



Primary Success

Issue #7 November - December 2005

Merry Christmas!

When you receive this issue, it will still be Autumn. Christmas seems to be far ahead, but the stores will be decorated after Halloween and it will be the time to begin the planning, especially if you have a Christmas concert. Have a look in the Primary Success *Big Christmas Book* to find some ideas.

As you head into this hectic season, remember what is important. No matter what is happening in your school, have your students reading as much as possible every day. Students who are not yet fluent should be reading aloud, and fluent readers can spend up to an hour reading interesting material independently. All students should also be practicing the math concepts that have been previously taught, even if you don't teach new ones in the busy month of December. Read lots of Christmas books! Do readers' theatre, do choral reading of Christmas poems, make up math problems with Christmas themes. If they keep up the reading and math skills, the children will continue to improve in December.

This is one time of the year when we do a lot of art projects and sing songs. Give your kiddies some exercise every day, as they are excited and will need to expend some of the energy!

Even when things are hectic, the Christmas season is great fun. Have a great holiday!

Jean and Kelly



Look for:



**Tips -
the best ideas!**

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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 an 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 Schedules and Expectations

Our brighter, more mature and secure students may thrive in an unpredictable environment. These students will also thrive when there are strict routines and consistency. Perhaps two-thirds of the students in any classroom will have some degree of difficulty when they don't know what to expect. There will be more problems when the students are over-stimulated, hurried, have to wait between activities or confused about what is going to happen. Changes in classroom routine may cause severe problems for students with emotional or other disabilities such as ADHD - and everyone around them.

Most students benefit from a daily schedule that is adhered to as much as possible. The schedule can be helpful to promote peaceful transitions from exciting activities to quiet ones. If students understand the progression to the next activity, the transitions will be smoother. The schedules will help the students to know what is expected of them and to promote responsibility and self-control. They will eventually understand the time available to complete assignments.

A concise schedule also helps the teacher to plan ahead. There will be fewer lessons missed or changed so the planning will be more efficient. Of course, a schedule must have enough flexibility to allow the teacher to change lessons to provide those great teaching moments and to respond to unexpected events.

Lessons should be planned so that they contain several different types of instruction and practice. There may be a review of previously taught skills, the teaching of new skills, hands-on practice, shared discussion or practice, individual practice and a closure. Some students in every class will do better work if the tasks are divided into small more manageable parts.

Post the schedule in the classroom where all the students can see it, and refer to it often through the day. In primary classrooms it helps to put a clock beside each activity, so the students can see when the next will begin. It is useful to remind students of the time left to complete an activity and to tell them of an impending change.

Establishing expectations will help to make your classroom run more smoothly. This is not as simple as deciding on them - they must be taught, modeled, reviewed and practiced every day, until the students completely understand what is expected and automatically respond in the manner you wish. This is not necessarily the same as the classroom 'rules'. Rules apply generally to behaviour but expectations refer to all parts of the school day from behaviour to work habits and learning. High expectations will produce high results! If you expect the students to print neatly and teach them well, their printing will be wonderful. If you expect them to walk quietly in the hall and practice it, that is what they will do.

These expectations can be school-wide, if the Principal desires it, with recognition given to students and classes who excel. The school can support the teachers to produce high expectations in the classroom. Top schools do this. These schools give special assistance to students with behavioural and learning difficulties so the teacher has a team of people to assist. Excellence means high expectations in academic learning and behaviour.

Each classroom can be operated with high expectations, with or without the assistance of the school team, directed by the teacher. It can be 'top-down', with the teacher reinforcing the expectations and establishing praise, prizes and punishment for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. It can also be partially a teacher/student approach, with the children helping to set the expectations and partially enforcing them.

School or classroom expectations must be simple and understood by all. They should be positive and explicit. Students who do not live up to the expectations set should receive an appropriate consequence. Teachers who have high expectations will have students who produce higher quality work, learn more quickly and behave more appropriately.



Guided Reading Ideas

Grouping

In most classes the reading ability makes whole class guided reading lesson not practical. If you have students who are not keeping up, are not able to read the material with at least 90% accuracy, whole class lessons will frustrate them. Not only will these lower students be frustrated, but it will not be teaching them so they will learn to the best advantage and it will be bad for their self-esteem. If you have students that should be reading much higher material - a lesson directed to mid-level students will not be as interesting for them.

Whole class lessons can be done on special occasions or on special material.

Three Days of GR

Day 1.....

- Look at the book cover, the author and illustrator. Read the title and predict what the story might be about. If there is a picture on the cover, discuss it, too.
- Take a picture walk if it is suitable. You don't want to do this if there is a surprise ending or happenings in pictures that will spoil the suspense of the story.
- Discuss prior knowledge - Have we read books on this topic? Have we met these characters before? Have we read books by this author? Do the students have prior knowledge of the topic?
- Teach new vocabulary - discuss the words and the phonics, put the words into phrases or sentences (usually from the book) and practice reading them.
- Pass out the books. Read the book to the students, or have them read it silently with discussion between pages or sections, or have them read aloud taking turns or read aloud with you. Have them follow the lines of print by sliding their finger down the side of the page to show what line they are reading. The slower students can be taken to one side and read the book with you.
- Read through each page, discussing the story. Have the students frame words, phrases or sentences with their fingers.
- The students read the story silently, moving the finger down the side of the page to help tracking and show you where they are.



Day 2.....

- Read through the book again. Fast readers can do it a second time while they are waiting for the slower readers.
- Do a printing exercise using the words in the story - sometimes a cloze exercises, sometimes 'yes - no' questions, and later answering questions in sentences. Then there is sometimes a worksheet, sometimes phonics exercises with spelling, sometimes drawing and writing a sentence.

Day 3.....

- Put the students into pairs and they read the book to each other.
- Come together and discuss the book, the story, the illustrations, the author, the special words in the story, the punctuation, and reading with fluency and expression. Talk about the basic words that will be found in other reading material and make a list of them on a chart.
- Everyone reads the book together, using expression.

Group Reading

Round robin reading has a bad name! It may be equated with only reading aloud instead of teaching lessons, having interesting discussions and reading for purpose. It is perfectly fine to have your children read aloud in turns to practice after the lesson, but everyone must be reading along silently. Tracing a finger under the words will show you that everyone is in the right place. The students should not read in turn around the circle, but at random. You can also have a student stop reading in the middle of a page, and the following child should be able to continue without getting lost. Oral reading is a valuable skill and it tells you a lot about the students' progress.

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

A is for alligator.
A is for ants.
A is for apples
on my pants.

B is for bear.
B is for boat.
B is for buttons
on my coat.

C is for cow.
C is for cat.
C is for caterpillar
on my hat.

D is for dinosaur.
D is for dog.
D is for doll
on my log.

E is for envelope.
E is for eggs.
E is for elephant
on my legs.

F is for fire engine.
F is for fish.
F is for fox
in my dish.

G is for girl.
G is for goat.
G is for gorilla
in my boat.

H is for horse.
H is for hair.
H is for hippopotamus
on my chair.

I is for igloo.
I is for ink.
I is for iguana
in my sink.

J is for jelly.
J is for jeep.
J is for jacket
on my sheep.

K is for kite.
K is for king.
K is for key
on my string.

L is for lion.
L is for log.
L is for leaves
on my frog.

M is for mittens.
M is for mouse.
M is for monkeys
on my house.

N is for newspaper.
N is for nest.
N is for numbers
on my vest.

O is for octopus.
O is for ox.
O is for ostrich
in my box.

P is for pizza.
P is for pan.
P is for pencils
in my can.

Q is for queen.
Q is for quail.
Q is for quarters
in my pail.

R is for rose.
R is for ring.
R is for rabbit
on my swing.

S is for sun.
S is for socks.
S is for snails
on my blocks.

T is for tooth.
T is for truck.
T is for tie
on my duck.

U is for underwear.
U is for up.
U is for umbrella
in my cup.

V is for violin.
V is for van
V is for violets
in my pan.

W is for worm.
W is for wagon.
W is for wings
on my dragon.

X is for x-ray.
X marks the spot.
X is for kisses.
I have a lot!

Y is for yo-yo.
Y is for yak.
Y is for yarn
in my sack.

Z is for zebra.
Z is for zoo.
Z is for zipper
on my shoe.

The "Bat-man" Consonant Song

Sing the sounds of the letters to the Batman theme tune.
We don't do the vowels, but you could if you wanted to.
Here are the first three verses, to get you started:

b b b b b b b
b b b b b b b
Batman!
c c c c c c c
c c c c c c c
Catman!
d d d d d d d
d d d d d d d
Datman!



Yum Soup!

Brainstorm a favourite food for every letter of the alphabet. Have each student illustrate one of them and glue onto a page of the book. Under the illustration print: 'In went _____. Yum, yum!' This can also be done with foods that are 'yucky' and it makes an amusing book that the kids love to read!

Move to the letter sounds!

bounce, blink, breathe, bend
catch, cry, climb
dance, drive
fall, fly, frown
gallop, grab
hop
jump, jiggle
kick
laugh, lean
march
nod
paint, plant
run
sit, swim, skate, sleep, smile, stand, spin
talk, twist, think, track
vacuum
walk
yawn
zip



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, Wallaby 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 Poetry

“Poems and songs are a great way to teach the concepts of print in Kindergarten as they are easily memorized. The lines can be cut apart and reassembled, the students can ‘read’ the poems pointing to each word as they read. You can use highlighter tape, wikki sticks, funny pointers or magic wands (the dollar store is a great place to find lots of good pointers). If you can find the coloured plastic transparent file folders these can be cut up to put over words.

You can print the words of a poem on overhead transparencies and the students can put the poem together. (They love to use the overhead!) They can use a pocket chart to assemble the poems.

Then I have the poems on separate pages and these are put into books that go into the classroom library. They are favourite reading material in SSR.”

“I teach Grade Two. I am not very musical, but we learn lots of poems and then do choral speech daily. They become very good at voice inflection and expression. This is a great skill for my class to have when it is Christmas concert time! I am much more comfortable with this than teaching singing. We also perform our choral speech at assemblies (we do poems on Remembrance Day.)”

“I use the lyrics of the Wiggles in my poetry! These lyrics readily lend themselves to accompaniment with clapping and/or percussion, imaginative retells, or just sharing for fun.”

When teaching poems, I have the students hunt for special things:

- Words with double letters
- Words that have sounds that we are studying
- Rhyming words
- Words that repeat in the rhyme
- Nouns or verbs or adjectives (for older students)



Nursery Rhymes

http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/rimes_and_rhymes.htm#Week1

Here are nursery rhymes that you can print out. They are great!

<http://www.smart-central.com/>

This is a good site, not just for younger students. Grade 2s and 3s will also find lots of great poems and they can sing along. Try ‘Never Smile at a Crocodile’!

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pfa/dreamhouse/nursery/rhymes.html>

Here is a good selection of nursery rhymes.

http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/kindergarten_rhyme_time.html

This teacher used nursery rhymes for a literacy and math night in Kindergarten.

<http://www.niteowl.org/kids/hpdcolor.html>

Here are illustrated nursery rhymes for colouring and putting into a book. The print isn’t great on some of them, though.

If you are not fond of the traditional nursery rhymes, teach the Dennis Lee rhymes - silly and lots of fun! Every student will love ‘Alligator Pie’. Grade Twos and Threes like the poems of Shel Silverstein as well.

Spelling



“This is how I do my weekly Spelling (Grade Two).

I have the weekly words up before school begins on Monday. I usually choose words that have one sound, sometimes with different spellings. For example, if the sound is /ow/ as in ‘now’, I have words with the ‘ow’ and also words with ‘ou’. We have 10 words each week. I use coloured pens to write the words on the chart, and do the specific letters in a different colour.

In Monday’s lesson we do an oral part first. We discuss each word and talk about the phonetic parts, whether there are rhyming words, etc. Then we spell it orally - saying the word, spelling it and saying it again. Sometimes we spell and say and spell and say to make a chant. Then the students print the words, and then we say and spell again.

On Tuesday the students tell me about the words, and spell any rhyming words. We chant and cheer them. Then the students must make the words with letter cards or plastic letters. Sometimes I have them print the words using the plastic letter tracers.

Wednesday we review the words and chant and cheer them. Then the students make the words by cutting letters from a newspaper or magazine, or make them with modeling clay.

On Thursday, we play a game with the words - Wordo, or a Spelling Bee. I may have a crossword or wordfind puzzle that I make from

www.puzzlemaker.com or from <http://www.edhelper.com/puzzles.htm>

Friday is the test day. I have a serious testing atmosphere and insist on perfect printing, too. I mark them immediately, and we cheer everyone who gets the words perfect. Then the words go up on the word wall, and must be spelled perfectly from then on in all work.

“I always have a treat time on Friday afternoon for the students who get all the spelling words correct. I read about the teacher who let the students make paper airplanes with the spelling sheets and let them fly the planes in the gym as the treat for ‘A’ papers. My kids love this, and will work really hard on the spelling to have this treat! Sometimes it might be a beanbag toss game or even a candy - although I don’t do this very often!”

“I have my kids print the words in odd ways or with odd things. They ‘write’ on the floor (rugwrite) or ceiling (hand in the air) or deskwrite or write on their feet or hand or knee. I also call a word and then a body part and we ‘body spell’ together. We spell with our elbows, our noses, our belly buttons, our tongues (this one is obviously a little difficult to understand but they know what they are saying!) and I usually throw in their ‘behinds’ because they love that. After we spell, we erase each word with the same body part. The kids love to do strange printing! We also do visualization - thinking about the word and keeping the picture that we saw when the eyes are closed, and then print the word with the eyes closed.”

“I have a box of tactile surfaces - pieces of carpet, sandpaper, velvet, satin, lace, window screen, rubber, etc. The students choose one, and print their words with the finger. Then they trade to get a different ‘feel’.”

“I think that the best spelling technique is to not let the students become accustomed to seeing incorrect spelling and having it imprinted. Of course, young children will spell incorrectly, but if you point it out quickly and give them the correct spelling they will be much better spellers. Seeing the incorrect spelling of a word many times imprints it and it is very difficult to change.”

PIEce of PIE There is a LIE in beLIEve
A friEND to the END

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. 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.”

A Weather Unit

Activities:

What is a cloud? Make a cloud in a bottle. In a clear and clean plastic bottle pour about 2.5 cm of very hot water. Then immediately cover the opening with an piece of ice. A cloud of vapour should form. Have the students brainstorm why they think this happens.

What is wind? Provide several objects for the students to use (cotton ball, leaf, marble, stone, pencil, small ball, tissue, crayon). Have the students predict which object will take the most blows to get between two points marked with masking tape. Record the guesses. Have the children see how many puffs of air or 'wind' it takes for each article to reach its objective and graph this. Make kites and fly them or windsocks to check the wind direction.

How much rain fell? Make a rain gauge. Rinse out a 2 litre bottle and cut it about 20 cm from the base. Turn the top portion upside down and insert it into the bottom portion to make a funnel. Use a ruler to measure off marks. After each rainfall examine the measurement. You could keep a month long graph.

Read *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. Write your own creative story of what food(s) you would like to see coming from the sky. Draw an illustration to go with it.

Study how temperatures are affected by the placement of the thermometer inside or outside, sun or shade, for 60 seconds. Observe results.

The Wind and the Sun

Cast: Storyteller, Wind, Sun, Michael, Katie

Storyteller: Long ago there lived a storyteller by the name of Aesop, who was famous for the stories he told. These clever stories are called fables and each one has a lesson for the reader to think about. One of Aesop's fables is called "The Wind and the Sun."

Wind: You know, friend Sun, I am definitely stronger than you are.

Sun: Oh, you think so! What makes you believe that you are stronger?

Wind: Well, with a single puff, I can blow the leaves off a tree and the hats off the heads of people. If I really try very hard I can even lift a roof off a house or knock over a tree. I think this is real strength!

Storyteller: Wind went on and on telling Sun how strong he was. Sun just listened and smiled slightly.

Sun: You are wrong, friend Wind. You are very strong but I believe I am even more powerful than you.

Wind: Let's see you prove your great strength!

Sun: Fine, friend Wind. I have an idea. Do you see Michael and Katie walking down the street?

Wind: Yes, I do see them.

Sun: Well, let's agree that whoever can make Michael and Katie take off their jackets is the stronger. I'll hide behind a cloud and watch as you go first.

Storyteller: Wind began at first with a gentle puff but nothing happened. Then he blew even harder but nothing happened. Once more, he puffed with more strength but nothing happened.

Wind: Puff! Huff, puff! Huff, puff, and whoosh!

Michael: I feel a cold wind. Do you feel it?

Katie: I sure do. I'm really glad I'm wearing my jacket. I am going to hold it close to me to keep out the wind.

Michael: Me, too! I am cold and need to pull my jacket closer to me.

Storyteller: As the wind blew harder and harder, Michael and Katie pulled their jackets closer and closer!

Wind: I give up, Sun. I'm much too tired to puff out another gust. Let me see what you can do.

Sun: I'll take my turn now, thank you. Please watch me.

Storyteller: Sun came out from behind the cloud and shone brightly down on Michael and Katie.

Michael: Ah, look! There is the sun. It feels so good after the cold from the wind.

Katie: I feel so warm now. I am going to take off my jacket!

Storyteller: When Katie removed her jacket, Sun winked at Wind. Sun knew that the contest was over.

Sun: You see, friend Wind, it is better to show kindness than force to get what you want.

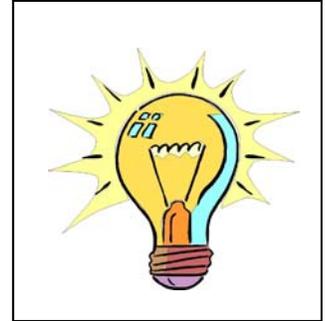


Take Home Back Packs

Many teachers are using the backpacks as 'homework'. They buy inexpensive backpacks and each bag is filled with a variety of items on a theme or an author. Have enough so that the kids don't have to wait too long between turns. You can have duplicate packs, too.

These are some ideas for their use:

- Send them home on Wednesday and ask for them back on the following Tuesday - or over a four day period: Monday to Thursday or Thursday to Monday. You need to have them back at least one day ahead of passing them out again as some may be forgotten on the return day.
- Have an introductory letter or booklet in the first backpack that is sent home to each student, explaining what is expected.
- The packs can be discussed in a sharing time on the day after they were returned. This will give the students ideas for using the packs and increase enthusiasm for the next one to come.
- The pack should be kept as light as possible, as the kids have to carry it. Use soft cover books whenever possible.
- Each pack has a list of possible activities. The students must do at least one activity each day the pack is home. The 'musts' are to read the book or have it read to the student and to do the writing. The other activities are optional but encouraged.
- Always include every item necessary in order for students to do any activity that are listed in the backpack. These could be crayons, coloured pencils, glue, scissors, assorted papers, pencil, eraser, books, etc. Include a 'checklist' for the parents so that all the items are sure to come back.
- Keep a list of who has taken which backpack home.
- Have a bulletin board to share the items brought back.
- In each backpack ask for parent feedback.



What can be in the backpacks?

Books at various reading levels (picture book to adult), magazines, videos, manipulatives, games, stuffed animals, toys, computer software, a journal, pencil, eraser, art supplies, even a snack! ('Goldfish' for an ocean theme, for example). There can be modeling clay, recipes for making clay or cookies or fingerpaint. There are puzzles or games that the students can do independently.

What are some backpack themes?

Authors like Leo Lionni or Eric Carle have wonderful stories which offer oodles of creative opportunities in reading, writing, math activities, and artwork.

A tooth backpack (for when kids lose teeth).

A birthday backpack (for their birthday).

A math backpack. There can be a family board or card game inside; Measurement, Weight.

Science: magnets, butterfly, insects, weather, dinosaurs, clouds, spiders, volcanoes, etc.

Social Studies: maps, countries, continents and oceans, my town, etc.

Themes: The Ocean, All About Me, Pumpkins, Colours,

Animals: Bears, Cats, Dogs, Whales, Kangaroos, Elephants, The circus, The Zoo, etc.

Jokes and Riddles

Magic- a book on magic tricks, a fiction book, a wand, etc.

Music - with a book on making instruments and a fiction book, a CD to listen to, etc.

Time



Math

A penny is one cent
A nickel is five
A dime is ten cents
A quarter twenty five
Money, money
That's what it's all about
Money, money
Let's turn around and shout

Penny penny
Easily spent
It's brown and copper and
Worth one cent.

Nickel nickel
Thick and fat
You're worth 5 cents
I know that.

Dime, dime
Thin and small
You're worth 10 cents
And that's all.

Quarter quarter
Big and bold
You're worth 25 cents
I am told.



Number 'Families'

Until the students truly understand the relationships of numbers in equations, they will always have difficulties. Subtraction is particularly problematic if they do not see relationships. It is important to do lots of different exercises to show the 'families'. For example: $5 + 7 = 12$ $7 + 5 = 12$ $12 - 7 = 5$ $12 - 5 = 7$
Here are a few ideas to show this.

1. Do a lot of number line work. Show the three numbers on a number line, and then make the equations.
2. Make sure your students understand that $7 + 5$ and $5 + 7$ are the same.
3. Do lots of missing addend questions and show how the number families help to answer the questions.
4. Play 'What's Missing?' Write 5, 7 and 12 on cards. Place them in front of the student. Have the student close his/her eyes while you take away one of the cards. The student opens his/her eyes and guesses the card that is missing. Then the student explains why.

Counting by

Ringo rango tingo tango,
Dinosaurs have shoes,
Ringo rango tingo tango,
I can count by twos.

Ringo rango tingo tango,
Dinosaurs have knees,
Ringo rango tingo tango,
I can count by threes.

Ringo rango tingo tango,
Dinosaurs galore!
Ringo rango tingo tango,
I can count by fours.

Ringo rango tingo tango,
Dinosaurs alive!
Ringo rango tingo tango,
I can count by fives.

"We clap hands on legs, then clap hands together, repeat when saying the Ringo rango tingo tango part. Snap the fingers of the right hand and then left hand, right and then left, when doing Dinosaurs have shoes, I can count by twos. Continue to snap alternate hands as you count. At end we clap and cheer ourselves!"

"We count by 3s to the tune of Jingle Bells. 3,6,9, 12,15 18,21 24, 27, 30 and we're done!"

Problem Solving

1. Understand - Read the problem carefully. What do you want to find out?
2. Plan - Will my answer be a larger number or a smaller one? Do I add or subtract?
3. Solve - Write an equation and/or sentence to describe the answer.
4. - Check - Does the answer make sense? Does it answer the question?

or for Grade Ones, have the children fill out this:

1. add subtract (they circle the correct one)
2. a box for a small drawing, with the answer clearly shown
3. $\underline{\quad} \bigcirc \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$



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.

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.”



Social Studies

Social Studies units usually begin in Kindergarten with the world that is familiar to the child - the child himself, the home and family. In Grade One it expands to the school, the town or city, to reading simple maps of the school area. Social values are included and the interdependence of the family, school and the community.

By Grade Two the students study the provinces, the country, the continents and oceans. The students learn the cardinal directions and how to read flat maps and the globe. By Grade Three they should be able to use a map key to study maps. They should have an understanding of the different kinds of maps, from local road maps to world maps, and what they tell us. In Grade Three they learn how the needs of people make us interdependent. You will discuss economics; wants, needs, goods and services, resources and products, and how communities work together in our country and the inter-dependence of countries around the world.

In all grades you will discuss traditions and celebrations, both here and in other countries - at Christmas you can teach winter holidays around the world.

Personal responsibility is also part of the Social Studies curriculum. The students should be taught fair play and good sportsmanship and respect for the rights and opinions of others.

“In my Grade Two/Three classroom I teach the continents and the oceans. We do one hour each week, and that time is set aside always for this unit that lasts all year. In the beginning we do an overview of the earth, learning to read maps and learning the names of the continents and oceans. Then we make a passport (I bring mine in to show them) and ‘travel’ to each continent. We discuss the plane travel and how long it takes and where we would pass over on the trip. After an overview of each continent, we ‘visit’ at least three countries within each continent (except for Antarctica and Australia). I always have good videos of the areas and the students like these. The students love learning about how people around the world live and new cultures. We make flag and maps, try foods, learn about the plants and animals and read stories from the countries. At the end the students have a passport of all the continents and countries they have visited.”

Earth Is The Name

(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)

Earth is the name of our planet.
It's shaped like a ball or a sphere.
It's covered with land and water.
A globe makes this picture quite clear.

Chorus

Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth.
Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth!
On Earth there are seven continents,
They're the largest masses of land.
Four large bodies of water are oceans.
In fact, there's more water than land!

Chorus



Seven Continents

(Tune: Row, Row, Row Your Boat)

To learn the seven continents
Think of the letter A,
And when you're down to only one
An E will save the day.
There's Africa, Antarctica,
Australia, Asia, too;
The oceans run between them
With their waters deep and blue.
There are also two Americas--
North and South, you see.
Now we're coming to the end.
Europe starts with E!

Oceans

(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)

The earth is all covered with oceans.
The earth is all covered with seas.
The earth is all covered with oceans,
More water than land don't you see.

CHORUS

Water, water,
Water all over the world, the world.
Water, water,
There's water all over the world!

So salty and cold are the oceans.
So salty and cold are the seas.
So salty and cold are the oceans,
Too salty and too cold for me.
CHORUS
Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic,
And then there's the Indian, too.
These oceans almost cover our planet.
I named them now can you?

CHORUS



Remembrance Day

In 1918, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day in the eleventh month, the world rejoiced and celebrated. After four years of bitter war, an armistice was signed. The "war to end all wars" was over.

"I always read and talk about 'Flanders Fields' and just got a new book through Scholastic called 'A Poppy is to Remember' by Heather Patterson. We usually talk about peace (what it means in the children's world) and the kids do writing 'Peace is...'. They make poppies by wrapping red/green tissue paper around the end of a pencil, dipping in glue, and putting on a poppy shape."

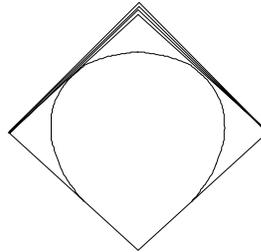
Little Poppy

Little poppy
Given to me,
Help me keep Canada
Safe and free.

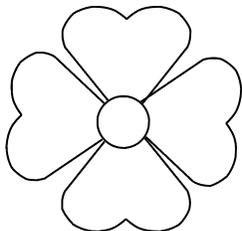
I'll wear a poppy
As red as can be
To show my respect
So all can see.

The soldiers brave
Are the ones we remember
We thank every one
In the month of November.

They fought for you
They fought for me
They fought
For everyone.



Have each student make a poppy and a leaf. Glue the centre of each poppy onto a wreath shape and slightly curl the flower petals upwards to give a 3 dimensional effect.



To make a bulletin board display, have a large simple circular map of the world (just continents and oceans) in the centre. Have every student in the school trace and cut out one or two hands in red and staple them around the earth - the bottom row with the fingers outwards and the top row going around clockwise, overlapping each.

<http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/remembrance.php>

Go to this site, and then to 'Veterans' Week for Grades 1 - 3'. Then scroll down to the 'Take Time to Remember Colouring Book'. It takes a long time to load, but be patient - it is worth the wait!

<http://www.coloring.ws/remembrance1.htm>

Here are some good colouring sheets for Remembrance Day.



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, saw dawn, felt sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up your 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, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae

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.

Tying Shoes and More

“Take a one pound coffee can. On the lid use a nail and punch 3 rows of holes and then lace it with the large shoe laces. The kids sit cross legged with the can between their legs and practice. The large laces are easy to tie and untie.”

“Some students have difficulty with this skill. Children with coordination problems will be longer learning this skill. We can hope they will have shoes with Velcro fastenings, but this is not always the case.

There are ‘pretend’ shoes with laces to tie that can be bought, or you can make a big shoe by decorating a shoe box. Punch holes in the top for the lacings. You can even cut a hole in the top so they can wear it. Laces tied around a plank of wood work, too. Attach them at the back and tie them at the front. Buy coloured laces - you may be able to buy some really wild ones - the wilder the better!”

Can you get dressed by yourself?
Can you brush your hair?
Can you clean your teeth real well?
And cross the road with care?

Hey, I can get dressed by myself
And I can brush my hair
I can clean my teeth real well
And cross the road with care

How about your shoelaces?
Can you tie them tight?
Can you do a double bow?
With practice you just might!

And I can tie my shoelaces
Hurray hurray hurray!
I can do a double bow
My shoes stay tied all day!

You take one lace
And make a loop.
Take the other lace
And make another bunny ear.
Fold one under the other
And there you go!
Tied shoes.

<http://www.fieggen.com/shoelace/index.htm>

“Visit ‘Ian’s shoelace site’ where he introduces the fastest knot in the world and also ‘Ian’s secure shoelace knot’ which he says requires twice the tension of an ordinary knot to get it undone.

In Grade two or three the kids can all learn different ways to tie their shoelaces and do a compare and contrast experiment. What is the easiest way? What is the favourite way? It’d lend itself to the making of bar graphs. etc. He has 15 different ways of tying shoelaces so all of the kids must be able to find one way they could do! You could have them rank easiest to hardest, the one that holds best to the most easily undone. Have fun!”

My Shoelace Blues

I’ve tried and tried to tie you, shoe.
I’ve never done it yet.
A loop that flip-flops on the floor
Is as close as I can get.
I’ve practiced on spaghetti.
I’ve practiced on the mop.
I’ve practiced on my sister
Until she made me stop.
So here’s the loop again, shoe.
I’ll hold it with my thumb.
I’ll wrap the other end around...
And yank it into bows.
It’s done!



Criss Cross I am Tying My Shoes

(to “Splish Splash I Was Taking a Bath”)
Criss Cross and go under the bridge,
Then you got to pull it tight.
Make a loop but keep a long tail,
That is how to do it right.
Then you take the other string,
and you wrap it ‘round the loop.
Pull it through the hole,
Now you got the scoop.
Criss cross and go under the bridge,
Now you made a double knot!

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.

Christmas

Make a 'Rudolph Book'

Rudolph has a different colored nose on each page.
Use velcro for the nose colours and they can be matched to the words on each page.

Rudolph! Rudolph!
What will you do?
You can't guide Santa
If your nose is blue!

Rudolph! Rudolph!
What do you think?
What will happen
If your nose is pink?

Rudolph! Ru-
dolph!
Your way cannot be seen
Through the snowy weather
If your nose is green!

Rudolph! Rudolph!
You're such a silly fellow
Who will know it's you
If your nose is yellow?

Rudolph! Rudolph!
How will you get back?
You can't see in the dark
If your nose is black!

Rudolph! Rudolph!
It's time to go to town.
But Santa can't see
'Cause your nose is brown!

Rudolph! Rudolph!
It's time to fly at night.
But it's very funny
'Cause your nose is white!

Rudolph! Rudolph!
The children are in bed.
And now I know you're ready
'Cause your nose is red!



Our Christmas Tree

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Come let's choose a Christmas tree,
A Christmas tree, a Christmas tree.
Come let's choose a Christmas tree
So early in the morning.

We'll buy the tree and take it home...
Now it's time to decorate...
What do we put on the Christmas tree...
We put some lights on the Christmas tree...
We put some balls on the Christmas tree...
We put a star on the top of the tree....

See the beautiful Christmas tree,
Christmas tree, Christmas tree,
See the beautiful Christmas tree
So early in the morning.

Our Christmas Tree Book

Copy a Christmas tree on green photocopy paper, with lines for the printing. Each student prints the first line and the second line is a choice of what they would like to put on their tree. After printing they decorate the page with the decoration. Staple them together to make a book.

On my Christmas tree there will be
A shining star just for me.

On my Christmas tree there will be
A ringing bell just for me.

A blinking light just for me....

A singing bird
A smiling angel
A fuzzy Santa
A little stocking
A gingerbread man



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.

The Christmas Concert

Christmas Boxes

Choral speaking or take parts.

Big boxes little ones	I have a big box.
Some in between	What can it be?
All holding presents	I have a tiny box...
That cannot be seen.	I can't wait to see.
Boxes with ribbons	Here is a skinny box.
Boxes with string	And here is one that's fat.
Boxes with wrappings	This one is a circle
That don't tell a thing.	I wonder what's in that?
Boxes with lids on	Big boxes little ones
Boxes that fold	Some in between
Boxes that whisper	All holding presents
Of treasures they hold.	That cannot be seen.
Green boxes, red boxes	Boxes with ribbons
Silv'ry ones too	Boxes with string
Under the Christmas tree	Boxes with wrappings
Waiting for you.	That don't tell a thing.

If your class is singing in the concert, put your three or four strongest most tuneful singers side-by-side. They will work well together and carry the singing. The weaker singers will follow their lead!
This works with choral speaking, too.



“A few years ago, I had my class do a dance to Raffi's *Christmas Time is Coming* on his Christmas album. The song is very country. The children wore denim skirts and jeans.”

“We did a very simple part for the concert. I had my kids come in pjs carrying a stuffed toy, and they sat around a fireplace on the stage and sing “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” and “Up on the Housetop”. It didn't matter where they sat (within reason) and was really simple to set up and practice. The kids looked cute, too.”

“We sang the 12 Days of Christmas (to a taped version), with two children holding up the appropriate large picture of the items each time they were mentioned. The right number of items was on the chart; 5 golden rings, seven swans a' swimming, etc.”

“We hold our concert in the school gym. Every class was given a section of wall to decorate with their Christmas art, and this made the gym look very festive.”

Plays are not good for Christmas concerts if there is going to be a big crowd. Children's voices are difficult to hear, so the words might be a blur to the audience. If you are giving a 'concert' to a small group - just your parents, for example, do a Christmas Readers' Theatre. Here are links to several:

http://www.readinglady.com/Readers_Theater/Scripts/scripts.html

Look for 'Arthur's Christmas', by Marc Brown and 'Redheaded Robbie's Christmas Story'.

http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/christmas_sites.htm

Go to Cathy's site and then to the Christmas concert links. Many of the plays must be purchased, but there are some free ones.



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

"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."



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.



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.



Keyboarding with Kids

by Marcia Goudie, Vacaville, Ca

Your wiggly first graders have gotten used to working quietly at the computer. They have had a chance to learn about the rules for working around computers. They are also fairly knowledgeable about what part of the computer does what, and which parts they can “touch” and the parts that are “teacher only”. You are wondering where to go next, because you have very little software to choose from. How about keyboarding and work processing?

Keyboarding and word processing, though not a beginner task, can be student friendly if taken in small steps. Keyboarding and word processing skills address many standards we are being forced to push on our students. Researchers Wood, et al. (Hoot, 1986) have found that those elementary school students who have learned to type achieve greater gains in reading comprehension, vocabulary, word study skills and spelling skills. Other positive outcomes mentioned in this study were improved independent reading, superior listening and organizational skills, and improved attention span.



Last spring, after we had learned computer basics including using KidPix, I began showing two classes (mine and the class next door) how to type their spelling words (list) in Word. We learned to type our words, including capitalization and backspacing to correct typing errors. One easy fix before students started working - I went into AutoCorrect and changed the settings so that all words would be entered in lowercase. Also, some of my stronger students began coming to the computer during small group time to type up their stories and poems. What satisfaction they gained! In an article written for Education World, Gary Hopkins comes up with some simple ideas.

- Encourage them to copy their list of spelling words for the week. Spelling their words slowly as they hunt the keyboard for the correct letters is good reinforcement.
- Have the students type up a single sentence and print it at the top of a page. Then, invite them to use the rest of the page for a drawing.
- You can gather other ideas from Mrs. Cannon’s computer lab. She has a great section called oh my word!
<http://www.computerlab.kids.new.net/Cannon/Word.htm>

If you can find the money for software, or if your school is considering purchasing some new software, there are several keyboarding and word processing software that are a little more kid friendly than WORD. Check out some of these products.

- Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing ----- Type to Learn
- KidKeys by Sunburst **<http://www.smartkidssoftware.com/ndkna103.htm>** (great price)
- PAWS **http://www.venturaes.com/index_new.asp** Do a site search for PAWS.

Teaching students the correct finger placement on the keyboard doesn’t have to be the first skill. Instead encourage students to become familiar with the keyboard and where to find the various letters. You’ll get them off to a running start.

Websites

"I went to a conference this week and Steve Spangler, the science guy, was mentioned. I don't know if you all have seen his website but it's AWE-SOME and has lots of wonderful experiments that would have the kids eating out of your hands. Check it out!"

Barb

<http://www.stevespanglerscience.com>

<http://www.bigwave.com.au/reports/>

This is software to make report card writing easier! You simply plug in suitable comments and can add your own at any time. There is a free download, if you want to try it.

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

This is fun! Look through the hundreds of poems.

<http://www.night.net/tucker/>

There are poems and stories that you can print off and use in the classroom. Most are suitable for Grade two or three.

"This is one of my favourite websites for computer lab ideas for all grades. She has organized projects and ideas for the entire year with appropriate links and software applications for each grade level. There are projects organized by months and also projects organized by grade level."

Peggy

Mrs. Cannon's Computer Lab Homepage

<http://www.computerlab.kids.new.net/>

http://www.successlink.org/gti/gti_lesson.asp?lid=3965

Personal Reading Devices

Story Bits

<http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/article33.html>

What are Story Bits? Story Bits are concrete memories that children can use to retell and share something they have read or that has been read to them. Teachers must think of what little 'bit' of a story would help the children remember what has been read.

Kindergarten skills:

<http://www.kinderpond.com/skillrings.html>

<http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/christmas.php>

Hunt through this site for lots of Christmas printables.

http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/sites_for_teachers.htm

Don't forget to pop into Cathy's site! She always has interesting things. Look at her collection of classroom management ideas and her collection of recipes. Cathy's Christmas section is good - there are lots of great ideas that you can use.

'Twas the Daze Before Christmas

'Twas the days before Christmas,
And all through the school,
The teachers were trying
To just keep their cool.
The hallways were hung
With Christmas art
(Some made in November
to get a head start!)
The children were bouncing
Off ceilings and walls,
And seemed to forget
How to walk in the halls.
With 'holiday shirts'
And 'jingle bell jewels',
The teachers looked festive
Enforcing the rules.
From deep in the teachers' lounge
There came such a chatter,
The principal went in
To see what was the matter.
The teachers were hiding
And trying to refuel,
On coffee and cookies
And treats for the Yule.
When what to their wondering
Ears do they hear,
But the ringing of school bells
It's the children, they fear!
More rapid than reindeer
The little ones came,
And the teachers all shouted
And called them by name;
Walk, Vincent! Walk, Tanner!
Walk, Tyler and Sammy!
Sit, Jamie! Sit, Laura!
Sit, Tara and Tammy!
To your desks in the room!
To your spots in the line!
Now walk to them! Walk to them!
No running this time!
So straight to their places
The children all went.
With fear of detention
Where they could be sent.
With manuals of lessons
Cradled in arms,
The teachers began
To use all their charms.
But the lessons presented
All fell on deaf ears.
The children were thinking
Of Santa's reindeer!
With a toss of their hands
They put manuals aside,
Went straight to the cupboards
Where videos hide.
And laying their finger
On the TV remote
They sat back to write
Their last Christmas note.
But you could hear them exclaim
At the end of the day -
Have a wonderful, happy and
L-O-O-O-O-O-NG HOLIDAY!!

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 sooooo 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.”

Teaching the Little Books

Here Is Santa (K - 1)

- Photocopy each page as large as you can – 11 x 18 would be a x200 enlargement. Staple the pages into a book.
- Show the title page. Read the title to the children, touching the words. Have the children repeat the words.
- Read the book to the children, touching each word as you read.
- Discuss Santa, and the items mentioned in the book.
- Have the children memorize the pages by saying them several times as you read and touch the words.
- Teach the high frequency words: Santa, here, is, are.
- Give each child a small book, stapled in the centre.
- When the children open the little book, ask, ‘Where will we begin to read?’ and discuss beginning at the top left, and then continuing to the right hand page. See if the children can use a pointer to touch each word as you read together.
- Highlight the high frequency words.
- The students can write their own books, using this format.
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.

On The Christmas Tree (1 - 2)

- Make a large copy of the book pages. Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- Discuss the title. What might the book be about? What might be on the tree?
- Give a little book to each child.
- Read the book to the children and discuss each page. This is a poem. Print the poem on a chart to see the lines beginning with capital letters.
- Teach the high frequency words appropriate for your class or group.
- Go through each page, and isolate vocabulary words.
- Put these words in phrases and sentences and practice reading them
- Find these words in the book. Have the students highlight them if you wish.
- Memorize the poem and read it in pairs and groups.
- Read the poem together (choral speech).
- The students can write their own books with the things they put on their Christmas trees.
- Use the words in the story to discuss the phonics you are teaching.
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.



Matt's Letter (2 - 3)

- Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- What kind of a letter might Matt be writing? Talk about letters to Santa.
- Give a book to each student.
- Read the book to the students or with the students and discuss each page.
- What might your parents think are good presents? What would you like to get?
- Teach the high frequency words appropriate for your class or group. Go through each page, and list words that may cause difficulties. Put these words in phrases and sentences and practice reading them Find these words in the book. Have the students highlight them if you wish.
- Read the book in groups, partners and individually. Have the students read the book to you.

Christmas in an Elementary School

(Sung to the tune of Winter Wonderland)

Children scream, they're not listenin'
When they go, we won't miss em',
In all of this pain, we try to stay sane,
Workin' in an elementary school.
Christmas comes, they're excited,
Though our nerves they've ignited,
They're off of the walls; they run in the halls,
Workin' in an elementary school.
In the lunchroom we can hear them yellin'
And we know that they are really wound.
Someone hits, the other says, "I'm tellin'!"
And that is when our heads begin to pound.
Pretty soon we'll be restin'
Cause our nerves, they've been testin'
We're happy it's clear,
It just comes once a year
Christmas in an Elementary School !



Dear Colleagues,

Have a great November and December! Remember to take time for yourself and smile and laugh every day - even when things get hectic!

Jean and Kelly



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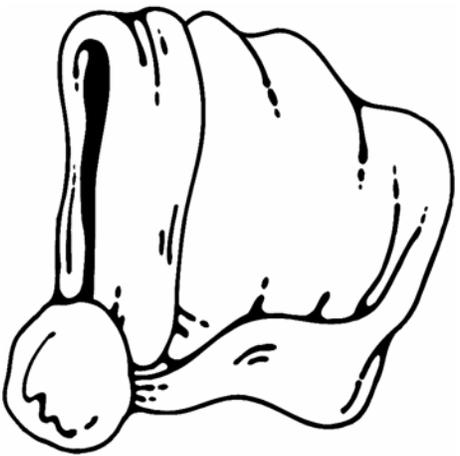
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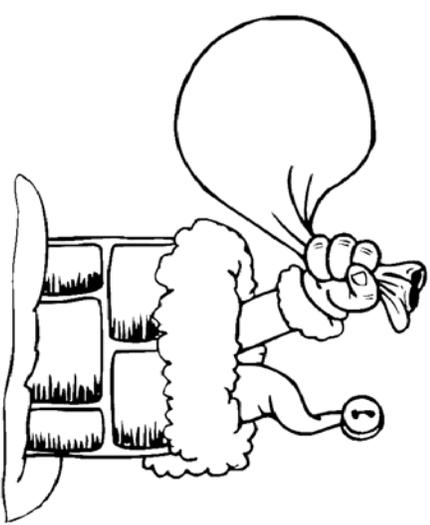
Here Is Santa



Here is Santa's hat.



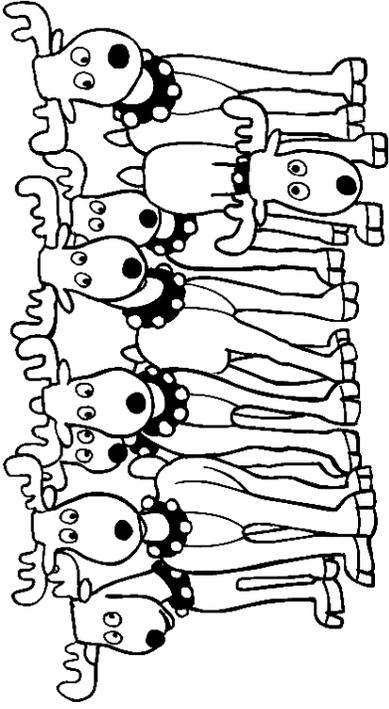
Here is Santa's beard.



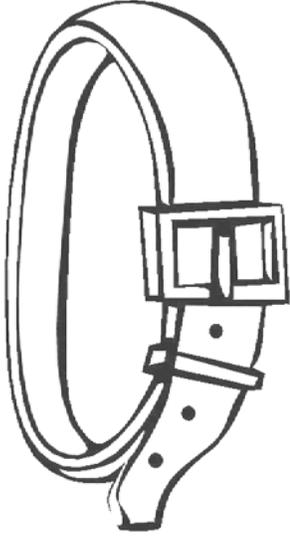
Here is Santa's sack.



Here is Santa!



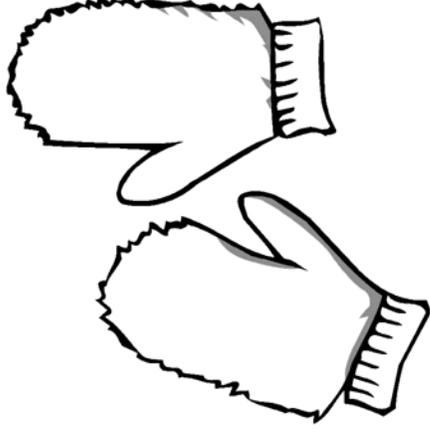
Here are Santa's reindeer.



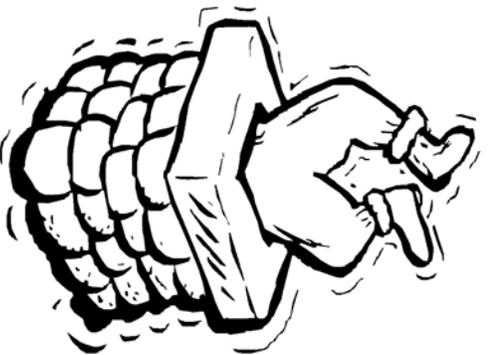
Here is Santa's belt.



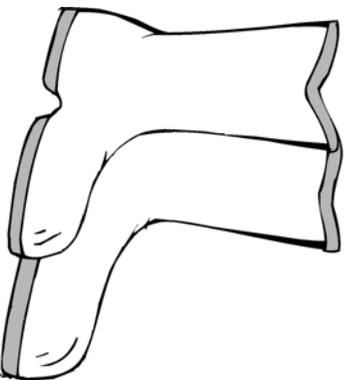
Here is Santa's sleigh.



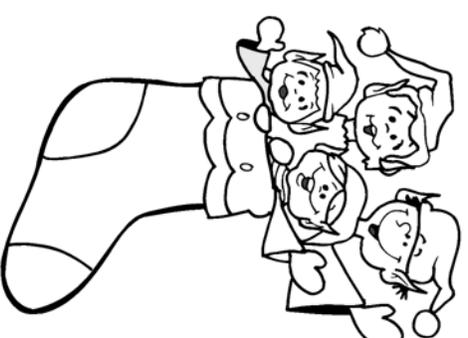
Here are Santa's mitts..



Here are Santa's pants.



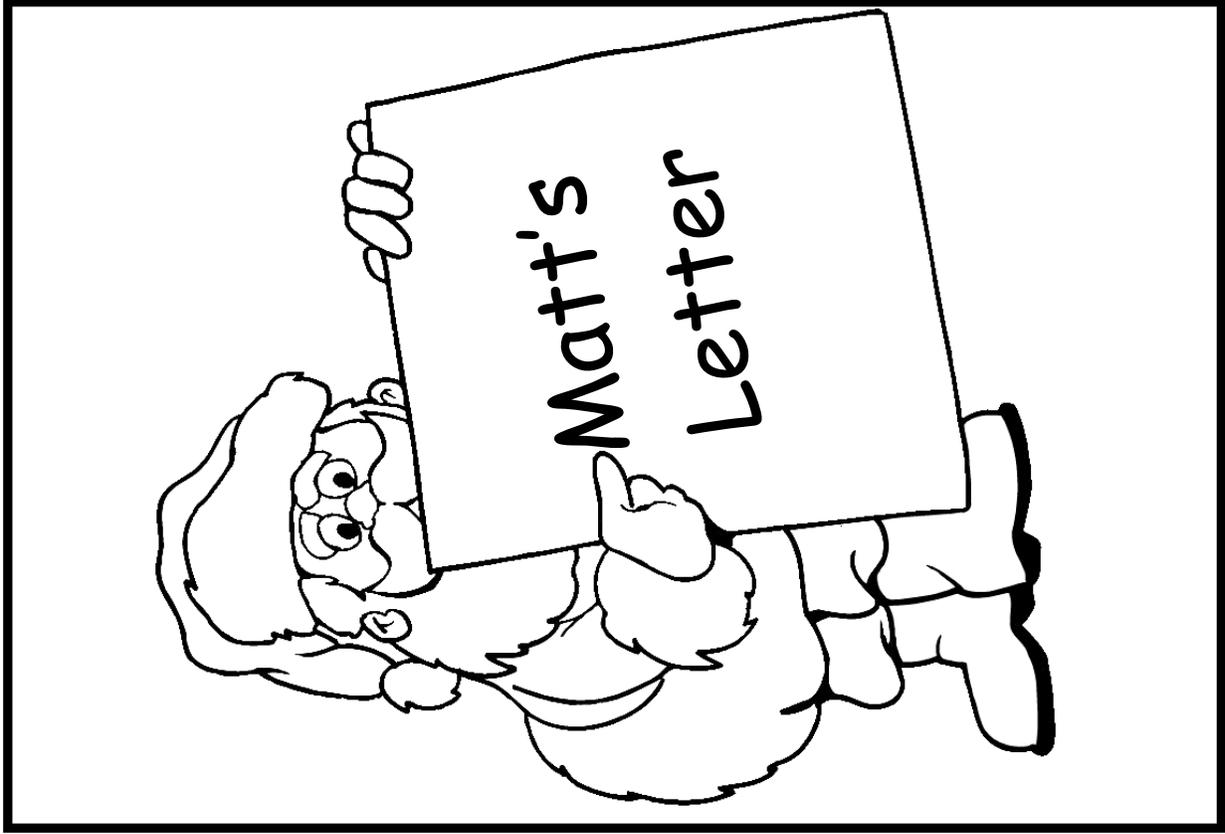
Here are Santa's boots.



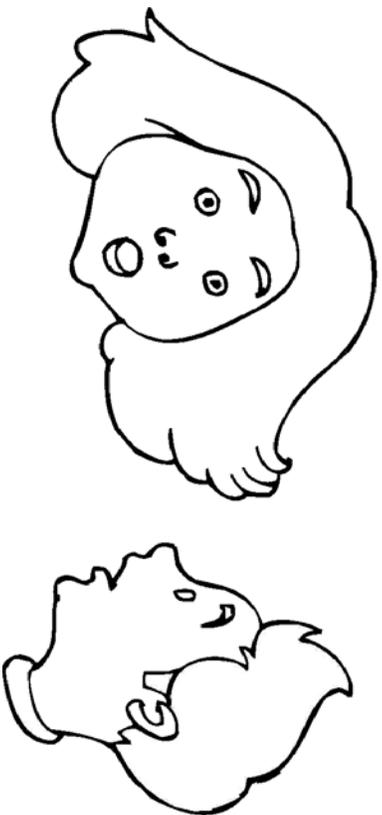
Here are Santa's elves.



Here is the North Pole.



Matt's Letter
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Matt wanted Christmas to come. Christmas was still two weeks away. It seemed a long time to wait!

"What can I do, Mom?" Matt asked. "What can I do that would be Christmas fun?"

2

Dear Santa

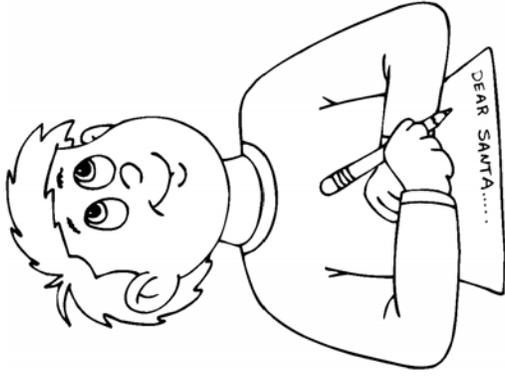
Please bring Mom a bowl and new oven mitts. Please bring Dad a new shovel and warm boots.

Would you please bring me something that is fun to play with? I like Superheroes and cars and basketballs. I like stuff that is gooey and messy. I like building things. I am sure you have lots of toys that would be just right for me. Bring me a surprise, please!

Love, Matt

P.S. Thank you for the train set you brought me last year!

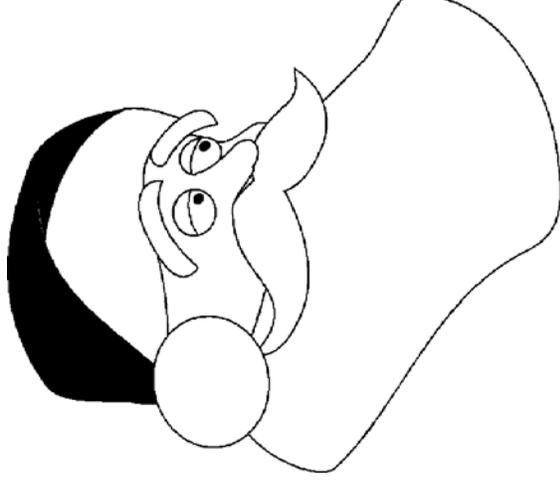
7



Matt sat down at the table. He thought and thought and wrote and wrote. When he was done, he put the letter into an envelope and wrote this on the front.

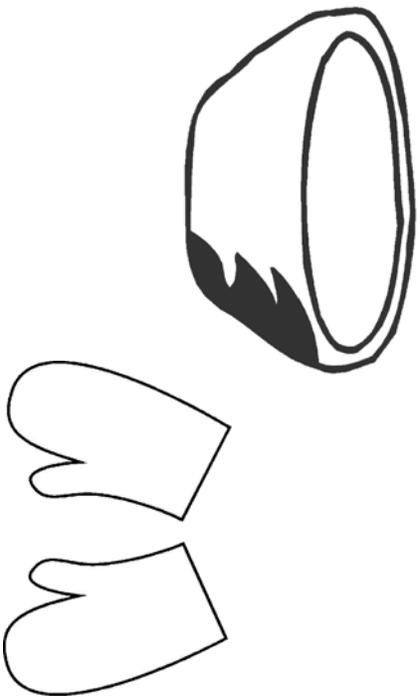
Santa Claus,
North Pole, Canada
HOHO HOHO

This is Matt's letter.



"Why don't you write to Santa?" Mom suggested.

"That's a great idea!" said Matt. He found paper and a pencil and sat down at the kitchen table. "What will I ask Santa to bring me?" he thought.



"Mom, what would be something good for Santa to bring me?" asked Matt.

Mom said, "I know! You like to bake. Oven mitts and a bowl would be a good idea. Then you can help me in the kitchen."

Yikes! Oven mitts and a bowl? Mike did not think they would be good presents.

4

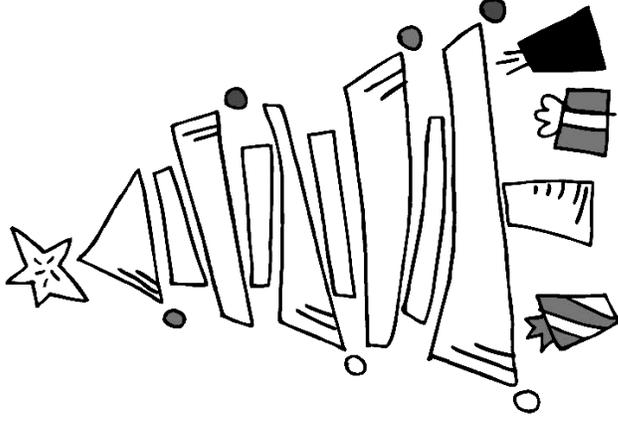
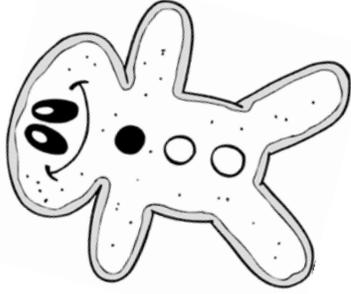


Matt went to see his Dad. "Dad, what would be something good for Santa to bring me?"

Dad said, "I know! A shovel to help clean up the snow would be a great present from Santa. New boots to wear when you shovel snow would be helpful, too."

Matt did not think that boots and a shovel were a good idea.

5

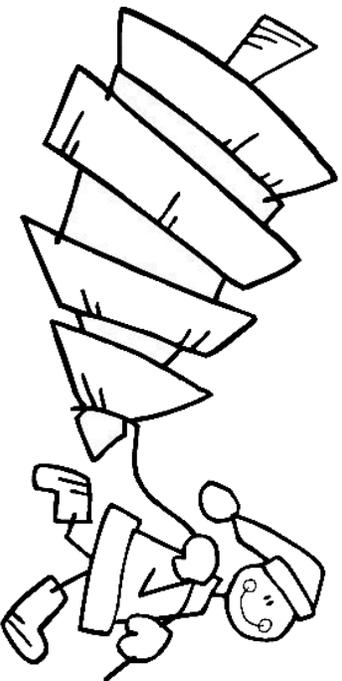


On The Christmas Tree



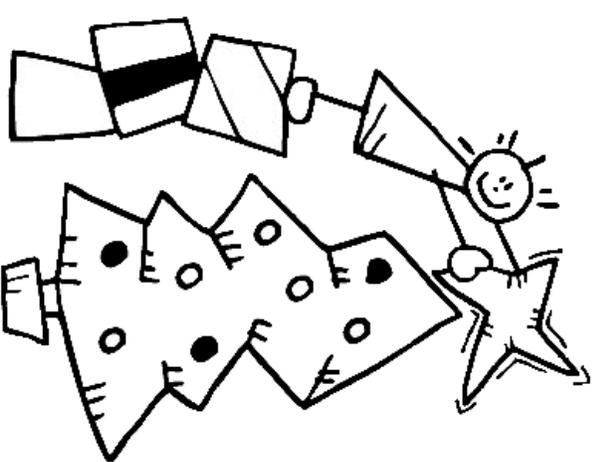
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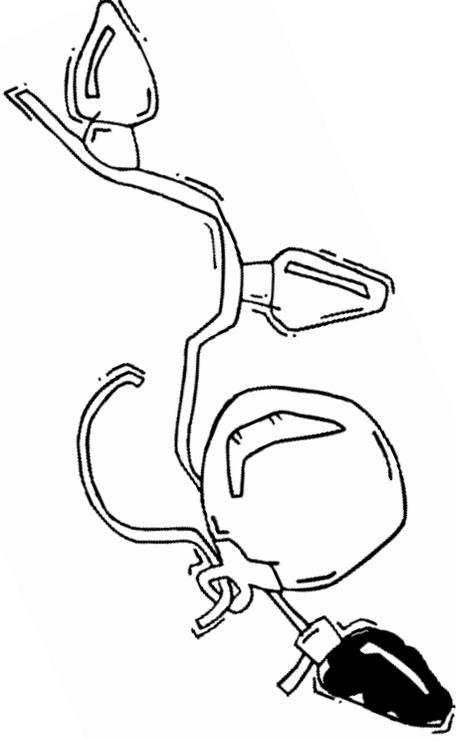
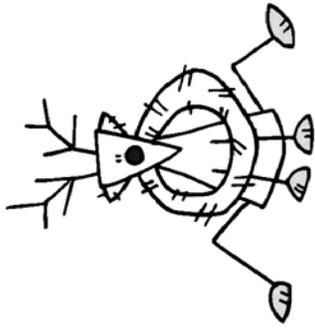
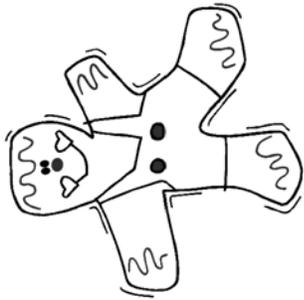
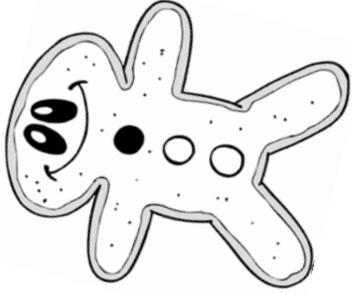
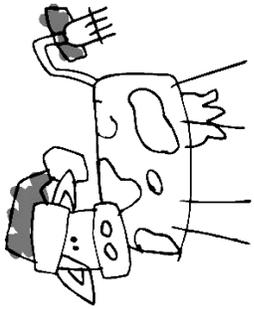
Have a look at my
Christmas tree.
It starts out bare
And then you'll see....

2



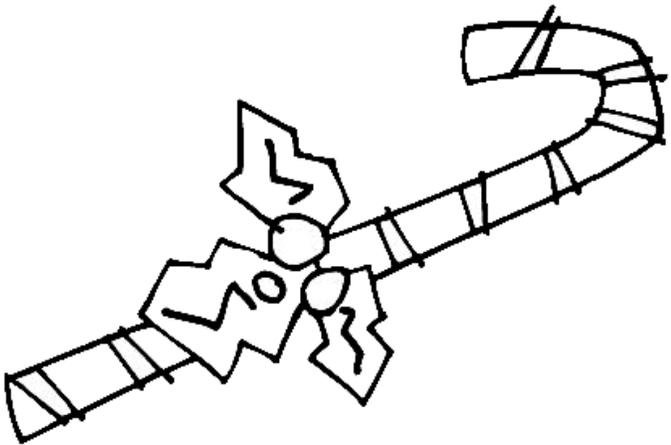
Now, the best part
You will see,
Is the beautiful star
At the top of our tree!
Merry Christmas!

7



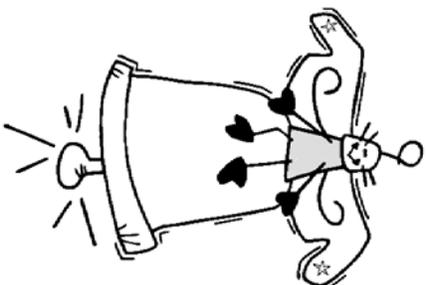
There are silly things
We like to make,
Some we colour,
Some we bake.

Some ornaments,
Silver and blue,
Sparkling lights
That twinkle, too.

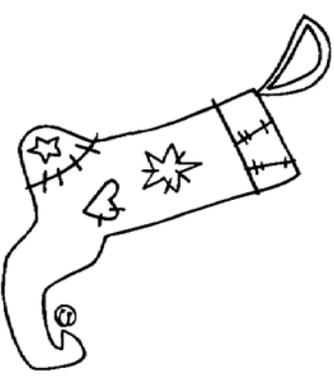


These candy canes,
So sweet and yummy,
Are for the tree,
Not for your tummy!

4



We hang angels
With little wings,
And tiny stockings
And other things.



5