about it. Where does the animal live? (habitat) What does it eat? Does it have a home? Tell one or two interesting facts about the animal, etc.

Take two pieces of 8 1/2 x 11 paper and fold in half the hamburger way. Staple along the fold. This gives a cover page, six pages in between to write information and the back page. Younger students need lines to print neatly, so you can photocopy the pages with the format. You may want to begin with sentence starters.

8	Title By ____	2	7	Photocopy double-sided. Turn the pages so they are vertical - face one left, the next right, and so on. Fold the pages in half after photocopying.
6	3	4	5	

The form consists of two rows of boxes. The top row has four boxes: the first is labeled '8', the second 'Title' and 'By ____', the third '2', and the fourth '7'. The bottom row has four boxes: the first '6', the second '3', the third '4', and the fourth '5'. Each of the boxes labeled 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 contains a smaller box labeled 'Drawing' and the word 'Sentence' below it. The box labeled 2 also has a 'Sentence' label below the 'Drawing' box. The box labeled 7 also has a 'Sentence' label below the 'Drawing' box.

Assessment

Have a copy of the following page for the student and for you. Have the student read **across** each line. On your copy, cross out errors and print what the child said above the word. Stop the child when he/she makes three consecutive errors.

To score: Count the words the child has read correctly. Add 100 to each score and then divide by 100. For example, if the child reads 68 words correctly, add 100 to make 168, and divide by 100 to make a score of 1.68. If the child reads 125 words correctly, add 100 to make 225, and divide by 100 to make a score of 2.25.

The final score is the approximate grade level – a score of 1.6 is considered Grade 1, 6 months. A score of 2.25 is considered Grade 2 level, approximately between the 2nd and 3rd month.

This is, of course, a very simplistic assessment. There is a lot more to reading than reading lists of words! This test is useful to give you a quick assessment of your new students so that you will have an idea of the sight word levels.



Name _____

a and I at is like red the to am my it
big cat you me play up go can are blue see
sit come here in look little no yes said will for
have was on he if yellow its too down good
funny help jump did ran she fast all do we
run stop today be away get some make his into
live may ride as call him black hot read sing find
let eat came out so us where ten brown her
going by saw work that from but got has of
one were wish your with fall after pick off two
why then long had green cut five many six tell
want they went our not fly what ask new old
or upon our give because pretty three well very
thank small once cold over four just made again
best when say please there put how gave myself
use which under try this them ate goes far first
who start soon open pull night know must about
those light never their now kind grow before around
full much sleep white walk both draw seven been
always bring any laugh eight wash write think take
better only buy found would clean does every show
drink these keep carry together right warm round
own could hurt done sight

Sight Word Games

Word Whackers

"My kids love Word Whackers! I write the sight words on the chalkboard (I usually do 16 at a time), divide the group in two, draw a line on the floor to line up behind and give the first person in each team a fly swatter. Stand to the side - this is very important! - and say, "Find the word _____." They run to the board and swat the word when they find it. I started by giving points to the team who correctly swatted first. Later they loved it so much they didn't care when I stopped scoring. We play until I feel most of the group can find the words quickly. They asked to play this every day!

After a few weeks I made 'desk swatter' game boards and they played in sets of three with tiny fly swatters (Crystal Springs) - one person calling words and the other two swatting.

I must say that this year's group read faster and sooner than in previous years. We really emphasized sight words and I think it paid off. More games like this one instead of so much pencil and paper work made it fun."
Cindy

Heads and Tails

This is a good activity to keep the students familiar with the word wall.

I pick a word on the word wall and they write it down. Then a student picks a word off the wall that starts with the last letter. They write the words like this:

play
yes
saw
went etc.

Finger Twister

"Trace a number of different sized circles onto a piece of paper, and run enough copies for each student. print the same number of words on the board as circles, and the students print a word in the circle of their choice.

Call out instructions such as, "Right thumb on _____." Continue with other words, "Left pointer on _____." Students love getting their fingers all twisted up and hardly realize they are practicing their sight words."

Sing Your Spelling Words

Songs for 3 Letter Words

- This Old Man
- Jingle Bells
- Are You Sleeping? (C-A-N can)
- Three Blind Mice

Songs for 4 Letter Words

- Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
- Skip to My Lou
- YMCA
- Are You Sleeping?

Songs for 5 Letter Words

- Skip to My Lou
- Row, Row, Row Your Boat
- You Are My Sunshine
- BINGO (There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o)

Songs for 6 Letter Words

- This Old Man
- Jingle Bells
- Happy Birthday
- Michael Row Your Boat

Ashore

- The Farmer in the Dell
- Skip to My Lou

Songs for 7 Letter Words

- She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain
- My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean
- Twinkle, Twinkle
- Willoughby Wallaby Woo

Songs for 8 Letter Words .

- We Wish You a Merry Christmas
- For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

Songs for 9 Letter Words



Parts of Speech

Teach the simple parts of speech when you are encouraging interesting vocabulary in the students' writing. Use the proper words as you describe nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

Noun Town

This would be a great lesson if you are going to be observed! Have a bulletin board ready with green paper. Make roads with adding machine tape, with a dotted line down the centre.

Then.....the town needs PLACES... (houses, stores or mall, school, church, post office, police and fire stations, hospital, banks, etc.

The town needs THINGS... (trees, gardens, signs, park benches, dogs, etc.), etc.)

The town needs PEOPLE... (people in cars, people walking, kids playing in the park, policemen, etc.)

Have the students draw and cut out pictures. Another option would be to have the students cut things from magazines. Put the pictures up, saying for each for example, "The fireman is a person. The word 'fireman' is a noun!" "This tree is a thing. The word 'tree' is a noun!" Nouns are words that tell about people, places and things.

Put the pictures up as artistically as possible, putting larger pictures at the bottom and smaller ones in the distance at the top. Put things where they might be in a town, like things together.

Verbs



Verbs are action words. A verb tells what someone or something does. There are also 'helping verbs': was going, am helping, is running, etc.

We want our students to use verbs that are more expressive of the action. Brainstorm words that we can use other than 'walk', 'said', etc.

Make a bulletin board for verbs. Take your students out to the playground and take digital pictures of each doing some action - run, jump, swing, hang, twirl, sit, stand, etc. Print the picture and have the children write about their action. Or.... they can draw themselves in action....

Adjectives

Adjectives are fun! Talk about a dog you saw in the street without any information about the look of the dog. Then ask the students to write a story about this dog, telling more about it - the size and colour, the length of hair, etc. Every student will be imagining a different dog! Have them underline the single words that tell something about the dog. make a list of them on a chart.

To end the lesson, tell about the actual dog you saw.



Write Cinquain Poems

A Cinquain poem is a five-line form that uses a syllable count of two-four-six-eight-two.

Line 1: a one-word line, a noun, that gives the poem its title

Line 2: two adjectives that that describes what the poem is about

Line 3: three action -ing verbs that describe something the subject of the poem does

Line 4: a phrase that indicates a feeling related to the subject of the poem

Line 5: a one-word line, noun, that sums about the poem is about, essentially renaming it

Questioning

These types of reading questions can be answered orally or in writing. Most teachers prefer them to be answered in complete sentences - it depends on the purpose.

1. 'Who' questions

These are the easiest to answer in complete sentences, because usually the 'who' comes out and the name goes in its place. For example: Who saw the dog run down the street? Peter saw the dog run down the street.

2. 'Where' questions

The answer should begin with the person or thing that is being asked about. If you teach nouns - the sentence will begin with the noun in the question. For example: Where was the dragon? The dragon was in the cave.

3. 'When' questions

The answer should tell a time, and again begin with the noun in the question. For example: When did Peter have lunch? Peter had lunch at one o'clock.

4. 'Why' questions

These are the most difficult to answer, of course. The answer usually has the same words as in the question and then the word 'because' and then the answer. For example: Why did the dragon make fire? The dragon made fire because he felt scared.

5. 'What do you think' questions

These questions require a thoughtful individual answer. The answer usually begins: 'I think....'

6. 'What happened next' questions

'What happened next' questions can ask about an element in the story sequence.

7. 'What do you think happened next' questions

These questions ask the student to imagine what the next part of the story would be - after the end of the story, or in the next chapter that has not yet been read.



Finding answers to questions

1. Handy answers - these questions can be answered by a sentence taken from the text. The student can write the sentence, or touch it in the book.
2. Finding clues - these questions can be answered by reading a page or a paragraph and finding the information (not a single sentence).
3. Use your head - these questions require the student to think about what he has read and give an opinion or make inferences.
4. On your own - The answer comes from prior knowledge or experience. For example: Did you ever.... What was it like when How would you

Phonics

An Artistic Alphabet Book

Each student can make a great alphabet book. They can have full 8 1/2 x 11" pages - one for each letter, or the pages can be cut in half. The upper and lower case letters are printed on each page.

A - Apple - 1/2 apple print with red paint - the apple can be cut lengthwise to show the apple shape or across to show the star (or both).

B - Blue Balloon - make blue prints of something that is circular and flat - a film canister or pill bottle lid, for example. Add a line for the string on each balloon.

C - Cotton - pull cotton balls apart and glue cotton to the page.

D - Diamonds and Dots - Use diamond and dot stickers, or glue on hole punch circles and cut out diamonds.

E - Egg - draw an egg shape and glue on egg shells.

F - Feathers - glue feathers to the page (you can buy a big bag of feathers at a craft store).

G - Green Glitter - use a green glitter pen, or drop green glitter onto glue.

H - Hand - make a handprint.

I - Ink - Ink can be stamped on the page with different stamps, or the students can put their fingers on an ink pad and press their fingers to the paper. Make sure they understand the word for this page, as it is a bit obscure! Or, the students could draw an igloo.

J - Jigsaw - glue jigsaw puzzle pieces.

K - Kleenex - glue a Kleenex to the page (or old keys - but they are too heavy for most paper).

L - Lace - buy a metre or so of lace and give each student a piece to glue on the page - or use paper doilies.

M - Mitten - trace a mitten shape around the hand and decorate it - or glue on macaroni.

N - Numbers - cut out numbers from magazines and glue them on.

O - O's - glue Cheerios to the page in the shape of an 'o'. This does not give the sound, though..... the students could draw an octopus.

P - Purple Potato - cut a potato and make prints with purple paint.

Q - Quilt - glue paper squares into a pattern.

R - Red Ribbon - Glue bits of red ribbon on the page.

S - Sand - glue sand on the paper - or.... seeds or string.

T - Triangles - use triangular stickers or glue on paper triangles.

U - Upside down - cut out a magazine picture and glue it on upside down - or draw an upside down picture.

V - Valentines - use valentine stickers or cut out a valentine and glue it on the page.

W - Wallpaper - Cut the letter 'w' from wallpaper and glue it on - or use wool or watermelon seeds.

X - Xs and Os - draw a tic-tac-toe game board and draw in some Xs.

Y - Yellow Yarn - glue yellow yarn to the page. Make sure the students know the word 'yarn'.

Z - Zipper - do a zipper print - put paper over the zipper and colour with the side of a crayon.



A Variety of Ideas

“To help the b-d reversals I have my students make a bed with their hands. Use the thumb and index finger for the circles and keep the other fingers straight up. Then put the circles together to "make" the bed. We practice making the bed. The "b" is first in the alphabet so it is the pillow (on the left).

The bed can also be made by making the ‘thumbs up’ sign and putting the folded fingers together.”

“I have made a large ‘Cat in the Hat’ hat, and on it I stuck 10 strips of Velcro, one beneath the other. We brainstorm all the simple words that have the _at ending. I put them on strips of tag with the opposite Velcro on the back. This serves two purposes - it teaches the ending and the consonant sounds that go with it. Then I have the students make up the list in alphabetical order. I also have a worksheet where they glue the words in alphabetical order onto a Cat’s hat. The words are: bat cat fat hat mat pat rat sat that vat The kids like to do this and it is a good first exercise for alphabetical order. They refer to the alphabet above the chalkboard.”

“Instead of round robin reading, we do ‘popcorn’ reading about once a week. The kids really like to do this! I begin by reading the first few sentences, and then I stop and say “Popcorn!” and a child’s name. That child continues from where I left off. After he/she has read one or more sentences (depending on the level and the student’s wish) he/she says “Popcorn!” and another child’s name. We talk about being fair and calling on someone who has not read. Doing this as a game keeps all the students reading and focused. Rarely does any child not know exactly when to start reading.”

“We do this by using the word ‘Twinkle!’”

“I am not sold on centres. I find it very difficult to hold the students accountable for what is to be accomplished. There is a lot of preparation, and, in my opinion, doubtful value. I have no idea whether they’re actually learning anything at that moment or have mastered the art of looking busy. I also have a problem getting my kids to be quiet enough at centres so that the students in the group I am teaching can concentrate well.

I have my kids do three ‘jobs’ when I am teaching groups. There is a ‘printing job’, where the students copy a poem or do a cloze exercise with vocabulary words. Later in the year they answer questions in sentences. Then there is a ‘practice sheet job’, a worksheet that goes with the reading they are doing. The last is the ‘reading job’. When the students have done the first two jobs they take a book from a tub at their independent reading level and simply read until the time is up. They enjoy doing these three tasks and hurry through the first two so they have more time to read quietly.”

“When you start literacy centres, don’t start guided reading groups right away. You need to take time to model the centres and guide the students through them for several weeks. After each work session, have the class come to the circle. Discuss the work, their work habits and behaviour. Have the class discuss how the problems could have been solved.”

“Once guided reading groups are being taught, you don’t want to stop to address misbehaviour or questions. Some teachers wear a special hat or sign around their necks that tell the children “NO!”. I give my kids strategies. When there is a problem, they are to try to solve it themselves. If the person can’t do that, they may whisper to a person near them and see if that person can help. They can ask three people. If no one can help, they are to skip over that task and go on to the next. They tell me after the reading group is finished. At the end of the session we meet and discuss problems with behaviour and the tasks. When I finish a reading group, I always say to the class, “Thank you for not interrupting! Is there anyone who needs to talk with me?””

“Practice fluency. Show kids how looking back and rereading are important to comprehension. We read a few pages and then write down every imaginable thing we remember in blue. Then we read it again and add things we remember in red. We read it again and add things we remember in green. Discuss how many more things we remembered each time. Re-reading not only helps us to remember important things about the story, each time we read the story through we read it more quickly and with better expression.”

Writing

Writing Class Books

I went walking and I saw

If you give a kid a cookie (class retell based on *If you give a Mouse a Cookie*)

Meet Mr. _____ (The kids interview the principal and then write about him/her.)

Willoby Walloby Woo - Each student does a page..... Willoby, Wallaby, W_____, The elephant stepped on (name). For example, Willoby, Walloby Watie, The elephant stepped on Katie. or..... Willoby, Wallaby, Wike, The elephant stepped on Mike. The students draw themselves and a huge foot above the head.



Writing Individual Books

Family Toe Count (A math book) - On each page draw a member of the family and print (for example) 'My Dad has 10 toes'. On the last page, draw the whole family and say 'My family has ___ toes.'

An Experience Book - Make a chart about a class trip or experience, putting each sentence on a new line. Read it until the students are all familiar with the vocabulary. Give the students blank books with lines at the bottom of the pages. They print the title on the front, and one sentence on each page. Illustrate the pages.

Or....., for older students, have them write about the experience. Discuss the sequence of events and the use of words such as: First, next, then, after that, etc. When the story has been edited and corrected, have them divide the story into as many parts as there are pages in the book and print out the book and illustrate.

Visualization

"I use this strategy to help kids use interesting words. We practice visualizing different things - for example, a dog, an animal, a bird, a man, a tree, etc. Look at it in your mind. If I say, "A boy in a costume came to the door," what do you see? Everyone is seeing something different! How can I tell you exactly what I see? We do that by using words that make the picture clearer. We talk about these words. When a student writes something in a story that does not make a clear picture discuss words that would be helpful."

The Jacket I Wear in The Snow

"This is a good writing exercise for December that goes with the book *The Jacket I Wear in The Snow*. The students write a descriptive story about a dream jacket. They describe what it looks like, what it has on it, and what's special about it. Then they decorate a paper jacket pattern to go with their descriptive story."

Mini-Offices

"My kids like to be private when they write. We have mini-offices - I stapled two file folders together, overlapping the right page of one and the left page of the second so there are now three sections. It will stand up on the desk. These two pages that are stapled do not have to be completely overlapped - if they are only partially overlapped the mini-office is wider, of course.

I buy the plastic sleeves, and the word wall words are typed up, photocopied, inserted into the plastic sleeve and put into one of the pockets. I do this every week, so the new words are always there. Another pocket is used for works in progress, and the third pocket holds the personal dictionary with the individual words that the student needs.

I find that the students are quieter and work better when they use the offices. There are a couple of children who play behind the 'screen', but I sit these children where I can watch them!"

Teaching Reading Fluency

Fluent reading is the goal! Fluency is the ability to visually take in groups of words in meaningful units, to read as we talk. Until a student can read automatically, the reading process is still in the early stages where he/she must think about the individual words and use strategies to decode or associate. There are some students that can have full comprehension of the subject matter without fluency, but most kids miss much of the content when they are concentrating on reading words rather than automatically reading phrases and sentences.

Some students gain this fluency in Grade One and we hope that the rest of them will achieve fluency in the second grade. Children who go into Grade Three without being able to read fluently will have difficulties because the quantity of reading increases dramatically. These students may always have problems! These are likely to be the future adults that are functionally illiterate.

Here are some strategies to teach fluency:

1. First, of course, is to teach reading and decoding strategies. Teach a wide reading vocabulary, mastering the words before continuing. Teach explicit and sequential lessons, especially to readers who have difficulties.
2. Read orally as much as possible. Before fluency is gained, many students do not read independently, and the only true practice they get is when reading orally. SSR reading time may be a waste of time for these kiddies. This time is much better spent if these students are taken for an oral reading lesson. Enlist tutors for students who do not get enough practice in class.
3. Perhaps the most important strategy is to read and read some more. Some students need to see a word up to 50 times before it becomes automatic or fluent. When words are taught they need to be practiced until they are automatic. Students must be reading at their independent reading level (95% word recognition) in order to practice fluency.
4. Practice reading phrases in one cluster, and practice reading sentences in meaningful clusters. Teach reading sentences with less emphasis on the connecting words - they must be correct, but read quickly. They slide in between the more important words that are stressed. Show the students that they do not have to look at each word individually. Our eyes can read three to five words at a glance.
5. Model fluent reading. This is modeled in read-aloud times. It also helps to model the students' reading material so that the students can hear how it should be read and they can try to copy it. Model reading with expression. Following a read-aloud session, ask your students: "After listening to how I read, can you tell me how good reading should sound?"
6. Do repeated readings. Have the students practice reading short sections orally. Discuss phrasing and the speed of the reading. Try to read as though you are talking.
7. Read orally simultaneously. In a one-on-one situation, an adult and a student both read a paragraph. The adult, of course, reads fluently in phrases and the student tries to follow. Review the same paragraph several times and then the student reads it alone.
8. Do echo reading. You read a sentence or a paragraph and all the students repeat the section back to you.
9. Once the students know the words, stop readers from using their fingers to follow the text. Pointing at words prevents the eye from reading ahead as it should. A student with tracking difficulties can put the finger at the end of the line, sliding it down as he goes to the next line below..
10. Do readers' theatre. Because reader's theatre is an oral performance of a script, it is one of the best ways to promote fluency.
11. Read into a microphone and tape it. After the reading, listen to it and discuss how it could be improved. Tape it again and see if the student has improved the reading.
12. Use a timer and time a student's reading. Re-read and see if the time can be shortened.



Increasing Vocabulary

When the daily number of words for each group of children was projected across four years, the four-year-old child from the professional family will have heard 45 million words, the working class child 26 million, and the welfare child only 13 million - averages, of course. All three children will show up for kindergarten on the same day, but one will have heard 32 million fewer words—which is a gigantic difference.

It is important to try to increase our students' understanding of words and word meanings. Our children come to school with a huge difference in speaking and listening vocabulary, and this must, of course, have an effect on their learning to read and write.

Here are some ways that teachers try to increase vocabulary.

“I always try to choose books for the read-aloud that are well above the lower students vocabulary. If I read books that are too simple the kids will not be increasing their vocabularies.”

“I try to build vocabulary through my read alouds. I first choose two or three vocabulary words from the story. I try to pick words that are not in most students' vocabulary; for example, ravine, sofa, fascinated, scarlet, etc. Then, I copy the cover of the book and write the words on cut up sentence strips and attach them to the bottom of the copied cover. After I introduce the word, read the sentence from the book that has that word in it, have students say the word with me, then give a kid-friendly definition of the word, use it in a context other than that used in the story, and have students engaged with the word (i.e: give me a thumbs up if the thing I name is enormous; thumbs down, if it's not enormous).”

“We do a lot of brainstorming. I have each student give me a word related to a colour, a theme (bears, whales, a season, etc.), or a feeling (sad, happy, excited, upset, etc.). Then I add some words that are not as likely in the students' vocabulary. We discuss these words and put them into sentences.”

“I use the five senses to introduce and use new vocabulary. I use an experience for this. For example, we go out for a walk in the woods in the spring. We use the senses to discuss what we see, feel, smell, hear and (possibly) taste. I introduce words that describe these. If they touch a tree, we might use the words rough, smooth, ridges, sticky, bumpy, cool, etc. A flower might have perfume, feel like velvet, have powdery pollen, etc.

We make fruit and vegetable salads, talking about the sight, feel, smell and taste of each, using interesting words. When we do science, the vocabulary is a very important part. The students like to learn the words ‘condensation, evaporation’, etc.”

“We make charts of words for each of the holidays and seasons and for special projects and themes. The students use these words in their writing and recognize them when reading. I try to add words that are not so common to increase their vocabulary. Often I will refer to the chart so that the students become familiar with the words.”

“I think it is important not to talk too simply to the students. The simpler you make your speech, the fewer new words the students will be learning. Primary teachers have a bad habit of ‘dumbing down’ their vocabulary!”

“I try to make show-and-tell a vocabulary experience by making a reference to the child's sharing using more uncommon words. If a child has been to the ocean, I take that opportunity to discuss tides or sea creatures. If a child discussed going to the fair, we discuss the harvest and the variety of fruits and vegetables. Put the new vocabulary into the context of the child's experience.”

“We have a word-of-the-day. This comes from the read-aloud. It is printed on the chalkboard for the day and we applaud anyone who can use that word in regular conversation.”

Phonics



“To really drill the concept of beginning sounds..... try putting the focus sound on everything! Say things like, “I am giving you a sheet of fffffpaper and I want you to write your ffffffame with your ffffffencil!”

Then we talk about the real sound in the word that I should be saying, write the two words on the board and compare the spelling. The kids love it! I also put the sound at the beginning or their names all day.

I give them a funny look, hold up an object such as a bar of soap, and say, “Now, I wouldn’t want to wash my hands with _____.” Of course, the children say ‘foap!’. Again we compare spellings, etc. It is so silly that even the kids who don’t always tune in of get the lessons easily make an extra effort.”

“We make flip books. Narrower pieces of paper are stapled to the left side of a longer piece. One beginning consonant, blend or digraph is printed on each of the narrow strips and the word ending is printed on the wider piece. So as the book is flipped new words are formed. For example, if the word family is ____an, the words can, man, pan, tan, than, plan, etc., can be read. The kids like to read through the sets. Sometimes they make sets at school and take them home to practice.”

“I had problems getting my slowest kids to blend sounds. I went over and over the letter sounds and the way to blend, but they just couldn’t seem to do it themselves. Then I tried to do it with physical movements, and it worked well! I had the kids slide down a slide making the sounds run into each other. Then I had three of these kiddies stand each with a letter of a CVC word, and say their sounds in turn, getting closer and closer to each other. Finally I had them blend large words and slide their hands under the letters. They began to ‘get it!’”

“I teach reading to a class of students with learning difficulties. I have found that well-memorized rules for them to refer to when they are reading and spelling are a big help. I teach the meaning of syllables and the concept of short and long vowels, and then use the following generalizations:

- ‘ck’ goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.
- Never end a word with ‘v’. always add a silent ‘e’.
- Double s, double f, double l, double z go at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.
- ‘j’ never goes at the end of a word.
- Hard ‘c’ rule: Fat c goes with fat a, fat o and fat u. (cat, cot, cut)
- ‘k’ rule: Skinny k goes with skinny i and skinny e. (kit, kept)
- th, sh, th and ch are digraphs. A digraph has two consonants that go together to make a new sound.
- ‘tch’ goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel - except much, such, rich and which.”

Syllabication Rules



1. Divide a compound word between the two parts: snow-flake base-ball scare-crow
2. Divide between the root word and the suffix: hope-ful want-ing love-ly
3. Divide a word between a prefix and the root word: dis-able un-happy
4. When two or more consonants come between two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided between the first two consonants: but-ter pic-ture hun-gry
5. When a single consonant comes between the two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided before the consonant if the first vowel is long - (open syllable): ba-con pi-lot pa-per
6. When a single consonant comes between the two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided after the consonant if the first vowel is short - (closed syllable): rob-in clev-er trav-el
7. When a vowel is sounded alone in a word it forms a syllable in itself: a-live dis-o-bey u-ni-form
8. When two vowels come together in a word and are sounded separately, the word is divided between the two vowels: di-et i-de-a ra-di-o
9. When a word ends in ‘le’ preceded by a consonant, divide the word before that consonant. When a word ends in ‘ckle’, divide between the ‘k’ and the ‘le’: tur-tle pur-ple bab-ble tick-le pick-le tack-le

Reading Fluency

Fluency is usually defined as the rate (words per minute) and accuracy (number of words correctly identified) of a student's reading of material at his/her independent reading level.

We want our students to read using the correct phrasing. A lot of the comprehension of the material comes through the proper phrasing and expression used with changes in pitch and emphasis. This is called prosody, or the rhythms and tones of spoken language. Whether text is being read silently or aloud, much of its meaning comes from the way it sounds.

As students recognize sight words and learn to decode quickly, they begin to read text in a way that sounds like natural speech. Daily oral reading helps to develop this skill as the student is able to listen to his/her voice and hear the phrasing and the sound of the words read smoothly.

"I tried making fluency sentence strips with my computer as was suggested in the Sept./Oct. issue, printing them the length of the paper (11 in.). I am really pleased with this idea! It makes much more sense than the long ones with bigger print - the kids can take a number of the words in with one eye scan and this is needed for fluency. Why didn't I think of this years ago?"

"I make strips with sentences or phrases containing the new vocabulary for that story. Sometimes we cut the strip into word parts, mix the words and then practice putting the sentence back together. For a centre, I put the cut words of a sentence into an envelope, the child picks an envelope, re-forms the sentence and then prints it out in an exercise book."

"We practice re-reading a story several times using good inflection and expression in my Guided Reading lessons. I stress the correct phrasing, reading several words as one unit: 'in the house', 'at school', 'I am going', etc. I find this really helps to promote fluent reading."

"Some of the children come to me at the beginning of Grade Two already reading fluently, but I often have at least two-thirds that are not there yet. My goal in Grade Two is to have as many of my students as possible reading automatically by the end of the year at their independent reading level - that is, not thinking about the individual words and reading without conscious thought of the mechanics. Some years I have all the students able to do this, and other years there are some children with difficulties that do not make that leap.

I try to have every child who hasn't reached this read aloud to me every day, and also read to an aide or other adult. Often these children do not read well to themselves in SSR time, so I need to be sure that they are getting all the practice they need to begin to read fluently."

"It is my opinion that many children will have problems with comprehension until they begin to read fluently. They are putting all the effort into word recognition and decoding - as it should be. Once they are reading fluently I then stress comprehension techniques."



Ideas to Promote Fluency:

- Do extensive daily oral reading.
- Re-read phrases, sentences and short paragraphs until fluent.
- Read a paragraph silently and underline groups of words that go together.
- Practice reading with expression.
- Do timed readings, trying to improve speed.
- Model fluent reading often.
- Echo reading - the teacher reads a passage and the student tries to imitate the fluency.
- Tape record and listen to the reading. Discuss how it can be improved.
- Do choral reading with less capable readers working with the fluent readers.
- Re-read books, songs and poems.
- Do Readers Theater.
- Neurological impress: the teacher reads slightly ahead of, and louder than, the student.

Teaching High Frequency Words

“Amazing, isn’t it? We have over a half-million words to communicate with, but half of everything we write and read depends on only 0.02 percent - on only those 100 most frequent words.”

Frank B. May in Reading as Communication

We want sight words to be recognized instantaneously in reading material. They are not considered ‘mastered’ until the word is read without conscious thought.

“When students are able to recognize words automatically they are much more likely to understand what they are reading. Drills focusing on common words can help students build a repertoire of words that they recognize as soon as they see them.”

1. First, teach the word. Show the phonetic elements, use the word orally, read it in simple phrases and then in sentences with other well-known words. Use kinesthetic experiences if possible. Print the word and illustrate the word or a sentence containing the word.
2. Next is practice. Some children need at least 50 showings of a word before it becomes automatic. This will decrease as the word-bank increases. Learning words helps to learn words! Make sure students read text containing high-frequency words every day.
3. Find the word in text. Underline it or highlight it if possible.
4. Create a word wall of high-frequency words. Add new words to the wall as they are introduced. Each day, chant or cheer the high-frequency words on the word wall.
5. Change the font on printed words and read words in a variety of situations and materials.
6. Have the students write the words as often as possible.
7. Test the student’s knowledge of sight words and keep track of each child’s progress.
8. Read for at least one hour each day in a variety of situations. Do independent reading of easy material, do group reading, buddy reading. Read orally and silently. Discuss what has been read.

Practicing high frequency words:

As students learn differently, try to practice the vocabulary using the different modalities. The best drill is when the child is seeing the word, hearing it and either printing or doing some other body movement at the same time. You can have the group see, say and spell new vocabulary.

- Have the group stand, show a word card, say the word and then spell it.
- With the word in sight, pretend that they are writing on a large chalkboard. As they say each letter, they write it in the air as large as they can. After each word is spelled, students say the word as they ‘erase’ it.
- Children start spelling the word while squatting. With each successive letter they stand higher and higher. With the last letter the students jump and reach into the air.
- Clap out the letters - or clap the consonants and snap the vowels.
- Use plastic or magnetic letters to make and break words.

Keep a word wall and practice it every day - or give each student a weekly-updated word list that is always in front of them at the desks. Do a variety of activities -

<http://www.teachnet.com/lesson/langarts/wordwall062599.html>

Or games: **<http://www.teachingfirst.net/wordwallact.htm>**

Do flashcard activities.



Spelling Rules

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

Consonant Rules:

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



Vowel Rules:

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

Suffixes:

Plurals:

Add ‘s’ to most nouns.

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

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

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

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

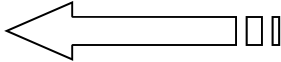
If the suffix begins with a consonant, keep the ‘e’. homeless lovely

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

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



The preceding page has desk tags that you can photocopy. One has just lines for you to print the child's name, and the other has the alphabet and numbers to 9 with the name. The students can colour the picture (or you can) and then laminate the tag. Attach them to the tables or desk with wide clear tape or stick a strip of Velcro on the back of the tag and another on the desk.



Environmental Print

This is a great way to introduce reading in Kindergarten and Grade One! Environmental print is the print we see all around us - the print on commercial signs, street signs, labels and products we use everyday, etc. Displaying environmental print in the classroom helps children feel successful 'reading' at an early age. Some examples are: the stop sign at the corner, a sign on a neighborhood gas station or grocery store, the wrapper on a favourite candy bar or snack food, box of a favorite cereal, the label on jar of peanut butter, an 'EXIT' sign, restaurant names, toothpaste, etc.

Ideas for using environmental print:

"I try to find items or labels for each letter of the alphabet. (Apple juice, B-Burger King, C- Coca Cola, etc.) I have the children to

bring in items for each letter to review the alphabet and the sounds. We make a Big Book out of using environmental print items."

"Make a bulletin board of environmental print. Have each letter of the alphabet and the environmental print below. This could be a joint project with several classes participating. We continued to add to it throughout the first weeks of school. We just put labels that the children can read up on the board and the kids loved to use this during the 'read the room' times."

Teaching Printing

It is important to teach printing correctly. 'Experts' say that it is easier to push the pencil away from you rather than towards you, and this is why so many children print from bottom to top. It seems that the children with poor fine motor skills are more likely to do this. If children learn to print letters this way and use this formation for some time it is difficult to get them to change. It is important because fluent printing is difficult when done incorrectly, and when the letters are made incorrectly it affects legibility as they begin to work more quickly.

Teach the letters individually, and teach the formation by making big letters in the air, on the carpet, on the chalkboard, etc. Ask, 'Where will we begin?' (at the top) every time they begin the letter formation. If you find that some students are reversing letters, give them a verbal cue - 'b is a bat and a ball'.

Our students need to learn to print fluently, as soon as possible. They will not be good writers until the printing becomes almost automatic, as children who struggle with printing will not be concentrating on the writing process and will not produce either quality or quantity until their printing is fairly fluent.

"I have my kids practice making their letters in a word almost touch, and put a 'finger space' between words."

"We started calling the printing spaces spaghetti and meatballs. Spaghetti spaces are the spacing in between each letter in a word (very thin spaces) and the meatball spaces are the big spaces between each word. We practice this concept during our morning message where we squish the letters in a word together and then, in between words, a student comes up, makes a meatball space (fist) and places it next to the word so the writer knows where to start the new word. This works great!"



"I make my own spacemen with the wide tongue depressors. I now use the coloured wide sticks available at Walmart, Michael's, etc. I draw a smiley face and use wiggly eyes. It's a great idea and so easy to make."



Literacy Centres

What do the students do while you teach small groups? Having literacy centres is one possible answer. Some teachers find centres difficult to manage. It is difficult to know what each student has accomplished at a centre and without supervision some students will not produce work of value. Centres can be noisy at a time when you need quiet to teach a group lesson. That being said, the teachers who model and practice the expectations at each centre before letting the children use it can find centres valuable.



“I introduce centres one at a time. This way each child knows the expectations I have about the purpose of the centre, and I teach them how to use the materials. In the beginning I limit the amount of centre materials. For example, at the writing centre I begin with only paper, pencils and wax crayons. Markers, fancy paper, etc., are added one at a time at a later date. I give the students a few exercises that they all must do first and then they can choose a centre activity. Some days I just do centres if I feel my slow workers are not getting enough choice time.”

“One of my favourite Grade One centres is a simple matching game. I have the digital pictures of the students, print them onto tag and laminate them, and I have a name card for every student. They match the pictures to the name cards. It's a favourite - they still pull it out at the end of the year, but then they see how quickly they can do it.”

The following centers can be modified for your grade level.

Reading Centres:

Library: Students choose books from the classroom library or leveled book boxes.

Big Books: Students choose big book stories to read - ones you have previously taught. Have them build the story using sentence strips or words.

Poetry: Using the poems you have previously taught, the students read poetry charts or collections in a book.

Partner Reading: Students choose a book at their reading level to read with a partner.

Reading the Room: Students may choose a pointer, glasses, wand, etc., and read the walls of the classroom.

They may read the calendar, poems, word wall, charts and other print that may be in the classroom.

Theme Library: As you do each new theme, season, science unit, have a bookshelf in the room that is full of related books.

Tape-a-Story: Students can tape themselves reading.

Magazine Centre: Students choose magazines to look through and read.

Pocket Chart: Students may use letter cards, word cards, and sentence. Build poems and stories.

Writing Centres:



The Writing Centre: Have an assortment of writing tools and interesting paper.

Writing the Room: Students use paper on a clipboard and copy words or sentences they can read from around the classroom.

Dry Erase Boards: Students use dry erase board to practice writing letters, names and words from around the classroom.

Stamp-a-story: Students use stamps/stickers to write rebus sentences.

Write a Book: Have book forms with lines and spaces for pictures.

Word Processing: Use the computer to write a story.

Chalkboards: Use the chalkboards to practice writing letters, names and words.

Journal writing: Students write on a specific topic or write on a topic of their own choice.

Post Office: Students write letters to their friends and family and put in a mailbox.

Alphabet Centres:

Alphabuilders: Straight, curved, and half circle parts are used to make letters.

Letter Sort: sort alphabet tiles on a two part graph - letters in my name/not in my name, curves/ straight, tails/ no tails, etc.

Alphabet Sorting: Put the letters in the correct alphabet order.

Matching: Match initial consonants and pictures.

Spelling and Word Centres:

Magnetic letters/words and magnetic boards: Students manipulate letters to spell names, words, or sentences.

Name/Word sort: sort into boys names/ girls names, by number of syllables, by beginning letter, by number of letters, by number of vowels, etc.

Rainbow Writing: Students write words/letters in words in different colours.

Magazine/Newspaper Search: Students search for particular letters or words in magazines or newspapers. Cut and glue the letters/words on another piece of paper.

Word Families:: Students use fold-overs to create new words in the same family.

Building Words: Put out the letter tiles of the letters the students have learned and they build words using phonics. Then print the words on a sheet of paper.

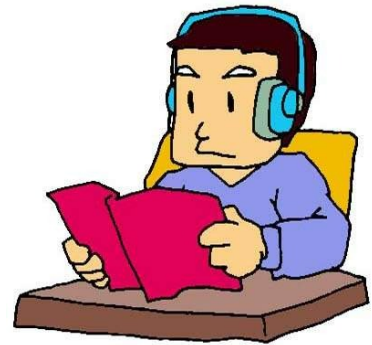
Audio-Visual Centres:

Listening Centre: Students choose books and matching tapes to listen to stories using a tape recorder and headphones. Listen to directions given on a tape to complete a worksheet after listening to a story.

Computer Centre: Students work on the computer with games that teach phonics, spelling or reading.

Overhead: Students use clear lettered tiles, water-based pens, and other materials to practice stories, letters, names and words on the overhead projector.

Keyboarding: Learn where the letters are on the keyboard and practice typing. Practice typing names and words.



Other Centres:

Science Observation: Students examine objects or displays and then draw and record what they see.

Art Centre: Use a variety of materials to illustrate stories that have been read.

Fine Motor Centre: Have activities to improve fine motor skills: colouring books, dot to dot, write on chalkboard, nuts and bolts, use stencils or trace simple pictures, use Lite-Brite, lacing or stringing beads.

Printing Centre: Practice printing perfect letters.

Organizing Your Centres.....

Centres should have a learning outcome and a method of assessing that outcome in order to be useful.

Place all the materials needed into a labeled container with a lid. When not in use put all the containers in the same place each day.

Make your centers portable by putting the materials into a plastic tub. The students pick up a tub and go elsewhere in the classroom.

Outline the space to be used for the center by using placemats, a floor mat, a desk or table, a hula hoop or other space delineation.

Model the behaviour required and the necessary outcomes.

Writing

For many children, writing is the most difficult task in the early grades. This is because writing involves many skills, and some children have a problem with one or more of these skills. Writing is a complicated form of communication, and communication cannot occur until the completed writing task can be read and understood. Before being a writer, students must understand our language and be able to put speech into separate words and also put separate words into a complete sentence. They must choose a topic and decide on the first sentence. They must keep these words in mind and in order as they go through the next steps. Students must have some knowledge of spelling and be able to spell the common words or know where to find them. They must have a knowledge of phonics to help them spell words with which they are unfamiliar. Then they must be able to print these letters and words legibly, and this is a formidable task for some children. After the words have been printed, the student must be able to read the words, so reading is also a prerequisite.

Many students do not feel comfortable writing because one or more of these prerequisites is difficult for them. This will improve as their skills improve. By the end of Grade One almost all children will have the necessary background skills and will be writing freely.

Ideas from Teachers:

“I make a chart of all the students’ names for the class to use in their writing. I also reply to Journal writing, asking a question or commenting on the entry.”

“Each month in Grade 1 I made a journal for them by making shape books (September Journal with a picture of a leaf, October a pumpkin, etc.) I put in paper with lines for a title, a space for an illustration, and lines for writing. I always use the interlines so the students keep the letter heights correct. Later in the year the paper was all lines with no illustration.”

“I encourage my kids to print neatly and softly in their first copy. Each child reads the first copy to me and we talk about things that need to be changed. I use a pencil, too, and draw a soft line under errors to remind him/her to make changes. For example, I might put a line under a spelling mistake, or a letter made lower case when it should be a capital or missing punctuation. Then the child goes back to his table. He carefully uses an eraser to get rid of the mistake and then corrects it. I find that it is important that the children correct the writing, but it is too much to expect that they re-print it. This way they have a good copy without re-writing. I don’t believe in a ‘sloppy copy’ - I don’t like sloppy work and I certainly wouldn’t encourage my kids to do it!”

“I have a computer in my classroom and a printer. When each child completes a story for publishing, I quickly type it out on a template I have made with a suitable primary font and a space above for an illustration. My kids love this ‘real’ publishing. I have done this in Kindergarten, Grade One and Two, and I find it works really well. In the early grades this is a good way to give the child reading material, too. Often we put these stories up on a bulletin board for everyone to read and sometimes we make them into a book.”



You can write in your backyard,
You can write in a tree.
You can write on the beach,
Or in a boat out at sea.

You can write when it's raining,
Or under the sun.
But no matter what,
You can write just for fun!

Kathleen L. Stone

Something to ponder.....

Why do we have our children write fictional stories? This is a skill they will probably never use. Can **you** write a good story? If you teach fiction, do it because the students enjoy it - do it for a treat. Don’t treat it as a goal because most students won’t do well at it in primary - even in later school years. Our students need to be able to write a good paragraph on one subject, using correct sentence structure, good spelling and interesting words.



Library Books

“My library has three parts. The first part has plastic book bins that are leveled. Each bin has a colour on the end, so the kids know which bin is the one for them. I put a coloured sticker on the spine and cover of each book so it is easy to make sure the books are in the right bins and the children can put them back with ease. These leveled books are used for the self-selected reading time, and most have been read by the children in guided reading.

The second part has books that are not leveled. Most are too difficult for the students, but they are able to look through them and try to read. Many of these I have read to the class so the children are familiar with the stories.

The third section is non-fiction. I only put out books that illustrate the theme or seasonal work that we are doing. If we are working on the rain-forest theme, I put out books of places, plants and animals that live there. If we are learning community helpers, then I have a selection of books to fit.”

My Book Bag

I'm as happy as I can be
This bag of books belongs to me!
I like to read a book each day
I like it more than I can say.



“I sorted my library into four groups. They are not precise levels but rather very easy, moderately easy, more difficult and beyond. I do this for any grade I teach. For example, in Grade Two the books range from easy picture books to difficult chapter books. I put stickers on the books to show the level.

Then we go through the Goldilocks strategy. We talk about finding books that are not too easy or too hard, but just right. We also talk about the ‘five finger rule’ - open a book and begin to read a page. Raise a finger for each word you can't read. If you have five fingers up on a page, the book is too hard.”

“When they feel they have mastered a level, I have them read several books to me and if they're ready they can go on to the next level. I also do running records.”

“They keep their own leveled books in a bookbag. These are stored in tubs. They get their bookbags anytime they are finished their work or have free time.”

“The students in my class have book boxes for silent reading time. They select these books weekly. They choose six books for their box on Friday. I stipulate that at least two of the books must be ones that they can read to me when I visit them during SSR. I record the books that they read to me on a conference sheet. Most children in my class work well with this system. Some children need to change books more often, I let them do this during recess (it usually takes just a few minutes). Some children need help selecting books, so I will help them with a few choices, but not all six. On Friday, when books are ‘switched’ we have a sharing time where children talk about a favourite book they had that week. I feel that this encourages other to try that book, too.”

The Goldilocks Strategy

‘Too Easy’ books

1. The book is short .
2. The print is big.
3. You have read the book before.
4. You know all the words in the book.
5. The book has lots of pictures.



‘Too Hard’ books

1. The book is long.
2. The print is small.
3. There aren't many pictures in the book.
4. There are a lot of words that you can't figure out.
5. There's no one to help you if you get stuck.

‘Just Right’ books

1. The book looks interesting.
2. You can figure out most of the words in the book.
3. Someone has read this book aloud to you.
4. You have read other books by this author.
5. There is someone to give you help if you need it.
6. You know something about this subject.

Spelling



It is good to get our children to focus on the words. Do spelling and math in the same exercise! This is great for Grade Two and Grade Three students:

Write the word: The number of vowels x the number of consonants = ____ + the total number of letters = ____ - (minus) the number of syllables = the total

This can be changed to suit your students.... for example, an easier one might be:

The number of consonants in the word - (minus) the number of vowels + the number of letters in the word = ____

Write out the alphabet and give each letter a numerical value - a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, etc. Add up the value of all your spelling words. Which word is worth the most? Guess first! Were you right? Then number the letters with z = 1, y = 2, etc. What is the highest scoring word you can find in your reading? Can you find a word that equals 50? 100?

The following strategy helps the student focus on the pronunciation of a word before seeing its spelling.

First, feel what your mouth is doing as you say the word. Example 'sight'.

- Say** the word. sight Say the syllables if there are more than one.
- Stretch** the word. /sss-iii-t-t-t/ Work by syllables if necessary. If a sound can't be stretched, stutter it.
- Split up** the sounds. Work by syllables if necessary. First sound? /s/ Next sound? long i Last sound? /t/
- Count** the sounds. 3
- Draw blanks.** _ _ _ The blanks stand for the sounds. Put slashes between syllables if necessary.

Next, learn the spelling.

- Record** the spelling sound by sound. On the first blank, write [letters] s _ _ On next blank, write [letters] s igh _ On last blank, write [letters] s igh t
- Study** the spelling. Ask, what does [pattern] say? What does *igh* say? Only ask about tricky parts.
- Write** the word. *sight*

Spelling Fun!

Heads Up, Spell Up

This is played like *Heads up, Seven up*: 7 students are 'it'. They lightly tap one student each. Tapped students have to correctly spell a spelling word before they can guess who tapped them.

Silly Sentences

Choose between 6-10 spelling words each week. Underline the letters from the spelling words. The first letter in word is first word in sentence, and so on. Examples: Spelling word - *brook* Sentence: Bobby ran over old kettles. Spelling word - *hates* Sentence: Harry and Ted eat sardines.

Glow-in-the-Dark Spelling

Students write their spelling words on white paper using glow in the dark materials. Then, hang up the words and have the students enjoy reading them in the dark!

Learn about Your Province

Give each student a list of cities and towns in your province or a simple map with the places marked. Have the children write a spelling word from their study list and then find a city or town that begins with the same letter. It gives them a chance to practice the words and also learn the names of other communities. It helps many children to learn the relative locations and distances of places in their province.

Shaving Cream Spelling

This is a great way for the students to review their spelling words and clean their desks. You give each student a 'blob' of shaving cream. They then spread it on their desk. The teacher will give the students one spelling word at a time while the students use their finger to write the word in shaving cream. After they are finished they erase the word and the teacher gives them the next word.

Have the students write their words on graph paper. This works for any level of spelling. They have to write each sound in a box. Here are some examples:

b o a t s h i p b a t h

This is a good way for the children to really focus on the sounds in the words.

Shaped words: Write words letter by letter in a pyramid, square, rectangle or circular shape.

Disappearing words: happy happ_ hap __ ha ___ h _____

Reappearing words: _____ k _____ ki _____ kit ___ kitt __ kitte _ kitten

Write the words 3 different ways: they could choose from: printed, cursive, crayon, marker, coloured pencil, squiggly lines, puffed letters, upside down, or one of their own.

Coloured vowels and consonants: Write words twice. Once with vowels one colour and the consonants another colour.

Picture words: Draw a picture, write all your spelling words somewhere in the picture. Make a frame for your picture by writing the spelling words around the outside of the picture. See if someone can find all the spelling words.

Word search: Use graph paper. Write all the spelling words then fill in all the extra squares with other letters. The words can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal as long as they are spelled from left to right or top to bottom.

ABC book: Use scrap paper and fold it in half, and in half again. Open and cut on fold lines. Should make 4 pages. On each page in the middle print the word in a very dark color. Under the word write the word in a sentence. Above the word draw a picture of what is happening in your sentence. Must use 3 or more colors and no white showing. With a dark color draw a frame around the picture. Do this for each word. Make more pages as needed. Put pages in abc order. Make a cover page with your name on it. Staple the left edge to make a book.

Write word 3 times: Good old basic drill practice. Write words 3 times each. Your choice of print or cursive.

Make acrostics out of the word. See the example of 'there' at the side of the page:

Once Upon a Time: Write a story using all the words on the list.

Write ten sentences using two different words from your spelling list in each sentence.

Words without vowels: Write the spelling words, but place a line where each vowel should go. L_k_ th_s.

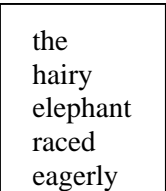
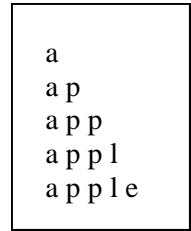
Words without consonants: do the opposite by writing vowels only _i_e _i_.

Cut out words: This one is a bit time consuming! Keep a box of magazines on hand and have the children find spelling words or cut out individual letters to make the words and glue them to a piece of drawing paper.

ABC Words: Write the words in alphabetical order.

Dictionary scavenger hunt Look up the words in the dictionary and write down the page number and/or definition.

Use the dictionary and/or thesaurus. Look for synonyms, antonyms and homonyms where appropriate.



Kindergarten Literacy Centres

There are many ways of using centres in the Kindergarten classroom. Some teachers allow the students to choose where they want to go and others have the students rotate through the centres so everyone gets a turn on each. All agree that the children must stay at the one centre for a certain length of time and must produce some 'work' at that centre.

Centres need to be taught. Add them gradually, teaching the proper procedures at each - the expected behaviour, the use of the materials, the expected outcomes, etc. Then, each student must clean up and put back all the materials at the centre when the time is up, and this needs specific training.

Word Centre

Alphabet magnet or felt letters or letter tiles - build names, sight words from cards or the word wall.

Alphabet Centre

Have alphabet books in the centre and the students put tile or magnetic letters in alphabetical order - they can use the books if they want to or if they do not know the sequence.

Nursery Rhyme Centre

Have a pocket chart with the nursery rhyme and envelopes with the poem cut into the words. Put the words in the correct order. Have books of nursery rhymes in the centre.

Sound Match

Match the letters with a picture. Use a set of cards that have the letter on the back of the picture so the children can self-correct. There are beginning sound match cards you can purchase.

Puzzle Centre

Have wooden puzzles with the alphabet to put together. Other puzzles can be in the centre - words or names can be cut apart into puzzle shapes.

Overhead Centre

Practice printing letters on transparencies - after the correct formation has been taught.

Poem Centre

After teaching a poem, cut a copy apart into lines, phrases or words - depending on the level of the students. Put the poem back together in a pocket chart. Have a copy of the poem so it can be checked. Have large copies of all the poems taught so far and pointers and the students can read the poems to each other as if they are a teacher.

Read the Room

Have a box of interesting dollar store magic items - funny glasses, magic wands, masks, finger puppets, binoculars, magnifying glasses, etc., to help them read the words.

Write the Room

Provide clip boards, paper and attached pencils. The children go around the room and write any words that they are able to read. Fancy pencils or glitter pens make this more interesting!

Playdough

Provide playdough or plasticine. Have a rolling pin and alphabet cookie cutters. Words that are being taught can be on cards for the students to make.

They could also form words by making small rolls with the hands and then making letters with these.



Big Book Centre

After you have taught big books, leave them in a centre with a pointer for the students to read.

Real Reading Centre

After you have taught simple books and the students can read them or have memorized them, put them in a real reading centre. A few comfy cushions and a cozy corner make this a popular centre.

Letter Match

Match upper and lower case letters. Alphabet books can be in this centre, too.

Computer Centre

Have suitable educational software that is simple to use.

The Reading Centre

The children can read emergent readers, teacher-made books and class-made books.

Story Telling Centre

After a fairy tale or other familiar story is told in class, provide flannel characters and story items for re-telling. Creative story telling can be done with a variety of characters. A puppet theatre can also be used for creative story telling.

Rhyme Matching

Have pictures of rhyming words that are to be matched - cat/bat, wig/pig, etc.

Making Words

Make words with tiles, stamps, letters cut from newspapers or magazines, beads, etc. Words can be copied from sight word cards or words from poems, etc.

Making Alphabet Books

Have letter and picture stamps and little books made up.

Making Sentences

Have word cards and the students can glue them to make a sentence.

The Writing Centre

Provide interesting writing tools and paper and let the students write letters, words and sentences if they can.

Library Centre

Here the students are free to explore books that are above their reading level but interest them. The books can be fiction or non-fiction. If you are doing a theme this is the place where the associated books can be found and explored.

Sequencing

Have sets of 4 pictures of activities or happenings that are in sequence. The student must put the pictures in order and then tell the story to another child.

Blending

This is a good exercise for later in the year. Have cards with a short vowel that the students put in the middle, and then consonant cards that they pick out of a box to put in front and after the vowel. See if they can make any sensible words!



Reading

Oral Reading Responses

<i>Be encouraging:</i>	'I can see you are really looking carefully at the words today.'
<i>Demonstrate strategies:</i>	'When I get stuck on a word I can sound it out or read on and re-read.'
<i>Stretch the response:</i>	'Tell me more about that...'
<i>Add information:</i>	'A _____ is a very unusual bird. These birds can...'
<i>Extend vocabulary:</i>	'A word that rhymes with _____ is _____.'
<i>Extend student responses:</i>	'What do you think will happen next?'
<i>Review story structure:</i>	'What happened first...and next...and last?'
<i>Make the student prove it:</i>	'Find the words that show that...'
<i>Model smooth fluent reading:</i>	'Today let's try shadow reading so you can feel the flow of the words.'
<i>Reflect:</i>	'What part of the story did you like? What words were tricky to read?'

- Encourage the child to read the story more than once.
- Introduce the child to shadow reading (reading with the child at the same time).
- Ask questions related to the story.
- Ask the child to tell the story in his own words. (Starting with what happened first, what happened next, and what happened last)
- Try reading it to the child first to get him/her familiarized with the story, then have it read to you.

Skeleton Response

Talk about a skeleton - the bones that hold a creature together.... What are the 'bones' that hold this story together?

This story is about _____. *Character(s) in a setting - e.g. This story is about a little boy named John who lived on an island.*

There was a problem! _____

It got even worse when _____. (if problem gets worse)

Finally, the problem was solved when _____.

Reading Response Journals

Reading response journals are exercise books where students respond to literature by recording their thoughts, feelings, reactions, and questions about the book they are reading.

It helps, especially in the beginning of the use of these, to provide an outline to show what sort of response is required.

Grade Three Responses

Pick one response after reading a book or story.

1. Write a letter to a story character.
2. Pretend you are a story character and do a daily journal for him/her.
3. Write: Why I would like to spend a day with _____ (one of the story characters) *or* in _____ (the story setting).
4. Name five objects used in the story and tell how they were used.

Extra Responses:

- Find six interesting adjectives and tell what they were describing.
- Look up five tricky words in the dictionary and write the meaning that was meant in the story.
- Find four synonyms for 'said' in the story.
- Find three compound words.
- Find two contractions and write the two words that makes up each contraction.
- Write a sentence that gives you a mental picture.



Reading Lesson Strategies

The Read-Aloud

The teacher read-aloud is a very important part of reading instruction. Chosen books should be good literature and in your students' instructional listening vocabulary. This means that the story should not be too easy - the students understand all words and the story line is too simple; or too difficult - the vocabulary used is beyond your students and the concepts are too difficult. The story should extend the children's vocabulary with some words that are not in common use, but they should be able to understand these words in context or through the pictures.

Read-alouds should model proper pace, expression, and comprehension. Not everyone is good at reading aloud! You can build motivation for the children to read this and other books independently - you are showing that reading is great fun.

In the early grades mix picture books with books where there are few pictures so the students learn to visualize the story and the characters for themselves. They need to make this transition into 'chapter' books.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is very similar to the read-aloud. The teacher reads the story to the student, but in shared reading the student reads part of the story. The book must be shared - in clear sight of both the teacher and the child. Big books are often used for this. Shared reading can be done with a book that is familiar to the student or one that has a pattern and the child is able to continue the reading easily. Sometimes the child just reads a few words of rhyme or repetition, and sometimes more.

In older grades shared reading may be done for pleasure - two people take turns reading a story, or to increase the interest. It can remove some of the stress of oral reading for lower students.

Guided Reading

Guided reading lessons can be one-to-one teacher-student, or the teacher can have a group of students. Because the students are doing the reading, the book should be at the students' instructional reading level - 90-95% accuracy of vocabulary knowledge. In a guided reading lesson the students read the text silently or softly while the teacher shows strategies to help them become independent readers.

The guided reading lesson usually goes through these steps: Show the book and read the title. Do a picture preview. Have the student look at the pictures and talk about the people or scenes. Do the students have any experiences that connect with these? Talk about any vocabulary that may cause difficulties during reading. Put these in phrases and sentences. Then the students begin to read. Assist the students with the reading vocabulary or give suggestions for decoding. When the reading is completed, discuss the story and have the students tell you what they have read or learned.

Fluency Reading

Fluency reading is usually done orally. We want our students to phrase the words correctly and use proper pace, pronunciation and expression. Without this, much of the comprehension may be lost, so this is a very important skill to learn. Fluency may be improved by the teacher modeling a passage and having the student re-read it, by choral reading, readers' theatre, taped reading, buddy reading, etc. - but perhaps the best strategy for this is oral reading every day and having lots of practice.

Independent Reading

Books for independent reading should be self-selected for the individual student's interest. The book should be at an appropriate independent reading level.



Word Walls

“I have been introducing the 5 words a week that I use from the Primary Success spelling program. I put each word from the list on a tag card. One thing that I do that works well for me is to put the ‘easy’, phonetically spelled words on green tag (I introduce these as the ‘easy’ ones. The ones that are ‘red’ words in the spelling program are put on red tag and we call these our ‘doozies’. Words that can be tricky (not going along with the rules or not quite phonetic) are on yellow tag - ‘be cautious’.

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

“I prefer to have my word wall along the side of the room because it is then the most visible from all points of the room. The words are not so high up that they are difficult to see, nor so low down that they could be blocked by furniture, children working in front, etc. I would not recommend having children remove words from a magnetic word wall because it's very important to keep that resource available to all children at all times, and that the positioning of the words not change from when they are added through until the end of the year. This helps children know that if then was the second word under the ‘T’ column last week, it will be this week, too. If you want to have copies of the word wall words available at the bottom of the wall in library pockets, or on cards on a ring, or in individual word wall folders at their desks, these are all workable options.”

“I introduce anywhere between 5-10 words a week with my Grade Ones. At the beginning of the year I start with five and gradually increase them according to the ability of my kids. I have each word written on coloured paper and it is then cut out in the shape of the word. These are taped to the board at the beginning of the week.

On Monday I introduce the words. We say, spell, clap and spell each word. We also use them orally in sentences. On Tuesday and Wednesday we say, spell, clap and spell and then write the word. On Thursday I just say the word and they look for it and decide which word it is and then write it on their paper. Friday they write their words on index cards. These go in their file boxes and are taken home at the end of each week to be practiced at home. The words from the board are then put on the word wall. From that point on they MUST be spelled correctly in their writing.

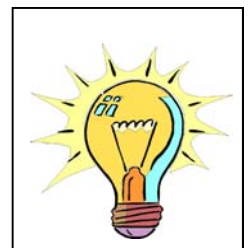
Also during the morning message each day we circle any word wall words that are in the letter. We circle and clap and spell each one we find.

If you have *Phonics They Use* by Patricia Cunningham, you will find these and many more activities. The clapping and spelling resulted in my kids knowing their words (both reading them and spelling them) better than any class I've ever had before.”
Paula

Printing

“I know I'm a traditionalist Grade One teacher! When the kiddies come to me from Kindergarten having never used lined paper it makes my job a lot harder. I think using free form paper is fine if you give them practice with the lined paper, too. I firmly believe it helps not only in proper letter formation, but those students I have that have had a more solid background in using lined paper have better visual discrimination and better text awareness when they go to read. They pick up on the mechanics of reading a book better when their eyes have been trained to look at letters in a straight line and proportioned correctly in relation to each other.”

“For the first couple of months in Grade One we practice making letters correctly. For each, I say, ‘Where do we start?’ and the class says in unison, ‘At the top!’, pointing up with the arm and hand. After we do this over and over - it is rare that I find students printing from the bottom up.....”



Phonics

"I blend sounds based on a program I learned a few years back (Companion Reading). Basically I stretch out the sounds on easy to blend words, especially at the beginning of the year.

SSSSSSSSSSaaaaaaaaaaaaammmmmmmmmmm - Sam
Ffffffffffffffaaaaaaaaaaaaaannnnnnnnnnnnnn - fan
Rrrrrrrrrrrruuuuuuuuuunnnnnnnnnnnnn - run

The students learn to say the sounds without taking a break and once they seem to have this at least understood – then I add blends, digraphs, etc., and we continue using this method when they get stuck on words. Shiiiiiiip." *Cathy*

"I have the children blend sounds several ways. Here are the most successful ones:

- I put magnetic letters on a cookie sheet and put out the letters I want the child to blend. I really spread them out. The child holds the first letter, makes its sound and carries that sound as he slides the letter over to the next letter. It continues this way until the letters/sounds have all bumped into each other.

- The other way is that I put beginning blends or sounds on the left side of the blackboard, the vowels they know in a row down the middle of the board and ending sounds or blends down the right side. Next I take a toy car and I drive over the letters. As my car hits a letter the children say its sound. They continue to make that sound until I come to a vowel. They say that sound until I hit a final letter and they put the word together. You just have to be careful with this one to check and make sure that no swear words are possible from the combinations you put up! I also make sure that in both games I have beginning sounds that last... /m/, /s/ and /n/ as opposed to /t/, /b/ or /j/, especially when I'm first introducing the process."

Barb

"Blending and segmenting are big things in our district. I do something almost every day that connects with this. I have one word family every week that goes along with the HM materials we use.

Two things we do are favourites with my kids. First, I have a class set of those 4x6 inch magna doodles. I also have a large sized one for me. I start by asking them to write the letter that makes the sound.. For instance, /o/ (they write the o in the middle of their slate). Then I add a beginning letter and then an ending letter to spell the word....h o t.... They erase and we start again (they hold their slates on their chests so I can see them all but others can't, though often I will tell a student to 'look at Kathy's'.

The other thing my kids love - I have a letter sorting box under my overhead projector and I pull out letters to blend word families. First I do many of them, then I call students to do them again. They love to come up. We focus on the vowel sound that week."

Marcia

I can spell cat – c-a-t
I can spell bat – b-a-t
I can spell sat – s-a-t
But I can't sell hippopotamus
Cathy



Things to Ponder



Many teachers use 'word families' or word endings to teach reading and spelling patterns. To use these, students have to recognize the end of the word and blend the initial sound to it. Some kids will have a problem recognizing these rimes. Compare this to sounding each letter from the beginning of the word to the end, blending the sounds as the word is read in the direction we read. Isn't this a more natural way to decode?

Home Reading

It is obvious that the more practice a child does in any skill, the quicker they will advance that skill. If a child is to be a good hockey player or ballet dancer, practice will be necessary. So it is with reading! Most teachers do a home reading program to add to the daily reading practice time.

It is important that the books chosen for home reading are books that are appropriate for independent reading, the level at which a child can best practice their reading skills to build fluency. Both children and parents are frustrated when children come home with books that are too difficult. The parent should not be required to give instruction and most parents do not fully understand the teacher's methods. The home reading should be a time where the child practices the skills that have been taught and mastered at school, and the child should feel confident and proud of reading to a family member.

It is sometimes difficult to find enough reading material that the early reader can read with confidence. The books you have taught in guided reading lessons, little photocopied books with controlled previously learned vocabulary and simple predictable text are suitable for early readers. For students in late Grade One and Grade Two and Three, there will be lots more material. Have the student read a page of the text to see if the book is at the correct level. Sometimes books that have been levelled from standard lists may not fit the student's reading ability, so check to see if the book chosen is suitable. Re-reading the same books is fine! Children will often enjoy re-reading a favourite.

Send home a note explaining why home reading is valuable and what your expectations are. Some teachers send a sheet each time where the parent can put the date, the book titles and comments. It often helps to have some sort of visible record in the classroom - stickers on a chart, a graph, etc. This is also useful for parent-teacher interviews when parents who are not insisting on the reading see the charts. Encourage your parents with the following:

Why Can't I Skip My Twenty Minutes of Reading Tonight? *Source Unknown*

Let's figure it out -- mathematically!

Student A reads 20 minutes five nights of every week;
Student B reads only 4 minutes a night...or not at all!

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night x 5 times each week.
Student A reads 20 min. x 5 times a week = 100 mins./week
Student B reads 4 minutes x 5 times a week = 20 minutes

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.
Student A reads 400 minutes a month.
Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month x 9 months/school year
Student A reads 3600 min. in a school year.
Student B reads 720 min. in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of ten whole school days a year. Student B gets the equivalent of only two school days of reading practice.

By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days.

One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance. How do you think Student B will feel about him/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

- Which student would you expect to read better?
- Which student would you expect to know more?
- Which student would you expect to write better?
- Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?
- Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?



Teaching Sight Words

Children need a strong sight word vocabulary to be successful readers. These are the most commonly used words in our language. The Dolch list is one source of these words. The students should have automatic recall of these words. To get automatic recall, these words must be taught in specific sequential lessons, and reviewed every day.

Teach 5 or more of these words each week, depending on your class and the level. You will likely teach 5 words each week at the beginning of Grade One and up to 20 words each week in Grade Two.



To teach a word:

- Introduce the word. Discuss the initial sound and the final sound. Blend the word if it is phonetic. Discuss the vowel sound(s), too. If the word is non-phonetic, say that this word must just be remembered by the look and shape.
- Look for small words in the word. Look for the word ending and think of rhyming words, if any.
- Spell the word aloud.
- Print the word on slates, carpet, in the air, etc. Make the word using magnetic letters, stamps, etc.
- Put the word into sentences orally so the students understand how the word is used.
- Print phrases using the word. Use only words that the students have already mastered to make the phrases.
- Print sentences using the word, again using only words that the students have already mastered.

To practice the words:

Do flash card drill.

Play games with the words on game boards, 'Go Fish', etc.

Read stories at the student's independent reading level that use the words.



Sight Word Games:

Bean Bag Toss

Divide a shower curtain liner into 16 boxes with a permanent marker. Attach the words to the boxes on the shower curtain with tape. Put small numbers on the corner of the cards. Divide the class into 2 teams. The teams take turns throwing the bean bag to a square. If the student can read the word the bean bag lands on, the team gets the number of points on the card. If the student misses the word, the other team gets the chance to say it. The team with the most points wins the game.

Around the World

All the students sit in a circle or the students can remain at their desks. One student stands behind another student who stays sitting. Flash a sight word to the two students. Whoever says the word first moves on to the next student. The student that makes it back to their own desk or starting point is the winner and has gone 'Around the World'!

Tic-Tac-Toe

Give everyone a blank copy of the tic-tac-toe board (or the students can draw the lines on a whiteboard), and put the list of words on the board. Have them place the words where they want in their board. As you call out the words, you will have to say if it is an X word or an O. The first one to tic-tac-toe is the winner.

A Game Board

Have a game board with numbered spaces. Have a pile of sight word cards. Each child takes turns turning over a card. If the child reads it correctly, he/she can move as many spaces as there are letters in the word.

More Sight Word Ideas

“We played ‘word whackers’. I wrote 16 high frequency words on the board and divided the class into two teams. The first person in each team got a fly swatter (yes, we first talked about the appropriate use of said swatters.) I stood to the side and called out a word from the list on the board. The first person to swat the correct word with the swatter earned a point for their team. Lots of fun!”



“We also did a high frequency game where they rolled a die and drew that number of cards from the pile. If they could read the words, they got to keep the cards. If not, they went back into the pile.”

“I have the Dolch words broken down into pre-primer, primer, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade word lists.

<http://gemini.es.brevard.k12.fl.us/sheppard/reading/dolch.html>

Each of those is broken into smaller groups of words so I have 10 groups, starting with easy ones and getting harder. Each group is printed on a colour of construction paper, 10 groups, 10 different colors. The colours are the colours of the rainbow, in order - beginning with yellow for the first list. As a student can read the first group of words he/she gets a certificate of that colour. The name goes on the certificate and is then put up on a bulletin board. As the students pass each color group of words, they get another badge of the matching color. This makes a beautiful Reading Rainbow wall, with a rainbow of color badges as the kids pass each level.”

Here are sets of the Dolch words, with the great Jan Brett illustrations.

http://www.janbrett.com/games/jan_brett_dolch_word_list_main.htm

Wordo

You need blank cards with 9, 16, or 25 blocks. Have students fill in the card with the words that you want to use. Tell them that each card will be different and to try to mix up the words they are using. Playing the game is just like BINGO. Call out the words and have the students spell it out loud with you and then mark their spaces. This will give those who are unsure of the word some extra help. The first one with a row covered calls out ‘WORDO’!

Erase Relay

Write two columns of words on the chalkboard that are approximately equal in difficulty. Write as many words on the board as there are children in the relay. Children are divided into 2 teams, and stand in two lines at right angles to the chalkboard. At the signal, the first child in each line points at the first word in his respective column of words and pronounces that word. If his pronounces it correctly, he is allowed to erase that word. The game is won by the side that erases all the words first.



Team Sight Word Race

The children are divided into 2 unequal teams in lines away from you. Turn over a sight word and the two children at the front of the line try to see who can say it first. The team that says the word first gets a point. Then these two children go to the back of their lines. The teams are unequal so the students have a new person to race each time as they get to the front of the line.

Reading Ideas

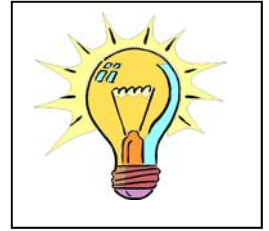
The Dolch Words

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

This is a good site to find the lists and there are also flash cards, phrases and more.

http://www.janbrett.com/games/jan_brett_dolch_word_list_main.htm

These lists have Jan Brett's great pictures.



Teachers who are using literature levels and guided reading usually also teach sight words. The Dolch lists are one tool to improve the children's reading vocabulary. The more words they can read - of course, the better readers they will be.

"I give my Grade Ones the first list of Dolch words to take home after we have gone over them at school. A week later I do individual tests, and if the child can read all the words they get to choose a special sticker for the page, and I staple another page behind that and they take both home the next week. I ask the parents to go over both lists every day and help the children remember the words. If they need extra, I send the flash cards home, too. As they know the lists I add another to the pile. I don't send one and then leave it, I want constant review of all the sheets they know, too. I find their sight word vocabulary is improving very quickly."

Testing

"My teaching partner equates reading fluency testing to a video game. You have to be very quick to win the game, and you get one point for every word you read, trying to read as many as you can before the teacher says 'stop'. If the child stops on a word, the teacher says it after 3 seconds and the child continues. It takes some practice, but the kids really understand the concept of quick reading when compared to a video game. Then they try to beat the last score."

"When I am testing fluency, I don't do the scoring with the child. Too often I find the child is put off by what I am doing. I have the students read into a tape recorder and I mark the reading later. This is also good because I can back up and hear the reading several times as I make notes."

"When I test phonics I like to use nonsense words, so the students won't be simply recalling the word. I have two bags containing letter cards, one with the vowels and the other with consonants. The child takes one vowel and two consonants and makes two C-V-C 'words' - reading them even when they don't make sense."

Phonics

Some consonants can be stretched when blending - f, h, l, m, n, r, s, v and z. All the rest cannot - and it makes blending very difficult if the students try to stretch these..... b, c, d, g, j, k, p, qu, w and y. Unless these are clipped short, a schwa sound is inserted into the word you are blending. For example, /b/ /a/ /t/ becomes buh a t - a double vowel sound. To get around the confusion between the two kinds of consonants, cut all the consonant sounds short - as short as possible. Pretend you have a pair of scissors with your first two fingers, and put these in front of the mouth as you practice the consonant sounds, cutting them as short as possible.

Teach the vowels as stretched sounds, so 'bat' is blended as b aaaaaa t with the b and t clipped short.

Phonetically Irregular Words

These words need to be taught as visual sight words in Grade One.

the to of was said put Mr. Mrs. you have are should could would they your what were two
do any many who some come here other mother brother another done one four eight father
where there does

Dictionary Skills

Pre-Dictionary Skills

1. Talk about the order of the letters in the alphabet. Play games; for example, give each child a letter of the alphabet and ask them to line up in the correct order, helping one another to find the place. Sing alphabet songs, too.
2. Ask questions..... what comes after 'r'? What comes before 'm'?
3. Learn the position of the letters in the alphabet. Is a letter in the beginning, middle or end? Say a letter, and ask where it 'lives'. Take a number line - 0 to 10, and say that if 'a' lives at zero and 'z' lives at 10 - where does 'h' live? Can the children come close to the position? What comes in the middle? What letters are near the beginning and what letters are near the end?
4. Use a picture alphabet book that has one page per letter, and ask the children to open it at the 'P' page, for example. How quickly can they find the page? We don't want them going through all the pages to find one.
5. Teach alphabetical order, first using just letters, then words beginning with different letters. You could do this weekly with the spelling words.
6. Teach alphabetical order when the words begin with the same letter - what happens then?



What is a dictionary?

1. Talk about what a dictionary is used for. It is a book of words. Why do we use dictionaries? Use a simple child's dictionary to begin the study.
2. The dictionary has so many words. How will we find the word we want? Talk about alphabetical order. Look at the book to see this.
3. We use dictionaries to find the spelling, the word meaning and the pronunciation of words, and how to break the word into syllables. Look at a simple word in the dictionary, and see where it tells the meaning. How does it show how the word is pronounced?

Learning to use the dictionary

1. It is helpful to begin with either a glossary or a very simple dictionary without too many pages.
2. Using a thicker set of dictionaries, practice opening the book at approximately the right letter. Think about where the letter comes in the dictionary and try to open the book near that letter. Why is this a smart thing to do?
3. There are words at the top of each dictionary page. These are called 'guide words'. Have the students discover why those two words have been chosen and how you can use them to find the word you want. Why are they called 'guide' words? What is a guide?

Dictionary Activities

1. Have a 'Word of the Day'. Choose a difficult word from the reading and have the students find it in the dictionary. Print the word, the page on which it is found and the guide words on that page. Write what the word means in your own words, put it in a sentence or draw a picture. Who can use the word in conversation, too?
2. Find a word that you would like to have as the word of the day. Why is that word special?
3. Create your own dictionary of words you need in your creative writing.
4. Play a game - see who can find the page a word is on first. How long did it take you?
5. What are the symbols used in pronunciation? Make a chart of them and use them to show the pronunciation of your spelling words.
6. Finally, look at on-line dictionaries.

Wonderful Words

If you do the 'making words' part of the Four Blocks, here is a tip. Go to Home Depot or other building store and buy a quantity of inexpensive white tiles, the tiny ones (one inch square). Then print lower case letters on them with indelible felt pen.

Another idea is to make a sheet of each letter on the computer and print it on cardstock. Some teachers put the consonants on white and the vowels on different colours. Cut the sheets apart and keep the letters in zip-lock bags or in fishing tackle trays.

Nouns and Verbs

"We have joined two subjects to make a 'Book of Nouns'. We were studying the school in Social Studies, too, so the children went around the school and took pictures with the digital camera of school people and places and things. We talked about nouns being people and places and things - so the two ideas came together well.

I 'pasted' the best pictures at the top of computer pages, and made a text box under each picture. Then the children sat by my computer and we decided what to print under each picture, talking about the nouns that we would use. I typed in the words as they told me what to say..... For example, 'This is Ms. Smith. Ms. Smith is the librarian. She works in the library. She helps us find books to read.' Then we talked about the nouns, and made the words 'Ms. Smith' and 'librarian', 'library' and 'books' bold and underlined.

They had pictures of rooms and places like the gym and the bathrooms, and things such as the secretary's desk and gym equipment.

We did this over several days, and they really began to understand what a noun was - and learned about the school, too!"

"I did a bulletin board display with verbs. I took pictures of my students doing things - printing, reading, running, climbing, talking, etc. and printed them - one for each child. Then that child wrote a sentence about what he/she was doing in the picture. 'I am Mary. Mary jumps. Jump is a verb.' I am Peggy. Peggy is printing. Print is a verb.' etc. They took the verb and decorated it separately under the sentence. It made a cute BB display, titled 'Grade Two Verbs'."

Adjectives

Collect adjectives! The things we read and the things we write would be very dull and boring without these words. There are many categories of adjectives. You can put up these headings, and the students can collect words and put them into the right category.

Colours: red, orange, yellow, etc.... and then scarlet, puce, indigo

Size: big, small, little, long, tall, short, heavy..... and then huge, tiny, enormous

How things look: pretty, ugly, interesting, gorgeous, short, tall.....

How things feel: rough, smooth, bumpy, wet, hot, cold, cool, soft, hard.....

How things taste: sweet, sour, spicy....

How things sound: loud, soft, whiny, squeaky, noisy, quiet.....

Feelings: happy, sad, angry, funny, kind....

Qualities: good, better, best, worst, kindest, crabby.....

Age: young, old, ancient, babyish.....

And many more!



Similes

Often we say that one thing reminds us of something else. The snow fell like feathers from the sky. He swims like a fish. This is as sour as a lemon. Be as quiet as a mouse.

Have the students brainstorm some, and then put one simile into each story that they write.

Writing

“I have my kids write every day, and I usually mark it with them and have them correct the errors. About one day each week I let them do free writing. Sometimes I give them a topic and sometimes just suggestions, but then there is no correction, except what the children can correct themselves.

I find that the best way to get them to see errors is to have them read what they have written aloud softly to themselves and then so someone else. Often they can see the mistakes as they do this. I ask the listening partner to ask the writer if all the punctuation and capital letters are correct.”

“It is a puzzle whether to have the kids recopy the writing and how often. I find that most children don’t like to recopy, so I usually only have them make a good copy when the writing is going into a book or being displayed on a bulletin board. Otherwise I am not sure about the purpose for rewriting.”

“Every Friday I ask my children to read through all their week’s writing (Grade One) and choose the one they think is best and most interesting. They bring it to me and I print it with the computer onto the bottom half of a page and print it. Then they illustrate it nicely and we put these in a folder to make a lovely collection. They also put in stories where they print a good copy. At the end of the year I choose one page from each student and make up a book for the parents, and then I bind each child’s collection into a book to take home.”

“My students only illustrate the good copy, not the daily writing. I do this because I have found that some children rush the writing to get to the drawing when they are allowed to draw every day, and others draw a sloppy picture because they do it too often.”

“I never put incorrect work up on a bulletin board or in a class book. I think that the material that the kids read should have correct spelling and punctuation and capital letters. And, of course, real authors have editors to help them make the work perfect, too.”

Celebrating Writing

1. We occasionally invite another class in and the children read their stories to a buddy from the other class - or they read to their big buddies.
2. In the spring we have a tea and parents and grandparents come in and hear the favourite writing.
3. I have a bulletin board in the hall and writing goes up there. I try to change it as often as I can (not as much as the parents would like.....)
4. One class has an open house evening and the children read their stories from a podium.
5. I put one student’s story photocopied into each week’s class newsletter.
6. We have an author’s chair every two weeks, and the students read one story to the rest of the class. There is polite applause, and the class asks the author sensible questions about the writing.
7. We make lots of class books, and the students love to read them in silent reading time.
8. Have a bulletin board that celebrates writing that is especially good (for each individual child).



Descriptive Writing

“We practice describing things. Instead of sharing time I have each of my students take a day in turn and bring an interesting object to school. Then we talk about the object and brainstorm a list of words to describe it. We use the five senses and list how it looks and feels and sometimes smells and tastes. After the first week, the students really try to bring in something that is different and interesting. Then together we write a short paragraph describing the object. After all the students have had a turn bringing in objects, then I bring in at least one each week and the students are to write a descriptive paragraph about it. Their descriptive writing has really improved!”

Spelling

Sing your spelling!

For 3 letter words - This Old Man, Jingle Bells, Three Blind Mice

For 4 letter words - YMCA, Twinkle Twinkle little Star, Skip to my Lou, Are You Sleeping?

For 5 letter words - Row, Row, Row your boat, BINGO 'There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o', You Are My Sunshine

For 6 letter words - This old man, Jingle Bells, Happy Birthday, Michael Row Your Boat Ashore, The Farmer in the Dell, Skip to My Lou

For 7 letter words - She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain When She Comes, My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean, Twinkle, Twinkle, Willoughby Wallaby Woo, Go In and Out the Window

For 8 letters - We Wish You a Merry Christmas, For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

For 9 letters - I'm A Little Teapot

For 10 letters - Row, Row, Row your boat, You Are My Sunshine

For 11 letters - If You're Happy and You Know It

For 12 letters - Ten Little Indians



Ways to Practice Your Spelling Words

If you can have many different ways for the children to practice their words, spelling time becomes a lot more fun and the spelling aptitude will increase. Try a different way each day!

Make a word search with a friend, then trade and solve.

If you are right-handed, write with your left, or vice versa.

Write your words on graph paper and outline in colours.

Write a story with as many of your words as you can.

Draw a picture and write your words in the picture.

Write your words replacing all vowels with a line.

Use a tape recorder and record your words and their spelling.

Write your words replacing all consonants with a line.

3D words - use modelling clay rolled thinly to make your words.

In a darkened room, use a flashlight to draw letters in the air.

Use a spelling word to create a new word by changing one letter at a time as many times as possible.

Make rainbow words - write your words in three colours or in all the colours of the rainbow.

Make silly sentences using as many spelling words in each as you can.

Scramble your words – write your words, then write them again with the letters mixed up.

Write your words by cutting out letters in a newspaper or magazine and gluing them on a paper.

Pyramid words - write your words adding or subtracting one letter at a time. The shape is a pyramid.

Words-in-words - write your word and then write at least two words made from each.

Clean words – write your words in shaving cream on your desk or table top.

Edible words - write your words by arranging alphabet pasta or Alphabits. Glue them on paper.

Magazine words - use an magazine or newspaper and find your word. Cut it out and glue it on paper.

Cheer your words - pretend you are a cheerleader and call out your words!

Criss-cross words - write two words having one common letter so they criss-cross.

Telephone words - translate your words into numbers from a telephone keypad.

Give each letter a number, 1 to 26 in alphabetical order. What are the spelling words worth?

Number the alphabet from 1 to 26, then convert your words to a number code.

Use magazines or newspapers to cut the letters of the spelling words and glue them onto paper.

Assign every letter of the alphabet a number. Then write the numbers that correspond to the letters of the spelling word. The student must use the number clues to write the spelling word.

Write your spelling words 4 times each.

Write a sentence for each of your words.

Write your words in alphabetical order.

Dirty Words - write your words in mud or sand.

Make words using popsicle sticks.

Solve a pre-made word search puzzle.

Write a short story using all your words.

Make a word search using your spelling words.

Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com/> and make different puzzles with this week's spelling words.

Math Ideas

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

A song called Jingle in My Pocket, about coins.

Math in the Opening Exercises

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

Probability

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

“We use ‘likely’ and ‘unlikely’ and ‘probable’ and ‘improbable’. We brainstorm lists of things that are in the students’ daily lives.”

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



Simple Addition Practice

Here are some easy ideas for students to practice addition:

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

One-To-One Correspondence

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

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

Math Ideas

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



Go to the 'Box Cars & One-Eyed Jacks' site for some great math things! Try the large dice in the early grades, and the 12-sided dice for older grades and adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing games. The magnetic bingo chips are great for teaching or for a centre. Look at the dominos and foam numbers and letters. And this is just the beginning of their neat things. Don't forget their original book called 'Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks' with many great math games.

Ordinal Numbers

"Put chairs at the front of the room and pick volunteers to sit on them. Name them as they sit on their chairs (the FIRST volunteer, the SECOND, etc.), and then call out things for them to do, like "I would like the first volunteer to clap three times", and everyone waits to see if the right person does the right thing. You can get tricky with things like "The second and fourth person in line can stand up, but the fifth person in line should get under their chair". Once the class understands the game well, I get suggestions from the audience, which keeps everyone involved. You can have a lot of fun with it, and my classes usually beg to play the "Who's First" game when they have earned free time.

There's also the old standby P.E. game where the class is split in two rows, students are numbered in one row, and then numbered in the other row starting at the opposite end, and when you call a number the 2 students assigned to that number are involved in a race of some sort. You can assign them an ordinal number and call out the tenth person in each row, instead of just the number 10."

Martha

Zero the Hero

Many teachers have Zero come to visit on every tenth day in school. You can have someone dress up, or have Zero come before school begins and leave a note and a zero treat to make this day special.

Here are some ideas for treats..... Cheerios, Froot Loops, Apple Jacks; mini-doughnuts, cookies with the centre hole, pancakes shaped like zero, mini-bagels; Life Savers, gummy rings; pineapple slices, apple slices. You could also go to the dollar store and find rings, magnifying glasses, or??

Zipadeedodah, zipadeeay.
Here we are on the _____ day. *(fill in the number)*
Zero the Hero is coming our way.
Zipadeedodah, zipadeeay!



One Two Three

(to This Old Man)
One two three
Count with me
It's as easy as can be...
Four, five, six, seven,
 eight, nine, ten.
Counting's so easy
Let's do it again.

Math War

Give each small group a deck of cards with the face cards removed. One student deals a specified number of cards (5 perhaps) to each member of the group and himself. Then each player turns over 1 card. The group looks to see who has the highest card. Now they turn over one more card. Now who has the highest number? In Grade One, this person can be the winner and deal the cards for the next round. In Grade Two or Three another card can be turned to see who wins - and if the students are capable, this can continue through all five cards.

Turn over two cards and have subtraction war. Who will have the smallest number left? For ties, have them turn over one more card and see who has less.

Math

It's 50 Day!

50 Day usually comes in November. This is 1/2 way to 100 Day, of course. Here are some ideas for a mini-celebration.

- Use coins to count up to fifty by pennies, nickels, and dimes. Use stamps to print the nickels and dimes on sentence strips and write the values as they go.
- Copy a Monopoly 50 dollar bill and the students write what they would do with fifty dollars.
- Count out 50 pennies, in tens, of course.
- Do 1/2 activities as this is 1/2 of 100.
- Make and eat 1/2 a sandwich, eat 1/2 of an apple or orange, eat 1/2 of a mini-pizza.
- Each partner can start a picture (do half) and then they switch pages and finish the other half. You could probably do the same with a story idea, let one partner start it and the other finish.
- Measure 1/2 liquid cup, 1/2 cup dry measure, 1/2 teaspoon, etc.
- Measure 1/2 centimeter and 1/2 metre.

“We make tree decorations in patterns: for example, strands of lights with an AB pattern (red, yellow, red, yellow); small hanging chains in red and green patterns, popcorn and cranberries strings in patterns, too.”

Math Games

The following games can be played by the whole class in partners or groups to reinforce a skill, or can be put into centres or math tubs.

Fast Adding

There are 2 dice. The players roll the dice in turns and add the two numbers that come up. The first to answer gets a point.



Memory

Have a pack of cards with matching addition or subtraction problems on half the set and answers on the other half. Play ‘memory’ by turning one card and then another trying to make a match. If there are no matches, turn the cards over again. Matches are kept by the player and the one with the most cards at the end of the game wins.

Cut the Cubes

This is a good exercises when you are teaching the combinations of a number. Begin with a set number of unifix cubes. One player puts all the cubes together and says, “I have 11 (for example) cubes. I am going to cut them!” That player puts one set in one hand and the other in the other hand and the hands behind the back. The second player chooses one hand, and then must tell how many are in the hidden hand. If there is an error, the first player shows the cubes and gets another turn until the answer is correct.

What's My Number?

One player writes a number on a hidden paper. Player two tries to discover the number by asking questions. Is it more than....., less than....., odd or even, between and? etc. How many questions did it take to find the number?

I Predict

This is a game that reinforces odd and even number. Each player begins with ten beans. The first player takes the die and predicts whether the number rolled will be odd or even. If it is correct, the player gets to take that number of beans from the dish. If he is wrong, he must put that number of beans back in the dish. Take turns rolling the die.

Multiplication

Day 1: Give each student a ziplock bag containing approximately 20 counters. Tell the students to put the counters into **twos** or groups of 2. Have them put the counters out so you can see the pairs (not with the counters on top of one another), with spaces between the 2's. Some students will have "Leftovers" - one counter left. Have a special place for leftover counters - in the student's hand or on the baggie.

You should be able to look around the room to see if everyone has the correct groupings. Ask the students how many **twos** they have made. They count the groups, not the individual counters, and the "leftovers" if any, are not counted, of course. Then they say, "I have ___ twos."

Now have the students make **threes**, or groups of 3. Again the counters in each group should be tidy, close together and the groups separated. Ask the students how many **threes** they have made. They count the groups, not the individual counters, and the "leftovers" if any, are not counted. Then they say, "I have ___ threes."

Do the same for fours, fives, sixes, sevens, eights and nines.

Now ask the students to make **ones**. (Some will look at you blankly!) All the counters are to be separated. The students say, "I have ___ ones."

Put the students into pairs and put their counters together so they have approximately 40 counters. Have them see how many ones, twos, threes, fours, etc., they have together. See that they are putting the groups in neat rows so they are easy to count. Also see that they are putting the "leftovers" away from the groups.

Day 2: Repeat the above exercise and then have the students put all their counters neatly on the baggie on one upper corner of the desk. Ask them to make just 2 '**3's**'. This will take some time. Model it on the chalkboard, ask what groups they are to make, and count the groups by saying, "one '**3**', two '**3's**'" putting their hands over each group as they count. The rest of the counters should stay on the baggie.

Have the students make 3 **2's**, 7 **1's**, 2 **4's**, etc. Stress the **grouping** number - 2's, 4's or 3's. Have the students make some of the groupings using other children or objects in the classroom. If some are making incorrect groups, review the Day 1 groupings.

Day 3: Make 3 **twos**. Ask, "How many counters do you need to make 3 **twos**?" Do the same with other groupings - 2 **threes**, 5 **twos**, 1 **seven**, etc. Stress the grouping number. Have the children make some of the groupings using other children or objects in the room - books, chairs, etc. Ask how many objects were needed to make that number of groups. Add the = sign. 3 **twos** = 6 5 **twos** = 10

and some that will surprise the children 1 **seven** = 7 and 3 **ones** = 3

What happens if I ask you to make zero groups? If I ask for 0 **sevens**?

Day 4: Now, add the multiplication sign! The students will be delighted. Ask for the number of groups, and after the students have made them, print the equation. But... still read the questions the same way.

$4 \times 2 = 8$ is read and spoken as 4 **twos** = 8,

Day 5: Review all the previous skills. Relate multiplication to addition. Show the children that 4 **twos** is $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 = \underline{\quad}$ Give them some questions, have them make the groupings with counters and then give an addition question that means the same thing. Show that $2 \times 5 = 10$ is the same grouping as $5 + 5 = 10$.

Day 6: Go through the other doubles. (2×3 , 2×4 , 2×6 , 2×7 , etc.) Have the students make the groupings with their counters as you put the questions on the chalkboard or state them orally. Ask them what the difference is between 2×4 and 4×2 . Elicit that the answer is the same, but the picture grouping is different. If you have a question that asks you to make **twos**, what can help you find the answer?

Put the $\times 2$ questions on the chalkboard - 0×2 , 1×2 , 2×2 , 3×2 , 4×2 , etc. To answer these we can count by 2's. Practice answering some $\times 2$ questions. You can count by 5's. How can this help you multiply $\times 5$? Put the 5 times table on the board: 0×5 , 1×5 , 2×5 , 3×5 , etc. If the question was 5×5 , how could you answer the question? Continue with 3's, 4's, etc.

Day 7: Use the word 'times'. Mix the questions and use manipulatives to answer questions to 25.

Math Ideas

Work with tangrams:

<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/area/tangram.html>

“I had the district crew paint several large number lines to 20 on our concrete playground area. In our math times, we often go out and jump out problems and questions. I have found it really helpful! We also use the ladder on the playground slide to show ‘going up’ and ‘going down’ the numbers.”

“We make many different kinds of number lines. We use clothes pins on a string across the chalkboard, stepping stones on the carpet, paper clips on a chart holding the numbers, and game boards like ‘Chutes and Ladders’. I find that extensive work in hopping forward and back through the numbers give the kids a much better understanding. Each student has a number line on the desktop, too.

We have daily lessons saying, “We are standing on the largest number. Which way will we hop?””

“I think the most powerful part of my math lessons is the feedback time at the end. We take a few minutes for the students to tell what they have done and learned in the period. This seems to crystallize the procedures, when a child has to put the concept into words.”

“In my Grade One class we spend about a week talking about each number. They use manipulatives to play a game for this ‘special’ number. One of the games we play is a bear cave game. You give each child the magic/special number of unifix cubes (or other manipulatives) and they make a cave with one of their hands to hide the unifix cubes. You use a cup or bowl and a set manipulates on an over head projector at the same time. You can start out doing this first and then the children do it, too. If the number you are studying is 8 and 3 bears are outside the cave how many bears are in the cave sleeping? I can only see one bear. How many bears are in the cave? Etc.

As your theme changes you can call the game something different. For Halloween have witches or ghosts instead of bears. For Christmas, use elves or gifts. The students can help you make up new games.

We do this with our math journals. At first just have them show the special number in a set. What can you find in the classroom that is the special number? Try and see how many different things the whole class could come up with. You could have 8: bears, cats, books, DVDs, pumpkins, leaves, students, etc. Have the students draw and colour a set to match your magic number. Later you could get into equations and even later you could use the number of the day or week.

We did the following things on the whiteboard and then the first 4 things in the math journals for the special number:

- digit 8
- word eight (5 tallies and then 3 tallies)
- drew it in base ten units/ten sticks
- drew a set of 8 (I always had one student pick a basic shape to draw this set: circles, squares, triangles or rectangles. You could do any shapes or pictures you want but I found they took too long if I let them pick!)
 - used coins to make that many cents two different ways
 - Used a string of 100 beads that were 10 red, 10 black to show that number and how many were "left over" from 100. (8 red beads with 92 left over). I also had them draw and colour the beads to show 8 or what ever the number was that day.
 - We also did the number partners for the special number and addition and subtraction equations. They liked to make their own equations to equal the special number.



Word Problems

“I model this procedure almost every day until the kids know it by heart. Then we do #3, #4 and #6 in our math journals.

1. Read the word problem. What facts does the problem give?
2. Re-read the **question**. What does it ask?
3. Draw a simple picture to show the problem and the answer.
4. Write the equation and solve it.
5. Re-read your question. Does the equation answer it?
6. Print a word sentence to answer your question.”



“We answer our daily problem in our math journals. I always use blank white paper, going horizontal with holes punched at the top. This gave them more room and they aren't distracted with lines. I stress neatness and clarity of the picture, the printing and accuracy, of course.”

Teaching Money

“I found that many of my kids did not recognize the coins. I showed and taught the name and value of one at a time in the morning opening, and within two weeks all the students could name them and tell how much they were worth. This practice really helped when we began to learn to add money.”

“We review coins and their values daily with the calendar. For each day of school we add a penny. I put tiny strips of magnetic tape on the back of the real coins and we put them on a cookie sheet. We trade every 5 pennies in to a nickel, and then to dimes and then quarters. The children are very excited when, on 100 Day, all the coins are traded for a Loonie! I like the magnetic tape, because the coins can be manipulated and moved around to show relationships.”

“We practice counting by ones with pennies, by fives with nickels, by tens with dimes and by twenty-fives with quarters.”

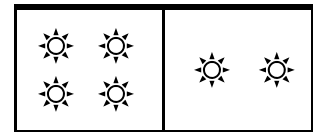
“We count money by putting the alike coins together. Count the coins that are worth most first, then the next, until lastly the pennies. If we have two dimes, three nickels, one quarter and three pennies, we practice putting them quarters first, then dimes, nickels and pennies. Then we would say, “25, 35, 45, 50, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63.”

I found that my kids needed extra practice counting by 10s on the 5 numbers - 5, 15, 25, 35, etc., and in counting on, but they enjoy adding up groups of coins.”

More Ideas....

“I made large domino cards. I found them helpful for students to learn how to form the two addition and the two subtraction stories for a pair of numbers. I use the cards with a small group or with the whole class and also in a centre. If the cards are flipped over it is easy to see that $4 + 2$ is the same as $2 + 4$. The cards fold in the middle, so one side can be put out of sight to do the subtraction. $6 - 2$ (fold the 2 side back) = 4 and $6 - 4$ (fold the 4 side back) = 2.

The students must write the four equations that go with their domino card.”



“I drew and cut out a large snake on butcher paper for my Kindergarteners. Then I wrote the numbers 1 to 10 on the body and cut the snake into ten parts. After I had the pieces laminated, now the children love to put the snake together with the numbers in the right order.”

“I buy the large collections of foam shapes at Michaels. These are great for sorting and sequencing and for making patterns with my Kinders.”

Adding to 10 is Easy!

Once understanding of addition and numbers has been attained, some students work slowly to answer the questions. You may find students in Grade Two and even Grade Three who still have to ponder over these simple questions. We will assume that questions to 5 can be easily answered - so we need to work on the answers 6 to 10.

<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
5 + 1	6 + 1	7 + 1	8 + 1	9 + 1
4 + 2	5 + 2	6 + 2	7 + 2	8 + 2
3 + 3	4 + 3	5 + 3	6 + 3	7 + 3
		4 + 4	5 + 4	6 + 4
				5 + 5

Rule 1 - Always begin to add with the largest number. If the question is $3 + 6 =$, add it as $6 + 3 =$.

Rule 2 - Questions adding one are easy. Count on one number.

Rule 3 - Questions adding two are easy, too. Count on two numbers.

Rule 4 - Doubles are easy, too. These are to be memorized. ($3 + 3, 4 + 4, 5 + 5$)

Rule 5 - If the numbers are just one apart, double the smaller number and add one. $4 + 3 = 3 + 3 + 1$

How many questions are left? $5 + 3, 6 + 3, 7 + 3$ and $6 + 4$. If the student can count on the 3 steps, that leaves just one question!

Adding to 18 is Easy!

We usually have students struggling to memorize these in Grade Two and sometimes Grade Three when we want them to work quickly with larger numbers. Teach the tricks!

<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>
9 + 2	9 + 3	9 + 4	9 + 5	9 + 6	9 + 7	9 + 8
8 + 3	8 + 4	8 + 5	8 + 6	8 + 7	8 + 8	
7 + 4	7 + 5	7 + 6	7 + 7			<u>18</u>
6 + 5	6 + 6					9 + 9

Rule 1 - Always begin adding with the largest number. That cuts the number of problems in half!

Rule 2 - Pretend 9 is 10, add the 10 and subtract 1 - the ones number in the answer will be one less than the number you are adding to the 9.

Rule 3 - Pretend 8 is 10, add the 10 and subtract 2 - the ones number in the answer will be two less than the number you are adding to the 8.

Rule 4 - Memorize the doubles.

Rule 5 - If the numbers you are adding are just one apart, double the smaller number and add one.

How many questions are left? Just $7 + 4$ and $7 + 5$!

Subtraction Tricks to 10

There are two ways to consider subtraction - take away and finding the difference. In most questions, one of these is easier to use than the other. Illustrate this on a number line.

Rule - If the numbers in the subtraction question are far apart and one number is small, subtract by taking away that number. If the numbers are close together, subtract by finding the difference between the numbers. For example, it is much easier to find the difference in $10 - 8$ than to say '10 take away 8'.

Subtraction Tricks to 18

Rule 1 - See the rule above.

Rule 2 - When subtracting 9, subtract 10 and add 1.

Rule 3 - When subtracting 8, subtract 10 and add 2.

Rule 4 - Use the doubles to subtract... $16 - 8 = 8$

Rule 5 - Count back 2 or 3.

That still leaves many questions. Practice subtracting from the 10 and adding what is left...

$$15 - 7 = (10 + 5) - 7 = (10 - 7) + 5 = 3 + 5 = 8$$

Math

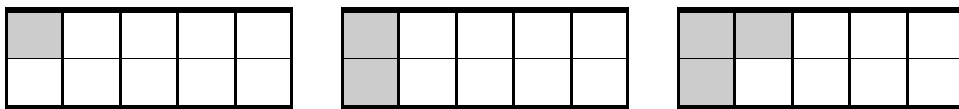
Beginning of the Year Assessment - Grade Two

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

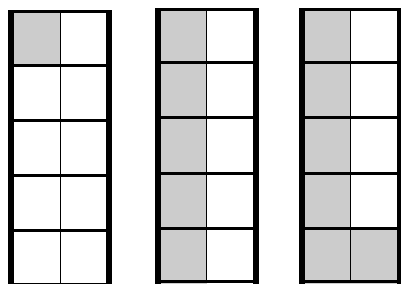
- Have them print the numbers to 100. Look for children making numbers incorrectly – bottom to top or reversed. See if there are children who have difficulty sequencing numbers.
- Take the children individually or in small groups and give them manipulatives. Show one addition question ($4 + 5 = \underline{\quad}$)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

Working with Ten Frames

Some provinces and school districts are advocating the use of ten frames. From what I have seen, there are several ways of using them. Sometimes they are shown horizontally, and filled from the left end in pairs.



Another author wants them vertically - filling down the first row and then up the second:



The students memorize how the frames look with each number.

They are used for place value - full tens and the last partly filled for the ones number.

These cards are used for addition with re-grouping... for example, to add $9 + 5$, 9 squares are filled in the first frame and 5 in the second, and it is easy to see that we can slide one over to fill the first frame and have 4 left for a total of 14.

The idea is that the student will be able to visualize the number patterns and ‘see’ what needs to be done without the frames later.

The ten frames are used to replace the bundled sticks for place value and the counters and patterns for addition and subtraction.

I think they are a valuable addition to your math program - but like all ‘new’ ideas - keep all your other strategies, too!

More Math

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

“I always thought I was making my kids think until we started a new math series. I complained all last year that what I had been doing worked better ... but now I realize the missing link is talking about what we are doing. The kids need to sit down after they do an exploration of any kind and they need to talk it out. It's amazing how the children think about what they are doing and getting them to explain it to each other helps those that aren't thinking about it, just trying to get through it. Now we sit in a circle after each math class (well, maybe every other) and those who want to talk, tell about how they did whatever they did or what they discovered. I still have those that look like they aren't listening (and maybe aren't) but I've seen a big increase in participation and thought.”

“Teach a lot of math games at the beginning of the year. Then when the fast finishers are done, they can play a game that reinforces the skill they are working on. I would also suggest laminating drill sheets and buying some non permanent markers as a math game...for some reason, students seem to love to do drills if they are done with wipe off felts, rather than pencil. Go figure!”

Aleesha

Place Value Roll

Have the students make a place value mat - tens and ones for Grade Ones, hundreds, tens and ones for Grade Two, and add the thousand column for Grade Three. One student rolls the dice. All students put the number rolled on one line of their place value paper. When all the lines are filled up, the students tell their numbers. The student that has the highest number wins. This can also be done with each student rolling the die for his/her own number in turn.

Green Ghost - White Ghost

You need 2 two sets of answers written on green and white shaped ghosts. Randomly pass out the green and white ghosts to the students. Show or tell a problem. All of the students work the problem. The first student with the correct answer to raise his ghost up high in the air scores a point for the green or white team.

M&M Math - Some Ideas

- Predict (estimate) the number in the box.
- Count the number given to you. Write the number.
- Graph the number of M&M's in the bag. Measure the box.
- Make up number sentences about the colours.
- Do you have an even or an odd number?
- Make a number sentence (equation) about all the colours.....
 $4 \text{ blue} + 3 \text{ red} + 6 \text{ green} \dots \text{etc.} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$
- Put the M&Ms into groups of 2, 3, 4.
- Is there more of one colour than another? Are all boxes the same?
- Make patterns with your candies.
- Match the M&Ms to the colour words.
- Graph your favourite colour. Which is the most popular?
- What do you like to eat first? Last?
- Make up subtraction problems..... I had 14 M&Ms and ate 6....



Zero the Hero

This old number,
It means none.
It is even less
Than one.

Zero the Hero
Came to school
Zero the Hero
he's no fool~
Zero the Hero
Stays in his space.
So all the other numbers
Can stay in their place!



When you see a zero on the numberline.
Look for a visit or a sign -
From that super hero
Who loves to see a ZERO,
Oh, he always comes to visit right on time!

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-day,
Here we are on the ____ day,
Zero the Hero's coming our way,
Zippidy-do-dah, zippidy day!

Many teachers use Zero Hero to teach place value. . . .

“We count the number of days in school so the day before school starts is day number ‘0’. Since the children weren't in school yet, when Zero Hero came by, he left us something in a bright red bag. We opened the bag on the first day and..... there was a note from him, a poem, and a treat that looked like zeros. That was not all.. He left us an estimation jar (with a suitable number of items in it), too, and I introduced them to estimation (guessing). We talked about the size of the jar and the size of the objects and then made estimates. I recorded them and then we put the numbers in order. The child that was correct (or nearest to it) got a small prize.”



“In kindergarten I show them what a zero looks like and to look for days with another zero because Zero Hero returns each time the zero appears. He comes every 10th school day, and we always miss seeing him. He always leaves us a poem, a treat and an estimation jar.”

“In our school one of the aides dresses up as Zero Hero with a red mask and cape and a white sweat-shirt with a red Zero on it. He comes around to all the K, grade 1 and 2 classes.”

“On days we have a zero, we play games with a zero. We play tic-tac-toe, and ring toss. We do exercises with hula hoops. We play circle games, too.”

“I buy washers at the hardware store and have the children thread them on string or something to make a necklace on the first 10th day. They wear their necklaces every Zero Hero day.”

“I give the children some hole re-inforcers and a small piece of black construction paper to make a picture.”

Some Zero the Hero Treats:

red zeros - cherry lifesavers
zero beads - Fruit Loops
Cheerios
pineapple rings
olive slices
mini-bagels
fudge striped cookies
sliced oranges
cored apple
doughnuts



Math Ideas

Zero the Hero

The Zero Song

(This Old Man)

This old number,
It means none.
It is even less than one,
With a z-e-r-o, z-e-r-o.....
That spells nothing but zero!

Zero the Hero

(Sung to Zip-do-dah)

Zero the hero today's your day.
Zero the hero come out and play.
Zero the hero today's your day.
Zero the hero, hip hip hurray!!

Zero the Hero

(Sung to Frere Jacques)

Zero the Hero, Zero the Hero,
We love you. We love you.
Though you may be nothing,
We really think you're something.
Yes, we do. Yes, we do.

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

This site gives you special things to do on the zero days.

Race for 100

"This game is simple, but it strengthens student understanding of place value and trading. I question students a lot and have them count often (before and after trading). Materials: place value boards with a column for ones, tens, and hundreds; die; base 10 blocks

Students roll one die. They take the number of one cubes indicated on the die. When they can trade for a tens rod they do so. The game continues until one student trades up to 100. That student is the winner.

Variations: Play the game backwards. This will provide a foundation for subtraction with regrouping. Use Place Value boards with a thousands column to play 'Race to 1000'. Make the connection between money and place value. Call the game 'Race for A Dollar' (or ten dollars, etc.)

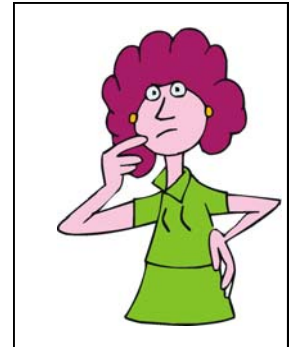
Math Ability in the Early Years

I have watched the development of my two grandchildren. They come to my home every day after school and I help with homework and watch their growth and interest in learning. These two have taught me a lot about the difference in math understanding.

The boy, now in Grade Four, did not do mental math as a pre-schooler or in Kindergarten. It took him until early Grade One to do one-to-one counting with accuracy. He did not visualize math patterns so it took him a long time to learn to count on, rather than counting objects from the beginning each time when adding (conservation of number). He did not see number relationships, and it was Grade Three before he could really understand that he could add $7 + 8$ by thinking of $7 + 7$ and 1 more and that 4×6 is the same as $2 \times 6 = 12$ twice. This is improving, but there are still gaps as there will always be when kids come to understanding later than usual.

The girl understands number relationships naturally. At four years old she could answer simple adding and subtraction problems orally. Now, in October in Grade One, she asked Grandma to write out math questions for her to do. The addition to 10 seemed easy, so I tried $7 + 5$. Twelve, she immediately said..... so I asked her how she knew that. Easy! she said.... $5 + 5$ is 10 and then 2 more... 11, 12. In class she is drawing simple patterns of $2 + 3$ and $4 + 2$ as teachers do in early Grade One to count out the answers - something she could visualize and do orally at four.

So you will have kids like these in every class. Some will not really need to be taught math, just shown the different procedures and the rest comes naturally. Some will need concentrated exercises to improve the way they see number patterns and relationships. An occasional student will never understand these and will have to memorize the answers in order to cope at all. It is too bad that teachers don't have more time to do math so grouping could be used to give kids the skills at their level of understanding. Just as in reading, our students come with a huge difference in math knowledge and comprehension.



Tally Marks

“I have been working on tally marks this week in various forms. Today we did this poem. I even had them copy it in a poem book and illustrate it. Then I wrote a list of numbers on the board for them to copy and write the tally marks.”

1, 2, 3, 4, cross the 5 for one more.

Keep doing this and you will see

How easy counting things can be!



Fact Families

“I introduce Fact Families as 3 numbers that are like family members. No one else (no other number) can be in the family. I draw a big 2 story house on board. In the attic I write the 3 numbers (such as 3, 5, 2). Together we think of the two addition sentences and two subtraction sentences that can be made with these numbers. We role play and practice with several number families. Kids write addition facts in two upper windows and subtraction facts in two lower windows. After a few days of practice, kids make their own house from paper and markers. They work in partners and then ‘present’ their houses. These make a great bulletin board display by adding a road and setting the houses along the road and called it Fact Family Street.”

“I do houses, too. I cut out a basic house, which is glued to a piece of 12 x 18 inch white or light blue construction paper. Then each child gets a boy and a girl pattern cut from the Ellison machine. Each child is assigned a family. They write and correct the number sentences that go with it. (This will be glued onto the back of the paper.) If the family is 3, 7, 10, this name of the family is on the roof. Then using 2 different colours of the little circle dot stickers they put these on the boy and the girl. (They're supposed to be buttons.) The boy might have 7 buttons and the girl 3 buttons or vice versa. Then I put a dot of velcro on the back of the boy and the girl and the corresponding pieces inside the house. To demonstrate: The boy can walk in first, then the girl and the number sentence would be $7+3=10$. The girl could walk in first and the sentence would be $3+7=10$. Both could be in the house and the girl leaves first, $10-3=7$ etc.”

“I use paper dominoes that I enlarge and laminate. I hold up a domino and ask the kids to give me 2 addition and 2 subtraction sentences about it.”

“We use triangles. On the points of the triangle write the digits in the fact family: ex. 2, 3, 5. On the triangle, have the child write the 2 addition and 2 subtraction facts for that family. You could duplicate tons of triangles, with lines for the facts.”

Problem Solving

There are certain key words used in problem solving that help determine what operation a student can use to solve the problem.

Addition – sum, all, together, total, in all, altogether

Subtraction – difference, left, less than, fewer than, greater than, more than, how many more?

If children have difficulty with problem solving, it often helps to make the question personal using the children’s names.

The problem-solving method consists of four basic steps:

- 1. Look carefully at the problem.** What does it tell you? What information does it give you? What facts do you have? What is it asking you to find out?
- 2. Choose a strategy.** Will the answer be larger or smaller than the numbers in the facts? Can you visualize the problem? Can you estimate the answer? What do you think you will do to find the answer?
- 3. Do the math.** Use the strategy you chose and work the problem.
- 4. Look back.** Re-read the question. Did you answer the question that was asked? Does your answer seem reasonable? Can you put the answer into a sentence?

Math Games

“We have been practicing double facts with a ‘hot potato’ type game. We sit in a circle and pass a ball. Students repeat a double fact (we go in order- $1+1=2$, $2+2=4$ etc.) when the music turns off, the person with the ball is out and sits in the middle of the circle until the next person out takes his/her place.”

“I have a beach ball game I play with the children whenever we have a few minutes to ‘kill’. I simply throw the beach ball and say a math equation and the catcher says the answer and throws the ball back. I also do this ‘counting by’ - each child giving a number in the series as they catch the ball.”

“I played ‘Around the World’ with my students almost daily and it really helped them to learn the facts. You start with one student standing behind another student's chair and you call out a math problem. The first student to answer moves to the next student and you do the same. (If the student standing doesn't answer first, he then sits in that chair and the student who answers moves on) They enjoy competing against each other and ending up in different seats. We do two or three rounds a day to start math class.”

“This game is used to practice addition facts. You need two sets of cards with one digit numbers , one number on each card. Three kids are needed to play. Two kids each pick a card from the pack and without looking at it, hold it on his/her forehead so that the third child can see both numbers. He gives the answer and the other two have to tell what number is hidden on his/her own forehead. Here is how it goes. Jan picks a card with a 6 on it. She holds it on her forehead (without looking at it) so that Bob can see the 6. Bob picks a card with 7 on it. He holds the card on his forehead (without looking at it) so that Jan can see the 7. Sally adds the two numbers together and says 13. Jan looks at the 7 on Bob's forehead and figures out her number must be 6. Bob figures out that his number must be 7 by looking on the number on Jan's forehead.”

“I have a ‘math fact a day’ calendar that I use to get the kids to learn their facts. I think it helps them. Each day is a fact and the turn around fact ($8 + 5 = 13$, $5 + 8 = 13$, and $13 - 8 = 5$ and $13 - 5 = 8$).”

This can be a solitaire game. Take the face cards out of the deck. Take out one card from the deck and don't look at it. Then turn over 8 cards face up. Cover the combinations of 10 – like 2 and 8 or 3 and 7 with fresh cards from the pack. Ace is a one. If you get stuck just make more piles until you get a 10 combination. When all cards are used pick up the piles that are combinations of 10 and you should have one pile left. The number missing to make ten is the hidden card - if all the combinations were correct.

“My students love this game! It's called ‘Addition Top It’. You need a deck of cards – a regular deck is fine, but remove the face cards. Have the children play in pairs. They are to deal out all of the cards in the deck evenly between themselves. Each child then places his pile face down. Together, they say, ‘1,2,3, Top It!’ and then flip one card over (one card each). The first person to say the correct sum of the two cards wins both cards. For example, if the two cards that have been flipped up are 5 and 9, the first person to say 14 wins both cards. Place winning cards face up next to your pile of face down cards. Continue until all cards are used, then count your ‘face up’ pile to see who won the most cards.

You can also play ‘Subtraction Top It’ (play the same way but subtract the cards, rather than add them), or for earlier in the year an easier ‘Top It’ where whoever flips the card with the higher number wins both cards. These games can get noisy, but the kids love them and it's a great way for them to practice their facts!”



Call Rudolph

Eight little reindeer pulling Santa's sled
One fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
“Can seven little reindeer pull my sled?”

*Count down the same way until
you get to one little reindeer...*

One little reindeer pulling Santa's sled,
He fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
“Call Rudolph!”

Math

Math Journals

“I used math journals a lot last year. I never thought I'd ever do them, but once I started I couldn't stop! Usually, I didn't require the kids to write certain things. They chose what they wanted to write about the math concept we covered. At the beginning of the year, it was mostly pictures and a few words, but by the end of the year, I encouraged the kids to write sentences.

Here are a few things we did in them:

- Draw pictographs, predicting, and then drawing the reality. e.g.: At St. Patrick's Day, they all had to bring in a green fruit. The kids drew pictographs to predict how many apples, limes, grapes, etc. would be brought. Then we did a graph after the fruit were collected. They also wrote about comparisons.... there were more apples than.....
- I taught the kids many math games. After about a week of playing a game, I had them recount how to play and draw diagrams in their math journal for each step of the game, so they wouldn't forget how to play.
- For our geometry unit, students drew and labelled things in the classroom that were the shape that we were studying for the day. Eg: square: window, mat
cube: box, t.v.
- For our money unit the kids drew the coins and their equivalents, and wrote about things they could buy.
- During any unit our students took time to write about how they felt about concepts. Did they understand it, did they like it...?

The possibilities are endless. I think that Scholastic has a book about math journal ideas.” *Iram*

Whether you write in a math journal or discuss math in the group, these questions are valuable. They increase in complexity as the students go through the grades.

- What did you learn from this activity (or lesson)?
- Is there anything about this activity or lesson you do not understand? Explain your difficulties.
- What does the word ‘ _____ ’ mean to you?
- Do you have any questions about _____?
- What is your favourite way to count? Why?
- How can you share a group of objects fairly?
- What are some ways we use numbers?
- What have you learned about adding and subtracting?
- What do you know about money?
- How do you count large collections of things?
- What words do we use when we do addition, subtraction, etc?



A Math Journal may include: recording sheets, diagrams, lists, surveys, charts, math vocabulary, questions, pictures to help solve problems, student reflections, self and peer evaluations. These can be kept in a variety of ways including: duotang folder, scrap book, binder, booklet, notebook, file folder with pockets.

The Math Journal should be used frequently and the students can read previous entries to see how their understanding has improved.

You can have the students do prompted writing, open-ended writing, and the demonstration of knowledge or skills visually or in writing. They can explain your thinking in pictures, numbers and words.

Kindergarten Math Ideas

Sort Shoes: Have two hula hoops. Put the children into a circle. Have each child take off one shoe and hold it in the lap. Discuss with the children the ways you can sort shoes (colour, size, type, laces, velcro, etc.) Indicate which circle will hold those shoes that belong and the which will hold those that do not. Choose the attribute you are going to sort for and have the children place their shoes in the proper circle. Discuss the sort and how you might do it again. Gather the shoes and sort them for other attributes.

Word Problems: You need story mats and manipulatives. Tell the students a simple number story. Decide how to use the manipulatives to tell the story. Practice telling the story.

Balance Scales: Discuss with the students how they should treat the balance scales and the materials. Let the students explore with the materials. Discuss what they learned - for example: how do you know which object weighs more, weighs less, weighs the same? What words can we use to tell?

Non-standard Measurement: give the students different objects to measure with non-standard measuring tools - unifix cubes, etc. Discuss the vocabulary: longer, shorter, taller, etc.

Shape Search: Discuss common geometric shapes. Ask a student to find a square in the room, ask another to find a circle etc. Go on a shape walk. Go outside to the playground and look for shapes. Discuss the findings.

Estimation Jar: Every week we do an estimation jar. Write down all the estimates with the students' names.

Other Math Ideas

"In Grade Two we fill out a paper when we do an estimation jar.

Today we are guessing about _____.

The highest guess is _____.

The lowest guess is _____.

The actual number is _____.

The sum of the highest and lowest guess is _____.

The difference of the highest and lowest guess is _____.

The number is even/odd.

The number has _____ hundreds _____ tens _____ ones.

The number guessed most often is _____.

You say this number when you count by 1's, 2's, 3's, 5's, 10's.



I have the kids put their guesses on yellow sticky notes. When it comes time to do the actual count I hand back their yellow stickies and we line up at the front of the class in numerical order. If one child has the same guess as another, they stand in front of that person, rather than beside them. If you have a common guess, you are going to have a stack of children in that one spot. This is important because it illustrates the 'mode' or the average that was determined by the number that came up the most. We talk about the 'range' of numbers that were guessed, any guesses that were terribly unreasonable and we look at the 'median' or the number that stands in the very middle of our line."

Barb

Counting Backwards Game: You need: small blocks or bingo chips, cards with various numerals. Students work in a group. Each player gets 5 blocks as counters. Cards are in a pile face down. One player turns over the top card, next player clockwise starts to count backwards from the number on the card. Continue around the circle with each player saying the next lower number on his/her turn. The player who says '0', loses a block. Winner is last one with blocks. Enrich by counting backwards by 2's.

Rounding Numbers

Rounding numbers make questions that are easier to do mentally. Rounded numbers and answers are only approximate. Use rounding to get a answer that is close but that does not have to be accurate. Make the numbers that end in 1 through 4 into the nearest lower number that ends in 0. 74 rounded to the nearest ten would be 70. Numbers that end in a digit of 5 or more should be rounded up to the next even ten. The number 88 rounded to the nearest ten would be 90.

Mark the place.
Look to the right.
4 or less are out of sight!
5 and more will buy one more,
Before they, too, are out the door.
In those empty right-hand spaces,
Zeroes keep their proper places.

Draw a number line on the board and number it from 0 to 50 by ones. Make the multiples of ten larger on the number line. (Multiples of 10 may be written in a different colour of chalk.) Write a number on the board - 18, for example. Have a student find it on the number line. 10 and the 20. 18 comes between 20 and 30 on the number line. Which multiple of 10 is the nearest? Try this with different numbers. What about numbers with a 5 in the ones place? (We go up to the 10 above.)

This is called rounding. Can the students see a pattern for choosing the multiple of 10? Numbers with a 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 in the ones place are nearer the larger multiple of 10. Numbers with a 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the ones place are nearer the lower multiple of 10.

In Grade Two and Three, teach rounding to the nearest hundred. Draw another large number line and number it by one hundreds (0-1000). Discuss rounding numbers to the nearest multiple of 100. Write a number on the board (647). Discuss where 647 is located on the number line. Circle the multiples 600 and 700. Explain to the students that 647 is rounded to 600 because it has 4 tens in the tens place. Numbers with 1, 2, 3, or 4 are rounded down to the lower multiple of 100. Numbers with a 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 in the tens place is rounded to the larger multiple of 100.

Ideas from teachers:

“We wiggle down during the first part of the poem, and wriggle up during the second part.

I made a number line around the room with the tens marked in red. I give every student a number. That student then has to go and stand beside the ten they are closest to.”

If the number that you circled is a 1,2,3, or 4
You gotta' go down to the ten before.
If the number that you circled is a 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9,
You gotta' go up the number line.



“I use the idea of the roller coaster to teach rounding. We talk about a roller coaster and the humps and hollows. They draw a wavy line across their paper. They put a 5 on the top of the first hump, a 10 in the hollow, a 15 on the next hump, 20 in the hollow, etc.

If a number ends with 5 and is at the very top of the hump (roller coaster) then the number will roll forward. All the other numbers will roll downhill, either backward or forward.

The same thing can work with 100's. This gives the students a clear picture of the rounding strategy.”

“In my grade three classroom we chant the army song tune....

1,2 round down 3,4 round down---1234 round down---
5,6 round up 7,8 round up 5678 round up and 9 also.

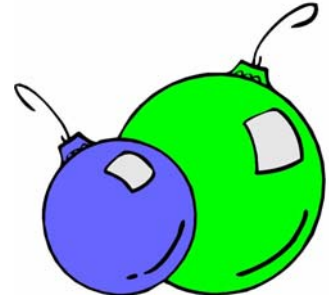
Math Ideas

Three dimensional shapes

“I put a cube, a cone and a sphere into a bag that I call a feely bag. The children reach in the bag and feel one object and describe it to the class and see if they can guess which one it is.”

<http://www.senteacher.org/Enlarge/12/Nets.xhtml>

These are great! Have the students make 3D shapes from these patterns. Enlarge them and show the students how to make the shapes. Talk about the names of the shapes. For each the students had to write the name and the characteristics of the shape.



<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/maths/contents10shape.htm>

This is a good site for ideas to teach 2D and 3D shapes. There are lots of ideas!

Brainstorm where each of the shapes can be found in our surroundings. Collect items that are the shapes.

“I put together a shopping bag of empty food containers ('cube' tissue box, cracker boxes (rectangular prisms), oatmeal boxes, paper towel tubes, Pringles potato chip can with plastic lid (cylinders), plus a few play food items (plastic ice cream cone), plastic oranges, etc. and wood blocks.? The students draw around each shape to make any type of picture they like.”

“We had a 3D shape snack at the end of the unit. We had cheese cubes, grapes, pretzel sticks (the thick ones for cylinders), and Bugles for cones. Let the students see if they can find foods that are in the shapes for the snack.”

Counting game for Kindergarten

“In my kindergarten class, we play ‘Ten to Win’. The children roll one die and take a corresponding number of counters. They have to count how many dots were on the die and then count that many objects and keep counting until they have a total of 10. The first to get ten counters wins.

Then when they do that easily, we will play ‘Zero to Win’, and begin with ten counters, taking away the number rolled on the die until a child has none left. The students who are capable will then need twenty to win.”

My Opinion on the WCP in Math.....

As I was revising the Math Success books, I went carefully through the math curriculum (all the western provinces have the WCP curriculum in math). B.C. is new to this and the prairie provinces have had it for some time. The Grade One program has added addition and subtraction to 18 (which many Grade One kiddies are not ready for, in my opinion) and left out time and money and fractions - and watered down the measurement unit. The Grade Two year only wants place value and numbers to 100 and no multiplication or division theory, and also leaves out many of the interesting extra bits that are fun to teach and fun to learn. The Grade Three year only teaches numbers to 1000 and just the beginning of multiplication and division to 25. In all the years there is a lot of emphasis on patterning - a little of which is good, but I think it is rather overrated in what it teaches the students.

So - IMHO - I think the curriculums are dumbing down the math expectations in Grade Two and Three, and putting too much in Grade One as far as addition and subtraction is concerned. It leaves out the interesting bits in all grades. Because I feel that way, I kept in all the work that I know children are capable of doing and like to do. And the extras are fun to teach, too! We can get as bored as the kiddies.

Teachers are always asking whether the books follow the WCP..... and the answer to that is ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Everything the curriculums ask for is there - and a great deal more.

Jean

More Math

Calendar Math Ideas

1. Practice patterning on the calendar - do simple patterns as the day is put up using colours or different pictures or shapes.
2. Put the days in school on a chart, putting up the day number as it happens. Then put a large card up on the bulletin board with the words... Today is Day _____ with the number large and very important.
3. Do place value with the days in school, bundling straws into tens, or other graphic representation.
4. Do money at the same time (this also helps with place value) by using pennies and dimes to represent the calendar date (Grade One) and the days in school (Grade Two).
5. Talk about today's numbers and whether they are odd or even.
6. Count the days in school in ten frames. Use a sticker or a Bingo dauber to put the dot in the frame, and begin a new one as the old one is filled and put with the other tens.
7. Read the time on a Judy clock and a digital clock and talk about the different times of the day when things will happen.

Make Numerals Correctly!

- 1 A straight line down and 1 is done.
- 2 Around and back on the railroad track, 2,2,2.
- 3 Go around and around a tree. That's the way to write a 3.
- 4 Down and across and down once more. That's way to write 4.
- 5 Down and around, make it fat. Numeral 5 wears a hat.
- 6 Down and around, make a loop. Numeral 6 rolls a hoop.
- 7 Across, slant, then you are done. Writing 7 can be fun.
- 8 Write an S but do not wait. Come back up and write an 8.
- 9 A loop and a line make numeral 9.
- 10 Pull down straight, lift, and then curve down, curve up--that's a 10.

Call Rudolph

Eight little reindeer pulling Santa's sled
One fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
"Can seven little reindeer pull my sled?"
*Count down the same way until
you get to one little reindeer...*
One little reindeer pulling Santa's sled,
He fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
"Call Rudolph!"

My Colourful Number Book

Illustrated by _____

The children put one sentence to a page.

Look at the black zero.

I can see one big brown dog.

Look at the cat with two orange eyes.

Look at three little gray ducks in the brown puddle.

Can you put four yellow stars in a blue sky?

I can see five pink flowers.

Can you see the little dog with six brown spots?

Seven blue birds look at me.

I see eight little green trees.

I can see nine red berries on the bush.

Ten little purple birds are in the tree

Model Game Playing

Do you have problems when your children play games? Modelling the activity is a huge help. Practice how the dice should be rolled, the game purpose and the rules, how to flip cards over, how to set up and put away the games. Go through each game with you modelling, and then let a couple of children try it in front of the others as you talk about the rules and how things should be done. Talk about quiet voices, the way to win and the way to lose gracefully.

If a child is not behaving suitably, remove him immediately, give him a math worksheet in a quiet place and discuss the correct behaviour when playing games.

Teach your children to play Sudoku. There are puzzles at all levels. Great brain food!

Shapes - K and 1

“We hunted for shapes in the classroom (the clock is a circle). Then each child made their own shape book. Each page said, ‘A _____ is a (shape name).’ The children drew the item and wrote what the item was on a line. Some children copied words next to the item they drew (I have signs all over the classroom - desk, chalkboard, closet, door, sink, etc....) The children really loved doing this activity and many of them were very creative!”



“Cut out assorted shapes in sandpaper, about 10 cm. down to 5 cm. big. The kids place them under large white or manila construction paper and rub with the sides of crayons. By overlapping the sandpaper shapes, and changing crayon colours, the kids can make beautiful shape collages!”

- Find shapes in magazines. Cut and glue to create robots on construction paper.
- Craft stores sell big tubs of foam shapes in different colours. These can be used for sorting and classifying, and can be glued to make pictures.
- Spray a small glob of shaving cream onto each child's work space. Encourage them to draw shapes.
- Make ‘shape’ cookies. Roll out refrigerated sugar cookie dough and then cut with circles, squares, triangles, etc.
- Make shapes with your bodies – circles with fingers, triangles with two hands. Four children can make a square or a circle, three children can make a triangle – in different ways – standing, lying on the floor, etc. let the children be creative!
- Build with shape blocks.
- Put shape blocks in a bag. The child puts his hand in the bag and picks a shape. He attempts to identify the shape without looking at it. Have the child justify the guess before removing the shape from the bag.
- Put shapes in bag. Tell the child to find a _____ without looking. Again have them tell why they think the shape they have is the correct one.
- Give each child a shape – shapes could be attached to the student’s clothing with clothespins or safety pins. Ask the circles to stand up, triangles to hop, rectangles to crawl under the table, etc.
- Hide a shape in your hand and give clues (one at a time) and have the children guess/tell what the shape is/could be.
- Use shapes to make patterns on paper or in pocket charts. Children practice the names of the shapes by reading the pattern (circle, triangle, circle, triangle).
- Put toothpicks on the table and instruct them to make various shapes (ask them to make a circle and see how many actually try!)
- Use a shape as the beginning of a picture: a circle can be turned into a face, a square can be turned into a house, a triangle can be turned into an ice cream cone, a diamond can be turned into a kite, etc.
- Cut out different shapes – circles, triangles, rectangles and squares. Place them on the floor and have the kids ‘cross the river’ or ‘cross the street’ only walking on triangles or squares or another specified shape.
- If you have a garbage can dressed as a ‘Muncher’, it can be called a ‘Shape Muncher’ for this:
Shape Muncher, Shape Muncher, munch, munch, munch..
How about a red circle for your lunch? (blue square, yellow triangle, etc.)
- Eat shapes: pizza, cookies, graham crackers, triangle crackers, slices of radish and cucumber – you can also use cookie cutters to cut bread into shapes.
- Cut a large orange felt tapered triangle for a pizza slice. Have the children add brown circles for pepperoni, black circles for olives, long yellow rectangles for cheese, etc.
- Make shape books, and glue in pictures of that shape from magazines.

P.E. and Fitness

Our students are getting less physical activity outside of school. Many parents do not allow the kids to even walk to school, and the kids do not play with friends outdoors unless there the parents make specific plans. The days when children go down the street to visit friends and even play on the street are over, unfortunately. Kids are watching TV rather than doing physical activities. This is happening just as many school districts are cutting back on Physical Education time. Some districts are even cutting out recess!

What can we do to increase the fitness of our students?

“We were studying our province. We found out the distance to the capital city and we are walking there. Every day we go out and briskly walk one or two kilometres around the school grounds (we had it measured out - the Grade Seven class did this as a project for us). So if we walk two kilometers each day we can multiply this times the number of students and we mark our progress on a large map. The kids are enjoying it, and when we get there I think we will have to walk back!”

“We have a Heart Healthy Walking program at our school sponsored by the local hospital. The students and teachers walk every day. Some classes do three kilometres a day (the older ones), in Grade One we do one kilometre a day. It's great for their health and hearts since they all sit in front of video games instead of actively playing. The kids earn cute little coloured feet charms for every kilometre walked to keep on a necklace.”

“We walked all across Canada last year! We use it as part of the Social Studies program as we learn all about the places as we walk through them. The school is talking about walking around the world - that sounds like fun!”

“For a quick break, we all stand up and someone picks a number. We then stretch up as tall as we can on our tiptoes and pick stars from the sky by reaching as high up as we can to pluck one star at a time from the sky. We stop when we've counted up to the identified number. Then I tell them to put the stars in their pockets for wishing on when they need a wish later on! Sometimes we count by 2's, 5's, or 10's, too.”

“We do simple fitness exercises in the classroom. Luckily we have quite a bit of room so the students aren't bumping into things. When I had a smaller class we worked together to move some desks out of the way and return them when we were finished.

I put on some of the Wiggles music, some jazzy songs. Then the students follow me as I do simple aerobics. We all enjoy it. I find that it helps me as well as the kids.”

Games

The Dragons are Coming!

Have students all line up on one side of the gym or field. Pick a dragon, and ask him/her to stand a few feet away. The rest of the students are villagers. Yell ‘The dragons are coming’! Students are to run away from the dragon. If they get tagged, they too become a dragon and have to chase the villagers. Play until all the villagers have become dragons.

Squirrel in a Tree

Have students line up and count them off as Tree, Tree, Squirrel, and repeat until you have 1 or 2 extra children. These extra children become homeless squirrel's looking for a home.

Have the pairs of trees join each other's hands and enclose a squirrel in their circle. There should be trees with squirrels inside spread all over the play area.

Blow a whistle or yell ‘Go’! Squirrels have to leave their trees in search of a new home.

Once a squirrel finds a new home the pair of trees enclose the squirrel in a circle and wait.

Any squirrels left out become homeless and must wait until there is a signal to run and search for a new home.

P.E.

“Spend time talking about personal space. This is useful in P.E. as we do not want the kids bumping into each other. Pretend that you are in a bubble, and you don’t want anyone to pop it.”

“This is a good opening activity to practice having a personal space. The children are in scattered formation facing the teacher. The teacher says in loud voice, ‘I see.’ The children answer in chorus, ‘What do you see?’ The teacher responds, ‘I see everyone hopping on one foot.’ Children do this, being careful not to let anyone into their space until the teacher again says, ‘I see....’ The children stop and answer, “‘What do you see?’” The teacher responds with a new challenge - gross motor skills, bend and stretch, animal movements, and/or twisting actions.”

“Ask the children to find a safe self-space in the gym. Beanbags have been scattered throughout the gym prior to their arrival. Remind them not to touch the beanbags. To begin the activity ask the students to begin walking throughout the general space at a signal. They are to avoid the beanbags as they are moving. When the music stops, the teacher will call out a body part (e.g. elbow, tummy, back). The students are then to touch that body part on **five** different beanbags as quickly and as safely as possible. The last one they touch will be their ‘home.’ They are to sit by that beanbag, and wait for the next signal to start and the game will be repeated.”

“It is wonderful to train our students how we can give a compliment and positive feedback to our classmates. Brainstorm and write on a chart all the encouraging things they can say to one another. Some examples could be: Good job, I like the way you..., You are good at..., Way to go on..., Nice job when you..., That was fantastic when..., Super, Excellent, Superb, Great, etc. This can be used at other times of the day – not just the gym time!”

“This is a co-operative version of musical chairs. Most children have seen the movie ‘Monsters, Inc.’ If not, explain to them that today they are going to be ‘monsters’” hiding in ‘closets’ Scatter the hoops about on the floor, leaving enough space between the hoops for the children to move freely. At the signal they will be ‘monsters’ wandering about looking for a closet to jump into. The students may perform any type of locomotive skill during this activity. (Hopping, skipping and jumping work well.) At another signal, they must jump into a ‘closet’ (hoop) and give their very best monster growl. (They love doing this!) Once they have completed this, take away 2 or 3 of the hoops and repeat the activity, until there are only about 2 hoops left. You’ll be amazed at how many children can stand in one of these hoops!”

Teachers, too!

Teachers are on their feet all day but often don’t get enough exercise. Do aerobics as part of your P.E. program. Have all your students follow you as you do aerobics to jazzy music. This is fun, and you will get some needed exercise, too! Or..... do an exercise sequence when you first enter the gym with your students. Do bending and stretching exercises with the whole body. You will feel refreshed as you go back to class.

http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/other_games/hopscotch.htm

http://www.gameskidsplay.net/jump_rope_rhymes/index.htm

Remember ‘Heads Up - Seven Up? Seven students are chosen to stand in front of the class. They say, “Heads down, thumbs up!” The rest of the children put their heads down on the desk and stick up a thumb. The seven kids each touch one thumb, and the thumb is pulled in when touched. When the seven have finished, they go back to the front of the class and say, “Heads up, seven up!” and the seven people who were touched stand up. Taking turns, each of these has three guesses to find the person who touched him/her. If the person guesses correctly he/she changes places with the toucher.



Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensations are flowing into our brain at a rapid rate from all five of our senses. There are messages from our eyes, ears, skin, mouth and nose. These sensations need to be acted upon, organized and co-ordinated. Many children, especially those with other disabilities (autism, Aspergers, ADHD, DCD, etc.) have sensory difficulties that accompany the disability. Sensory integration problems have reportedly been seen more often in children who were born prematurely or with a low birth weight or were deprived of sensations in early childhood. Problems may also occur in children who have had too much sensation in their early environment, such as in children suffering from abuse or Post Traumatic Stress. Many autistic children appear to have SPD based on their avoidance of sensation.

In the simplest terms, children with SPD either avoid sensation or seek it. The person is either under-processing information or over-processing (sensory overload). One doctor believes that 10% of the population have some form of SPD - which means at least two children in your classroom could be affected.

Visual Sensitivity - Over-Responsiveness

The child is over-sensitive to bright lights and may cover the eyes to shut out the light. He may be uncomfortable in places that are over-stimulating - and many classrooms fit that. He will have difficulty focusing on one thing and be very easily distracted. Bright colours or mess around him will be a problem. Small children will not like to go up or down stairs. They may avoid eye contact.

Visual Sensitivity - Under-Responsiveness

The child may have spatial difficulties and problems seeing the 'whole picture'. There may be letter reversals, untidy printing that tends to slope. The child may have problems with jigsaw puzzles and loses his place when reading or doing math.

Auditory Sensitivity - Over-Responsiveness

The child may be sensitive to background sounds that we ignore, and be frightened of loud noises - oddly, the toilet flushing in strange bathrooms is one. (My DCD grandson has almost all of these symptoms!) The child may have problems if the classroom is noisy. He will put his hands over his ears when noise is expected or when the levels are too high. He may not be able to pick one voice out of the background noise.

Auditory Sensitivity - Under-Responsiveness

The child may love loud music or make a lot of noise himself. He may have difficulty with spoken directions and say "What?" often.

Over-Sensitivity to Touch

These children will not want others to touch them and may lash back if another brushes against him. They may feel rough clothing as if it were sandpaper against their skin. This child will not want to be dirty and will not want to be messy in glue or finger-paint.

Under-Sensitivity to Touch

The child with under-sensitivity to touch may want to be hugged constantly, will need to touch everything and be touched and even may be self-abusive. They may have under awareness of pain or temperature.

Some children are frightened of movement and do not like their feet off the ground. They do not swing or climb on the playground. Other children crave it - and bounce, climb, swing often without thought of danger. There is also sensitivity to taste and smells - and others.

There is a good website with check-lists - they don't give you conclusions but may give you interesting insights.

<http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/sensory-processing-disorder-checklist.html>

SPD in the Classroom

We can't diagnose the children in our classrooms with sensory dysfunction, but you may notice that some of your children fit some of these categories. Children who have sensory problems live with stress, in many cases, and this is very difficult for them and certainly affects their learning. Here is how you can help these children cope with their disability.

Talk to the child about his discomfort, if it is obvious to you. Tell him that you understand and that you want to make things as pleasant as possible. Give the child options when his sensory levels are giving stress.

Keep the noise level as low as possible, and your voice at a mid to low pitch. If activities are planned that will be noisy and you know a child may be stressed - give the child an option to go to a quieter place for this time. If the fire bell is going to ring, you may want to tell the child ahead of time. Remember that if the classroom is noisy, that child may not be able to pick your voice out of the background noise.

Do not over-decorate the classroom. A wild profusion of bright colours makes it difficult for some children to concentrate. Mess is also very distracting. Keep the classroom tidy and organized. If a child has visual sensitivity problems and is not completing work because he is distracted, provide a desk or table with a bare 'office' surround facing away from the class, or let him go to a bare room nearby.

Some children have movement sensitivity, and will not want to do the same things in the gym or on the playground that the other children do.

Be aware of children who are acting out, and see if there could be some sensory trigger.

It is difficult to understand exactly what these children see, hear, or feel - unless you have some of these sensitivities yourself. But it is important to know that if a child is obsessing on something in the environment - he will not be working or learning to the best of his ability.

Things to Ponder



The Benefits of Play

How are children different now from what they were 60 years ago? Yes, they are different. Children in the past entertained themselves! There were toys, but they didn't DO anything - the child had to help the toys do things. Most children then had freedom - they played up and down the street - and on the street - with their friends every day, with a ball or a skipping rope or no props at all. They invented games, made up their own rules and played with imagination. Games were passed down through generations.

Children today are entertained by toys, TV and video games. Toys are frequently specific to one purpose and lead the play, rather than the child leading. Kids do not play with their friends as often after school hours, as they have 'play-dates' rather than neighbourhood play. The children make fewer independent decisions when not with their parents. Then there are the hours spent watching TV, video games or on the computer. They are hustled off to organized soccer or hockey practice or dance lessons, where they learn the game skills and get exercise but have little independent interaction.

Play is very valuable! Free play increases these necessary skills: imagination, creativity, problem-solving, abstract thinking, self-confidence, cooperation, sharing, conflict resolution, gross and fine-motor skills, and many more.

Today the children get fewer hours of free play each week. It seems that the parents feel neglectful if the children are not being entertained or trained in a purposeful way. And the children are missing all the great fun of just playing, by themselves or with friends. And the schools are cutting back the time of recess and lunch break, assuming that more time sitting in class is going to produce those good things that really come from play.

Now, we are trying to TEACH creativity, instead of letting the children bring it forth themselves. We teach cooperation and sharing and conflict resolution, instead of letting it happen naturally. We worry about children not getting necessary exercise and becoming overweight, and cut the playtime.

Sorry! I guess I am just missing the good old days! J

A Substitute Binder

We are sometimes absent unexpectedly, and while we should always have planbooks prepared thoroughly and in advance for the week, it is often difficult for a substitute teacher to come into a classroom and take over your students and follow the day as you would do. We want these days to be as valuable as possible and a binder with the following information will help this to happen.

This could be your planbook itself, if you wish, with your daily plans in the second section, or your planbook can be separate.

Part One

1. A 'Welcome' page with your name.
2. A class list, with the students' numbers if you do this.
3. Make name tags - the ones made like a necklace with a name tag and string to go around the neck are easy. Put a class set into the pocket at the front of the binder. Then the sub can call the children by name easily.
4. A seating plan that is up to date. This can be in the binder or on a bulletin board by your desk. Some teachers put the names on sticky notes and this way the names are easy to change and it can be kept up to date.
5. A brief page with the classroom rules and the school rules.
6. Put in a simple outline of your behaviour management philosophy and simple easy techniques that you use that are effective with this class.
7. Put in a school map, with the rooms where the class goes for special lessons marked - the library, the computer lab, gym, etc. Especially in larger cities, you may have subs who have never been in this school before. Label the teachers' lounge!
8. Add a page describing where important things can be found.... extra pencils, art paper, math manipulatives, etc.
9. Give a brief discussion about your special students and the modifications or needs that a substitute should know and health concerns of your students.
10. Talk about your classroom routines - what the students do when they come in, how they line up, your bathroom rules, using the class library, pencil sharpening, attendance, etc.
11. Have a page for emergency procedures (fire, earthquake, etc.) This should also be posted by the classroom door. Also let the substitute know who to contact in case of classroom emergencies



Part Two

1. A timetable for your week.
2. An outline of typical days through the week.
3. Alternative lesson plans in different subjects from reading lessons to gym lessons - in case you do not have enough left for the sub - in emergencies.
4. Classroom games the students know how to play with instructions and rules.
5. Put a book for read-alouds in the back of the binder pocket - a book that the students have not heard, and a list of other possible choices and where they could be found.

Part Three

1. A 'feedback' sheet for the sub to fill out telling what she did through the day, if there were any problems or concerns, etc. Put headings of what you would like to know.
2. Have a 'comments' section at the bottom of the page.

Part Four

1. Extra sheets in all subjects - math drill sheets, reading and phonics sheets, puzzle pages - follow the dots, word search, colouring pages, etc.

Health

'Health' is a broad topic - so broad that this unit could last through the school year.... but here is an outline of a health unit.

1. What is 'health'? What does it mean to be healthy? Why is it good to be healthy? What things might we do to make our bodies healthier? Brainstorm things we can do to make us healthy.

2. What causes us to be sick? Germs can make us sick..... What are germs? Can you see them? Why not? Are all germs 'bad'? Germs are in the air and on the surfaces of things around us. How do germs get into the air? (When we sneeze and cough....) What can we do to prevent germs getting into the air?

How do germs get on the surface of things? Have a student put glitter paint or glitter glue on his/her hand. Then he could shake hands with another child or touch the desk top or a pencil. What happens? Then another child might touch these surfaces and the germs spread all about.

3. How can you prevent germs getting on your hands? You can't! Germs on your hands don't hurt you, but if they get into your mouth they could make you sick, and germs on your hands spread them everywhere. How can you clean your hands of germs? Washing the hands is the best way to prevent the bad germs from making you sick. When should you wash your hands? We should wash often, and especially after the bathroom, before touching food and after touching animals.

A quick wash does not get rid of all the germs. You could have the children wash as long as they sing a song to themselves - sing 'Happy Birthday to You' and don't stop washing until the song is done. Or:

To **Row, Row, Row Your Boat**.

Scrub, scrub, scrub your hands
Put the soap between
Wash the germs right down the drain
Make them nice and clean!

And another:

Wash, wash, wash your hands,
Chase those germs away,
Rub, scrub, rub, and scrub
No more germs today!



If they sing this three times they will be at the sink long enough to clean well.

Children should be taught how to wash..... the water temperature, the amount of soap, the scrubbing of the entire hand, rinsing and drying properly.

4. Eating the correct foods help us to be healthy. What foods are good for you and what foods are not? Brainstorm two lists. Do your students really understand what foods are healthy?

5. There are 4 different food groups that we should eat every day. Vegetables and fruit; meat, fish and eggs; grains - bread, pasta, etc.; dairy products - milk, cheese, yogurt, etc. Some foods do not fit in any of these - the fats and sweets. We could call this last category 'Other foods'. Think of foods that fit into each of the 5 groups. Children's growing bodies should have lots of the first 4 groups and very little of the last.

6. Have the health lesson just before lunch time. Talk about the students' lunches. Lay the foods out on the desks and talk about which groups the foods fit. Do any students have all of the 4 good groups in the lunch? A meat sandwich, carrot sticks and milk to drink would cover all 4. Who has the healthiest lunch? What vegetables and fruit are in the lunches? Go through the lists and make a chart of all the good things. Now eat!

7. Ask the students to talk to the parents about the lunches. Can you improve the lunch for the next day? Repeat the lesson the next day and see if there is more healthy variety.

8. Exercise is important for healthy bodies. Do your students get enough exercise? Children now get less exercise than children in past eras. Discuss this with your students and why this is so. Talk about the play you did when you were young. In years past, there was no TV, no video games and children had freedom to be outdoors without supervision to visit their friends on the street and play games.

What do we consider exercise? Playing soccer, running, skipping, climbing are all good exercise. Talk about what your students like to do. Good exercise lasts for at least 10 minutes and makes your heart beat faster and your breath come quicker.

Do some exercises in your classroom on days when you don't have PE. Run on the spot, do jumping jacks, put on jazzy music and do 'fitness to music', following your lead in aerobics. This is good for you, too! This makes a good break in a long quiet work period.

9. It is important to keep our teeth clean. When should we brush our teeth? We should brush after meals and before bedtime. Why is that an important time to brush? Have small mirrors and let the students have a good look at their teeth. Do you see any white material on the teeth? This is called plaque, and when we brush we should try to brush away all of the plaque, because it will damage the teeth if left there. Discuss how we should brush,

Hold the brush with the bristles pointing toward the teeth.

Move the brush so it cleans from the gums to the teeth edges.

Brush the upper teeth downward, the lower teeth upward.

Use a scrubbing motion to clean the chewing surfaces on the molars.

Brush the inner surfaces as well as the outer.

Brush each area at least 10 times.



10. Drinking water is important for health. Our bodies are more than half water, but we are always losing water so it must be replenished. We need water to live. The cells in our bodies need water to be healthy. How much water do the children drink each day? Some people say that students learn more effectively when they drink water throughout the day - replenishing the brain cells! You could try it for a week - let each student have a bottle of water on the desktop, refilling it when it is empty with tap-water. At the end of a week, ask the students if they noticed any difference in their work..... An experiment!

11. Safety is part of a health unit. Teach safety on the street and the rules of riding bicycles. Go over safety at school and at home.

12. You can teach the different body systems - respiratory, circulatory, skeletal, digestive, etc.

13. Teach the heart, and how we can keep the heart healthy.

14. The five senses unit is usually in the science program, but can also be taught in an over-all health program.



Teaching lessons about healthy living and then going on to the next topic will not change any behaviour. 'Health' is not a topic to be studied and then left behind. Good will only occur if habits are changed, and that takes effort. The concepts should be mentioned every day. Talk about the school lunches and what the children eat for breakfast - talk about it almost every day. Praise children who are munching on carrot sticks or an apple at recess. Exercise every day until it becomes part of the students' day. Make hand washing a part of the daily routines. Let the children drink water whenever they want.

Sharing Time

“I have my Kinders share once each week. It is always the same day, so the children and parents can plan for that time. I let them share toys that are meaningful, or other interesting objects - or the child can simply tell something that is happening in his/her life. The other children can ask questions or I ask the sharer a few questions about their sharing object.

In the beginning of the year I focus on the person who is sharing and try to get them to say a few interesting things about their object. Later in the year we talk about good questions and the audience behaviours.”

“I call it ‘Share and Care’. One child shares each day, and the rest of the class ‘cares’ by asking questions or giving a compliment. We practice manners, and saying nice things to each other - and then saying ‘thank you’ for compliments.”

“I teach a split class of grade twos and threes. I have one Sharing Journal. This is taken home each day by a student. They write about what they want to share or write questions so the class can guess their sharing object. When we do sharing time, it is more like an ‘author’s chair’ as the person reads from the Sharing Journal what he/she wrote the evening before. Then the other students have a brief chance to ask good questions and the sharing student gets a chance to discuss the object further.”

“I was not a fan of ‘Show and Tell’. It took valuable time out of the day and often I was not sure of the benefit. I decided to try to make it as valuable as possible and now I have a twenty minute block on Friday afternoon when the students get a chance to share what is happening in their lives. They may bring something to share, but toys are forbidden! This is part of the Language block, a speaking and listening component.

I teach them what good speakers do - stand straight, look at the audience, speak clearly - and never run on and on. We also learn what good audience members do - listen carefully, look at the speaker, and ask thoughtful questions. The speaker gets complimented for the things he/she did well - first by me and later in the year by the class. I now find that my class will ask sensible thoughtful questions to the visitors to the school who put on performances instead of the silly questions that some children ask!”

“I have Science sharing every two weeks. The students bring in interesting items that are conducive to discussion. Some we have had are: a feather, fossils, a bone, rocks with crystals, a bird’s nest, a snake skin, etc. The kids love these sessions and look forward to them. They like to think of something interesting to bring. This opens the discussion of the object and gives a good ‘teaching moment’.”

“We have sharing time while the students are eating their lunches. This keeps the time quiet and they get more of a chance to share what is going on in their lives. Each person only gets one minute to share, so things go quite quickly. I stop any ‘run-on’ children.”

“My student of the week is the only one that gets to share, and he/she is able to bring in two things that are meaningful to him/her.”

“The ‘king/queen of the week’ brings in or tells about something that they know how to do. It could be a craft they have made, or they could discuss a sport that they play. Some students share a favourite book that they have read, or show us a computer game that they play at home. If possible they demonstrate - they might sing or dance, draw something well or do something that they can teach the class.”

“I do sharing every Friday afternoon. I have a calendar that gives a specific topic for each Friday. Occasionally there will be a ‘free sharing’ time, where the kids can share any topic.”

“We have ‘Surprise Sharing’. The object has to fit into a small bag. The student must write three questions or clues to see if the others can guess the item. One student does this each day and we go down the class list alphabetically.”



Having an aide/para/parent helpers

If you are lucky enough to have a classroom helper, make sure you know the rules governing this. In some places, aides are not allowed to actually teach children, and in other districts trained aides and para-professionals can take a group of children for teaching purposes. Parent helpers usually should not be made aware of privacy matters of the other students and their families - home problems, disabilities, etc. Whatever the rules are, remember that you are the 'boss' and that you have the responsibility for whatever the helper does.

Your helpers, from paras to parents, will need firm direction in order to be useful. Do not assume that they know what you want done - that way lies disaster! Be very specific with your directions and demonstrate if possible. Remember when you were a student teacher and the classroom was a new experience? And, you had training.....

Below are lists of possible 'jobs' that you can give classroom assistants. The work given will depend on the training and experience of the helper - and the rules, of course.

High Responsibility:

- Recess/lunch supervision
- Marking more complicated work
- Teaching a reading or math group
- Assisting children at centres
- Running a centre
- Working with disabled students
- Working one-on-one with students with learning problems
- Helping with simple assessments
- Supervising if the teacher has to leave

Medium Responsibility:

- Listen to children read one-on-one
- Listen to a group of children read
- Photocopying
- Putting up bulletin boards
- Marking simple work
- Keeping children on task
- Sitting beside a student who becomes distracted
- Supports the rest of the class while you teach a group
- Help with computers
- Walk with the children when they go to gym, library, etc.
- Read stories
- Helping children in writing lessons

Low Responsibility:

- Filing papers to mailboxes, etc.
- Cutting out supplies
- Tidying and organizing math manipulatives
- Sorting library books
- Running errands
- Helping with art projects, field trips, special days
- Take attendance
- Help with coats, zippers, boots at recess
- Make games, flashcards, etc.



Learning Disabilities

Dyspraxia—Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

You have a little boy in your kindergarten classroom. He seems to be a slightly withdrawn child who prefers to play by himself or with one other child. He does not appear to be able to join in with a group of children playing, although he seems to enjoy watching their activities. He appears to have an average intelligence, although slightly inarticulate speech. You notice that his pencil grip is immature and he appears to have difficulty with the simplest of fine motor tasks, although he can explain to you how the task should be done. His drawing seems to be at the level of a 2 year old, while his vocabulary is well within the average range for his age. He simply refuses to participate in circle time, dancing or games. He has trouble dressing himself and becomes stressed or confused if routines change. His parents state to you that he has always been a bit shy and that he is “just not athletic”.

It is very possible that the student described above has Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). Developmental Co-ordination Disorder is described as an impairment, immaturity or disorganization of movement. The term DCD is now replacing the labels “Clumsy Child Syndrome” and “motor learning difficulties”. In the past these children may have been described as “klutzy” or “nerdy”. Up to one child in 10 is affected by DCD. It is therefore likely that every class will have a child with this disorder in varying degrees of severity. As in all learning disabilities, the problem cannot be ‘fixed’ and the children will have this disability all their lives, but they can be taught positive coping skills.

Teachers may recognize the following symptoms in the classroom:

- Immature speech or articulation.
- Immature fine and gross motor skills. The child will have difficulty learning new motor tasks. He/she may appear clumsy and awkward.
- A child with normal intelligence may have difficulty planning and organizing his thoughts.
- Difficulty with reading, writing and spelling or math.
- Behavioural/emotional problems – difficulty joining in with peers, low self esteem, P.E. avoidance, acting out during craft time, trouble coping with free time, isolating. This area is especially important. Children with DCD are capable of growing into fully functional adults, however, confidence and self esteem issues can lead to larger problems than the disability itself.



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

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

- 1. Allow extra time:** Try to provide the child with enough time to complete fine motor activities such as math, printing, and artwork. If speed is necessary, be willing to accept a less accurate product, or adapt the exercise, i.e., provide the child with a photocopied set of questions. Children with DCD do not deal well with tasks when they are feeling stressed, so timed tasks may be especially difficult.
- 2. Use repetition:** Children with DCD will eventually learn the skills necessary to perform a task. However, they do not learn naturally as other children do, and need a significant amount of repetition and practice before a new skill or movement becomes automatic.

3. Allow variability: It is very important to remember that a child's ability will be variable day to day, sometimes even hour to hour. They may not be able to do something one day that you saw them do perfectly well the day before.

4. Create an appropriate learning space: A desk that allows the child to sit with his feet flat on the floor and to maintain good posture is important. The immediate workspace should have minimal distractions. He works best in a private space that he can organize in his own way – other children may disturb his task planning.

5. Remember the goal: It is important to always remember the goal of any activity. For example, if the point of an exercise is not printing, do not ask a child with DCD to copy from the board or from a book. If the goal is creative writing, ignore messy handwriting and focus on the content.

6. Break it down: In all tasks, both in the classroom and in the gym, ensure that each task is broken down into small, achievable parts. Simply including a child with DCD in the class explanation of a game and then expecting them to join in will only cause anxiety and/or isolation or acting out. Children with DCD need to learn physical things in small steps, where complete understanding and ability to do one motion is the foundation for learning the next.

Provide motivation and praise success: Motivation is key – a child with DCD may be quite ready physically to learn a new skill, but they are overly cautious. A behavioural reward program can be quite effective in getting over the first hurdle of "I can't do it".

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

Kelly Raine, BSW, Dip. CYC

Note: Kelly's son, my grandson, has DCD quite severely. He is now going into Grade 5. He learned to print quickly and legibly by Grade 3, but handwriting is now a problem. He reads above grade level but has some problems in math. He has difficulty with physical movements - he runs awkwardly and can't catch a ball, and is finally learning to swim after years of lessons - he can do one physical movement (kick his feet, for example) but to coordinate the arm movements at the same time is difficult - and then add breathing in the proper places..... The physical things that other children do automatically must all be thought through and taught in isolation. Jean

An Old Favourite

Chant this with rhythm and lots of expression. Begin the chant standing, and each child sits down after he/she has had a turn so everyone gets a turn.

Leader: Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?
(child's name... *Mary*) stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Mary: Who me?

Class: Yes, you!

Mary: Couldn't be!

Class: Then, who?

Mary: *John* stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

John: Who, me? etc., etc.

WHO stole the COOKie from the COOKie JAR

Who, ME?

Yes, YOU!

Couldn't BE!

Then WHO?



ABCs for Kindergarten Parents

An Apple: An apple for the teacher...
It's really nothing new.
Except when you remember,
Parents are teachers too!



Book Bags: The children will take books home each week, and it is important that they are returned on time.

Centres: Our classroom will be set up in centres. We will begin using these slowly, one at a time, so the students thoroughly understand what is expected of them.

Discipline- I believe in positive discipline and positive reinforcement, but in order to provide a safe and happy environment it is important to have rules and guidelines for behaviour in the classroom.

Eating at School: We have healthy food discussions in my classroom, and I encourage the children (and parents) to bring healthy choices for snacks.

Field Trips: We will be going on several field trips this year. We will be needing volunteers to meet us at the destination. If you can help, let me know.

Giving Tree: The Giving Tree is on the bulletin board just inside the classroom door. The paper apples on the tree have objects that we need in the classroom that we need. If you would like to help out, pick an apple, write your name on it and pop it into the basket on the board.

Homework Calendars: A homework calendar will be sent home on the first day of the month. Each day has a simple activity for your child to complete. Put a star on the calendar for each day that the homework is completed, and return the sheet at the end of the month.

Illness: If your child has a fever he/she should be kept home for 24 hours after the fever has disappeared.

Juice: Please send healthy drinks - juice or milk. Soft drinks are not allowed.

Kindergarten News: This is the name of our classroom weekly newsletter. It will always be printed on florescent green paper, so you can't miss it!

Library - We will go to the school library once a week on Tuesdays. Please return all books on time!

Music- We sing a lot in Kindergarten. Ask your child to sing the songs at home, too.

No toys, please!: The students are not allowed to bring toys to school except on their special days.

Outdoor Play: The students will be going outdoors to play at recess and after they eat their lunches. Please make sure they have suitable outdoor clothes for the weather. All children must go out at these times.

Parties: We will have several parties through the year. We celebrate Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. We also have a Thanksgiving feast and an Easter egg hunt. Please do not send food on your child's birthday - we have other ways of celebrating.

Quiet Time- We have a quiet time each day. The children may look at books or simply rest.

Report Cards- Report cards will be sent home in December, March and the end of June. There will be an Interim report between each of these reporting periods.

School Supplies: Please put your child's name on all school supplies.

Time: Please ensure that your child is at school on time each day.

Units- We have a new 'Unit' each week, corresponding to the alphabet letter we are studying.

Visit Us: We would be happy to have you visit us in our class anytime. We can always use an extra pair of hands, so we will happily put you to work! When you come in you must report at the office.

Website: Our class has a website, and you will find lots of information and pictures of the busy children. (You must sign a release form in order for your child to be in the website pictures.)

X-tra Clothes: We keep several sets of extra clothes at school in case of accidents or puddles. If your child comes home in our extras, please wash them and return them.

You: You play an important part in your child's progress! Read to him/her every night and discuss letters and numbers at every opportunity.

ZZZZ's: Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest. When children are tired they do not do well at school.

Parent Communication

1. Make sure that all written communication with parents is accurate and looks professional. Spelling or grammatical errors make you look 'uneducated'! Have a colleague edit it if you are unsure.
2. Keep a copy of all phone calls, notes and newsletters to parents. It may be important!
3. Write clearly and concisely so there cannot be any misunderstanding of the message.
4. Avoid educational jargon. Not only can it be misunderstood by the reader, it sounds pretentious.
5. Give copies of newsletters and other important communications to the Principal.
6. File copies of your communications and parents' communication where you can find them.
7. Record all face-to-face meetings and phone calls - the date, who you talked to and the subject. You may want to have a phone log.

Ideas for Parent Conferences:

1. Care-givers come in many different combinations, from two and one-parent households, to same-sex parents, foster parents, guardians, etc. Try to discover the care-givers for each household. Having the children draw their families can help to tell you what the home is like. Invite both parents to conferences, or the people who are directly involved with the child.
2. Try to introduce yourself to the parents in the first two weeks of school if possible, even if it is simply at an open house or talking at the classroom door.
3. Allow plenty of time for each parent-teacher conference.
4. Have a file prepared that gives you direct information of the child's ability, skill levels, work habits, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to remember all the information unless you have it written and at your fingertips.
5. Get organized before the conference. Have all the test scores, student work samples, and exercise books. Know the reading level and the knowledge or gaps in the knowledge that you will be working on in the next months.
6. Try to greet the parents by name.
7. Have comfortable equal seating. Don't sit behind your desk or ask parents to perch on tiny chairs.
8. Begin the conference with a positive statement about the child's ability, work, or interests.
9. Be honest. If a child is having difficulty, say so! It may be hard to tell the parents that a child is having difficulty, but it will be much harder at a later date.
10. Tell the parents what you have done to help the child, what you are presently doing, and what you will try in the future.
11. Be specific in your comments. This is much easier if you have written extensive anecdotal notes.
12. Use simple vocabulary and forget the jargon. Most parents won't understand a word of the educational double-talk....
13. Ask for the parents' opinions. What they have to say is important for you to know.
14. Every child has strengths. Talk about these and how these strengths can be used to promote learning.
15. At the end of the conference, summarize the discussion and the actions you and the parents have decided to take.
16. Keep a written record of the conference. Put it into the child's file so you can refer to it.

“As a parent, I find that the school is always asking for money! Two dollars for this, five dollars for that, ten dollars for this and more for that. This is over and above the supplies and the hotdog Fridays. As a teacher I know that the school needs things and that I buy necessities out of my own pocket for my own classroom, but there seems to be never-ending requests for money. As a middle-income family, we find these requests too much - so what do lower-income families do and how do they feel about it? I think schools need to be more frugal and decide priorities to help both struggling teachers and families. In my opinion, books are more important than the newest technology. pencils and paper more important than the best sports equipment.”



For the Parents....

How you can help your child to succeed:

- Talk often with your child. Explain the world around him/her. Encourage questions and answer them as well as you can. If you don't know an answer, look it up together.
- Read to and with your child every day. Talk about the words and ideas in books. Read books that are fun and books that teach. Read not only easy picture books but chapter books that have few pictures. This will encourage imagination.
- Ask your child's teacher how you can help your child practice at home what he is learning at school.
- Talk about words and letters and sounds. Read words in the environment - street signs, store names, toy words, words on the computer.
- Listen to your child read every day. Be patient! Praise the efforts. If the book is too difficult and the child does not read it easily, read it together - then find an easier book to read.
- Say the sounds of letters and ask your child to tell you the letter names.
- Encourage your child to print simple words using the sounds that have been taught. Spell and write easy words, and later make sentences.
- Write a word on paper and cut the letters apart (or use plastic or foam letters). Mix the letters and have your child spell a word by putting the letters in order.
- Encourage your child to write for a reason - letters and thank-you notes, simple stories, and grocery lists.
- When you read together, stop now and then to talk about the meaning of the words and the story. Ask questions about the story.
- Before you come to the end of a story, ask your child to predict what might happen next or how the story will end.

The Giving Tree

What can the parents donate to your classroom? Some teachers put up a tree at Christmas, and decorate it with ornaments, each with a donation item. The parent can take the ornament, sign a list and then donate the item.

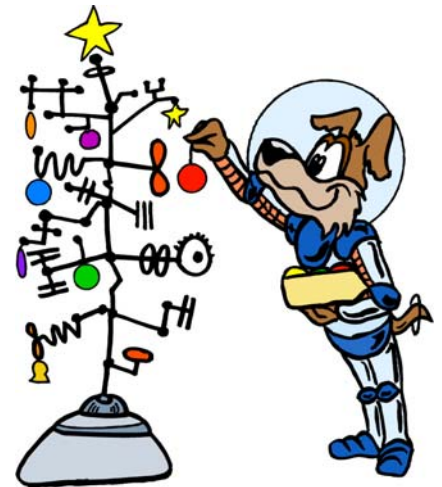
Here are some ideas:

Post-it notes, notepads, stickers, old (suitable) magazines and catalogues, wikki sticks, books, awards, coloured copy paper, collections of items suitable for math manipulatives, lego, plasticene, board games, puzzles, baby wipes, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, clear contact plastic, feathers-beads-lace, etc., stamps and stamp pads, skipping ropes, balls, hula hoops, and school supplies. Art and craft supplies are always welcome, and extra pencils and erasers for children who are unable to bring more. The parents can also bring empty aluminum foil tubes or gift wrap tubes (not toilet paper), empty milk jugs for an igloo project, empty margarine containers with lids, and much more!

This is a good site for parent/teacher conferences.

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=7319>

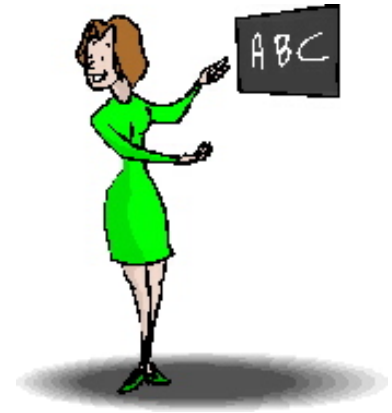
"I had my parents write me a letter telling me all about the child. These were very good and I learned a lot about the families and things about the children that I would not otherwise know. It was very valuable!"



The ABC's for Parents

If you are planning a classroom handbook for parents, this is an interesting format!

- A - Absence - what to do if your child is going to be absent from school, notes to explain, phone calls
- B - Buses - bus safety, bus information
 - Book bags - bring the book bag to school each day
- C - Computers - the day and time in the computer lab and a request for a parent helper
- D - Drugs and Doctor note for special concerns - all our prescription and non-prescription medicines at this age must be transported to school by parent with doctor's note if they are to be given at school
 - Discipline - the school and classroom rules
- E - Emergency contact number if the parents cannot be reached
- F - Field trips
- G - Gym - our days and times, what the children should wear
- H - Homework - expectations, frequency
 - Home Reading - helpful hints for reading with your child
- I - Illness - when to decide if your child's illness is one that requires him/her to be kept at home
- J - Junk food - snacks should be healthy foods and not junk foods
- K - Kisses... - grade one is HARD...they need lots of support, hugs and KISSES
- L - Library times and library books
 - Lunch - healthy lunches if brought from home, also information about the hot lunch program)
- M - Money - how to be sure money sent from home actually gets to me!
- N - Newsletters - how often they will be sent home and what day of the week or month. Send them on a certain colour of paper so the parents can watch for them.
- O - Outdoor clothes - if your child is well enough to come to school he/she is well enough to play outdoors at recess and lunch. Make sure they are dressed appropriately!
- P - Peanut allergy - we have one child with a severe allergy this year
 - Parents Group - day/times of meetings, how to get involved
 - Parties - we will have classroom parties at Hallowe'en and Valentine's Day
- Q - Questions - how to contact the teacher and the school
- R - Recess - healthy snacks, nothing messy as they eat their snack outside most days
 - Report cards - when they will be sent
- S - Shoes - indoor shoes, or a pair to be left at school to wear for gym
- T - Telephone - school phone number. Toys - no toys are allowed at school except on special days.
- U - Upset children - please let us know if your child comes to school upset about something at home.
- V - Volunteers
- W - Water bottles - water helps brains to function well!
- X - Xtra work... or xtra practice for homework - some teachers want the students to have an 'Xtra' set of clothes at school.
- Y - YOU - importance of parent communication and support
- Z - ZZZZ.... - sleep and bedtimes. The days at school are long and busy. Children need to have a good night's sleep.



“Our school has a handbook and fortunately, it covers so much of this. I think the parents may even have to sign that they read it and covered it with their child!”

Here is a parents' ABCs for Kindergarten.....

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

Report Card Ideas

Speaking

- speaks clearly
- has difficulty using (pronouns, verbs) correctly
- enjoys participation in conversation and discussion
- expresses ideas clearly
- has a good oral vocabulary
- takes turns talking
- speaks with confidence to the group

Listening

- can follow directions
- enjoys listening to poetry
- enjoys listening to stories
- listens carefully
- evaluates what he hears

Phonics

- is able to distinguish sounds in words
- is able to use _____ consonant and vowel sounds
- confuses the sounds ___ and ____
- is able to blend short words using the vowel(s) _____
- is learning to attack words independently
- uses the phonics skills to attack new words

Reading

- reading is (smooth, jerky, hesitant, rapid, irregular, fluent)
- comprehends what he reads
- can read to follow directions
- can now recognize _____ sight words
- reads for pleasure
- needs lots of repetition in order to retain reading vocabulary
- is still confusing words which look alike
- is beginning to read words in groups (phrases)
- reading is becoming (not yet becoming) automatic
- enjoys discussing the stories

Writing

- uses punctuation correctly
- is able to place periods and question marks correctly
- uses colourful words
- uses (complex, simple) sentences
- is now able to write a complete sentence independently
- participates in group story telling (composition)
- can write an original story of ___ sentences
- puts words in the appropriate order
- is able to read his sentences back
- shows self confidence in writing
- can compose several related sentences

Spelling

- is building a good spelling vocabulary
- enjoys learning to spell new words
- is able to learn to spell words easily
- sometimes reverses letters in a word
- has difficulty remembering the spelling of non-phonetic words



Printing

- often reverses letters, such as __, __, etc.
- has good (poor) fine-motor skills
- is able to print on the lines
- spaces letters and words correctly
- some printing is excellent but is often untidy in daily assignments
- enjoys doing neat careful work

Math

- can work with numbers to __ with understanding
- understands the signs +, -, = and uses them to make number statements
- understands and uses basic facts of addition and subtraction to _____
- reverses some numbers
- understands place value to _____
- can use manipulatives to add and subtract
- can use manipulatives to show place value to _____
- understands money (pennies, dimes, nickels)
- relies heavily on counting objects when adding
- knows the basic shapes
- can count to _____
- is able to create graphs using simple data
- understands several methods of graphing
- is beginning to memorize the number facts

General Remarks

- is friendly and cooperative
- cooperates well
- helps others
- has a sense of humour
- has a good attitude towards school
- is working well in all subjects
- lacks independence, is gaining independence
- is too easily distracted
- is self-reliant, needs to become more self-reliant
- is an attentive student
- all work is neatly and accurately done
- is a polite conscientious pupil
- works too slowly
- does not complete assignments in the allotted time.
- seems unable to finish required work
- does colourful and interesting art work
- is especially good at _____
- should be encouraged to _____
- needs frequent encouragement
- is maturing
- is learning to concentrate
- is gaining self-confidence
- takes pride in work well done
- is eager to learn
- often seems tired at school
- shows initiative; thinks things through for himself

A Penguin Theme

Do a KWL chart. Begin the unit by discussing the student's prior knowledge about penguins. Ask the children what they already know about penguins and list what they say (K – what they know). Ask the children what they want to learn about penguins (W – what they want to know).

Read some factual books about the different species of penguins.

Penguins are sea birds of the Southern Hemisphere. They cannot fly. There are 18 species of penguins, found in South Australia, New Zealand, and off the coasts of Peru, Chile, and South Africa. Some species live as far north as the equatorial Galapagos Islands, but they are primarily cold-weather birds. There are seven species of Antarctic penguins: the Adelie, Gentoo, Macaroni, Chinstrap, Rockhopper, King, and Emperor. The Adelie and the Emperor are the two true Antarctic species.

After you read through the books and have completed the study, as a class fill in facts on the 'Learned' part of the chart.

Activities

- Ask the children to put a pin on the map where they live and then to put a pin on the map where they think penguins live. Talk about the continents and Antarctica.
- How much do the different penguins weigh? Weigh objects until you have a similar weight.
- How tall are the different types of penguins? Make some pictures life-size and label them.
- Describe a penguin and draw it.
- Make a plasticine model of a penguin and make the penguin's habitat.
- What sort of animals are penguins? (mammal, fish, bird etc.) Think of three things all birds have in common.
- Ask the children to waddle, jump, slip, slide and dive like penguins.
- Ask your students to come to school wearing black and white.
- Buy some little plastic penguins and fill a pan with snow and build a penguin habitat. Build nests out of pebbles.
- Create a Venn diagram – how penguins are alike and different from other birds.

Make a penguin book:

Penguins:

Do not fly, they hop, walk, or toboggan

Are expert divers and swimmers

Have thick layer of fat called blubber under skin

Do not build nests.

The female lays egg, males hold egg on the top of their feet, hunches down so skin covers and warms the egg.

Raise their chicks in colonies called rookeries.

There may be thousands of penguins in one rookery.



Penguin Thoughts

Have you ever seen penguins in picture books?
I always smile when I see their looks.
They look like men in their fancy suits,
All black and white from head to boots.
I often wonder when it snows,
Do they freeze their little penguin toes?
Do they shiver and shake in their land of ice?
Sitting on icebergs CAN'T BE NICE!

Penguin Parade

Waddle, waddle, waddle,
From side to side.
Penguins go a-walking,
Slip, slip, slide.
With a funny jump,
The penguins dash
Down to the water,
Splash! Splash! Splash!
Waddle from the water,
With a rock'n roll
Penguins go parading,
On a wintry stroll.

Here's the template for a penguin book.

http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/printables/cat_penguins.shtml

<http://www.geocities.com/teachingwithheart/penguinsunit.html>

Wonderful Watermelon!

Do a web search for the poem Watermelon Time by Leland B. Jacobs

Watermelon ABC's

A-B-CDE

Watermelon is good for me.

F-G-HIJ

I must eat it everyday.

P-Q-RST

What a treat it can be!

U-V-WXY

You will like it if you try.

Z-Z ZZZ



Watermelon, everywhere,
On my face and on my hair.
On my fingers, on my toes,
Watermelon on my nose.

This may seem so very funny,
But it's best in my tummy!

This may look so very funny,
Watermelon's best in my
tummy!

Who Took the Melon From the Melon Patch

(Who Took the Cookies From the Cookie Jar)

Who took the melon from the melon patch?

_____ took the melon from the melon patch.

Who me?

Yes you!

Couldn't be!

Then who?

_____ took the melon from the melon patch!

(Repeat the rhyme until each student has had a chance to be named.)

Down By The Bay

Down by the bay
Where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
My mother will say,
"Did you ever see a bear
Combing his hair?"
Down by the bay.

"Did you ever see a bee
With a sunburned knee?"

"Did you ever see a moose
Kissing a goose?"

"Did you ever see a whale
With a polka dot tail?"

To Begin the Theme

Begin the KWL chart. Brainstorm what the children already know about watermelon. Fill in the K part of the chart as they tell you about watermelon. Then ask what they want to learn and fill in the W section. The L part will be filled in at the end of the unit as they tell you what they have learned.

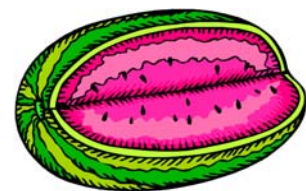
Bulletin Boards

Put up a brown background on a bulletin board. Cut out oval green watermelon shapes. Cut a spiral from the outside of a circle for curly vines, and attach them on the board. Add big green leaves and the watermelon.

If this is for the beginning of the year, put the students' names on the watermelon, and a picture.

Watermelon Science

Do you think the watermelon will float or sink? Graph the opinions and then test it. Why did this happen?



Let some seeds dry out for several weeks, and then wrap them in wet paper towel in a baggie. Will they germinate? If the seeds sprout, plant them in soil.

Watermelon Math

Have students guess the circumference of the watermelon using a piece of yarn/string. Later try out each one of the strings on the watermelon. Put the strings in order from longest guess to shortest. Who is the closest to the actual circumference?

Talk about shapes. The whole watermelon is an oval shape. Cut it in half and you see circles.

Graph whether the class likes watermelon or not. Make small ovals with the students' names on them and put them on the sides of the graph.

Measure how long the watermelon is. Discuss how it can be measured accurately.

Estimate the weight and then weight it. Everyone can lift it and compare it to the weights of other familiar things.

Estimate the number of seeds in a slice. If you want to count all the seeds in the watermelon, save them carefully. Then count them in 10s to find the total. They could be glued on watermelon shapes.

Discuss fractions as you cut the watermelon.



A Watermelon Treat

Make watermelon popsicles! Take all the seeds out of watermelon slices and put them in a blender. Add a bit of water. Put this into popsicle molds.

Make a dip for your watermelon. A pressure can of whipped cream makes an easy delicious dip, or use Cool Whip.

Watermelon Art

Cut paper plates in half. Each student gets half for a watermelon slice. Let students paint the rim of the paper plate green. Paint the center of the plate red. Glue real watermelon seeds on the paper plate.

Cut white paper plates in half. Let students sponge paint their paper plate with red and then green paint. Glue on real watermelon seeds when paint dries.

Watermelon Vocabulary

Teach the words: watermelon seeds red green white black juice plant vine slice etc.

<http://akidsheart.com/holidays/summer/wmelonday.htm>

Printables for your Watermelon Day.

http://www.hungrymonster.com/FoodFacts/Food_Facts.cfm

Click on Watermelon to find out lots of interesting facts!

A Pumpkin Theme

<http://www.mrspohlmeyskinderpage.com/pumpkins.htm>

<http://www.edhelper.com/pumpkins.htm>

Pumpkin Printables!

<http://www.kinderthemes.com/pumpkins.html>

Pumpkin theme for Kindergarten



Language Arts Activities

- Put a pumpkin in front of the class. Brainstorm words to describe it. Discuss the 5 senses and add more words.
- Brainstorm similes and metaphors. The pumpkin is as big as _____, as orange as _____, etc.
- Teach pumpkin vocabulary. Pumpkin, orange, green, big, little, huge, tiny, patch, cut, carve, etc.
- Write a story about the pumpkin face you would like to carve on your pumpkin.
- Read books on pumpkins.
- Write a book on the life cycle of the pumpkin.

Math Activities

- Estimate the circumference by cutting strings as long as they think the circumference is. See who is the closest!
- Estimate the weight. Have everyone lift the pumpkin and then guess.
- Have three pumpkins and compare the size and weights. Does the heaviest pumpkin have the biggest circumference? Compare the number of ribs.
- Count seeds, using groups of 10 and 100. Estimate how many there will be before counting.

Science, Social Studies and Food

- Plant pumpkin seeds.
- Talk about the life cycle of the pumpkin.
- Research the history of pumpkins.
- Cook the seeds in the oven or you could send them home with a student to be toasted and then eat them, of course.
- Make pumpkin cookies, pie, or bread with the pumpkin or just cook it and add butter or brown sugar.
- Do a google search for 'Pumpkin Pie in a Baggy' - a favourite!

After Halloween...

Make a pumpkin seed flower.

Draw a small circle in the centre of the paper.

Glue the pumpkin seeds outside the little circle with the points of the seeds facing out.

Then glue a second row of seeds outside the first row. Make more rows, if you wish - it depends on the patience of the students. Let dry. Put glitter in the center. You can paint the seeds any colour you want using acrylic paints.



A Friendship Theme

The More We Get Together

The more we get together,
Together, together,
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.

For your friends are my friends,
And my friends are your friends.
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.



Hello My Friend

Hello my friend
How are you?
Say your name.
And we'll clap for you! (*Clap out syllables*)

Two friends are better than one,
And three are better than two,
And four are much better still,
Just think what four good friends can do.

Our Book of Friends

Have each child draw a self portrait. On the top of each page print the words:
Our friend _____.

Have each student print his/her name on the line. Bind the pages together to make a favourite book.

A Friendship Salad

"Each year we make a fruit salad. I bring in beautiful fruit and a big bowl. We talk about how wonderful the fruit looks and how sweet it will taste. As we are talking we create a fruit salad. I cut the fruit up, we taste a bit and add the rest to the bowl. As we add each fruit we mix it up and talk about how nice it looks and how tasty it will be. At the very end I bring out two very black over-ripe bananas. The children are horrified and I ask them what's wrong. They tell me the bananas are rotten and eventually the discussion gets to the idea that those two rotten bananas will ruin the whole fruit salad if we put them in. Now we equate the fruit salad to our classroom. What happens when something is added that is not pleasant? When something unpleasant is added to the salad it is spoiled, and when something unpleasant is added to the classroom it is spoiled for everyone."

Friendship Web

"We made a friendship web. We had a ball of yarn and sat in a circle. The first student held the end and said something about himself/herself, and then rolled the ball to another student, who held the yarn and rolled the ball to another. When everyone had a turn we raised our hands and held the web up high in the air.

What Good Friends Do!

Take pictures of the children working, playing, reading, doing math, etc. in pairs or small groups. Mount each picture onto construction paper and write 'Friends _____ (read together, do puzzles, etc.)' Bind the pages into a book. Title the book 'What Good Friends Do'.

Hands Of Friendship

"Carefully trace around each student's hands on a sheet of white construction paper with a black marker. Let each youngster colour in his handprints with a skin-toned crayon or marker. Write each name above the pair of handprints. Arrange all the children's handprints on a bulletin board so that they make a circle."

Friendship Fall Tree

Trace and cut out hands from fall colours. Put the hands on a tree for autumn leaves.



Autumn Art and Activities

Barb's Ideas

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



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

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

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

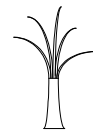
Finally, we made coffee filter leaves...dropping eye droppers of fall coloured dyes onto the filters and when they were dry, cutting out leaves....and carefully attached them to our mini trees with bits of clear tape. I must have done this around October because they went home as Thanksgiving center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

Leaves and Trees

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

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

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



Poems for the Autumn

The Little Elf

A little elf
Sat in a tree
Painting leaves
To throw at me.
Leaves of yellow
And leaves of red
Came tumbling down
About my head.

Down, down
Yellow and brown,
The leaves are falling
Over the town.



Leaves On the Trees

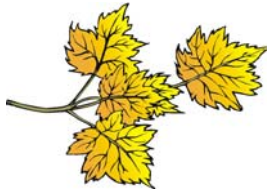
(The Wheels on the Bus)

The leaves on the trees turn
orange and red,
Orange and red, orange and red.
The leaves on the trees turn
orange and red,
All through the town.

The leaves on the trees come
tumbling down,
Tumbling down, tumbling down.
The leaves on the trees come
tumbling down,
All through the town.

The leaves on the ground go
swish, swish, swish,
Swish, swish, swish,
swish, swish, swish.
The leaves on the ground go
swish, swish, swish,
All through the town.

Off to school
We go together
In September's
Sunny weather.



Gently Falling Leaves

Little leaves fall gently down,
Red and yellow, orange and
brown.
Whirling, whirling,
round and round,
Quietly without a sound.

October

October's the month
When the smallest breeze
Gives us a shower
Of autumn leaves.
Bonfires and pumpkins,
Leaves sailing down -
October is red
And golden and brown. October
October's the month
When the smallest breeze
Gives us a shower
Of autumn leaves.
Bonfires and pumpkins,
Leaves sailing down -
October is red
And golden and brown.

Pumpkins

When you see me in the fields,
My orange glowing in the sun,
It's time to say goodbye to summer
And hello to autumn fun!!



Here We Are Together

("Did you Ever See a Lassie")

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.



I Am

Frere Jacques

I am (name),
I am (name),
That's my name,
That's my name,
I am glad to be here,
I am glad to be here,
At school today,
At school today.

Three Little Witches

(Three Little Indians)

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

Autumn Activities

<http://www.mrspohlmeyerskinderpage.com/fall.htm>

Visit this site for a great unit at the Kindergarten - Grade One level. There are lots of good art projects, and reading and writing ideas.

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/veg/trees/treestruicolor.htm>

For Grades 2 and 3 - a great page to explain why leaves change colour.

Autumn Vocabulary:

autumn fall harvest garden rake leaf leaves sky sunflower scarecrow birds fly south cool yellow orange red brown apples ripe

Wreaths

There is a great variety of wreaths your students can make using leaves, twigs, seed pods, and other Autumn objects found on an Fall walk.

Discuss the signs of Autumn before going on the walk. Then give each student a plastic grocery bag and go collecting. They can find coloured leaves, dry grasses with the seed heads, seed pods, etc.

The bases for the wreath can be paper plates, cut from tag or grapevine wreaths. Attach the collectables onto the wreath with glue. You can give each student a puddle of glue on a scrap of paper and they can gently dip the item into the glue and press it onto the wreath.

A suggestion - do this outdoors, or spread a huge sheet of plastic over your classroom floor. All these collectables will drop, crumble and make a huge mess!



Have each student pick one favourite brightly coloured autumn leaf. Press it on clear contact paper and cover it with another sheet. (You should do the second part - it is a bit tricky!) Then the students can cut out the leaves. These real leaves can be put up on your windows or hung by fishing line from the ceiling as if the leaf is falling.

Take a parachute or a sheet and go to a part of the schoolyard where there are lots of fallen leaves. Pile the leaves onto the parachute, and then each person can hold the edge, lift it up gently and on a signal, go down and then up suddenly! See how high the leaves will bounce.

Go out and see how many different kinds of leaves each student can find. Pick up one of each. When they have perhaps a dozen different ones, use them for sorting and classifying. Do you know the names of the trees so the leaves can be identified? Compare how they are alike and different. Who has the largest leaf? The smallest? Put them in order from largest to smallest.

Brainstorm changes in the fall. What are people doing? What are animals doing? What are birds doing? What is happening with plants and trees? Why are these things happening?

Do a unit on the five senses in the autumn. During your outdoor walk, have the students look for autumn changes, smell apples and the smoke of burning leaves, touch the leaves and seeds, taste fruit and vegetables that are ripe now and listen for geese flying south, crickets and grasshoppers, etc. Chart the things you noticed.

Do a weather unit, noticing and recording the changes in the autumn.

Art for Autumn



- Make a Fall bouquet with real leaves, grasses and seed heads, etc.
- Use fall coloured crayon shavings on wax paper - fold over, cover with t cloth and iron until the crayon shavings melt. Cut out a leaf shape.
- Dip marbles in autumn colours of paint and roll them on brown paper. Do this in a large cake pan or a box with sides.
- Have an apple theme - taste fresh apples, applesauce, apple pie, apple cider, apple juice, dried apples and caramel apples. Make apple prints - cut the apple in half length ways and round to show the star and seeds.

<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/1stgrade/applestory.htm>

- Fill a small paper plate with plaster of Paris and stick in acorns, leaves, moss, bark, twigs, etc. Make sure to stick in a paper clip for hanging.
- Staple a paper plate cut in half to a whole paper plate with the bottoms matching. Fill the open pocket with collected weeds, dried flowers, eucalyptus branches, pepper tree berries, etc. Decorate the front plate with paint.
- Make trees by using hands dipped in paint for the leaves.
- Collect large leaves. The students paint the back of the leaf with red or orange paint, and when the entire leaf has been painted, press the painted side down on paper to make a print. Keep the paint fairly liquid and use big brushes.
- Have each student cut out a tag leaf. Cover the leaf with glue and lay brightly coloured fabric over it. Cut around the leaf shape again. Now turn the leaf over and do the same on the other side. These interesting leaves are great to hang in a doorway or from the ceiling. Make them into a mobile, too!
- Paint a child's full hand, wrist and a bit of the forearm with brown paint. Press the arm onto paper to make a tree shape - the arm is the trunk and outspread fingers are the branches. You will need parent helpers for this! Make coloured leaves with bits of torn paper.
- Make pictures with the Autumn collectables. Give each student a piece of clear contact paper (or the coloured in yellow or brown). They stick their leaves, seed heads, etc., onto the contact paper. They must think before they place each object - there is no changing the mind!
- Use coffee filters or paper towel. Paint the surface with water colours in yellow, orange and red and let the colours run together. When it is dry, cut out a large leaf shape.
- Collect leaves that are dry and brittle, and will crumble. Draw, colour or paint a large tree. 'Paint' a part of the leaf area with liquid glue. Crumble the leaf onto the glue. Shake off and 'paint' the next leaf area with glue and repeat.

Autumn Ideas



Autumn

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



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

Stained Glass Leaves

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

Leaf Stencils

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

Keeping Leaves

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

Leaf Hangings

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

Autumn Math

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

Graphing - Graph leaves by color, shape, size.

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

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

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

Corn Flowers

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

Autumn

“This is suitable for Grade Two or Three. We found leaves outside and laid a piece of aluminum foil over the back side of the leaf. We taped it all down and then rubbed, gently at first, to make the leaf veins stand out on the foil. The leaves with the big veins turned out best.”

Go to this website and look at the wonderful tree shape made from a paper bag.

<http://www.mrsbrownart.com/1st.htm>

Leafy Lanterns or Pictures

Suspend these lanterns for a spectacular array of fall foliage.

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

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

Form a cylinder by overlapping and stapling together the ends of each construction-paper strip. Attach a 1" x 8" construction-paper handle to the top of the lantern. Hang from the ceiling.

Or..... after pressing the leaves between the wax paper, make two identical paper frames from fall-coloured construction paper and glue one frame over the leaves, turn it over and put the matching frame so both sides look the same. Put these up on the windows for a great autumn look or hang them from the ceiling.

Put a lovely real leaf between two pieces of clear contact plastic and cut it out, leaving a 1 cm. edge around the leaf. This is a great way to use real leaves for display. Use them to make mobiles, too.

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.”

“In the fall the class and I go on a search for nature items, for example, leaves, small flowers, flower petals, (we have a garden at school and it proves to be a good time to take the flowers off the stems - which I do before class as I really don't want the kids to think that they can do it) and so on. The kids are encouraged to find colourful things and always do a great job. Then they arrange them on their desk top, sharing, of course. Then I give them a piece of clear contact mactac and they redo their arrangement on this. When done we put another piece on top. Then I cut them into round shapes and hang them from the wire in my room. They move in the wind and are really effective!”

Apple Prints

Cut apples through the centre to show the star. Paint the flat side with red paint and make prints.



Autumn

As summer ends and autumn comes, the days get shorter and shorter. This is how the trees 'know' to begin getting ready for winter. During winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The trees will rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer. They begin to shut down their food-making factories. The green chlorophyll disappears from the leaves. As the bright green fades away, we begin to see yellow and orange colours. Small amounts of these colours have been in the leaves all along. We just can't see them in the summer, because they are covered up by the green chlorophyll.

The bright reds and purples we see in leaves are made mostly in the fall. In some trees, like maples, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn turn this glucose into a red colour. The brown colour of trees like oaks is made from wastes left in the leaves. It is the combination of all these things that make the beautiful colours we enjoy in the fall.

Make a book with these pages:

1. In the autumn the days get shorter and cooler.
2. Many plants stop making food in the fall. Then the green chlorophyll goes away.
3. We can see orange and yellow colours. These colours were in the leaves all summer, but the green covered them up.
4. Some leaves turn red. This colour is made in the autumn, from food trapped in the leaves.
5. Brown colours are also made in the autumn. They come from wastes left in the leaves.
6. Then the leaves fall and the trees are ready for winter.



Separate Colours in a Leaf

Collect a few large leaves from several different trees. Tear or chop the leaves into very small pieces and put them into separate small baby food jars labeled with the name or location of the tree.

Add enough rubbing alcohol to each jar to cover the leaves. Using a plastic knife or spoon, carefully chop and grind the leaves in the alcohol. Rubbing alcohol can be harmful if mishandled, so use with care.

Cover the jars very loosely with lids or plastic wrap or aluminum foil. Place the jars carefully into a shallow tray containing 1 inch of hot tap water.

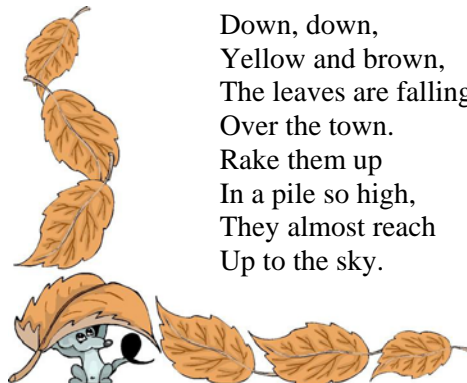
Keep the jars in the water for at least a half-hour, longer if needed, until the alcohol has become coloured (the darker the better). Twirl each jar gently about every five minutes. Replace the hot water if it cools off.

Cut a long thin strip of coffee filter paper for each of the jars and label it.

Remove the jars from the water. Place a strip of filter paper into each jar so that one end is in the alcohol. Bend the other end over the top of the jar and secure it with tape.

The alcohol will travel up the paper, bringing the colours with it. After 30-90 minutes (or longer), the colours will travel different distances up the paper as the alcohol evaporates. You should be able to see different shades of green, and possibly some yellow, orange or red, depending on the type of leaf.

5 little leaves in the tree next door,
1 fell off and then there were 4,
4 little leaves all over the tree,
a bird pulled off 1, and now there are 3,
3 little leaves up where the wind blew,
1 fell off and then there were 2,
2 little leaves sitting in the sun,
a bug ate a leaf and now there is 1,
1 little leaf in the tree alone,
the wind blew and blew and now there are none!



Down, down,
Yellow and brown,
The leaves are falling
Over the town.
Rake them up
In a pile so high,
They almost reach
Up to the sky.

Art for Autumn

Leaf Rubbings

- Cut out leaf shapes from a stiff paper. Colour with yellow, orange or red chalk or pastels. Place coloured shapes on construction paper then use thumb and rub the colour from the leaf to white paper. With younger children put a loop of tape to hold the leaf in place.

- Tape real leaves to the table. Lay typing paper over and have the students rub with the side of a peeled crayon.



Leaf Prints

Collect large leaves. The students paint them fall colours and then make prints of the leaves by white or beige construction paper over the painted leaf. They rub the paper until they can feel the veins of the leaves through the paper. Peel the paper off and you have a beautiful leaf print!

Autumn Trees

Draw and colour a tree with branches. Show the younger children how to draw a tree as big as the paper. For the 'leaves':

- They can glue colourful puzzle pieces (the leaves) on the tree. You can use the pieces as they are or paint them first.

- Put yellow construction paper in a cake pan. Dip marbles into red and orange paint and roll them around on the yellow paper. Let it dry and then cut out leaf shapes to put on the tree.

- Thumbprint the leaves on the branches using red, orange and yellow.

Leaf Art

- Have each student cut out a large leaf shape. Dip the paper leaf into water. Dab yellow, red, orange, green, and brown paint all over. Fold the leaf in half and smear the paint together.

- Fingerpaint using two colours - red, orange or yellow. When the paintings have dried, draw huge leaf shapes on the back of the papers and cut out. These are wonderful to decorate the classroom.

- Shave peeled crayons using a potato peeler (or pencil sharpeners) onto waxed paper. Cover with another sheet of waxed paper and a cloth and iron until the crayon melts. Cut in leaf shapes. These make nice sun-catchers for your windows.

- Collect small leaves and press them in books for several days. The following day the students paint the leaves with glue and then press them onto black paper to make a glue leaf print. Then they sprinkle glitter over their leaf print. These are very striking!

Leaf Math

- Have each student collect a specific number of leaves - 12 or 20, for example. Then sort them by colour, shape, points, etc.

- Graph your leaves.

- Put leaves in an estimation jar and estimate how many are in it.

Keeping the most beautiful leaves:

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

- Laminate your favourite leaves or put them between two sheets of clear contact plastic.



Thanksgiving

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

A Turkey

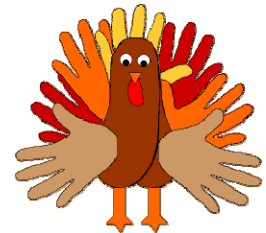
1. Colour a coffee filter for the tail. Use paint that is quite liquid, or dampen the filter first as you want the colours to run a bit. Make lines of colour outwards from the center of the filter. Use bright colours for an artistic turkey and browns for a realistic one. Have the students trace around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

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

There are other turkeys on the same site.

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

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



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

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

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

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

A Thanksgiving Mini-Theme

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

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

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

Thanksgiving

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)

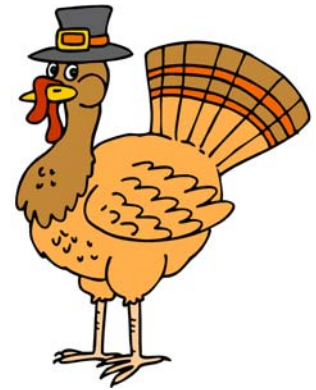
And scratch with all your might. (scratch like a chicken with right foot)

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!



Pumpkin Fluff

“We make Pumpkin Fluff with cool whip and canned pumpkin pie mix. We crush graham crackers for topping. It is delicious and the kids love it.”

Pumpkin Pie in a Cup

Mix a 30 oz. can of pumpkin pie filling with 16 oz. of cool-whip.

Put a layer of graham cracker crumbs in a small dish, a spoonful of the pumpkin mixture and a dab of whipped cream on top.

It tastes like pumpkin pie!

<http://www.mrspohlmeyerskinderpage.com/thanksgiving.htm>

This Kindergarten teacher has wonderful ideas!

Mr. Turkey

I am Mr. Turkey,

Big and fat.

On my tail are feathers,

What do you think of that?

When I walk I wobble,

And when I talk I gobble!

Turkey, turkey,

Gobble, gobble.

Eat too much

Wobble, wobble.

“I send home a construction paper turkey and ask everyone to disguise the turkey, however they want, so he won’t get caught for dinner. I ask the families to disguise him as a different animal or character. They can use any items they want to decorate him. I ask them to be returned a week before Thanksgiving so we can display them. I take digital pictures and display them on the class website for everyone to see. They are a big hit!”

My name is Tom Turkey and I look swell -

I’m wearing my disguise so I hope you won’t tell!

Handprint Turkeys

Paint the child’s palm and thumb brown and each finger a different colour. press the hand down on paper with the fingers outspread for tail feathers - the thumb for the neck and the palm as the body. When dry, put a red fingerprint for the turkey’s wattle. Use orange marker to make beak and feet and black marker for eyes.

Add this poem beneath the turkey handprint:

This isn’t just a turkey,

As anyone can see.

I made it with my little hand

Which is a part of me.

It comes with lots of love

Especially to say:

I hope you have a very

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

One Fat Turkey

One fat turkey went strutting by

He shook his feathers and winked his eye,

He flapped his wings and his head gave a wobble,

And he looked at me and said, ‘Gobble, gobble, gobble!’

Thanksgiving

Coffee Filter Turkeys

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

Paper Plate Turkey

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

Turkey Glyphs

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

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

The second website has a printable turkey pattern.

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

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



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

http://www.gigglepotz.com/bulletin_jan1.htm

Here's a cute bulletin board idea with hands and feet for the turkey feathers.

Albuquerque

To My Darlin' Clementine

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

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

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

My Turkey

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

Turkey Dance

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

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

Gobble Says the Bird

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

Thanksgiving

Turkey Tails

"I made the front view of a turkey with brown paper, about 2 and a half feet tall, and I put it in the middle of a bulletin board. I've laminated this so I can use it year after year. I send home a cut paper feather (I get two out of one piece of 12 x 18 white construction paper) with a note telling parents to help their child decorate this feather. Anything goes....colours, markers, paint, fabric, buttons, beans, real feathers, etc. I also tell them they can glue it to a piece of cardboard to make it stronger, if necessary. Then as the kids bring them back, I put them up around my turkey for the tail. It always turns out so interesting and colourful.

The all-time favourite turkey poem.....

The turkey is a funny bird
Its head goes bobble-bobble;
And all he knows is just one word...
And that is GOBBLE-GOBBLE!

Thank You

Thank you are the words we say
Not just on Thanksgiving Day
Thank you are two magic words
Say them loud so they are heard!



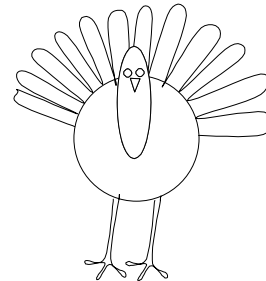
The Turkey Shuffle

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!

Five Little Turkeys

Five little turkeys standing at the door,
One waddled off, and then there were four.
Four little turkeys sitting near a tree,
One waddled off, and then there were three.
Three little turkeys with nothing to do,
One waddled off, and then there were two.
Two little turkeys in the morning sun,
One waddled off, and then there was one.
One little turkey better run away,
For soon it will be Thanksgiving Day.

Make a paper plate turkey. Colour or paint a small paper plate brown. Trace hands onto bright yellow, orange and red paper and cut them out. These are the tail feathers - glue them behind the plate so the fingers stick up above the rim. Cut a slim oval about 3 inches (8 cm) long from brown paper and put the turkey's eyes and beak at one end and glue it onto the paper plate. Draw and cut out feet and glue them behind the plate.



Note: Pardon my computer drawing, but maybe you get the idea.....

Thanksgiving

My name is Tom Turkey
I'm afraid as I can be.
I'm wearing my disguise
So you won't catch me.



Two or three weeks before Thanksgiving send home a turkey outline on brown construction paper. Send a letter that asks the family to give the turkey a disguise so he can avoid being caught for Thanksgiving dinner. Dress him up like a fireman, Superman or a ballerina, for example.



Another idea is to ask the families to decorate the turkey. They could use real feathers, glitter, etc.

Students in Grade Two or Three can write a story about how their turkey manages to escape!

Stone Soup

This is a favourite book by Marcia Brown. Stone Soup is the story about three hungry soldiers who come to a small village in search for food and a place to sleep. The town is poor, and the people hide the food so the soldiers can't have any. The soldiers then show the villagers how to make stone soup. The stone soup begins with a stone and only needs a few other things in order to make it superb.

The students can each bring in an item needed for the soup. They can bring potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, tomatoes, ground beef, beef bouillon, macaroni or rice, and celery. Act out the story. Assign your students different parts and have them add the ingredients to the pot. Cook the soup and serve with bread!

Turkey Talk

Use turkeys to teach a lesson on quotation marks. Have the students make construction paper turkeys and glue them onto large pieces of paper. Then they print something they think a turkey would say about Thanksgiving. Glue elbow macaroni around the words the turkey speaks.

Pumpkin Pie in a Baggie

Pour ½ cup of milk into a small ziplock baggie.

Add 1 tbs. of vanilla pudding mix. Add 1 tbs. of the canned pumpkin pie mix into the baggie as well.

Close the ziplock sandwich baggie tightly. The students mix the ingredients in the bag by squeezing gently until the texture is smooth and thick - about three minutes.

Carefully snip off one bottom corner of the baggie with scissors. Each child will then squeeze out the pumpkin pie pudding into the pie crust, graham cracker crumb crust or onto a plate. Top with whipped cream, cinnamon, or graham cracker crumbs.

Thankful Poem

There are many things I am thankful for,
I can find them near and far.

There are many things I am thankful for,
Let me tell you what they are.

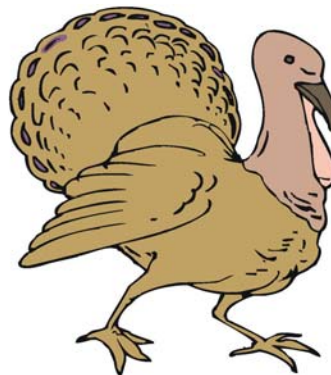
I am thankful for the sun.

I am thankful for the trees.

I am thankful for my friends.

And I'm thankful to be me!

Author Unknown



Turkey, turkey
Gobble, gobble.
Eat too much and
Waddle, waddle.

Websites:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/thanksgiving/>

Lots of art ideas.....

<http://www.edhelper.com/Thanksgiving.htm>

Lots of ideas and printables!

Halloween is Coming!

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

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

Houses to AVOID while Trick-or Treating

Have your students brainstorm a list and draw the houses that should be avoided! The following list is an example.....
Any house made of food. Any house that sits four feet above the lawn. Any house that makes weird noises. Any house where green lights flash out the windows. Any house with realistic statues in the front yard of people in 'running away' poses.



Witches and Wizards

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

3-D Ghosts

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

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

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

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

Three Little Witches

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

Halloween

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

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

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



Karey

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



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

Write a story:

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

Sponge paint a white ghost on black paper.

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

<http://www.pumpkin carving101.com/>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Halloween Activities

Spider Webs

Cook spaghetti, rinse it well and then leave it in cool water. Lay the strands out on wax paper to make a web. Put a bit of liquid glue where the strands cross. Let dry thoroughly and carefully peel off the wax paper.

Draw spider webs to practice the formation, then draw one on wax paper - not too elaborate. You may want to give the students a set number of lines. Take liquid glue and make a solid ridge of glue along the web lines, leaving no spaces. When the glue is dry, peel off the wax paper and you have a web!

EEEEek!

Take digital pictures of each child making the scariest Halloween face possible and put into a pumpkin frame (a pumpkin shape with the centre cut out) with the date, the grade and school. Place a magnet on back for the student's refrigerator.

Draw Spooky Trees

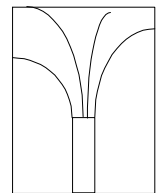
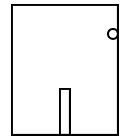
Drawing trees is a very useful skill. We use trees in many art projects. At Halloween the students draw spooky trees, with haunted houses and bats.

1. Draw a upper case letter Y that is about as tall as your paper. The vertical part is the trunk, and the arms are two of the branches. Widen the trunk. Now make middle-sized Ys, the stem touching an arm of the original Y. Make smaller ones, again with the stem of the Ys touching these 'branches'.

Demonstrate the tree. The students find it easier if they turn the picture so the Ys are made 'right-side up'.

2. Make a narrow rectangle at the centre bottom of the page. Colour this rectangle brown (the trunk). Then have the child put his finger on the side of the paper where the little circle is, and draw a curved line from there to the upper right-hand corner of the trunk. Do the same on the left to the upper left-hand corner, and two other lines from the top to the middle of the trunk. Widen these branch lines and colour them brown so the line across the top of the rectangle disappears and it all becomes one. Add more smaller curved lines as side branches. Ask the students to only draw 4 or 5 side branches on each long branch..... some children want to put dozens! The curve on these little branches should be toward the end of the branch it is on, not away from it.

For a spooky tree, practice drawing it as shown, then do another with wavy twisted lines.



Hookey Spookey (Tune: Hokey, Pokey)

Put your right hand in, take your right hand out,
Put your right hand in, and shake it all about.
Do the Hookey Spookey and fly like a bat.
That's what it's all about.

Continue using other parts of the body .



I'm a Little Pumpkin

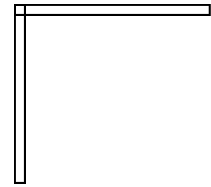
I'm a Little Teapot
I'm a little pumpkin
Round and stout
Packed full of seeds
That you can scoop out
When I get all carved up
Then I'll be
The cutest Jack-o-Lantern
You ever did see!

It's Halloween!



Cut out huge pumpkins from the largest construction paper. Add triangle eyes and nose and a toothy mouth.

Teach the students to fold a spring. Glue two long strips of orange construction paper at right angles to one another. Then take the strip that is underneath and fold it over the top to make the right angle again. Take the one underneath and fold it over the top again and press down. Keep doing this until the strips have been folded into a pile. Glue down the top ends. Always keep the centre on the table - if the children lift it, the folding gets confused. Make four of these. These are the arms and legs, so glue them at the sides and bottom of the pumpkin.



Have the students work in pairs to trace their hands and feet on black paper with white pencil crayon or chalk. Cut these out and glue them on the ends of the springs.

These are fun!

Make skeletons out of Q-tips, straws or noodles. This works well with a unit on the human skeleton.



Teach or review shapes by making a big witch! Use a circle for the head, a square for the torso, a bigger triangle for the skirt, a triangle for the hat with a narrow rectangle for the brim, circles for the feet, rectangles for the arms and circles for the hands. A long thin rectangle makes the broom, with a square or rectangle for the bristles. Add a face, wool or curly paper strips for hair. If these are made almost child-sized, they are very cute lining the hall outside your classroom!

Another hall decoration that is effective is to begin with a fence. Cut brown fence pickets - rectangles with pointed ends. Then cut out a large tree from black paper and put it at one side. The students can make jack o'lanterns to sit on the fence or at its foot. They can make bats to fly in the air.

You can begin this before Thanksgiving, with the fence and the tree. Coloured leaves can be falling. Add wheat sheaves behind the fence and put a big scarecrow in front of the fence. Add a few pumpkins that are not yet jack o'lanterns.

Fingerpaint large sheets with orange and then cut big, big pumpkins out when they are dry. These are very effective! Older children can fingerpaint the curved pumpkin ribs.

Pumpkin Pudding Cups

pumpkin pie filling with spices
prepared whipped topping
2 packages of instant vanilla pudding
milk
small plastic cups

Make up the pudding with milk to the directions. Add the pumpkin pie filling and stir well (or use electric mixer). The children then spoon the mixture into the cups. Add a blob of whipped topping!

They chose me from my brothers,
"That's the nicest one!" they said.
And they carved me out a face,
And put a candle in my head.
Then they set me on the doorstep,
Oh, the night was dark and wild.
When they lit the candle,
Then I smiled!

Halloween is Coming!

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

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

Bottled monsters! Cute!

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

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

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

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

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

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

The witch takes a cat.....

The cat takes a bat.....

The bat takes a ghost.....

The ghost says "BOO".....



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

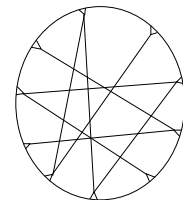
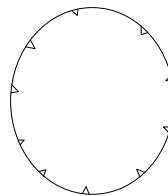
“One person is it. The rest of the class lines up on the middle line of the gym and does a little dance singing “Witch, witch, couldn't sew a stitch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich!”

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

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

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

Hang the spider web, and add a spider:





Halloween Fun!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here are some good websites to visit for more ideas!

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

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

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

Five Little Witches

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



Halloween is Coming!

Write a class book for Halloween! It could be one of these:

Pattern it on Brown Bear, Brown Bear..... Begin with 'Black cat, black cat, What do you see?' and on the opposing page..... 'I see a white ghost, looking at me.' Then 'White ghost, white ghost, what do you see?' etc.

Make a book with each student getting a page - 'On Halloween I will be _____.' and an illustration.

'In the haunted house I saw a _____.'



If you want to do less Halloween but still celebrate the season, learn about owls, bats and spiders. They make great room decorations, too. You can have the students research these, write about them, do art projects and learn poems.

"I make these gorgeous little hanging bats from a black sock and felt for the wings, eyes, etc. They are adorable! I have a large tree on a bulletin board and the bats hang up side down from that tree."

"I make black cats from a large circle (the body), a smaller circle for the head, triangles for ears, and a long tail. The children glue sequins on for eyes, and the cats are very effective."

Put up a picture of a skeleton. Teach the names of the main bones and talk about the human skeleton. Then give the students a large piece of black construction paper and put out white straws, q-tips and the foam peanuts. Can the students make a skeleton? Try first, and glue later.

Draw a simple spider web on paper. Then make thin glue lines and put black yarn on the line.

Trace the bare foot for a ghost shape - the heel is the head and the toes the bottom. Cut out of white tissue paper and use just a tiny bit of glue to glue just the head down so the ghost can move and you can see through it!

"Have the kids paint a paper plate with black tempera paint and let it dry. When the plates are dry, using a single hole punch, punch holes around the outside edge of the plate. Using white yarn, tie one end to one of the holes on the paper plate and the other end to a plastic needle. Have the students lace in and out of the holes in what ever directions they want to create a spider web. When they are done, knot off the remaining end to the paper plate and make a construction paper spider to go on the web. I did this as a buddy activity with my Kindergarten class and the grade 5 class."

"We make pumpkin pizzas – English muffins with cheese cut out from a pumpkin cookie cutter, pizza sauce and pepperoni."

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

"My students always love to make haunted houses. We start with a 12" x 18" of gray paper and they draw a house that size. They make their lines a bit wavy for a spooky effect. They draw doors and windows and then cut along 3 sides and fold them so they open. This is glued to black paper. Then spooky things are put in the windows, so you can see them when the window (or door) opens."

It's Hallowe'en!

A pumpkin round and very fat (*hands clasped, arms forming a circle*)
A scary witch with a pointy hat, (*hands making hat above head*)
The shiny eyes of a big black cat, (*point to eyes and look around*)
That is Hallowe'en!
A ghost that's hiding the hall, (*make swooping "ghost" gestures with arms*)
A skeleton wobbling on the wall, (*make body wobble back and forth*)
The spooky sound of an owl's call, (*hand cupped behind ear, listening*)
That is Hallowe'en!
A walk in the dark in the shivery night, (*shiver*)
Door bells ringing with all their might, (*imitate ringing door bell*)
Candy, cookies, and apples to bite, (*rub stomach*)
That is Hallowe'en!

<http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/2ndgrade/halloween.htm>

Grade Two students have made up Hallowe'en math problems.

Try these on your goblins!

Cut out pumpkins from construction paper. Give each pumpkin an expression.

Attach a stick to each pumpkin puppet.

Say the poem using appropriate expression.

Here is a pumpkin who's happy
Here is a pumpkin who cries
Here is a pumpkin who's sleepy
Here is a pumpkin who sighs
Here is a pumpkin who's angry
Here is a pumpkin who's sad
Here is a pumpkin who's noisy
Here is a pumpkin who's glad!



"We folded a piece of paper like a greeting card and drew a pumpkin on the front. Inside we drew the outline of the pumpkin and printed, 'I like a pumpkin, the outside'. Inside we showed the 'meat' and then glued seeds. Inside was printed 'and inside!'."

When Is Hallowe'en?

When (adjective) (noun) (verb)

And (adjective) (noun) (verb)

When (adjective) (noun) (verb)

And (adjective) (noun) (verb)

Then it's Hallowe'en!



Say this in your spookiest voice.

Ghost Chant (recite very quietly)

Ghost so scary.

Ghost so white

Don't scare (child's name)

On Halloween night!

"I let my grade two students plan their Hallowe'en party. At the beginning of October we discuss the party and the students put their own ideas for games and food into a plastic pumpkin. A week before Hallowe'en we vote on the food that has been suggested. The games must be created by the students, so they discuss the games that have been suggested and vote for three or four. They write out the rules and agree on them. This makes the party more relevant."

Halloween Is Coming

Halloween is coming,
What will you be?
I might be a pirate
On the deep blue sea.

Halloween is coming,
What will you do?
I might go trick or treating,
How about you?

Halloween is coming,
Who will you meet?
I might meet a princess
Skipping down the street.

Halloween is coming,
What will you wear?
I might wear a blanket
And be a brown bear.

Halloween is coming,
What will you see?
I might see a jack-o-lantern
Winking at me.

Halloween is coming,
What will you be?
It's a SECRET,
So wait and see!

“We did white handprints (minus the thumb) on black paper. The fingers were together so the palm made the ghost head and the finger tips the skirt. We added eyes. The students printed ‘Ghost so scary, ghost so white, please don't scare _____ on Halloween night’.”

Cook spaghetti and rinse it well. Let it cool and lay the strands out on wax paper to make a web. Put a bit of glue where the strands cross. When it is completely dry, remove the wax paper.

Talk about spider webs and how they are formed. Draw a couple so the students are familiar with the formation. Now take liquid glue bottles and ‘draw’ the web on wax paper. Make sure all the lines join and that there aren’t any spaces. When it is dry remove the wax paper carefully.



Halloween Games

Hallowe'en Musical Chairs - Play it the same as the usual Musical Chairs, but play spooky Hallowe'en music.

Pin the Stem on the Pumpkin - This is played just like *Pin the Tail on the Donkey*. Have a large pumpkin cut-out and make a separate stem. Other variations: *Pin the Nose on the Pumpkin*, *Stick the Nose on the Witch*.

Find the Ghosts - Make enough Kleenex ghosts for each child (and a few extras) and hide them around the classroom. To make the ghosts: take a lollipop and wrap the tissue around it so that the top of the lollipop is the head. Tie a piece of ribbon or yarn around it.

Doughnuts on a String - Instead of bobbing for apples (5, 6 and 7 year old children often don't have front teeth, so bobbing for apples doesn't work well), tie donuts on a string and tack to the ceiling or above a door. Try to bite the doughnut keeping their hands behind their backs.

Hallowe'en Sounds

This is the way the witches fly, witches fly, witches fly,
This is the way the witches fly,
Swish, swish, swish.

This is the way the ghosts go by, ghosts go by, ghosts go by,
This is the way the ghosts go by,
Oooh, oooh , oooh.

This is the way the black cats howl, black cats howl, black cats howl,
This is the way the black cats howl,
Meow! Meow! Meow!

This is the way the pumpkins laugh, pumpkins laugh, pumpkins laugh,
This is the way the pumpkins laugh,
Hee! Hee! Hee!

This the way the night owls cry, night owls cry, night owls cry,
This is the way the night owls cry,
Hoo, hoo, hoo.

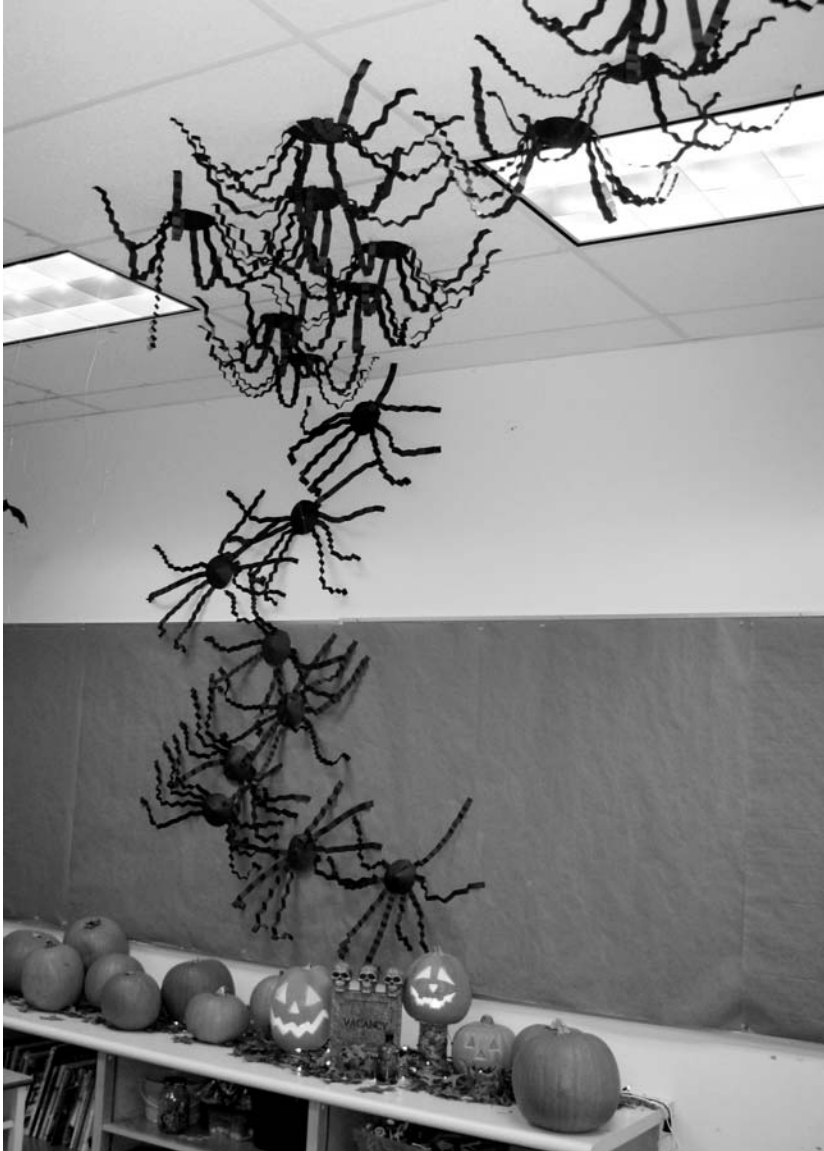
Make yourself an easy costume: buy a large sheet of red felt, fold it in half, cut out the shape of a ladybug but keep the fold at the top. Cut a hole on the fold for your head, and fasten the sides together leaving large spaces for the arms. Use a black marker for the spots or glue on black felt spots. Find big oversized round glasses and a bobbing headband with antenna.



Make gingerbread haunted houses for Hallowe'en! Do them on the small milk cartons with graham wafers, or ‘glue’ graham wafers with royal icing. Use chocolate and licorice, and orange candies and candy corn for decorations and make dark chocolate icing for ‘glue’. Oreo cookies and Oreo crumbs can be used. Have the students brainstorm what candies or other food can be used for decoration that is suited to Hallowe'en.

Some Pics

Who knows - I may not do the magazine next year - and I took some pictures at the local school and the Grade Two classroom of Mrs. Carruthers - a favourite teacher who loves art projects and decorating for the seasons. So these are a couple of her Halloween ideas!



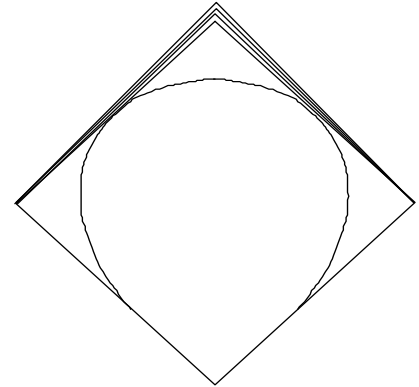
These large spiders climb up the wall and across the ceiling!
The bodies are a simple circle, slit to the centre and then overlapped a bit to make a slight cone shape. The legs are just accordion pleated construction paper.

Little lights go around every bulletin board and on bare tree branches in the corner.



Remembrance Day

Most schools have a Remembrance Day ceremony. Make a wreath to bring up to the front of the assembly. Cut out a wreath shape from tag. Have the students cut out poppies. Fold a square of red butcher paper twice. Hold it with the four points up. Draw a petal shape as shown in the diagram. Cut out the petal shape and open the poppy. Put black dots in the center. Curl the petals towards the center around a pencil. Glue the centers of the poppies to the wreath so it is completely covered. You can add some leaves, too.



Play *We are the World* by Bryan Adams as classes walk into gym.

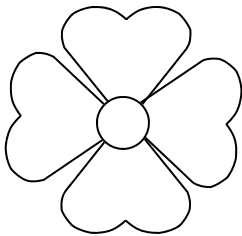


Poppy

Poppy we are but children small,
We are too little to do it all.

Children, you may do your part.
Love each other is how you start.
Play without fighting.
Share your games and toys.
Be kind and thoughtful,
To all girls and boys.

“We talk about war and I ask them what they know about war. Then we talk about peace and how we feel when things are peaceful. We brainstorm things that are peaceful and write them on a chart. Some years we make a book with each child doing a page.”



“We make poppies by cutting hearts. The students first practice folding paper and cutting hearts, and when they are confident they are each given four squares of red paper. They cut out four hearts. Then the tips of the hearts are glued together to make poppies. They can add a red circle and then put yellow and black spots in the centers. Curl the petals into the center. Put them on a bulletin board display or a wreath.”



Little Poppy

Little poppy
Given to me,
Help me keep Canada
Safe and free.

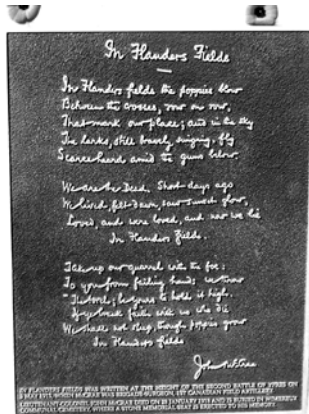
I'll wear a little poppy,
As red as red can be,
To show that I remember
Those who fought for me.

Remembrance Day

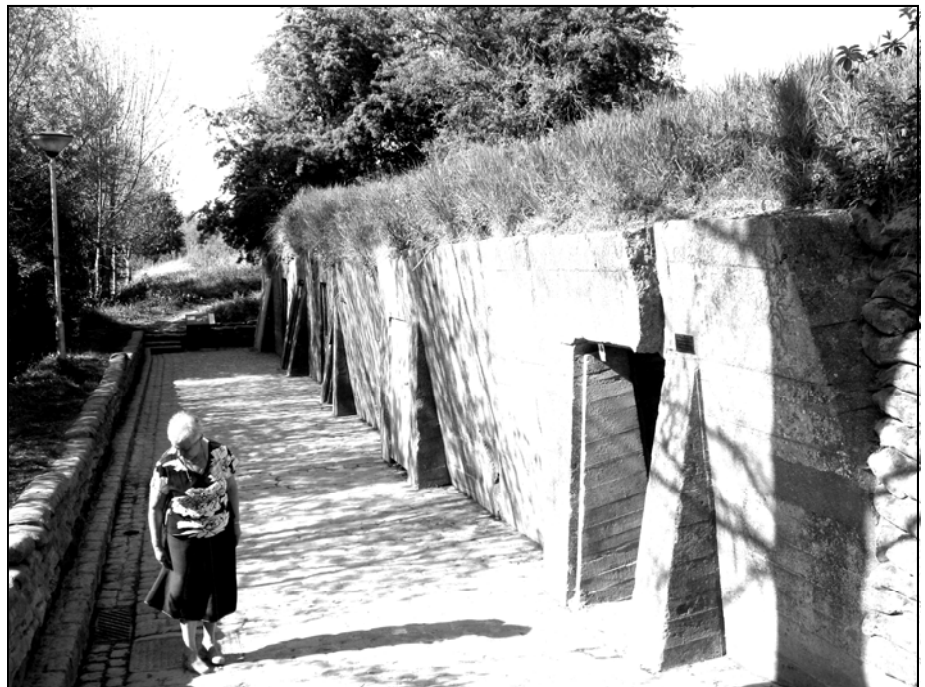
We wear a poppy
On Remembrance Day,
And at eleven
We stand and pray.
Wreaths are put
Upon a grave.
As we remember
Our soldiers brave.

Remembrance Day

Last March I was in Belgium, and part of the tour was a stop at the medical field station where Dr. John McCrae worked. This was just a series of concrete bunkers build into the side of a small ridge beside a canal - dark and damp inside. Near this bunker was a small cemetery and several large cenotaphs with information about the man who wrote this famous poem. Canadians are still revered in Belgium for the fighting in the First World War. Everywhere we went through the battlefields of World War I there were our Canadian flags and our poppies on the crosses of Canadian soldiers killed almost 90 years ago.



This is a copy of his actual writing in stone.



In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, tho poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Lieut.-Col. John McCrae



John McCrae was born November 30, 1872 in Guelph, Ontario.

When he was young, McCrae had a keen interest in both writing and the military. He began writing poetry while still a student at college.

In the years leading up to World War I, McCrae lived in Montreal and pursued a successful career in medicine. When Canada declared war on Germany in 1914, 41-year-old McCrae was among the 45,000 Canadians who joined the war effort within the first three weeks. McCrae felt it was his duty to help his country during these troubled times.

John attended to the health of many wounded soldiers in the trenches.

The **day** before he wrote 'In Flanders Fields', one of John's closest friends was killed and buried in a grave decorated with only a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies were already blooming between the crosses that marked the graves of those who were killed in battle.

Unable to help his friend or other fallen soldiers, John McCrae gave them a voice through 'In Flanders Field'. John McCrae died of pneumonia and meningitis on January 28, 1918.

Before he died, McCrae had the satisfaction of knowing that his poem had been a success.

The poem's popularity helped Canada and several other countries adopt the poppy as the Flower of Remembrance.

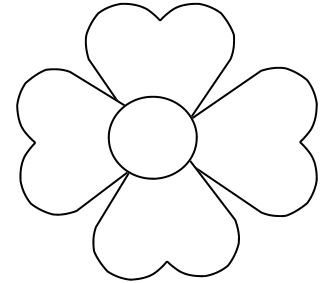
Remembrance Day

“I have my kids colour 2-3 poppies each which they cut out and we make into a wreath to lay at our Remembrance Day ceremony.

“I have them copy a short poem onto a patterned sheet (wreath with poppies) that we put up on our wall.”

“Try cutting a large green pepper in half and taking out the seeds and the cut edge of the halves make a great stamp for a poppy design.”

“I make poppies by cutting 4 same-sized hearts from red paper and gluing them with the points together in the middle.”



Remembrance Day

We wear a poppy
On Remembrance Day,
And at eleven
We stand and pray.
Wreaths are put
Upon a grave.
As we remember
Our soldiers brave.

Little poppy
Given to me,
Help me keep Canada
Safe and free.

On Remembrance Day
Our flags will wave,
To honor those
Who were so brave.



Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Day
We wear our poppies
(children point to their poppy)

On Remembrance Day
We see the old soldiers
proudly marching in the parade
(veterans march or stand and salute)

On Remembrance Day
We see people laying wreaths at the cenotaph
(child places wreath at podium)

On Remembrance Day
We think of the soldiers who died
(heads down)

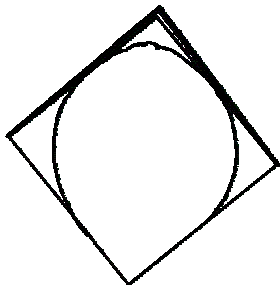
On Remembrance Day
We think of the mothers who cried
(girls weep)

On Remembrance Day
We think of the people who were fighting to
make the world a better place to live
(globe and dove)

On Remembrance Day
We stand in silence *(heads down)*

On Remembrance Day
We remember.

Teresa Williams



Fold red paper twice. Put it on the table as shown – four points upwards. Draw the petal shape and cut it out. This may take some practice on scrap paper first.

Add yellow and black spots in the centre of the poppy.

Glue the poppies onto a wreath.

It's Christmas!

We've Been Waiting

(Tune: I've Been Working On the Railroad)

We've been waiting for December,
And it's finally here.
We've been waiting for December,
Santa's getting near.
Can't you hear the sleigh bells ringing?
Reindeer up so high.
Can't you hear the children singing
As they watch the sky ?
Hurry up Santa!
Hurry up Santa!
Santa, please come to-da-a-ay!
Hurry up Santa!
Hurry up Santa!
Santa, please come to-da-a-ay!
Toys in the sleigh with Santa
Toys in the sleigh I know.
Toys in the sleigh with Santa
Time's going oh, so slow!

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/deer.html>



Here are good ideas for a Polar Express theme....

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

<http://www.cape.k12.mo.us:80/blanchard/hicks/Reading%20Pages/Polar%20Express.htm>

Lots of great links, including a good Kindergarten one for the Polar Express.

Do you remember the Monster in a Jar activity that was a Halloween activity shown in the 2007 magazine? That was great! Now do Santa in a Snow Globe. Draw Santa doing some Santa-ish activity in the globe (a globe pattern is at the end of the magazine) and colour it well, filling the whole globe with colour. Print the child's name on the globe base. Then the students write a paragraph about the picture. Cut out the globes, and put them up on a bulletin board with edited or typed stories.

The globes could be used for other art activities, too!

Spray paint old CDs - or leave them silver on one side. Take a digital picture of each student and print them out in a circle shape so they will fit in the centre of the CDs. Cover each photo with clear contact plastic. Make another paper circle for the other side of the CD, too - and have the children print the grade and the year and decorate it with colour. Glue the picture on one side of the CD and the paper circle on the other.

Take a drill and make a small hole at the top. Put a loop of thread or a hanger in the hole.

Now get the children to 'paint' glue carefully around the outside 1/2 inch at the edge of the CD. Drop glitter on the glue, or confetti or macaroni or other decoration. When this is dry, do the same on the other side.

Make snowmen out of tube socks! Pour graduated amounts of rice into the socks. First pour in 1 1/2 cups of rice and then tie that section off with white string or yarn. Then do the same with 3/4 cup of rice, tie it, and 1/2 cup and tie it again. Fold the top of the sock over to make it look like a hat and put a pom pom on it. Use smaller pom-pom for the nose and buttons. Buy googly eyes at a craft store and let the kids use markers to make dots for the mouth. Use a strip of felt to make the scarf.

Christmas Ideas

My absolutely favourite Christmas art project is Torn Paper Santas. They look so individual and very charming and the parents always want them to decorate for their Santa's Breakfast.

Our Santa's are about 3 to 4 feet tall and are created using the coloured paper on the large rolls, except for the head which is made from pink construction paper. The kids are afraid to tear the paper at first but if they don't rush it won't be a problem.

We begin with the head and then tear out coloured eyes with black centres, a jolly red nose, a white beard and place a little red mouth on top of that. This is probably enough for the first day. Everyone now puts the bits and pieces into the blue recycling box.

On Day Two we tear out a red suit, black boots and mitts and trim with white fur and a black belt topped with a gold buckle.

I love them and put them on the window and along the wall outside of the classroom.

Santa, Santa Books

Make little student books with the following text:

Santa, Santa, what do you see? I see the lights on my Christmas Tree!

(Add foil stars or glitter to a picture of a Christmas Tree)

Santa, Santa, what do you hear? I hear the bells on my reindeer!

(Glue tiny bells to a picture of a reindeer.)

Santa, Santa, what do you feel? I feel my beard, so soft and real!

(Glue cotton to a picture of Santa)

Santa, Santa, what do you eat? I eat a candy cane, so nice and sweet!

(Tape a real candy cane to this page.)

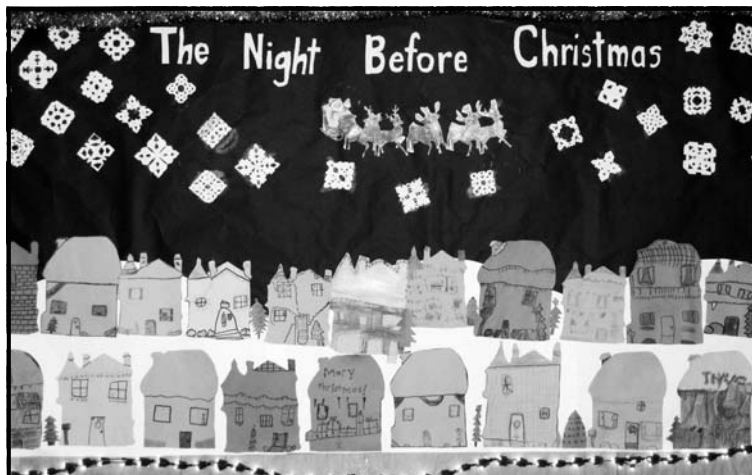
Santa, Santa, what do you smell? Something's in the oven, but I won't tell!

(Add cinnamon to a picture of a gingerbread man.)

The best gifts for parents have a picture or handprint or something personal of the child. If that can be in a tree ornament, that makes it a real keepsake.

"I just did a bulletin board for school. I covered 8 inch squares of poster board with gift wrap of various types. Then I added a Christmas bow and in the middle placed a picture of the child. In each of the four corners we placed an ornament cut from the Ellison machine with a talent that each child has - example - 'I can read really well' or 'I can draw really great rockets' written on each one. In the middle of the board, I attached an empty wrapped box to make it have a 3D component - Caption - 'We All Have Wonderful Gifts To Share'"

Hilda



Christmas Fun

“My class has 10 boys and 10 girls and the boys are bringing 10 gifts, one for each boy, and the girls are bringing 10 girls’ gifts, all the same. On party day we take turns passing our gifts out....great fun to all be the same and not worry about comparison.”

Try these other gift exchange ideas:

-Have each child bring a wrapped book for the classroom! Each child can open one. Then everyone can enjoy 20 gifts instead of one, and your classroom library benefits. Have each child write their name and the date on a special label and glue in the book they bring.



“Here is a door decoration or hall bulletin board. The title says: ‘The Angels in Room ___ wish you a Merry Christmas!’ You can put music notes in glitter above the angels.

Trace each child's foot with shoes off so the toes make the bumps on the bottom. The heel becomes the head of the angel. Then have the students trace the two hands with the fingers together – these will become the wings of the angel. Glue the hands behind the body of the angel. Use a gold pipe cleaner halo. The children then put glue on the ‘skirt’ and wings and put on glitter. They really turn out lovely!”

“Make a ‘Froot Loops’ tree. Fold a standard size piece of green construction paper in half lengthways, draw a triangle with base (1/2 of a Xmas tree) then cut out with zigzag edged scissors (pinking shears). Cut a star shape from the yellow construction paper. This is to put on the top of the tree. Have the children put the names on the back before adding the cereal. Give each child a puddle of glue on a separate paper. They gently dip each Froot Loop bit into the glue and place it on the tree. Glue the star on the top of the tree. Lay flat to dry.”

“My class made calendars as gifts for the parents. You need some computer knowledge for this (not much): I took a couple of pictures each of the kids with the school's digital camera. I then made a page for each of them in MSWord, with their pictures, the year and ‘My Calendar’ on it and printed it in colour. I left a white border around the edge which they each decorated with pictures, glitter glue, etc. - all the fun stuff. I printed off a set of calendars for each of them with some school dates, etc. The children can put the dates in themselves, or you can print the completed calendar. I cut red tag about 10" x 20", and glued the picture page at the top and stapled the calendar pages at the bottom.”

If you want to make your own calendars - MSPublisher and Office have calendars that you can use, and the program puts all the dates in if you just give the beginning and end dates. Then you can cut and past photos or computer graphics.

“On black construction paper the students wrote ‘Merry Christmas 2008’ with white pencil crayon. I took a digital picture of each child and printed them. They glued the picture and a tiny holly leaf on the black paper and laminated it. We then painted popsicle sticks green or red and made a frame out of the sticks and I hot-glued them onto the laminated paper. They looked like little school chalk boards with a Christmas Message. You can attach a hook on the back to be hung on the wall, or a longer string so they are ornaments. The parents loved the gifts. We sponge painted white butcher paper for wrapping paper.”

“An upside-down flowerpot is shaped like a bell! Buy the smallest clay flowerpots you can find. Fold 1/4 inch red satin ribbon in half and push through hole at bottom of flowerpot and tie a small bell on the ribbon for the clapper. On the front of the pot hot glue some holly and berries, cut out pictures from old Christmas cards and glue on, or attach the student's picture. On back of the pot the children write their names and the year. On the rim of pot write ‘Happy Holidays’, or “Merry Christmas”. You could also try the tiny green plastic plant pots to make similar ornaments.”

Christmas Art

“The kids and I enjoy having a tree in the classroom. It is not a real one, of course! I decorate it with lights, and I took curly ribbon bows and pulled them apart and draped them throughout the tree. The students string popcorn and dried cranberries, and we make tiny paper chains from gold and silver wrapping paper.”

“My Grade Ones just love to make paper chains. I precut the red and green strips and I like to see them make patterns with the colours. They usually make so much that I take a box of chains down to the office area and we decorate the entrance hall, too.”

Ornament Gifts

“One of the favourites is a small chalkboard ornament. I cut a 4” x 4” piece of black poster board. The students glue 4 craft sticks - one on each side to make a frame, I make a loop from ribbon and hot glue that at the top so it can hang and then four more craft sticks are put on to frame the back. I take a digital picture of each child wearing a Santa’s hat, and print them out about 3” square. This is glued on one side of the little ‘chalkboard’. On the other side the children use a thin white paint pen to write: Merry Christmas, Love, (name), the year, and some ABC’s and $2+2=4$ on the black board. I hot glue some little pinecones on the corners of the frame, and also glue a little red or green bow in the middle.”

<http://www.geocities.com/txhogue/crafts/ornaments.html>

Look here for lots of simple crafts and tree ornaments! Many of these are useful for Kindergarten and Grade One.

Use clear plastic Christmas balls and dump some acrylic paint and glitter into the inside. Swirl it around and then dump the excess paint out. Let dry upside down. Embellish with a big bow at the top, or curly ribbon tied to the top.



Reindeer

“I have the students trace their bare foot on brown paper and two hands, a left and a right. They can go with a partner to help with the tracing. Cut out the three pieces. Then the foot is the reindeer face, with the heel at the chin. The hands are the antlers, placed with the thumbs together at the top of the ‘head’. Glue these behind the head. Then add a red pom-pom for a nose and the wiggly eyes. They are really cute!”

“I make reindeer from a handprint. Trace your hand on brown craft foam, tag or brown construction paper. Cut the shape out. The spread fingers are the legs, so add black hooves to the fingertips. The thumb is the neck and head, so add a red glitter glue collar with gold sequins for bells, then glue on google eyes and a red pom pom nose at the end of the thumb. Make a tail sticking up from the same material as the body. For the reindeers antlers, cut a brown pipe cleaner in half. Bend each half in two (slightly off center) and curl the ends. Glue together the pipe cleaner pieces, holding them in place with a paper clip or clothespin until the glue dries. Finally glue the antlers in place on the reindeer.”

“I make reindeer from doggy bones. I buy a bag of the dog treats (the biggest ones I can find) - one bulging end makes the ears and the other is the nose. We cut antlers from foam. Add wiggly eyes and a red pom-pom for a nose. Add a red bow between the antlers. They are very cute!”

Handprint Wreath

Trace the circle of a margarine container on large paper. Put green acrylic paint in a large cake pan and get a small paint roller. Roll green paint over the child’s hand and it is pressed onto the paper with the palm in the circle. Turn the paper and repeat until the centre circle is all green and the fingers spread out all around the circle. Let dry, and then add some holly berries with finger tips dipped in red paint. A red bow can go on top.

Christmas Projects

Send home a family project for December! Send an outline of a gingerbread man or a gingerbread house for the family to decorate. Copy the outline on tag so it is stiff. When they are returned they make a great bulletin board display!

Another idea is to send an outline of a Christmas stocking. Then make a fireplace out of paper and hang the decorated stockings on it. The saying that above it can be '...and the stockings were hung by the chimney with care....'

The parents can use whatever they wish to decorate, and some parents are very imaginative!

"Hang a large paper Christmas tree on the wall. Then send round flat paper ornament with each child and ask the family to write down one of their Christmas or winter holiday traditions. The children bring the ornaments back, tell us about them, and then we use them to decorate our tree."

"We made Christmas Crackers. The materials we used for each student were: a toilet paper roll or part of a paper towel roll; a 'cracker' (a long skinny strip of cardboard that, when pulled by the ends, makes a loud 'pop' sound - you can buy these at a craft store); a rectangle of foil wrapping paper about 20 x 30 cm, or 8 x 12"; three pieces of double sided tape; two pieces of curling ribbon (long enough to tie both ends and leave enough to curl prettily); and assorted treats - we gave each student a couple of foil wrapped chocolates, a miniature candy cane, a jingle bell, etc. You also need four self-adhesive star stickers.

Step one: put the 'cracker' inside the toilet paper roll, and using one piece of tape, fasten it to the inside of the toilet paper roll so it doesn't fall out and get lost (don't tape the thick middle section that pulls apart and goes 'pop').

Step two: put the wrapping paper on your desk in the 'landscape' position and put a piece of tape at the top and center.

Step three: place the toilet paper roll on the tape and gently roll downwards, covering the toilet paper roll-- watch you don't rip or wrinkle the paper too much. Last piece of tape goes on the bottom of the wrap to attach it to the roll and hold it on.

Step four: gather one of the ends of the Christmas cracker and tie it with curling ribbon - don't tie it too tightly or you won't be able to pull it and make it go 'pop'. I can see grade ones needing help with this....

Step five: fill the open end with the treats.

Step six: tie the open end closed with ribbon. Curl the ribbon. Again, help needed....

Step seven: decorate with star stickers.

We tied the bell and candy cane on each of the sides with the curling ribbon, instead of putting them inside as treats, and we used shiny silver and red foil wrapping paper. They looked great. It took about 40 minutes to hand out all the materials, do the steps and finish decorating. They loved this, and some of the students went the extra mile and cut out bits of construction paper 'confetti' to put inside their crackers as well.

Martha



For gifts for parents, find something that will be a keepsake. A photo of the child on a tree ornament, handprints or something else that is personal makes a well appreciated choice.



"My favourite art project is to fold 12" x 18" green construction paper in half the 'hotdog' way and draw a big half tree shape to the fold - a triangle and a trunk at the bottom. Cut them out. Make a puddle of liquid glue on a paper scrap and dip cereal bits into it and put them on the tree. Coloured cereals like Froot Loops and the star shaped ones are good. Have several different kinds. Put a handful of each on each desk. Tell the students to eat all the ones that are broken or misshapen and put all the good ones onto their tree. Let them dry thoroughly before displaying."

Christmas Activities

“We had our second annual ‘Santa's Elves Workshop’ and I ended up with 21 of my 22 children attending with their families. I had each family tie and paint a lap quilt (they will go to some seniors in need in our community), make a candy train for Meals on Wheels,

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/candytrain/>

and we all brought toiletries to make toiletry kits for a transition house in our community. At the end of the evening the children presented their readers theater ‘The True Spirit of Christmas’ (it was part of a Polar Express unit). We had a wonderful time and I loved that the families were taking time out of the busy Christmas schedules to stop and make things for those less fortunate than themselves.

The lap quilts were easy. I put a rectangle of polar fleece of one colour on top of one of a different colour. I pinned them together. I cut strips that were 1/2 inch wide and 2 inches long all around the fleece, so it was all fringed. The families just tied the top to the bottom at every fringe. Then they finger painted on the flowers. I took them to the senior's home last night and they were thrilled to get them. It was MUCH easier than last year when I sewed everyone's fabric squares together! Won't be doing that again. I was thrilled with the family turn out that evening, it was great.”

Barb M.

“I like to make Magic Reindeer Food. Mix oatmeal and coloured sugar crystals - glitter isn't safe for birds. You could add some birdseed (call it oats!) Put the mix in ziplock snack bags. Take a brown lunch bag. Glue antlers about an inch down from the top, trace a triangle below it, add google eyes and a red pompom nose - or glue on the hands and foot reindeer on page 26. Glue the poem on the back of the bag. Put the bag of reindeer food in brown paper bag, fold the top down and punch two holes...tie ribbon through as though deer has a bow between the antlers. These two sites with different poems have tags, or the kids can make their own.”

http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/xmas/magic_reindeer_food.htm

<http://www.organizedchristmas.com/printable/showgallery.php/cat/502>

P.S. The second site has how to make Snowman Soup, too.

My, oh my! We do declare.
Here is special reindeer food
To sprinkle through the air!
The oatmeal is for energy.
The sparkles are for flight.
So sprinkle the reindeer food
On Christmas Eve night!
All of Santa's reindeer will
Love this healthy snack
And next year Santa's reindeer
Surely will be back!

Stars and Snowflakes

Cross three craft sticks together in the center of each stick to make a star. Paint some white glue on it and dip in glitter. Or.... glue on cereal and/or macaroni, making each ‘arm’ the same. Paint with white paint and sprinkle glitter on when it is still wet.

Cut stars out of card stock, and paint them with white paint. When they are dry, decorate with white glitter pens, or paint an outline on with glue and dip in glitter.

Make a cluster of snow flakes - get a bucket of foam snow flakes from a craft store. Glue three together, partially overlapping them. Attach a ribbon for hanging.

Christmas Writing

Give Rudolph a different nose. What will he be able to do now?

Write to Santa without asking for presents.

Write ‘how-to’ paragraphs - how to decorate a Christmas tree, how to build a snowman, or how to wrap a gift.



Christmas Ideas

“I cut out a very large green tree from butcher paper. The top is at the top of the bulletin board and the bottom is near the floor. I had to cut two halves so it is almost twice the width of the paper. I added a brown trunk at the floor. Then I strung the little white Christmas tree lights back and forth on the tree. We do a lot of Christmas art projects, and the class makes several different tree ornaments that are tacked to the tree.

Different years we decorate the tree differently. One year I put large pinwheel poinsettias on it. Another we made ball ornaments with the children’s pictures on them. There are lots of ideas. I always get lots of compliments on the tree!”

“Our art teacher cut out large green trees, one for each class from K to 7, and put them up in the central hall. Now every class has to decorate their tree. They look wonderful when they are all done!

We did this last year, too, and moved them to the gym walls for the Christmas concert and they were a big hit.”

“On the last day of November I send home a large Christmas Tree pattern with each child. I call this their ‘Holiday Homework’. Together with their family they are to decorate the tree using any items found in their home. The trees come back beautifully decorated and make a wonderful holiday hall display.”

“I found some bare tree branches about five feet tall. I painted them white and stuck them in some ready-mix concrete in a middle-sized flower pot. I have these up all year with little white lights on them and decorated with seasonal things. At Halloween I have orange lights and black bats on the tree. At Christmas I have lights with mixed colours, and the children make decorations for the tree - hanging ornaments and real candy canes. It is a focal point in the classroom and the kids love it.”

Sparkly Peppermint Playdough

2 cups water
2 cups flour
1 cup salt
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
4 tablespoons oil
4 tablespoons peppermint extract
glitter

Mix all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until mixture thickens and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Form dough into a ball, sprinkle with glitter, place on waxed paper, and cool completely. Store in Ziplock bags.



Sparkle Shapes

Put a simple black outline of a Christmas shape under wax paper. Trace around the shape with liquid glue, making a thick line and closing the shape. Sprinkle fine glitter into the glue. When it is dry, peel it off the paper and hang with a ribbon.

Fridge Magnet / Ornament

“You can make very cute fridge magnets by using can tops and bottoms - taken off with the can opener that leaves the top ridge and does not leave a sharp edge. Trace the lid on red or green paper, cut out the circle and glue it to the lid. Put a photo of the child with the date and grade on top. A magnetic strip goes on the back of the lid.

If you want to make tree ornaments, glue ribbon ends to the back of the lid to make the loop, and then cut another circle of coloured paper and glue it over the back.

Christmas, Christmas

I am always excited when I see something new - new to me, at least..... in my grandson's grade two class-room they made sugar cookies with 'stained glass' centers. They had cut out large round cookies and then used a small cookie cutter to cut a shape out of the center of each - a tree or bell, etc. Then the teacher used a hammer to smash yellow lifesavers into a powder. When the cookie was on the baking sheet, she sprinkled the powdered candy into the cookie centers. As they baked, the centers melted into a gold sheet that was translucent. The teacher said that she had been doing this for years, and did the same thing to make windows for gingerbread houses. She said that she had tried it with other candy, but lifesavers was the only one that worked. She was only using yellow today, but there are lots of colours..... Neat!

“I really like bingo markers! The kids like to use them, they last a long time and they are very effective.

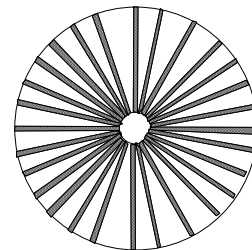
We made Christmas trees. I drew the tree on the paper first and then photocopied it for the children. I found three different shades of green bingo markers and the students used these to colour the tree. They had great fun! The three shades made the trees look very interesting.

When they are dry, we decorated them with star stickers, simple round stickers for balls, and other small stickers that you can get at the dollar store. You could use cereals glued on, or sequins and rickrack tape, or lots of things.

Then we cut out small parcels from shiny Christmas gift wrap and glued them under the tree.”

A Star Ornament

1. Put two CDs back to back so that the shiny sides face out. Glue them together with a glue gun.
2. Wind silver cord or sparkly ribbon through the center hole as in the diagram, around the edge and back through the center until there are rays out from the center circle all around the disc.
3. Glue the ends of the ribbon.
4. Add a bow if you wish. Tie a loop through one of the rays to hang the ornament.



The Polar Express

There are wonderful units and ideas for this popular book and movie on-line. Have a look at these!

<http://www.marcias-lesson-links.com/polarexpress.html>

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

<http://www.kinderthemes.com/thepolarexpress.html>

<http://www.cape.k12.mo.us/Blanchard/hicks/Reading%20Pages/Polar%20Express%20Teaching%20Resources.htm>

This is a dreadful URL, but a good site if you can get to it!

http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/deli/exhibits/1000432/The_Lesson.html

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

<http://www.littlegiraffes.com/polarexpress.html>



Christmas Activities

“Here is a game that I’m playing with my kids for Christmas.

I call it ‘Broken Toys’ – a tag game. Choose 2-3 students to be ‘it’. Choose 2-3 people to be elves. Put them in different coloured pinnies so the kids can tell them apart. The rest of the class are the toys. Set aside one corner of the gym (mark it with pylons or...) to be the North Pole. If a ‘toy’ gets tagged – it is broken and has to freeze in whatever position you decide. The elves can take them by the hand back to the North Pole to be repaired. Once there, the broken toy has to do 5 jumping jacks to repair himself. Then he can go free again. The elves can be tagged too.”

The original game I saw written down was “Auto Wreckers”. Kids are either “Awful drivers”, “tow trucks” or automobiles. When tagged, the tow trucks take them to the garage for repairs, they do their jumping jacks (or whatever) and then carry on back on the roads.

Another game we like to play is called ‘North Pole’. Lay out hula hoops on the floor of the gym – 1 less than the number of students you have. The goal is to be in a hoop – but the person who isn’t in a hoop is always looking to be in one too, and there can only be one child in a hoop. Give each child, including the extra, the name of a reindeer. When you call out their reindeer name, they have to leave their hoop and get into another one. The ‘extra’ person tries to get into one as well. Students can not go back into the hoop they just vacated. To make it more fun, call out two names at a time. If you call ‘North Pole’ everyone must change hoops..”

Heather

Count down the days until Christmas with a paper chain. Take off a loop each day. This can be done in the classroom at calendar time, and also sent home for the family to do.

December the first 'til Christmas
Is the longest time of the year,
It seems as though old Santa
Never will appear.
How many days 'til Christmas?
It's mighty hard to count,
So this little chain of paper
Will show you the exact amount.



Snowman Votive Candle Holder

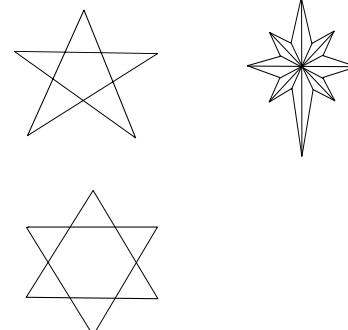
Find inexpensive blue votive candle holders. Have each child dip one finger in white paint, the complete length of the finger. Have each child make 3 full length finger prints on their votive cup.

When dry, let the children add eyes, nose, mouth and buttons using fine point sharpie permanent markers. Place a tea light in each votive holder.

Stars

Teach your students to draw stars. There are three kinds:

1. the 5 point star, drawn in one continuous line.
2. the 6 point star, two triangles
3. the 8 point star, made with straight lines and then the end points are joined.



Christmas Ideas

At the North Pole

If I went to the North Pole, I might see...
If I went to the North Pole, I might hear...
If I went to the North Pole, I might touch...
If I went to the North Pole, I might smell...
If I went to the North Pole, I might taste...



I can see one white beard.
I can see two blue eyes.
I can see one red hat.
I can see one red suit.
I can see one black belt.
I can see two black boots.
I can see Santa!

“I make large elves! I use coloured digital pictures of the students’ faces. They cut them out and add red paper hats with fur and tall pointy ears. They are very cute!”

“Last year I made large pinwheel poinsettias. We cut the square red paper diagonally almost to the middle and brought the points into the centre and glued them. We added yellow bits for the centres and put jagged leaves behind them. They made a wonderful display!”

Make huge decorations for the hall! Finger paint large papers with bright rich colours. Let dry, and cut out very large circles for Christmas balls. Then decorate them with glitter pens. These are very effective.”

Hands and Foot Reindeer

Take off your shoe and trace it on brown paper. Cut it out - this is the face. Put it on the table, toe down. Glue two wiggly eyes (or paper ones) about where the arch of the foot is located, a smile just above the toe and a red nose just above the smile. Trace two hands with the fingers apart from brown paper (the kids can trace two left hands and turn one over to get a left and right. Cut two ear shapes. Glue these on the top of each side of the reindeer’s head. The hands are the antlers, of course. Glue them behind the ears, with the thumbs pointing down on either side.

Countdown to Christmas

“On the first of December I give each student a sheet with Santa’s face. We colour the red hat and his features. I put these up along the chalk rail. Each day we glue a cotton ball onto Santa’s beard and say the following poem.”

How many days until Christmas?
The days are fun to count.
We’ll add a cotton ball each day
‘Til there’s just the right amount.
When Santa’s beard is solid white,
Hooray! Tonight’s the night!



Ice-cream Cone Ornaments

Buy regular size Christmas balls. Hot glue these sitting in pointed waffle cones, with the hanger at the top. Then the students use an eyedropper and dribble white paint at the top so it runs down the ball. The paint needs to be quite thick - do some tests..... If the balls are a bright deep colour like a rich blue or scarlet, the white paint looks great. If you have white Christmas balls you could try dribbling different colours - dark brown for chocolate, red for strawberry.

To make them last longer and not be so delicate (or rot before the next Christmas), spray the cones with clear acrylic.

I have a card ‘tree’, and we hang these on to do the paint dribbling and to let them dry.

Christmas Concerts

First, here is some common-sense advice from someone who had done dozens of these!

1. Many schools do whole school plays and singing. I have to say that usually parents are happier when each class does a piece separately. They know when their child is coming on, and can see their child perform without large crowds of students. This way each class is given its time to shine. There is always a lot of variety this way, so the parents don't get bored.
2. Keep it short! This is easier for you and the chance of it going smoothly is increased. Keep the whole concert between 40 minutes and one hour, if possible. Try to have the least possible time between 'acts', too.
3. Keep it simple, especially with the younger children.
4. Cute is good! If you can have the parents laughing or wiping tears from their eyes that is a success.
5. Do what your class (and you) are good at. If you sing a lot with your class, sing in the concert. If you do poetry and choral speech, do that. If you dance in PE, that is an option. Doing something that you don't usually do makes it much more difficult.
6. Plays are difficult. The audience will be filled with noisy pre-schoolers and the rustle of adults, and primary voices are rarely strong enough to be heard. Plays take a huge amount of practice and are rarely very successful.
7. Keep costumes and props simple.
8. If your children are singing, it is really important to put them in the right order. For example, you will likely have 3 to 5 kids who can really carry a tune and are able to sing out clearly and reasonably loudly. Put these children together so their voices come together. They will carry the rest of the class! Apart they wouldn't feel this power and their voices would be lost.
9. Practice with your kids until they can do it in their sleep. Practice coming on stage, where they should stand and how they get off the stage. They should be able to do it without your prodding in the real concert.

Familiar songs are good for the younger classes. Sing Jingle Bells, Up On the Housetop, Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, etc. Have the students wear elf hats, their pajamas, or reindeer headbands. If your students are not strong singers, play a tape of the song and let the kids sing along.

Try Raffi's 'Looks Like Santa' or the song 'Must Be Santa' - wear Santa hats and maybe beards, too!

Reindeer Pokey (*Tune: Hokey Pokey*) Wear brown and a reindeer headband. Wear bell bands on the wrists.

You put your antlers in. You put your antlers out,
You put your antlers in and you shake them all about.
You do the Reindeer Pokey and you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about!

Then ... You put
your front hooves (hands).....
your brown tail (turn and do a booty shake!)
your body in... (jump forward)

Do the ABC's of Christmas, each child holding up a picture or letter in turn with everyone saying the words.

<http://www.alphabet-soup.net/chris/abcchrist.html>

<http://home.att.net/~scorh5/ChristmasABC.html>

<http://www.santas.net/theabcsofchristmas.htm>

This is a religious one....

A more secular version.....

This version has 4 line verses for each.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

<http://pjkondrat.blogspot.com/2004/12/kindergarten-christmas-program.html>

Look at these great headbands, complete with red noses!

S-A-N-T-A (*Tune: Old McDonald*)

Who laughs this way, HO HO HO, S-A-N-T-A,
Who drives the sleigh through sleet and snow, S-A-N-T-A,
His hair is white, his suit is red,
He wears a red hat on his head.
Who brings fun for girls and boys, S-A-N-T-A



Christmas Gifts

Class Gift Exchange

There are a couple of ways to handle this that are better than the old drawing names exchange!

1. Have every child bring a book to give to the classroom. Wrap them, hand them out randomly and open in the circle. Everyone is getting all the presents! Have several in case a student can't bring one or forgets.
2. Have the children each make a bag or stocking, and each student brings enough tiny gifts for every other child - dollar store pencils, wrapped candy, etc. Everyone will get the same - oodles of tiny presents!

"I give my students this gift every year. I go to Home Depot and buy a sheet of white shower board. I have them cut it into 12" x 15" pieces. Then I bind the edges with brightly coloured electrical tape. I buy washable markers and include one in each gift. The kids love them!"

Gifts for Parents

- Try to give something meaningful - a photo of the child, handprints or appropriate art work are always appreciated!

- Make tree ornaments with a picture of the child and grade and year. These can be done with a frame made with baker's clay or popsicle sticks, or the child's photo can be glued to a clay Christmas cut-out - a bell or a candle, etc.

- Cover a babyfood jar with complimentary shades of tissue paper. Paint the surface with a glue and water mix and layer the tissue paper. Put a votive candle inside.

- Handprints in plaster-of-paris or printed with paint are always a welcome gift, especially in Kindergarten.

- "I got small picture frames (2 per pack) at the dollar store. I want to frame my student's original art-work in them for a holiday gift for families. I will have the children draw a picture of their families for the frame - or they could do a self-portrait."

Clay Ornaments

4 cups flour

1 cup salt

1 1/4 - 1 1/2 cup water

Mix together and knead until smooth. Add food colouring if desired. Three dimensional figures can be made or you can use a rolling pin and cookie cutters to make shapes. Bake at 300 degrees until set and golden (1/2 hr to 1 hr). For a more golden appearance, paint with a beaten egg when it is almost done baking and looks dry. Don't use egg on coloured dough. For coloured dough, paint with shellac or lacquer after baking.

Use a drinking straw to make a hole for hanging, before baking, of course.

Cinnamon Ornaments

Use cinnamon, applesauce and glue to make ornaments.

1 1/2 cups ground cinnamon (it can be purchased cheaply in bulk at Costco or Walmart)

1 cup applesauce

1/4 cup white school glue

Roll it out like cookie dough and use cookie cutters to make shapes.

They need to dry thoroughly, usually about 48 hours. You can also use a toothpick to write words or the year on the top. They smell lovely!

This is a cute snowman!

http://www.make-stuff.com/recycling/bottle_snowman.html

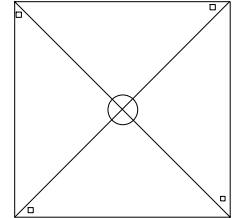


Christmas Art

Poinsettias

Have the students fingerpaint a sheet of red paper and a sheet of green paper. Use large oval leaf patterns and have the students cut out five green oval shapes and eleven red oval shapes. (Pick an uneven number - older students will be able to make more pieces than young ones.) Glue one end of each red oval into the center of the flower so the petals are evenly spaced. Glue the green ones behind the red ones so the ends stick out. Put a red circle in the center of the poinsettia and make yellow spots for the flower center. The bigger you make these, the more striking they are!"

Make pinwheels from red paper,. Begin with a square and fold diagonally twice. Draw a small circle in the center. Cut down the lines from the corners to the circle. Take the corners with the little squares and bring them into the center and glue. These make three-dimensional poinsettias that are great for tree decorations or bulletin boards.



Christmas Trees

"For a neat bulletin board... we made green footprints last week and this week we added glitter toes! I stapled them by the heels into the shape of a Christmas tree, all overlapping each other. It's really cute."

The children trace and cut out their hand prints from green paper. I arrange them in a tree shape on the bulletin board and we decorate it with all the decorations we make."

We turn the pointed cones upside down and paint them like little Christmas trees.

Ornaments

"I like to make paper chain hanging ornaments. This is also a math lesson. I give the children a math sentence (plus or minus). They use pieces of wrapping paper to make the paper chain answer. We hang them on the paper tree that we'll make for the bulletin board.

"I buy inexpensive silver ball ornaments. The children paint the silver balls with either designs or just a mush of paint. The mush of paint looks absolutely dreadful and then it dries into the most beautiful ornaments. The silver shimmers through the dry paint. I use dry paint discs with lots of water, not liquid tempera. The liquid paint tends to be too thick and it breaks off when it dries. I wrap these up for Christmas gifts for the parents. The paint seems to last for a long time."

The Handprint Snowman Ornament

Buy dark blue Christmas balls. Put the hooks in the balls before you begin. Paint a child's palm and fingers with white acrylic paint. Set the ball down in the palm of the child's hand. Press the fingers up around the sides of the ball. Open the hand and lift the ball out carefully. While the paint is still wet, sprinkle the fine glitter on the white paint to make it look like the snow is glistening. Hang to dry. when the child's fingerprints come up around the sides of the ball, it looks like snowmen standing in the snow. Use sharpie markers to make black eyes, orange carrot nose, mouth, and buttons.

These aren't just 5 snowmen as anyone can see, I made them with my hand Which is a part of me.

Now each year when you trim the tree, You'll look back and recall Christmas of 2004 When my hand was just this small!

<http://www.littlegiraffes.com/christmas.html>

This site has a picture of the ornaments.

Reindeer

“I’ve made simple reindeer. Purchase a puzzle with larger pieces, and then remove all the pieces with a straight edge. Have the kids each select 3 pieces and paint them brown on one side. When dry, arrange the pieces so that two are pointed outwards as the antlers, and the third piece is on top pulled down so it looks like a nose. Add googly eyes, and a jeweled nose with a red sequin at the tip of the piece. You can attach a small magnet on the back with hot glue, or a ribbon to hang it on the tree. They can also have a small pin hot glued on the back to make a Christmas brooch.”

“Use three craft sticks and glue them to form a triangle. Put a red pom pom on the nose point and pipe cleaners cut in half and wrapped around the horizontal stick. Add wiggly eyes on the angled sticks.”

<http://www.littlegiraffes.com/christmas.html>

Here is a great poem about Rudolph that you can make into a little book for your students or even use as a concert poem. There are oodles of other super art ideas for the Christmas season. Don’t miss it!

Make hand and foot reindeer! Trace one foot and two (opposite) hands on brown paper and cut them out. The foot is the head with the heel as the nose. The hands are the antlers.

These are great sites to see Christmas crafts and ornament

<http://www.geocities.com/txhogue/crafts/ornaments.html><http://www.geocities.com/txhogue/crafts/dec.html>

Santas

Enlarge this Santa head (or other) as large as possible. The students trace their hands on white paper and cut them out, cutting across the palm. Curl the fingers. Glue them onto the beard, beginning at the bottom and layering them.



You can also pull cotton batting apart until it is thin, ‘paint’ liquid glue on small sections of the beard and hat band and stick on the cotton batting. Then glue another section, until the beard is all covered.

Bulletin Boards

Make angels and put photos of the children’s heads on the angels.

Make a large fireplace. Have the students make Christmas stockings and decorate them - hang them on the fireplace. Print the names on the stockings. Older students can use a stocking shape to write a story or a letter to Santa.

Classroom Christmas Trees

Do an environmentally friendly Christmas tree in your classroom. Use an artificial tree or a bare deciduous tree (as is, or painted white).

See if all the decorations can be natural and student made.

Do some ‘old-fashioned’ decorations - string popcorn and/or dried cranberries.

Make paper chains using small strips of red and green or silver and gold paper. Make the strips small so the chains don’t dwarf the tree.

Re-cycle old Christmas cards. Have the students collect can lids (with the rolled edges) and glue Christmas card cut-outs to both sides and add a string. These can also have student’s pictures.

Roll small cones in paint and glitter or use the coloured glitter pens. Hot glue a ribbon loop to the top.

Make the cinnamon and glue gingerbread men ornaments. They smell lovely!

Christmas Gifts

A Candle

Buy three kinds of small beans, preferably in three colours. For Christmas colours, get kidney beans, white beans and green split peas. You can also use the coloured aquarium rocks. Have a 6 oz. paper cup for each child, with the names on the bottom.

Mix up the beans and add liquid glue (the white glue that sets clear). Fill the cups with the mixture to about 2 cm. from the top. Take a 25 cm. tapered candle and push it down in the bean mixture. Let it dry for at least two days. Cut or tear off the paper cup carefully. Tie a ribbon around the base of the candle, next to the beans.

“We get baby food jars and ‘paint’ glue on the outside. We then cover them in a layer of red and green tissue paper squares. We then do one more layer of glue. Drop in a tealight candle and we’re all done!”

Photos

“I take a digital photograph of each student in front of a Christmas bulletin board and print them out. The students glue the outer edges of the photo to oaktag. Then I give them eight coloured tongue depressors to create any type of frame they’d like. We string them on gold ribbon. I then give the kids glitter glue pens to neatly decorate their frame. They really are fancy and beautiful. Parents always love them.”

Christmas tree decorations with the student’s photo and the year and grade level are always appreciated, and are brought out every year afterwards to decorate the tree.

“My children make ornaments using Elmer's glue, green food dye, and shredded wheat crushed. You mix this, shape it into a wreath shape and place the child's picture in the middle after they dry. They can be dressed up with glitter and ribbon.”

Exchanging Gifts in the Classroom

This practice is becoming less popular, but the children do love presents! When students exchange gifts, some are always disappointed. Some children don’t bring gifts and some of the gifts are not suitable. Here are some other ideas that let the children have the pleasure without the problems.

Have the students each bring a book wrapped as a gift for the classroom. Have a few extra for the students that don’t bring one or are unable to bring one. They can all be put under the tree and each child in turn may take one or take one that another student has previously chosen. You can also put on Christmas music and hand the gifts around until the music stops. When every child has a gift, take turns opening them. Or... the student that brought the gift can open it. You can put a insert in the beginning of each book telling who brought it and the year. Kids will come back in later years to visit and see if their book is still there!

Have every child bring enough of a small item for every student in the classroom. Put these in individual paper stockings. Possibilities are wrapped candies, school supplies such as pencils or erasers, stickers, small toys, party grab bag favours, etc. This way every child gets a stocking to open and everyone gets the same things.

If your school is in a higher socio-economic area, have each student bring a present for a child that can be given to a social agency that hands out gifts at Christmas.



The favourite Christmas gifts for parents are pictures of the child and/or neatly done crafts - child made not teacher made....



Christmas Activities



“For our holiday party, we switch between the 3 classrooms and the students do 2 activities in each room:

1. We made a paper plate Santa with cotton beard.
2. We organized a bag of reindeer food with a poem about sprinkling it on the front lawn. We mixed raw oatmeal, birdseed and the coloured sugar crystals to sparkle. (Don't use glitter - it can harm wildlife and is not bio-degradable.)

Sprinkle on the lawn at night
The moon will make it sparkle bright
As Santa's reindeer fly and roam
This will guide them to your home.

3. We made a nutcracker using toilet paper rolls.
4. A teacher taught the children how to play the dreidel game.
5. They liked to make snowmen cookie treats - an oatmeal cookie as the bottom snowball, a vanilla wafer as the head, frosting over both cookies, a 1/2 gumdrop hat, mini-m&m eyes, mini-chocolate chip buttons, and a fruit rollup strip for the scarf.

6. We made a snowflake windsock - large piece of blue construction paper, a few snowflakes made by cutting coffee filters, and blue and white streamers to hang down. Glue the snowflakes onto the blue paper, glue the streamers along the bottom, roll into a cylinder and staple, hole-punch the top and tie ribbon or yarn through to hang.

As they make everything and rotate, they carry around a plastic grocery bag to keep everything - except the cookies- they're saved to be eaten at the end of the party.”

Help Others

Have a penny drive and donate the money to a children's charity. This is a good project - just think of all the math work you can do with all those pennies! Have a penny race with students in the next class.

The Partridge in a Pear Tree

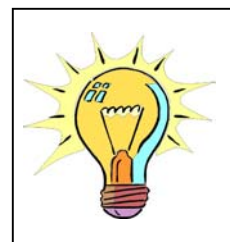
For each one of the days, we like to do a different hand or body movement.

- Partridge in a pear tree - hold your hands over your head like a ballerina (my girls like to stand on their toes)
Two turtle doves - put your folded hands on one cheek and bend your head to the side (like you're showing that you're sleepy)
Three French hens - put the backs of your hands on your bottom and flutter your fingers up and down like they're feathers
Four calling birds - put your hands around your mouth as if you're making a megaphone and say (a little loudly) four calling birds
Five golden rings - hold out one hand and sing this line really loudly.
Six geese a-laying - squat down like you're laying eggs and get right back up
Seven swans a-swimming - fold your arms at your elbows and make like you're swimming with your hands
Eight maids a-milking - pretend you're milking a cow with both hands
Nine ladies dancing - tap your feet in front of you like you're dancing
Ten lords a-leaping - leap up and down a few times
Eleven pipers piping - hold your hands out to the side like you're playing a fife
Twelve drummers drumming - drum your hands up and down in front of you like you're playing a drum

Tips from Teachers

“This is a tip for using the homework calendars. We have given each student a looseleaf scribbler with a computer graphic and title : **My Homework Calendar** glued onto the front of it. At the end of each month the student brings in this scribbler, which we peruse (semi-mark, as it must go home that night). This has brought up the rates of student participation in the program, and keeps all their work in one spot!”

Karey



“I put my students extra supplies in a large Ziploc (which they bring from home) labeled with their name. This holds it all in one place. I then store the bags in a box, in an easy to reach location, and the students can either get their own, so I get it for them. They have to ask my before they go into the box. I have done this for the past 3 years, with great success!”

Colleen

“I make small name tags for my students by backing small sticky note paper with manilla tag, laminating them, and gluing magnets on the back. I print the child's name on his/her tag and place all the name tags on a table for the beginning of class. When the children enter the classroom in the morning, they need to find their name on the table and place their name tag on the magnetic white board I have attached to a bulletin board. This helps them learn to recognize their name and others in the class. It is also a quick way to determine who is absent before I do a formal attendance. On the white board, I will print words, such as ‘Boys’ and ‘Girls’ under which they need to correctly place their names. They soon learn to recognize these words and develop some graphing skills as we talk about the number of children under each category. I also use these name tags when the children choose which center to go to. I use a large pocket chart with the name of each center in a different pocket. Students must place their name tag beside the center name of their choice. When a center has four name tags beside it in the pocket chart, the students know that center is full and they need to choose another one. This method also helps me quickly locate a student who did not clean up a center when it is clean up time.”

Nicole

“When I am organizing my Grade 1 classroom in August, I make a box of materials that I might need when I get a new student during the year. I put in any notebooks or workbooks that we use throughout the year. I add all the notes that I send home in September about reading, writing, spelling, Math and the reading program that I have set up in my classroom. I add blank name cards, birthday cards etc. so that everything is in one place when the new student arrives. This is a simple thing that takes no time to organize but can save a person time and frustration later in the year.”

Kathy

“I have a class mother. I choose a mom that will be reliable and has time to do the tasks throughout the year or will delegate. This mom calls other parents to help with parties and field trips, or other volunteering jobs. We have a reading afternoon, and this mom calls the others to make sure that every child has a parent or other adult to read with.”

Cathy



“I make privacy ‘offices’ for my kids. I glue two file folders together overlapped about six inches. Then I glue a number line to 20 and an alphabet to the inside of the folder. I laminate them and then cut open the pockets. Every week I provide a sheet with the word wall words that goes in a pocket. The students may put work that is not completed in the other pocket to finish later in the day. I love my ‘offices’, and the kids seem to like the privacy.”

Mary

Shary's Tips

"I have a class with quite a few behaviour challenges and personality conflicts amongst the students, so I try to do activities to build class community. Every Wednesday is designated as Secret Buddy Day. They print their names on a paper, and with their back turned to the rest of the students (so as not to look directly AT the person whose name they have just drawn!), they draw a name. I put my name in the draw too. We brainstormed ideas of things to do, such as picking up things under that person's desk so as to keep our room cleaner, push their chair in if they have forgotten, smile and say hi, excuse me, thank-you or ask them to play, let them go first in line, etc., etc. At home time, we spend a few minutes saying who was our secret buddy and smile at them. It is a huge hit.

To help build class community, we have two parents come in and make Taco Day happen at lunch, once a month. The students go into self-selected pods; each pod is responsible for bringing pre-cooked taco meat mixture, shredded lettuce and chopped tomato, grated cheese, carrot and celery sticks, and cut up fruit for dessert. We rotate pods monthly.

To help the students settle as soon as possible after recess and after lunch, I read from a chapter book. They do NOT want to miss a word.

To build class community, there is a VIP once a week, on a rotating basis. I have an bright matting from a picture, and they bring photos to put inside it, and also 'things' to put in front on it, on the shelf. They give a little talk about themselves via their 'things'. We all learn a lot about each other.

To build class community and for me to get a sense of where each student is on Monday mornings, we sit on the carpet, and go round the circle saying what number from 1-10 we feel inside, and then give one positive and one negative, if any, from our week-end. This is time consuming but it is so valuable! We take about 15 minutes and I will always do it after this. I follow this up once school gets underway, until the end of October (i.e.: so as to hit Parent-Teacher conferences), a 'Touch Base' duotang. Each double page has: page 1 - about 15 feeling faces, labelled and about 5 blank faces; page 2 - divided into quarters, horizontally, with a blank face in each quarter, on the left. First thing in the morning, again after Recess, right after lunch and again just before Home Time, they draw in the face according to how they feel, then write one sentence I feel _____ because _____. It gives a good inside look at how they are all adjusting and leads nicely into friendship skills and also conflict resolution skills.

Reading Buddy time: two buddies cruise about watching how students stay on task, help the little buddies with reading strategies, share their book, etc. These two students pick ONE set of buddies for the Buddy of the Week, at the end of the session. The prize is a 6" strip of border trim, with a ribbon tassel, for each to have as a book mark. They go about with a clip board with the criteria, discussed beforehand, on it. The new names are added to a chart with their names, and is posted in the hallway."

Grade One and Kindergarten children can write this little poem. Talk about the rhyming words on the second and fourth line. The last line will stay the same, so are there any other words that will fit into line two? Bee, flea, tree, key, ski, knee.... Then the students can fill in the other two words with their choices.

I am not a crocodile.
I am not a bee.
I am not a monkey.
I am ME!



Super Teacher Tips!

Cathy's Tips

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



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

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

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

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

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

Pat's Tips

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

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

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

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

Life is the art of drawing without an eraser.

Ada's Tips

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

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

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



Barb's Tips

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

More Teacher Tips

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



Cheryl's Tips

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

I colour-code all the notebooks and folders - and then I hang a list so I remember which colour is which.

The kids have a duo-tang for each subject - that way loose papers always have a proper home.

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

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

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

Heather's Tips

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

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

Barb's Tips

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

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

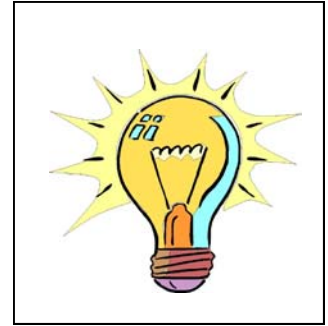


White boards: My husband made them. We went to the hardware store and bought a sheet of white bath-tub surround. It comes in 4'x8' sheets and we cut it into little boards...they are 5" x 7". They ended up costing just under a dollar each. (I took a wipe off pen with me to the hardware store to make sure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

Teacher Tips

Martha's Tips:

I get a class set of empty pop flats from the grocery store and have students decorate and use them as drawers to put inside their desks. If they need to find something, instead of pulling a mess out of their desk, they slide out their “drawer”. It makes it so much easier to clean their desks, as well, because then they organize their drawer on top of their desk where they can see, instead of shoving things inside any which way.



Shake everyone’s hands on the way in the door every morning and out the door every afternoon, make eye contact, and speak positively to each child.

Be available to chit chat for five minutes before or after school with parents (but stay firm about asking parents to set up a meeting if they want to discuss “heavy” issues that deserve more time/preparation/privacy)... you get to see the dynamics between parent and child, and they find you to be more approachable. I should add that my classroom had an outside door where students lined up and parents waited with their children until the bell went. Where I’ve been teaching/subbing for the past four years the students arrive mostly by bus at different times, and many of the schools allow the students to wait in their classrooms with general supervision.

I hold individual conferences during the 2nd week of school to meet with each of the parents—before/after school or by phone (always make sure you have a positive meeting with a parent before a negative one—if I suspect I’ll need to talk to a parent about behaviour within the first few days, I make sure I make some type of positive contact right away)...I tell them about our class rules and discipline procedures; communication book/planner/agenda expectations; washroom rules; homework (gotta use the homework calendars from Primary Success!); update birthdays/addresses/allergies/phone numbers etc. (I also make sure to find out Mom’s last name... in case it’s different from child’s).

I try to do all my photocopying for the next week or more, if possible, during my prep (when other teachers aren’t around and needing the machine as well), and then I keep the worksheets for each subject area (paper clipped and in order), in separate, labeled, cardboard magazine holders - homework calendars (photocopied for the year), printing, phonics, math, spelling, etc. That way, I just have to pull the next set of sheets out to leave on my desk—really helpful if I’m too tired to think at the end of the day or in a rush, running late, etc. TOCs have somewhere to get “extra” work if they’re at a loss for a filler activity.

I use pinking shears to snip the bottom right corner of every worksheet that is completed and correct. I even snip the bottom right cover of their duotangs. That way it is easy to see if someone has corrections to do, and by grasping the pages at the bottom right corner with their thumb, they can automatically turn to the right page without having to flip through each page one at a time.

I use a highlighter dot on my originals—which makes it easy for new teachers or student teachers to help themselves to “extra” worksheets in my filing cabinet, without me having to worry about losing originals. It’s a great way to cull the extra sheets that build up over time, and it helps others out, too.

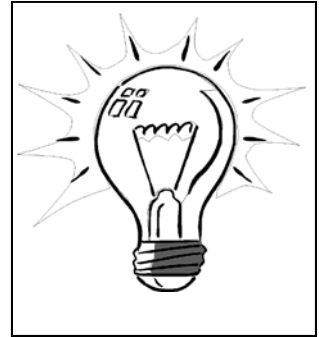
I make sure the students know what all the funny marks I make on their work means: a dot means something is incorrect (it can be turned into a check mark when corrected); if something is underlined, that means it is backwards; if something is double underlined, they used the wrong case (upper/lower); etc.

I save enough lids from frozen fruit cans (concentrate) so everyone has one with their name on it. I put magnetic tape on the back, and use these on the board for graphing activities, voting activities, and question of the day activities.

Super Teacher Tips!

Janeen's Tips

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



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

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

Barb's Tips

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Sharon's Tips

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

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

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

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

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

More tips....

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

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



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

Super Teacher Tips!

Rebecca's Tips

Chair pockets on the backs of their chairs made out of brushed denim have lasted a multitude of years and keeps our books clean, in a safe place and organized ready for reading at a moments notice.

Book bags sewn from upholstery samples are exactly the right size and easy to make as they are pretty much 'pre-cut'.

For recording notes on students progress at a moment's notice I use full sheets of sticky labels ... they don't get lost like post-its and are stuck quickly into a binder at the end of the day under each student's name; when report card time rolls around I have already accumulated notes on each student's progress in a variety of subject areas (I have a subject page for each student).

I use a beautiful soft garden chime to get student's attention rather than my voice ... it's an effective and pleasant way to have them stop, look and listen.

I purchased some garden bucket chairs from Superstore a couple of years ago ... I got the large adult size for about \$8 each at the end of the season ... Grade 1s and 2s are small enough that 2 kiddos fit per chair and they love to use them for reading buddies ... I bought 3 and situated them around the classroom for quiet reading times.

We always play soft music during art classes, it keeps the noise down and the atmosphere is so pleasant ... student's actually remind me to turn on the CD player if I forget ... of course we vary the composer, style, artist, etc. and discuss how the music helps our creative juices flow.

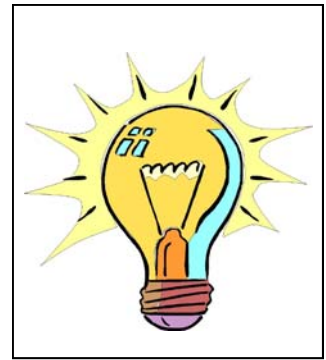
To take attendance in the morning, I have student's turn name cards as they come into the classroom, then the monitors of the week retrieve the unturned cards and track down those who may have forgotten, then they fill in the attendance page and bring it to me to check.

We have teddy bears in the classroom as reading buddies ... they love stories, but they need to be read to everyday ... that's why they 'chose' to live at our school!

At the beginning of the year I create a set of laminated name tags (I now purchase pre-made ones); after laminating them I write each student's name on a name tag/place card with a Sharpie marker and I put sticky velcro on the backs of each card (the scratchy side of the velcro goes on the name tag; the soft side of the velcro goes on the table). I can change the seating plan and refigure tables at a moment's notice ... and I always have extras for when new students arrive throughout the year (I use Sharpies because I can also recycle the name tags by simply writing over the Sharpie with dry marker and then rubbing away with a brush, then reuse with another student).

I used to use baskets of supplies at each table (and I do still have some for the child who always loses everything) but our school switched over to individual pencil boxes which contain writing pencils, colored pencils, crayons, individual pencil sharpeners, erasers, and scissors. We have a high turnover which means kids are always coming and going ... so to save time throughout the year (and to avoid chaos) at the beginning of the year we create about 2 times the number of pencil boxes we require for our class list (I store the extras in the back closet), then when a new student arrives early one morning I don't have to scramble around for the basics but have it all at my fingertips ready for the little one to fit right in.

We begin a 'Songs and Poems' book in the fall using a duotang. We add to it weekly and then have a variety of songs and poems to share with our parents any time. The students take them home at Winter break and keep sharing them with their families at home while we start another in January ... years later I've still had student's come back and tell me they've kept their songs and poems duo tangs and still have them!



We keep our boots on an old bookshelf in the hallway ... our floors stay clean and dry throughout the year, regardless of the weather ... our janitor has personally thanked us for this little tip!

We always take pictures of our field trips wherever we go ... then when we return to school we sort through the pictures and create a 'story' about the field trip as a shared writing experience. Later in the year student's actually do their own writing. We laminate and ciroflex the pages and turn it into a 'book'. The students love to share this with each other and their parents and they will read them repeatedly. At the end of the year we have created enough books that everyone gets to take one home with them for keeps!

I purchase cards from the dollar store to help celebrate birthdays and I create a beautiful cake drawing on the inside using colourful markers ... the candles on the cake each have a sticker atop them for the flame ... students then get to take their bookbag to the office and as a special treat read with the principal on their birthday. At the 'meet the teacher night' in September I explain to parents that should they choose to celebrate their child's birthday with food that it be in the form of cupcakes as it is much less chaotic or messy than cake. I've never had a parent refute this.

In math during addition and subtraction, we use unifix cubes in egg cartons which are cut down to 10 containers from 12 - this really works using Trevor Calkins Power of Ten program ... I've seen kiddos "get it" when other strategies have failed.

I've used the plastic eaves troughs in my classroom to create bookshelves underneath the old chalkboards (I've positioned them about 6 inches off the floor); they provide excellent bookshelves which allow me to place books facing out. Young children do not readily chose books by looking at the spine of a book, they like to see the fronts.

I always get to know the public librarian in my community (school or home); when they cull children's picture books I often get a phone call and they let me come down and take my pick of the culled books. Generally they let me take the books at no charge knowing that they will be in front of children and be read.

I use Rubbermaid dishpans as book baskets in our classroom; they are sorted by genre or author or subject and each tub and each book in it is labeled with a number - that way it is easily relocated to the correct tub ... and kiddos can easily do this, it's not just up to the teacher to do the sorting.

Many years ago my teaching partner and I created an Environment Club at our school ... the students in the Environment Club take turns throughout the year to collect all the disposable juice boxes and dispose of left over juice and straws. We take these to the Bottle Depot. Twice a year we meet as one large group and decide where the money we've collected should be spent ... students have donated to some amazing causes (we built a well in India for a community without fresh water; we donated to the Calgary Zoo Conservation Fund; we've donated to the Mustard Seed to help homeless; we've sent supplies to a new school in Africa) ... they truly are becoming good citizens!

I got rid of my teacher desk and instead used a large kidney-shaped table (which I purchased) and a bookshelf/cupboard. I was able to use the table for guided reading and found it much more useful and less cluttered than my 'teacher desk' which was never big enough to be of much use anyway and at the wrong height to meet with little ones.

Purchasing individual pencil sharpeners at the beginning of the year for everyone has saved us all from the constant grinding of the wall sharpener. Of course you always have the child who sharpens continuously (or so it seems) but that little one was always in line to sharpen anyway.

I always have kiddos write their name on the board when they are heading off to the bathroom ... that way you always know who is out of the room. I also have a rule that only one boy and one girl (with a buddy up until December for Grade 1s) was allowed out of the room at a time (unless of course it's an emergency - as it can be sometimes).



Songs and poems are a great way to start the day when kiddos are straggling in. They can start sharing with a buddy and then lead into a whole group before we tackle the morning message. This way we're all doing something instead of waiting for everyone to gather together ... this also encourages those stragglers who like to dawdle in the coatroom.

Treasure boxes (pencil case boxes filled with buttons, rocks, keys, polished stones, glass blobs, feathers, shells, etc.) are magical to a child and are a great way to practice counting (just remember to let them have some play time with it at the beginning and ending of the lesson).

Counterpillars are strings of pony beads in two colour groups of ten each - 10 blue and 10 white. They are another quick strategy for beginning adding and subtracting to 20 in Grade 1 - easily held in the hand and used when needed.

A 'magic' pointer created by a piece of dowel with a sparkly pom-pom on the end can work wonders for a shy child to take a turn reading the morning message. I really do believe that if learning can always be a fun experience they will be motivated to try their best.

At report card time I always set up stations in the hallway which reflect our learning in the classroom - classroom books are laid out, as are a few copies of the Songs and Poems duotangs, whatever we've been working on learning in math is set up for parents to try with their kiddos, science experiments are also laid out for the kiddos to teach parents. It provides some important glimpses into our classroom learning experiences as they await meeting with me. The students really enjoy showing their parents what they can do and if siblings are along they are occupied as well.

The best beginning of the year art activity I have done (and continue to do) is to meet with our Grade 6 buddies and create life-size paintings of the Grade 1s and 2s; I then laminate them and the Grade 6s help again the following week to cut them out. Then we line the hallway in front of our classroom with these 'bodies' - we now have individual bulletin boards for each student to hold a sample of their work for display to families throughout the school. It's a great ice-breaker for the kids to get to know their older buddy. Since we're on the first floor near the entrance to our school we always get lots of compliments about our 'welcome to the school'!

Individual mini whiteboards are available and very economical, come in a class set, are very good quality and extremely useful for all kinds of activities in the classroom. I teach how to hear the 'click' of the dry marker to make sure it's properly closed and won't dry out. We each have a sock for wiping the board clean (I just purchase a pack of kiddies socks and each child gets one in which to store the marker (we practice math sentences, spelling, even letter printing; it's fast, easy, fun and motivating.

For classroom clean ups to happen quickly and efficiently, I have a music box which is wound and we try to 'beat the box' and get cleaned up before the music stops.

One thing I do is the first month of school I let them pick where they want to sit, of course if there is a problem I can move them around, the next month I pick where they sit, then the next month is their turn again. They like this and try hard to stay close to a friend. I also assign who gets to pick the story everyday, both in the a.m. and p.m. and everyone tries hard to be on time or they get skipped until next time. *Ruth*

To keep anecdotal notes on students and notes from parents organized I use a binder. In the binder is a set of alphabetical dividers where students are filed by their last name. Each student has a sheet with all personal info on it that I get from the office. Then I record all my notes on the child and add pages as the year progresses if I need to. Behind this page I insert a page protector for each student. I store ALL notes from parents regardless of what the note is about. It is so easy during the year if I need to check on something or look back at what a parent requested. I never lose any notes from parents this way and all my notes on students are in one place. *Louise*



More Teacher Tips

“I have a type of management strategy I use in my room regarding washroom breaks. Each student gets a colored popsicle stick at the beginning of the year with his/her name on it. When he/she wants or needs to go to the washroom or get a drink he/she simply asks and if it is granted he/she places his popsicle stick in a bucket and does not get it back until the end of the day. This works well because students are only allowed to go to the washroom or get a drink during class time once throughout the day. If the child does not have his/her popsicle stick they are not allowed to go. If the student has been missing the popsicle stick for more than a week he/she may get a new one but if found one needs to be thrown out otherwise they will take advantage of having two!”

Rhonda

“I took a tip from another teacher to help keep my kids' desks organized: Each child has a ‘pop flat’ box (short box bottoms that a case of pop comes in) that is used as a desk drawer. These drawers are inserted the long way into the desk. There is enough room on the side for a good sized pencil box (I use baby wipes tubs), bottle of glue, etc. We organize the desk drawers as a class. We talk about which items we do not use much, and those things go at the bottom of the drawers. Things that we use all of the time go on the top. “



“One thing I do is the first month of school I let them pick where they want to sit, of course if there is a problem I can move them around, the next month I pick where they sit, then the next month is their turn again. They like this and try hard to stay close to a friend. I also assign who gets to pick the story everyday, both in the a.m. and p.m. and everyone tries hard to be on time or they get skipped until next time.”

Ruth

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Louise

“This is not my idea but one I got from a workshop. I have used it often and the children like it. It's called "Reading Train". I have the children sit side by side as if they are on a train. The children on the left are ‘a’ and the children on the right are ‘b’. I ask ‘a’ to begin reading to ‘b’ and when I want them to change I have a wooden train whistle that I blow. Then ‘a’ moves ahead one person on the train and ‘b’ now reads to ‘a’ or I have them stay seated with that partner and ‘b’ reads to ‘a’. If you have an uneven number of children, the teacher takes a turn on the train also.

Another idea is using the brightly coloured plastic display boards from the teachers’ store for private offices. If a child needs less distractions or is disturbing others put one of these display boards on their table or desk so they are better able to concentrate on the task at hand. I always refer to them as private offices. All the children like them and will often ask for an office to do their work.”

Donna

Morning Meeting: First thing every morning we meet on the carpet and begin our day with a handshake and hello. We stand in a circle. I turn to the person next to me, shake their hand and say, "Good morning, Susan!". Then Susan says to me, "Good morning, Mrs. Leyne." Susan turns to the person on her right, shakes hands and says good morning. The handshake travels all the way around the circle. It's a lovely, calm way to start the day, everyone is recognized, and the children learn to shake hands properly, look their friend in the eye, and greet them with a smile on their face.

Barb

Odds and Ends

Classroom Games

7-Up: An old favourite! Pick 7 children to come to the front of the room. All remaining children put their heads down with one thumb up. The 7 children walk about the room and select one child each by pushing his/her thumb down gently. (If they complain that someone is peeking, tell them they are not to choose anyone who looks as if he/she is peeking.)

After all have selected, then the leader says "Heads Up, 7 Up!" Those 7 who were chosen stand by their seats. One by one they guess who chose him/her. Decrease the number of guesses if only a couple of people are left at the front. If the guess is correct, the child at the front sits down and the other goes to the side of the classroom to be part of the next game.

4-Corners: One child is chosen to be It. She/he puts her/his head down and begins to slowly count to 20. The rest of the class is to move quietly to a corner of the room. (Before beginning the game, determine what each corner is called. I use North, South, East and West. As soon as the child says, '20', remind the students that they must stay in their chosen corner or they will be 'out'. The person who is It announces a corner. Students who are in that corner must sit down. It counts again and the students move again. Play continues until only one child remains.

Here Comes the Judge: One child is It. That child sits at the front of the room with his/her eyes closed and facing away from the class. I select a child by pointing to come to the front of the room. That child comes to stand behind the person who is It and says, "Here comes the Judge" in a disguised voice. If he is correct, he stays, if not the players trade places and play continues. This game came, of course, from the old 'Laugh-In' show - which you may or may not remember, and it can be updated with the child saying something else! Make it seasonal by having the child say "Ho, ho, ho", pretending to be Santa.

Musical Numbers: Place cards with the numbers 2-12 on them around the room on the floor. You will likely need two or more sets. Have as many cards as there are children (or more). Music is played. Children walk around the room and must stand on the nearest number when the music stops. The two dice are rolled and the number that is rolled determines which children sit down. Play continues until one player remains.

Promise

Each day I'll do my best,
And I won't do any less.
My work will always please me,
and I won't accept a mess.

I'll color very carefully
My writing will be neat.
I simply won't be happy,
'Till my papers are complete.

I'll always do my homework,
I'll try on the test.
And I won't forget my promise,
To do my very best!



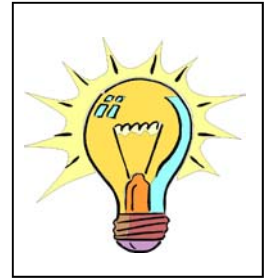
November

Do you know November's here,
November's here, November's here?
Do you know November's here?
A great time of the year!

Leaves are turning red and brown,
Many leaves are falling down.
Leaves have blown all over town.
A great time of the year!

Do you know November's here,
November's here, November's here?
Do you know November's here?
A great time of the year!

More Odds and Ends



Gifts for volunteers, others....

Give your staff friends a root beer, wrapped and ribboned on the last day - the tag reading 'Merry Christmas and a Happy Root Beer'.....

Use this with a package of purchased cocoa mix or make up your own dry mix. Tie the saying to a candy cane with colourful ribbon and tape to the pack of cocoa.

A little cup of cocoa, As you sip this cocoa,
I'm sending your way, It's heat will warm your heart.
For you to sip and enjoy, Just like our friendship warmed mine,
On some cold lonely day. Right from the very start.



Give a cookie cutter with this cute poem.

I made a plate of cookies, I went into a panic,
And ate just one or two. And ordered on the phone
But I started feeling guilty This brand new cookie cutter
Because they were for you. So you can make your very own!

Use one of the poems below with a whisk.

Whether stirring up cakes, cookies, soups or soufflés,
You'll find this whisk useful in so many ways.
But whenever it's use, whatever you do,
It says "Merry Christmas from me to you".

"Whisking" you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Give a package of muffin mix with this sentiment....

You're getting muffin for Christmas.....

"We made Christmas cards for our parents. The children made the front by tracing holly leaves and then gluing them onto a green or red card with red holly berries. On the inside I had them write or copy a cute little poem. I have this one I would like to share."

The Nicest Gift

The present you give another
Need not be a costly thing
If you have tucked some love inside
Before you tie the string



Gifts

What shall we give the children?
Christmas is almost here -
Toys and games and playthings
As we do each and every year?

Yes, for the magic of toy land
Is part of the Yuletide lore
To gladden the hearts of childhood
But I shall give something more.

I shall give them more patience
And a more sympathetic ear,
A little more time for laughter
Or tenderly dry a tear.

I shall take time to teach them
The joy of doing some task.
I'll try to find time to answer
More of the questions they ask,

Time to read books together
And take long walks in the sun
Time for a bedtime story
After the day is done.

I shall give these things to my children
Weaving a closer tie,
Knitting our lives together
With gifts that money can't buy.

Odds and Ends

Tattling....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



A-B-C-D-E
Grade One is the place to be.

F-G-H-I-J
School is great fun every day.

K-L-M-N-O
Reading, writing, watch us grow.

P-Q-R-S-T
Adding numbers 1-2-3.

U-V-W-X-Y
Everyone likes to try, try, try!

We finish with the letter Z.
Now it’s time to go to bed!

A Good Idea ...

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

More Odds and Ends

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



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

Cindy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Odds and Ends

Themes for September and October

"I start with a unit on friendship and names and our school community. We talked about our classroom rules and the school rules. We did a Big Book using the frame of *Brown Bear Brown Bear Who Do You See?* with a different student saying hello to a worker in the building like the secretary, the principal, speech teacher, bus driver, PE teacher, librarian, etc.

Then we did Chicka, Chicka Boom Boom with lots of things to go with ABC's. We put up names on the word wall under the letters - and for the letters that didn't have names, we named some stuffed toys - Barbara Bear, Ziggy Zebra, etc.

We did a Nursery Rhyme theme. Kids don't learn them any more!

We did an Apple theme in September and Pumpkins in October. I have done Scarecrows, The Harvest, Bats, Spiders, the Skeleton and Migration in the Autumn. All of these teach concepts well and interesting facts, too."

An Engine and a Caboose!

"This is something I use with my grade ones that does wonders for their self-esteem. I have an 'engine' and a 'caboose' everyday. The engine is the child who stands at the front of all lines that day and the caboose is the back person. We have a special 'engine' chair that the engine sits on while we are at the carpet and we have an engine song we sing to that child. On the back of the chair is a little pocket chart that I put adjectives in like: super, intelligent, wonderful, helpful, kind,.....etc. The engine picks the adjective that he/she feels best describes him/herself. We then sing a song using that adjective. It goes like this: 'We think that you are _____, we think that you are _____, we think that you are _____, we're glad that you're here.' (sung to the tune of *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*).

I change this routine in January and we start a complement circle instead. That's where the engine sits in the middle of the circle and we each say one thing that we like about that person. I quickly print the complement on a yellow stickie and the children put their complements right on the child in the middle. Once we're done, the engine says thank you and I put all of the stickies on a paper to be photocopied for the child to take home. I went to a workshop on how to deal with difficult children and one of the suggestions was that children need to feel that they belong and that they are cared for. This little routine seems to work and I hear from parents that the kids can't wait for their turn to be engine again and again; they never tire of it." *Barb*

"Here's a song I use during gym class that goes to the tune of *London Bridge*: (the body parts can be done in any order)

Left foot, left foot, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap. [Tapping foot]

Left foot, left foot, tap, tap, tap. [Tapping foot]

Now stand at attention! [Jump up and stand tall]

More verses:

Right foot, right foot, tap, tap, tap...

Left hand, left hand, wave, wave, wave...

Left leg...jump, jump, jump...

Left arm...flap, flap, flap...

I change the song every time, and make new actions up as I sing."

Martha



Friendship Fruit Salad

"I have each child brings some fruit from home (these could be sorted and graphed). We look carefully at each fruit and talk about the colour, the texture of the skin and the smell. Then we make a huge fruit salad with everyone's contribution. We also make butter and a cornbread to eat with our salad."

Odds and Ends



“I make my day plans on the computer. I have a template that has my weekly schedule exactly the way I want it on a spreadsheet. I ‘Save As’ last week’s day plans and change the things that need changing. As many of my reading and math lessons follow the same sequence, I have places for the review, lesson, practice, etc. It is so easy to do up the week, and necessary changes are just done with a cut and paste. I add some notes for a sub, too. My district wants the objectives in the daily plan, so there is a line for that in each lesson. It’s a nuisance, but as most lessons in a subject have similar objectives, this only takes a minute to pop in. Many things stay the same from week to week - for example, in Spelling I only have to change the lesson number. My Principal wants a copy of the weekly plans, so I just e-mail them to him as an attachment.”

“At the end of the day we have a time when we stop and think about what we learned or did today. We pick the most important thing and I write the sentence on a sentence strip, with the date. We re-read the sentence and discuss it. The next morning one of the students is chosen to illustrate it. I keep all of these, and on the last day of the month I put them into a book for the library. I write them on the computer and glue in their drawings of the events. The kids really like to look back to see what was learned in the past!”

“I used my date stamp on all the work until I taught my kids to write the date code. (day, month, year - 29-10-05) Now they print the date code on everything. This is really valuable when I look back at work in exercise books and at work collected for files.”

“I always give gift certificates to my own children’s teachers, thinking what I would like. I especially like gift certificates to restaurants, teacher stores, book stores. Last Christmas one parent gave me a gift card to Walmart and I chose some books and games for our classroom. One favourite that I also give is a Christmas basket with hot chocolate packages, a gift card from Blockbuster and a bag of popcorn.”

“I have my children read into a working microphone. I can adjust the volume. They love to hear themselves read this way. It is also good for Readers’ Theatre.”

“Students take homework and other papers home in laminated manila envelopes. Attached to the envelope is a copy of the homework schedule (Mon. - spelling, Tues. - math, etc.) and a space at the bottom for the child to write in a response to ‘Ask me about....’ The child writes in something he/she is excited to go home and talk about, or I have the child write in something that I’d like them to discuss with their parents. These can be wiped off each day with a quick swipe of a baby wipe.

BTW, baby wipes are soooo convenient for wiping of vis-a-vis marker from laminated paper or tag-board. This is how I make many changeable signs for the room.”

Betty-Ann

“ This year for my Open House I am doing a formal presentation where the parents come to sit and hear me tell about routines, classroom policies, the yearlong curriculum, etc. Last year I did an informal one where the children came with their parents and took them on a ‘tour’ of the room. We practiced what the children would say, I had little signs up at each place, the children had clipboards and there were stamps at each place so they could stamp that they were there (they LOVED the stamps!) I was on the tour, as well as a graphing activity, a refreshment, and the Daily News.

For something to have on their desk, I catch each child as s/he comes in in the morning and have him/her stand sideways in front of a large piece of construction paper that I have hung on the wall (or blackboard). The should be shoulder touching, or almost touching, the paper. I have the overhead projector shine on them to create a their shadow for a silhouette. I do the tracing of it AND the cutting out. I put the names on them as I trace them, put them in a pile, then take them home later to cut out. I glue them to a background piece of paper. On the day of Open House, we put the silhouettes on the desks with the WHO AM I? paper. Parents are then invited in as they arrive and asked to see if they can find their child’s desk based on the outline.”

Odds and Ends

Record Keeping



“I have three different files for each child.

1. The first is a folder on my computer. I have a data-base for each testable subject in one file where all the marks are put, a word processing file where I write down parent contacts, the date and information about the contact, and another word processing file where I jot down anecdotal notes. I try to do this on twice-weekly basis.

2. The second is a file in my desk drawer for personal paper. Here I put the entry fill-in sheet that I have the parents do, notes from parents, etc. I keep emergency information here, too.

3. The third is a file with a collection of work that the child has completed. This is handy when there are parent/teacher conferences. I use a date-stamp to date the work.”

“I keep a class list in a file by the door in a holder. When there is a fire drill I can just grab it as we go out.”

“I have a large 2” binder with dividers. After each name I have blank paper for anecdotal records and graph sheets to put down test and quiz scores. I keep running records here, too, and a grid to keep track of reading levels.”

“I have files in my desk drawer for school forms, information sheets, meeting notes, etc. I keep them in order of date. It is amazing how often I want to refer to something that came up at a meeting, or to check dates on school affairs.”

“I jot anecdotal notes on post-it notes with the date, and at the end of the day I pop them into the child’s file. When this becomes messy, I go through and re-write them into the file in order.”

“I put a sheet of Avery labels on a clipboard and write notes on the kids as I see things happening. Then these are lifted and stuck into the files.”

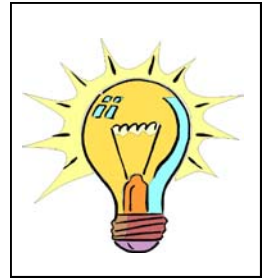
“I make a huge effort to write a lot of anecdotal notes on each child. I try to do at least 10 each day. Then the first thing I do after school is type these into the individual student files on my computer under different subject headings. I find that this cuts down report card writing in half! I have such a lot of information in the files by report card time, I can just write it out without any fuss.”

Concerts

Here are a few basic suggestions for Christmas concerts:

- Keep it simple, especially with Kindergarteners and Grade Ones.
- Do what you and the class do best. If you do a lot of singing with your class, sing in the concert. If you do Readers’ Theatre, do one of those. If you do choral speech in class, that is a good option. If you dance in PE, a dance is a good idea. Problems arise if the students are doing something that is not usually done in class.
- Practice until the kids can do their bit in their sleep, and also practice getting on and off the stage in an orderly fashion.
- Plays are not usually a good idea - the little voices can rarely be heard over the audience noise.
- Singing with a tape is a help - it keeps the students singing together and on tune.
- If you are singing, put your three or four strongest most tuneful singers together in the middle of the group and encourage them to sing quite loudly (without shouting). This will keep the rest more in tune.

More Odds and Ends



The foods which commonly produce allergic problems are milk, soy, egg, wheat, fish, shellfish, peanut and tree nuts. Reactions to peanut, nut and shellfish tend to continue to be a life long problem and are usually more severe than are allergic responses to the other foods.

It is not practical to achieve complete avoidance of all allergenic foods as there can be hidden or accidentally introduced sources, but it is definitely possible to reduce children's exposure to allergenic foods in the school. These rules may help:

- There should be no trading and sharing of foods, food utensils and food containers.
- Children with allergies should only eat lunches and snacks that have been prepared at home.
- Hand washing is encouraged before and after eating.
- Surfaces such as tables, toys, etc. should be washed clean of contaminating foods.
- The use of food in crafts and cooking classes may need to be restricted.

It should be stressed that tiny amounts of certain foods like peanut butter when ingested can be life threatening. Some children may have skin rashes and stomach upsets just from simply contacting residual peanut butter on tables wiped clean of visible material.

- The potential risk of life-threatening allergic reactions to airborne food particles such as peanut or shellfish is negligible.

Using the overhead

Copy a poem onto a transparency. You can use paper on top of the transparency to cover all except the line of words that you are discussing.

Do a math sheet together, or use the overhead to show the manipulatives as the students use them on their desks. when introducing concepts.

Show a piece of writing and discuss errors and the good parts of the sentences.

Let the students use the overhead to practice spelling words.

“I am lucky - I have a phone in my classroom. I put all the parents numbers on a list on the wall by the phone, with alternate numbers for emergencies. I also like to make happy calls to homes occasionally in school time and the student can talk to the parent after I have given the compliments. It is good to make calls home that are not so happy - the child can explain why I am getting him/her to talk to Mom.”

The November Miracle

Well do I remember the terrible feeling in October! Here two months have gone by and the children have learned NOTHING! In the words of a Grade One teacher.....

“Our Grade One teachers were just talking yesterday about how ‘needy’ our children are and remembering what we call the ‘November Miracle’. It seems every year, even though we know better, about the end of October we start saying things like, “These kids haven’t learned a thing!” or “I have worked so hard and they haven’t understood anything!” “They haven’t heard a thing I’ve said. They’ll never be readers!” “They can’t read, they can’t print, they can’t even use scissors! What have I been doing?” Then along comes the end of November and you see those huge smiles as suddenly they are reading words, phrases and then sentences on their own! It’s like a miracle every year!”

So the time for the miracle is approaching. And it’s just in time for Christmas! What a nice gift.....



Odds and Ends

“We have been looking at work by Picasso and so we had a Picasso Cafe today instead of a Halloween party. It worked out really well because I had a couple of children who couldn't celebrate Halloween. Here's my website link to see pictures of the day. It was great fun!

<http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca/Sites/ReportsViewOnePopM.asp?RID=14063>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Odds and Ends

“I bought an inexpensive file box and labeled a hanging legal size file and folder for each child,. It is placed on a table by the door. I teach the kids how to file things in their own folder. Then when I correct their work, they file it themselves in their take home file. All newsletters, calendars, school notices I can file. So even if a child is absent, I know that they will receive all notices. Missed work can also get filed and parents know to complete it and send it back the next day. In center time, the kids file any small art work or crafts in their file.

At the end of the day the file contents are placed in a take-home envelope and put in the backpacks.”

“One of the little things I do involves choosing sides for games. I have a cup with blue and red tongue depressors. After putting in a stick for each child playing, each child chooses a stick without looking and that decides whose team they are on (the red team or the blue team). It is quick and eliminates one child being the last chosen.”

“I have had a hard time with my students returning things to school. I learned something this summer in one of my classes that has made a big difference. We have a Responsibility Book. When students forget homework, our stuffed animal that makes home visits, things needed for projects, etc., he/she must put his/her name in the Responsibility Book along with the date and the reason why their name is there. The teacher I learned this from taught Grade Three and she did it for a month at a time. I think that is a bit too long for my Grade Ones, so right now we do it for a week at a time. If at the end of the week, any students who have not had to put their names in the book receive a prize. As the year progresses the length of time will increase and the rewards will become intangible - extra recess, extra computer time, homework holidays, etc. So far it has worked very well in my room. They really try hard not to get their name in the book.”

“I have found that when I am in the computer lab and want my students attention, it can very difficult because they want to continue using the mouse. The answer is simple - I have them sit on their hands. This tip also works well in the classroom when you want 100% attention quickly.”

“I keep my word wall words in an expandable file folder in alphabetical order. They are very easy to find this way!”

“I take photos of the children modeling behaviours that I expect - kids with hands up, kids holding hands (for working cooperatively), sitting with hands folded, sitting ‘criss-cross applesauce’, lining up perfectly, etc. I put these pictures in stars. Then whenever I want to remind students of behaviours say “Reach for the stars!” to remind them of how to behave.”

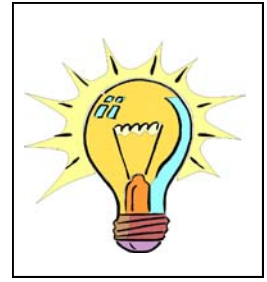
“When you need perfect quiet in the classroom - a test, silent reading, etc., we play ‘The Quiet Game’. The first person to talk loses - including me.”

“I am a primary parent as well as a teacher. As a teacher I know how important the money raising activities are for the school - my school sells popcorn, Christmas wrap, etc., at this time of year. It is work for the teachers collecting and keeping track of the sales - time that could be better spent other ways - but the cause is good as the money helps the school in many ways - it provides extra computers, books and gym equipment that are not supplied well in our school budget.

But as a parent I find it very annoying. I am a very busy person, and to take my kids out selling things is not my idea of fun or a wise use of my precious time. I think parents should be given the option of donating on a one-time basis to the school fund. I would rather give \$50.00 once than the dribbles of giving, buying things I don’t need or irritating my neighbours when I arrive at their doors to sell. I think, if given the choice, most parents would agree!”



More Odds and Ends



“I have a ‘Focus Wall’. It is a bulletin board where important things we are working on are all in one place. Our first comprehension strategy is Schema, so I put that up with big letters, and the making connections poster from www.readinglady.com. I do it in conjunction with an author study on Kevin Henkes, so I put the names of his books that we will be using. I also put the words ‘character’, ‘setting’, ‘problem’, ‘solution’ up, as we are working on these. I put up a small pocket chart for the weekly word wall/spelling words and a large pocket chart for my daily literacy objectives (as in our district we must post them daily). These are all things I would normally have somewhere in my room, but I put them all together on one board and it is a Focus Wall.”

To put felt up on a chalk board so you will have a felt board for a word wall, put the double-sided carpet tape around the edges and at intervals vertically and horizontally. Roll the felt up tightly. With help, put the felt up sticking the top edge first and then gradually smoothing it down - stretching as you go. Cut off any excess later. When done, put up items by putting the sticky Velcro pieces on the backs of the pieces.

“I went to an in-service where there was talk about children who have psychological problems. It was said that if there is a lot of stuff on the walls the children are distracted and unable to fully focus. Their thought is that only two colours should be used throughout the room and they should be blues, greens, or very pale yellow depending on the age group. They also say that all decorations should be curriculum based and not just placed for decoration.

After changing to this way of thinking I must say I have far less discipline problems than I have had in the past and the kids seem to be calmer. I know this upsets some people but before I tried it I was one who had tons of stuff all over pertaining to my theme. I did not think I could do away with a theme and all the decorations but since giving it up I am not going back. It is a lot less work for me as well as lot less expensive, and a calmer room with children who are able to concentrate better is a very good thing!”

Staff Gift Exchange

“We have a staff party where we bring gifts, but we bring what would be considered a tacky gift. Sometimes it is something that a student brought for you or something silly. Everyone wraps their packages so beautifully. We can each in turn take one off the table or take one belonging to someone else, and it goes around until everyone has a gift without knowing what it is. We often end up in a ‘fight’ to get the one that is the biggest or best wrapped. It is lots of fun. At the end we open them and see what we have ‘won’.”

“This is another staff gift exchange: everyone brings a gift and places it on a table or other central spot. Each participant draws a number...#1 gets to choose a gift first and must open it and let all see. #2 goes next, may take #1's gift or one from the pile. (If #1's gift is taken s/he must go back to the pile, s/he cannot re-take the original gift.).....#3 goes next and may take 1's or 2's or one from the pile....etc...”



Gifts for Volunteers

“I always make something (fancy cookies or candies), wrap them in holiday wrap or fancy saran wrap, tie with pretty ribbons, and give them to lots of people...principals, secretaries, custodians, team members, etc. It doesn't cost very much (except my time) and everyone loves them.

For my parent volunteers it depends on how often they volunteer. The ones who maybe come on field trips or help out every now and then get the same bag of candy plus a nice card thanking them. For volunteers who come every week I give them the candy or cookies but I try to get something else to go with it- sometimes a Starbucks card, sometimes a small plant, depends on how much money I have and what their interests are. We don't have many volunteers at my school so I really do appreciate those who come regularly and want to give them something to reflect my appreciation.”

Odds and Ends

“One important piece of advise for the parents (or teachers) is to be sure they are not training kids to ignore them by repeating the directions over and over and over. Kids are smart enough to know that we will tell them again and again, so why should they stop what they are doing and listen the first time? Prompt their attention by saying, "I am going to give you some directions, so get ready to listen." Do not rescue them by repeating things again and again. Start off with only 2 very specific directions at a time. Then have them repeat the directions back to you. When they master 2 directions, go on to 3 directions at a time. They will have to concentrate to remember the directions in order so they can repeat them back and then follow them.”

<http://www.ehhs.cmich.edu/~tbushey/newfree.html>
Printables! Check out the ‘Student Survival Kit’.

Desk Drawer Necessities!

Teachers drew up a list of things to be found in their desk drawers!

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| -safety pins | - lipstick | - prizes for the students |
| - lunch bags | - medication like Advil and Tylenol | - extra pairs of shoes |
| - an umbrella | - Vitamin C and Echinacea | - feminine necessities |
| - variety of stickers | - a pointer | - Scope |
| - extra class key | - blank cards for thank you notes | - hair clips for students with hair
in eyes |
| - candles for birthday cakes | - Goo-gone | - thread, twine |
| - lighter or matches | - scraper | - different kinds of tape |
| - batteries | - dice | - a whistle |
| - pair of socks | - bandaids | - a hand bell |
| - change of clothes | - peroxide | - some blank CDs |
| - a sweater or vest | - latex gloves | - antibacterial wipes |
| - deodorant | - staple remover | |
| - flashlight | - extra pair of shoes | |
| - cough drops | - awards | |
| - baby wipes | - timer or stopwatch | |



Try doing a focus wall! Here is an example:

http://www.smbd.org/district_programs/reading_/teacher_idea_sharing/focus_wall/index.html

“This is a wonderful idea for your ‘All About Me’ unit. Ask, ‘What gift can you share with others?’ All children have something in which they shine! This is a great community-building activity. Perhaps it is bike riding, math, science knowledge in a specific subject, reading, playing soccer, singing, drawing, etc., - all have equal value.”

“I became a teacher so I could do all the careers I was interested in - writing, social work, anthropology, science, linguistics, nursing, law ... you name it, a teacher does it!”

I’m Ready!

(Tune: If You’re Happy and You Know It)

I’m ready for the first day of school,
To tackle every test and every tool!
I’ll learn to read with ease,
And math will be a breeze,
‘Cuz I’m ready for the first day of school!

I have a brand new shiny pencil case.
My desk will be a very tidy place.
My backpack is just right,
And I’ll bring it home each night,
‘Cuz I’m ready for the first day of school!

Now, Mom, you really need to say good-bye.
How come you always look like you might cry
My teacher will be there
To guide me and to care,
‘Cuz she’s ready for the first day of school!

Odds and Ends

Read, read, read!

“I do not use centers in my classroom - I find them time-consuming to set up and difficult to monitor. I like to teach reading in small groups, and while I am teaching these groups or having conferences with individual children, everyone else reads. My Grade Two kids can read up to an hour by the end of September. Some children can get into a book and be comfortable reading independently for the entire time, and others do a variety of reading and can change several times during the period. I have a basket of books on each table with picture books, non-fiction books, magazines, books of varying difficulty, books by authors we are studying, books about themes we are studying, copies of books made by the class, etc., in them.

As long as the students are reading material at their independent reading level, this is the best use of time! Their reading really improves with all this practice, and even the lower readers learn to concentrate and read lots of books.”

“My kids do ‘Book Shopping’. They come in, mark lunch choices, sharpen pencils, get their browsing boxes (box of books at their level) and head to our classroom library to read on the rug or bean bags or choose new books for their boxes. I know it sounds like it could be a ‘free for all’, but it's not. They know the rules for appropriate ‘shopping’ and appropriate book selections and know the consequences if they break the rules. I really feel that this is one of the most important times of the day. I'm easily able to do my ‘teacher business’ and they are totally engaged in reading!”

Hot Chocolate

Make a pot of hot chocolate on a cold winter day. It is great while you read *The Polar Express*, too!

In a big pot, mix: (this serves 20 kids)

16 cups skim or low-fat (1%) milk

1 cup sugar

1 1/2 cup chocolate-flavored syrup

Marshmallow cream, or nonfat whipped topping

Mix the milk, sugar, and syrup. Cover and cook on LOW until the milk is hot. Stir, and ladle into mugs. Garnish with the marshmallow crème or whipped topping.



Poetry Folders

“My kids kept a Poetry/Song Folder this past year in a duotang. Every time we did a poem or song for morning meeting, reading, writing, science, social studies, or for fun, I would copy it and give it to them to put in their folders. They could illustrate the poems whenever they had a chance - or during our Finish Up Friday time. I use a LOT of poems and songs, so by the end of the year they each had a fat folder of memories from our year together. Throughout the year, the kids really loved reading their Poetry Folders and revisiting the poems/songs we had done. They stored the Folders in their book baskets. I did not allow them to go home during the year, for fear of them not returning since we used them almost daily! They took their folders home on the last day of school. Lots of summer reading material!”

“I do a class songbook with my students. I use a 3 prong portfolio for this. At the beginning of the book, the students place two sheets of lined paper. These are labeled ‘Table of Contents’. As we add songs to our books, we number each page and write the page number and song title on our table of contents page. The songs themselves are typed and the students can decorate the pages if they wish. This is a good reading experience, too, as there are often higher level vocabulary words in the songs.”