April 2008 | Volume 14, No. 7

Classroom Connect®
Connected Newsletter™
The K-12 Guide to Technology & Data

Author Websites

Liven Up Literature Lessons

ESSENTIAL EDUBLOGS
Collaborate with experts

CONSUMER MATH TOOLKIT
Teach money management

ONLINE TOOLS
Promote interactive learning

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Connected Learning

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How to Connect with Us

- To obtain sample issues of the *Connected Newsletter* for personal use or staff training, call **(800) 638-1639** or email **help@classroom.com**.
- Harcourt Connected Learning is an award-winning provider of professional development programs and online instructional materials for K-12 education. To learn more, visit our Web site at **www.harcourtcl.com**.

Classroom Connect
Connected Newsletter

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Before going to press, we do our utmost to check the safety and validity of the websites in this issue. But due to the ever-changing nature of the Internet, we cannot be responsible for address changes or inappropriate content on these sites.

CAUTION This icon indicates a site that contains excellent information but may link to content that is unsuitable for students.

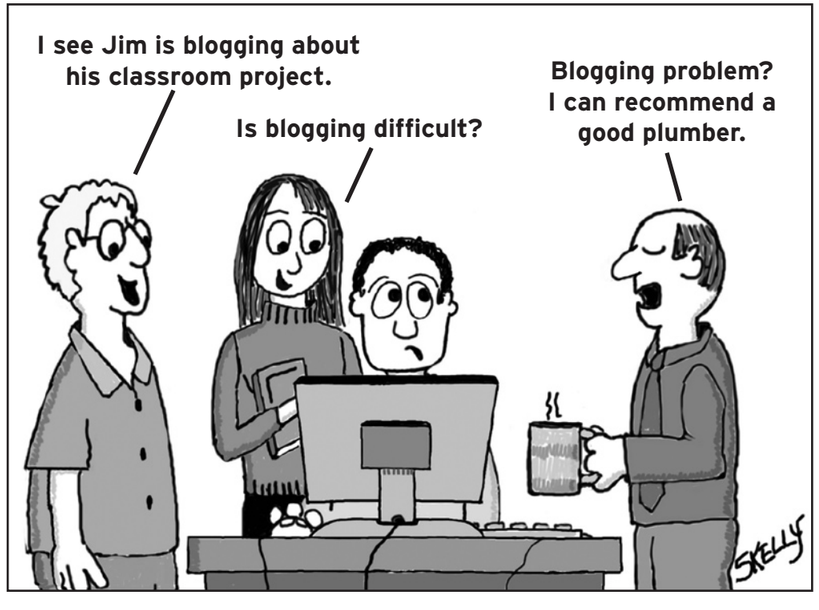
Keeping Up with Our Students

Looking ahead, the May issue of the Connected Newsletter continues to focus on today's ever-changing classroom. Mark Pullen writes *The Definitive Guide to School 2.0*. He shares that students are ready to learn in a "School 2.0" manner, meaning that they are skilled at using Web 2.0 applications. They are already accustomed to purchasing online, sharing videos, and communicating globally. They demand that the content they are learning is immediately relevant. In his article, Mark offers practical tips and advice that will get educators up to speed.

Other offerings include a lesson on Kidspiration and a math feature about paradoxes, fallacies, and surprises. Finally, Donald Hawkins shares insights about how we can use technology constructively in the classroom.

Paige

Paige Meredith
Executive Editor



Integrated Science Units
Grades 4–12

These multidisciplinary units were created by classroom teachers. The engaging science tasks "employ various instructional activities from which students may choose based on individual learning styles, multiple intelligences, personal interests, and creative inclinations." Each unit integrates technology and contains a learning challenge, an action plan, team and individual activities, and ways to present team findings. Topics include National Disaster Research, Animal Rights, Community Disaster Plan, Junk Food, Space Travel, Nuclear Energy, Crime Investigation, Community Growth, and Genetics. Check out the links to additional non-science units as well.
intgrunits.olivet.edu/internal/

Educators for Social Responsibility
Grades K12

Teachers will find many uses for these extraordinary lesson plans about conflict and social responsibility. Activities include Kindness-Catcher Camera, Hanging Up the Anger Suit, Conflict Skits, Enemies Web Chart, Peaceful Verbs, Valuing Different Views, Exploring Stereotypes, and Security In My Life. All lessons are linked to national standards. Users must register to download the free lessons.
www.esrnational.org/otc/

The English Teacher: Lesson Plans and Teaching Strategies
Grades 9–12

Developed by Leif Danielson, this site features lesson plans for books such as *Fahrenheit 451*, *True Grit*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Miracle Worker*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and *King Lear*. Teaching Creative Writing has lessons on dialogue, narrative writing, and poetry listening. Teaching Composition focuses on writing analogies, impromptu writing, and research papers. Additional resources include strategies for teaching vocabulary and media, when to add extra credit work, and constructing multiple choice tests.
teacher2b.com/

Live Links
If you would like a PDF containing all of the live URLs from this Newsletter, send an email to **links@classroom.com**

Asian Odyssey
Grades K–12

The Cleveland Museum of Art presents a thorough collection of Asian art lessons designed to familiarize American students with Chinese and Japanese cultures. All lessons are accompanied by images and are searchable by grade level, locale, or subject matter. Subjects include Buddhism, Daily Life and Festivals, Daoism and Confucianism, Geography and Climate, Literature and Folktales, Mathematics, Science and Natural History, and Visual and Theatrical Art. Try lessons on the history of paper, embroidery, haiku and topography, or dragon and tiger imagery.
www.clevelandart.org/educef/asianodyssey/html/

Pattern Math
Grades 9–12

Math professors Pippa Drew and Dorothy Wallace created wonderful lessons for the Math Across the Curriculum project at Dartmouth College. Though designed for college students, the lessons are comprehensive and can be adapted for high school. Look at the relationship between art and math through an exploration of repeating patterns and symmetry. Investigate mandalas, block printing, Klimt, Islamic art, and Escher. The lessons provide an opportunity to challenge students to think about math in new and different ways.
math.dartmouth.edu/~matc/math5.pattern/index.html

The Tech Museum of Innovation: Hands-on Labs
Grades 3–8

Discover inspirational technologies from this interactive museum in San Jose, California. Students can study renewable energy sources, observe changing weather patterns, design a product using microchips, or insert DNA into bacteria to learn how medicines are made. Design challenge lessons include Magnet Circus, Physics of Roller Coasters, Rover Landing, and Exploring Buoyancy. In Spuds in Space, "students investigate force and motion as they design spacesuits for their potato astronauts that can withstand the hazards of high velocity impacts from space debris and meteoroids."
www.thetech.org/education/programs/classroom/

by Emily Beck
Preschool Music and Middle School Math Teacher
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AUTHOR WEBSITES

Liven Up Literature Lessons

In the pre-Internet days, when you wanted a good book, you strolled to the library. When it was time to search for books, you asked the librarian. You knew that between the Dewey Decimal System and the librarian, success was just a paperback away.

Today, success is just an Internet bookmark away. Authors in the information age write content not only for their books but for their personal websites and blogs as well. Authors are also active on publisher's websites and online book portals. These various websites speed up our book searches and expand an array of research information. What gives authors' websites an edge on librarians is their interactivity and up-to-the-nanosecond information updates.

To illustrate the vast resources available from authors on the Web, this article will recreate a book format with an introduction and chapters to include as many authors' websites as possible.

Introduction

Begin with **Google Book Search** (books.google.com/). It delivers reviews, purchasing and borrowing information, Web pages, key terms, and popular passages. Use Google Book Search to examine the cover art from any book. To give students a pictorial prompt for journal writing, project on a large screen the cover of *La Mariposa*, a story of one boy's assimilation in school, by Francisco Jimenez. Of particular interest is the link to Places Mentioned in This Book. For example, study the novel *Blue Highways* by William Least Heat Moon, then the Places Mentioned in This Book displays a map of locations visited in the book.

Chapter One: Setting the Stage

One of the most prolific authors online is **Jan Brett** (www.janbrett.com). Brett's long-established website offers a generous array of activities, reproducible materials, videos, read-alongs, games, and eCards.

Author E.B. White and his classic *Charlotte's Web* remain interactive and current because of students in Mrs. Taverna's second grade class in Sleepy Hollow, New York. Their website **Charlotte's Web** (www2.lhric.org/pocantico/charlotte/index.htm) contains an ABC book, chapter summaries, quizzes, games, poems, and even a virtual field trip to a pig farm.

Dr. Seuss lives online in **Seussville** (www.seussville.com/lb/home.html). Click on the playground link for games referencing popular titles such as *Sam, I Am*; *One Fish, Two Fish*; *Fox in Socks*; and *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. Especially fun is the Seussville Storymaker where students fill the role of an author and create a three-scene story. You can also create a story together as a class during whole group instruction.

Chapter Two: Character and Plot Development

Visit "an old house in Paris that was covered in vines." That first line in 1939 introduces Ludwig Bemelman's rich character portrait of **Madeline** (www.madeline.com), a girl living in a hotel. Madeline's interactive website features a fan club, word search puzzle, and trivia to use for jeopardy questions and fun class discussions.

Jeff Kinney's **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** (www.funbrain.com/journal/Journal.html) is based on the illustrated tales of a middle school student named Greg. Students can read the diary he writes at the insistence of his mom. Then they can type any calendar day to jump to a diary excerpt and write their own character embellishment for Greg's life.

Author **Sue Monk Kidd's** (www.suemonkkidd.com) characterizations and vivid descriptions of South Carolina in *The Secret Life of Bees* will have readers reaching for a vintage hanky. Individual students, pairs, or your whole class may participate in a safe discussion forum at her website.

Chapter Three: Rising Action and Adventure

Action meets historic events in *The Captain's Dog: My Journey with the Lewis and Clark Tribe* by **Roland Smith** (www.rolandsmith.com/). Smith's narrator Seaman gives the dog's eye view of Lewis and Clark's 28-month expedition. You do not need a dog's help to explore Smith's Web page with a thematic unit on exploration and cherished family photos.

Action writer **Will Hobbs** (www.willhobbsauthor.com) author of *Far North* and *Crossing the Wire* gives a personal peek into his everyday life through his pictorial diary. Is Will Hobbs a modern-day Jack London? Let your students visit the **Jack London Online Collection** (london.sonoma.edu/) and decide as they create a timeline to compare and contrast both authors.

Chapter Four: Character Alienation

Sometimes students are engulfed by the stories they read. One young reader in Billie Dixon's Portales Junior High School library spoke in hushed tones about *The Angel's Trilogy* by Lurlene McDaniel. The trilogy gives voice to a teenager named Leah who is alone in a hospital waiting for her mother. McDaniel transferred personal tragedy to book pages as inspiration for *The Angel's Trilogy* and her other novels. McDaniel is one of a growing number of writers to meet young readers where they congregate. She maintains sites at **MySpace: Lurlene McDaniel** (www.myspace.com/lurlenemcdanielwriter) and **YouTube: Lurlene McDaniel** (www.youtube.com/user/LurleneMc). Both venues offer interviews, online commentary, and complete book chapters.

Printz Honor recipient **Terry Trueman** (www.terrytrueman.com/) sensitively captures the feelings and experiences of Shawn McDaniel, a young boy with cerebral palsy in *Stuck in Neutral*. Trueman's website chronicles the parallels between his life and plot elements of the book. Trueman's openness reveals the reality of life's struggles for students to vicariously experience. After visiting McDaniel's and Trueman's Web pages, assign a Venn diagram for students to compare and contrast the novel vs. the authors' actual life experience.

Chapter Five: Making Connections

Use authors' websites to connect to other curricular disciplines. **Catherine and Laurence Anholt's** (www.anholt.co.uk) books for younger readers connect art and reading. Their titles include *Picasso and the Girl with the Pony Tail*, *Camille and the Sunflowers*, and *The Magical Garden of Claude Monet*. Use an LCD projector to display their beautiful website collage for students to add to or replicate. Read the online book as a whole group activity and let students romp in the games section.

For slightly older readers, author **Barbara Beasley Murphy** (www.barbarabeasleymurphy.com) sets her books in museums. In *Life! How I Love You!* 12-year-old Lily meets painter Frieda Kahlo in the New Mexico Museum of Art. Visit the site for introductions to Murphy's other museum novels such as *Miguel, Lost and Found in the Palace*.

Authors Brian Jacques and Katherine Paterson connect readers to tales in fanciful **Redwall Abbey** (www.redwall.org) and **Terabithia** (www.terabithia.com/) respectively. The popularity of all things Hogwarts led author **J.K. Rowling** (www.jkrowling.com) to issue versions of her website in six different languages.

Chapter Six: Conflict Arch

America Soliz faces conflict as a recent immigrant living in a Chicago barrio. Despite wishing to return to her native Oaxaca, America resolves her conflict by relying on her creative talent. Author **Luis J. Rodriguez** (www.luisjrodriguez.com) uses his site to link to the **Barnes & Noble** (www.bn.com) online book warehouse. His book, *America Is Her Name*, benefits from Barnes & Noble's interactive page-turning feature. Students may page thoughtfully through the online book and then use their journals to respond to these prompts:

- Have you ever felt left out or unwelcome?
- Would you like to live somewhere else?
- How do harmony and tolerance help a neighborhood?

Chapter Seven: Diversity

Reading lists benefit from titles of many cultures. Students get a real-world example of an interview with **An Na** (www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resources/authors/interviews/AnNa.html), author of *A Step from Heaven*. Visit **Children's and YA Author Cynthia Leitich Smith** (www.cynthialeitichsmith.com) to browse the author interviews and quotes sections. These are great for lesson hooks and matching games.

Lee and Low Books feature writers with diverse backgrounds. Search for books at this website and results include themes, reviews, and book guides. Author Mary Williams' tale **Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan** (www.leeandlow.com/booktalk/williams.html) and Andrea Cheng's family tribute **Grandfather Counts** (www.leeandlow.com/teachers/guide38.html) are just a few of Lee and Low Books' spotlight interviews.

Chapter Eight: Vignettes

Teach point of view with *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman. Thirteen different characters give their point of view about planting a garden in a Cleveland neighborhood. Read the first chapter of *Seedfolks* at **Paul Fleischman's Official Website** (www.paulfleischman.net). Print the chapter, cut the paragraphs, and distribute for students to organize as a sequence check. Read Fleischman's essay, "From Seed to Seedfolks" and emphasize Fleischman's first sentence, "I'm a word person. When I'm eating alone, I need to be reading something—anything." As a journal prompt, ask students to consider if they are a word person, a thought person, an action person, or a combination!

In vignettes organized under five topics (family, angst, friendship, love, and home), *Growing Up Filipino* reveals the perspectives of young adults in both the Philippines and the

continued→

United States. Author **Cecilia Manguerra Brainard's** (**www.geocities.com/athens/parthenon/4463/**) page includes shorter essays and stories for further reading or as a resource for improving reading skills.

Chapter Nine: Further Adventures in Chapter Books

Perhaps as much mystery surrounds the authors of the **Nancy Drew** (**www.nancydrewsleuth.com**) series of books as the heroine herself has encountered. The site chronicles the title's inception (over 75 years ago) to last year's movie starring Emma Roberts. To combine literary elements with history, ask students to create a timeline of several book publication dates and their front page headline counterparts. Click the blog link for fun craft ideas and current thoughts from the latest Nancy Drew writer.

Not forgotten are Nancy's boyhood counterparts, **The Hardy Boys** (**www.hardydetectiveagency.com**). Both series have interesting idioms and vernacular. Reading excerpts to students from either series can bring a humorous approach to deciphering unfamiliar terms in context. Log in and use **Amazon's** (**www.amazon.com**) excerpt feature to find page samples. See also Amazon's key phrases list to help you reinforce the state standard of identifying words in context.

Voracious readers of **Lemony Snicket** (**www.lemonysnicket.com**) know that a website from author Daniel Handler is likely to be a mischievous experience. With links such as Vile Videos, More Misfortune, and Dire Diversions, Handler ensures that a Web visit is also a lesson in alliteration. Author Charles Ogden welcomes all pranksters and invites readers' submissions and reviews at his website based on the excursions of his characters **Edgar and Ellen** (**www.edgarandellen.com**).

In a more bucolic theme, author Laura Ingalls Wilder's website of the **Little House on the Prairie** (**www.littlehouseontheprairie.com**) series has its own virtual field trip. View the map titled Laura's Travels and accompanying slide show to highlight national history and geography. You may also enjoy author Ann Rinaldi's website, **Ann Rinaldi: Historian and Storyteller** (**www.annrinaldi.com**). Her books weave historical plot elements into the lives of young characters.

Avid readers in Mary Gonder's class in Bulloch County, Georgia, clamor for author Kevin Henkes' **Dear America** (**www.scholastic.com/dearamerica/books/index.html**), a book series of young girls' letters during historic periods. For a quick digital storytelling activity, students can publish their own stories, diary entries, and poems in a virtual word quilt. Book excerpts, video clips, and an interactive design room combine literature, art, and history at this fun portal.

Chapter Ten: Comic Relief

Making the most of car trips inspired **Nancy Shaw** (**www.answers.com/topic/nancy-shaw**) to see humor in roadside travel. Shaw's series of six books on the adventures of the "fleeced five" herd of madcap sheep are a wild and woolly read.

Author **Laura Numeroff** (**www.lauranumeroff.com**) retells life events through the cause and effect lens in *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, and *If You Take a Mouse to School*. Her website offers ideas to inspire kids to write their own stories as well as games and writing tips.

David Shannon (**www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/shannon**), author of the *No, David!* book series, wrote his first book at age five. He describes his life in a video interview at the Reading Rockets website. Continue navigating through Reading Rockets to view the author pages and video interviews of **Patricia Polacco** (**www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/polacco**), **Bill Martin Jr.** (**www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/martin**), **Eric Carle** (**www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/carle**), and more. The author information is so concise and readable that this website may be the only resource you need when students begin the next author biography assignment.

Epilogue

The Internet hosts many informative, fun, and interesting author websites with real-time discussions, multimedia, and student communication and publishing opportunities. Collect all the books on your class reading list in a personalized virtual library with the help of **Library Thing** (**www.librarything.com**). Library Thing is the world's largest free online book club and library catalog. Get a personalized link to share book titles that will be displayed on a virtual bookshelf. Connect with other readers who also chose the same books and recommend additional titles for future reading.

See all the books mentioned in this article (and some that space restricted) at my **Library Thing** catalog (**www.librarything.com/catalog/authors4kids**). Choose a few to recommend to your students and enjoy!

Helen Teague, M.A., Ed. (helen@4oops.com) *is an educational consultant specializing in professional development and curriculum writing. She wants to be included as the first non-sheep character in the next Nancy Shaw book. Please visit her website at* **4oops.com**.

Essential Edublogs
Connect with Teachers!

Edublogs are online journals written by teachers who want to share their knowledge and experience. Many edublogs offer lesson plans, technology tutorials, classroom success stories, the latest educational research, and software recommendations. They provide ways for teachers to collaborate with experts and contribute best practice models. There are often links to podcasts on various subjects, professional development resources, and conference updates. And for many teachers, what makes an edublog special is the comment section, a dynamic forum in which to express opinions on hot topics!

Where can you find the most useful edublogs to meet your needs? Begin with **Techlearning's Top Edublogs** (**www.techlearning.com/blog/2007/08/top_edublogs_august_2007.php**). Scott McLeod and his assistants compiled a list of 30 edublogs as measured by Technorati rankings. The edublogs range from the popular **Inside Higher Ed** (**www.insidehighered.com/**) to the **Infinite Thinking Machine** (**www.infinitethinking.org/**). **Edublogger World** (**edubloggerworld.ning.com**) also provides a starting point for teachers who want to improve instruction, foster learning, and build community among educators. In addition, investigate the six outstanding edublogs here: the wealth of ideas will enhance your teaching skills!

AssortedStuff

Tim Stahmer is an instructional technology specialist for Fairfax County Schools, Virginia. His observations on the state of public education in the United States include topics such as redefining privacy, the $100 laptop, and the read/write Web. From the blog you can link to Tim's searchable database of resources in **Top 101 Websites for Teachers** (**www.assortedstuff.com/top101/**). Click **Stuff for Ed Tech** (**www.assortedstuff.com/stuff/**), a collection of training materials for teachers "who want to publish on the Web, work with digital images, and generally use technology to improve their professional practice."
www.assortedstuff.com/

School Library Journal: Never Ending Search

Joyce Valenza is a teacher-librarian at Springfield Township High School, Pennsylvania. Her blog for SLJ specializes in emerging technologies and information fluency. One post includes a review of her lesson on citing sources using **Noodlebib** (**www.noodletools.com/**). Another post discusses the launch of **Partnership for 21st Century Skills: Route 21** (**www.21stcenturyskills.org/route21/**). This "major sandbox for discovery" contains a framework for literacy skills, assessment tools, and ways to construct rich learning environments. Joyce's upbeat writing style makes this edublog a worthwhile destination.
feeds.feedburner.com/SLJNeverEndingSearch

Alan November Webblog

Alan, renowned educational consultant and author, invites you to listen to exemplary keynote speeches via podcasts. What do you know about online community building? Take the quiz and find out. Alan asks his readers for their best hopes about the impact of technology and the Internet on learning. One response: "Students feel empowered as they see that their ideas are heard and are valuable. Empowered students would then be enthusiastic about their own abilities to contribute to a dialogue for addressing real problems and designing real solutions." Refer to this edublog's accessible archives to help support your school's philosophy on technology and encourage administrators to expand district programs.
nlcommunities.com/communities/alannovember/default.aspx

Alexander Russo: This Week in Education

Scholastic hosts this former teacher-turned-writer's compendium of major education news stories that involve national politics. Dig into the Health and Education spending bill, Head Start, or NCLB reauthorization. With intriguing daily snippets culled from others' edublogs ("Delay School Start Time to Raise Scores? No Thanks."), Alexander is sure to stir things up! Check out his opinions on charter schools, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), urban education, and cash incentives for students.
www.thisweekineducation.com/

The Elementary Educator

What are two basic types of questions we should be asking in classrooms? How should we teach students in a Web 2.0 world? Mark Pullen, a third grade teacher in Michigan, keeps pace with thought-provoking topics such as The Inverse Power of Praise, Teacher Autonomy vs. Forced Uniformity, The Death of Sustained Silent Reading, and Assumption-Free Teaching. Subscribe to the blog's RSS feed to keep up with informative new content.
mrpullen.wordpress.com/

Computer Science Teacher

Alfred Thompson taught for eight years and is now the K–12 Computer Science Academic Relations Manager for Microsoft. His edublog focuses on successful technology techniques to boost students' skills. For example, download a screencast that demonstrates how to create an install program or link to Tablet PC tips on video. Topics include Security vs. Ease of Use, Robots in Education, and What in the World Is a Developer Evangelist?
blogs.msdn.com/alfredth/default.aspx

by Sharon Wheeler
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This Month: The Galápagos Islands

The Galápagos Islands, also known as the Islas Encantadas, straddle the equator approximately 600 miles (965 kilometers) west of Ecuador. The archipelago consists of 13 large and many small volcanic islands. The islands were discovered in 1535 when father Tomás de Berlanga, the bishop of Panama, sailed to Peru to settle a dispute between Francisco Pizarro and his lieutenants after the conquest of the Incas. Today, the Galápagos are governed by Ecuador and are maintained as part of its national park system. Many believe these remarkable islands hold the key to the scientific explanation of evolution.

Charles Darwin Foundation

The Charles Darwin Foundation has researched the ecosystem of the Galápagos Islands for almost 50 years. Its mission is "to provide knowledge and assistance through scientific research and complementary action to ensure the conservation of the environment and biodiversity in the Galápagos archipelago." The resources for young researchers and their teachers include a Kids' Corner that provides answers to FAQs posed by students. Student activity books and a teacher's manual are available in Spanish. For older students, fact sheets on indigenous species are available in English. Students can follow the steps taken to restore the islands nearly extinct tortoise population via an online book or Windows movie.
www.darwinfoundation.org/en/library/children

Galápagos Conservancy

The Galápagos Conservancy "advocates for the lasting protection of the Galápagos Islands through programs of constituency building, education, and fundraising in North America." The lesson plans on this page are grouped into grades 3–5 and 6–8. Each plan includes a lesson overview, standards connections, materials lists, student objectives, assessment strategies, student handouts, and worksheets. A map of the archipelago with a sidebar of statistics will come in handy.
www.Galapagos.org/schools.html

Galápagos Education

Developed in conjunction with the Smithsonian, the National Science Teachers Association, and the National Science Foundation, this site is an entertaining option for teaching students about ecology and evolution. Students can see, hear, and learn about the biology, ecology, and geology of the Galápagos. They will also study the unifying concept of evolution, which is a series of changes (some gradual, some sporadic) that account for the present form and function of objects, organisms, and systems. The Classroom Investigations contain both downloadable and online activities to use at home or in class. Teaching Evolution resources provide information and links about the theory of evolution.
www.nsta.org/publications/interactive/Galapagos/

Animals, Adaptations, and the Galápagos Islands

This site supports Scholastic's *Science Explorations*, a publication of the American Museum of Natural History. After listening to a three-minute introduction, students can explore the Galápagos Islands as Darwin did when he first arrived. Using any one of three levels, students can use an electronic field journal to collect clues and investigate how the islands' animals have adapted to their environment. The completed journal may be printed or viewed as a PowerPoint presentation. Go to Darwin's Library for additional information to help students understand some of the concepts.
teacher.scholastic.com/activities/explorations/adaptation/index.htm

World Atlas: Galápagos Islands

The Galápagos Islands map on this site can be enlarged before printing. Another map shows the archipelago's location in relation to South America and the world. Read a brief description of the islands, review geographic facts, and learn about the climate. World Atlas is an invaluable site for real and virtual journeys around the world!
www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/samerica/galap.htm

Additional Webites

PBS: Destination: Galápagos Islands
www.pbs.org/safarchive/5_cool/Galapagos/g1_welcome.html

Galápagos Natural History
www.Galapagosonline.com/nathistory/nathistory.htm

Explore Galápagos
school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/Galapagos/index.html

Travel for Kids: Galápagos Islands
www.travelforkids.com/Funtodo/Ecuador/Galapagos.htm

Discover Galápagos: Darwin's Enchanted Islands
www.discoverGalapagos.com/GalapagosIslands/index.html

The Galápagos Islands: Activities for Elementary, Middle, and High School Students

The Galápagos is one of the most amazing places on Earth. Charles Darwin was inspired to study life in a new way after he observed slight variations between species on the different islands. He subsequently developed his revolutionary theory of evolution. Shortly after Darwin's visit, the islands' animals, particularly the tortoises, were hunted nearly to extinction. Today, the islands and their wildlife are protected. Students can become virtual tourists and view the Galápagos Islands by completing these activities.

1 Location	**FOCUS** Where are the Galápagos Islands? **OBJECTIVES** • Locate the ocean that surrounds the Galápagos Islands. • Identify who owns the islands. • Explain the geological history of the islands.	**Picture Gallery of the Galápagos Islands** www.ecuador-travel.net/Galapagos.pictures.htm **Map of Galápagos Islands** worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/samerica/galap.htm **Galápagos Geology** www.geo.cornell.edu/geology/GalapagosWWW/GalapagosGeology.html
2 Discovery	**FOCUS** Who discovered the Galápagos Islands? **OBJECTIVES** • Explore the history of the archipelago. • Describe the events that occurred after the arrival of the Europeans to the islands.	**Galápagos Online: Early Discovery** www.Galapagosonline.com/predeparture/History/Early_Discovery.htm **History and People of the Galápagos Islands** www.ecuador-travel.net/Galapagos.history.htm **Galápagos Islands History** www.Galapagos-inc.com/history.html
3 Evolution	**FOCUS** What did Charles Darwin discover in the Galápagos Islands? **OBJECTIVES** • Identify the significance of the Galápagos Islands in Darwin's theory of evolution. • Learn the differences among the flora and fauna that inspired Darwin's evolutionary theory.	**Charles Darwin and the Galápagos Islands** www.gct.org/darwin.html **Charles Darwin** www.crystalinks.com/darwin.html **Charles Darwin and the Galápagos Islands** www.rit.edu/~rhrsbi/GalapagosPages/Darwin.html
4 Plants and Animals	**FOCUS** What plants and animals are unique to the Galápagos Islands? **OBJECTIVES** • Explore the land and sea mammals indigenous to the Galápagos Islands. • Identify the islands' unusual reptiles. • Name the birds indigenous to the islands.	**Galápagos Islands: Plants** www.tortoisetours.com/Galapagos-plants **Galápagos Islands: Wildlife** www.tortoisetours.com/islands-wildlife **Galápagos Wildlife** www.Galapagosonline.com/Galapagos_Natural_History/Birds_and_Animals/Fauna.html
5 Environment	**FOCUS** What environmental pressures are being placed on the Galápagos Islands? **OBJECTIVES** • Name specific threats to the islands' environment. • Discover what steps are being taken to protect the islands' sensitive ecosystem.	**Challenges to Galápagos** www.darwinfoundation.org/en/Galapagos/challenges **Galápagos: Threats** www.worldwildlife.org/wildplaces/Galapagos/threats.cfm **Conservation of the Galápagos Islands** www.Galapagosonline.com/Galapagos_Natural_History/Conservation/Conservation.html

by Jim Cornish · Fifth Grade Teacher, Gander Academy, Newfoundland, Canada · jim.cornish@warp.nfld.net

APRIL 2008

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1 **Black Sea** Where is this body of water located? www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/blacksea.htm	2 **Kites** What feat was accomplished by Homan Walsh? www.nationalkitemonth.org/history/kitepeople.shtml	3 **Isle Royale** What research project is conducted at this national park? www.nps.gov/isro/naturescience/index.htm	4 **Dog Shows** Which four breeds are making their debut in 2008? www.westminsterkennelclub.org/
7 **U.S. Air Force Academy** What are the academy's core values? www.usafa.af.mil/core-value/cv-mastr.html	8 **Flowers** Why are petals important? www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/gpe/case4/c4facts1a.html	9 **U.S. Civil War** Where did General Lee surrender? www.pocanticohills.org/civilwar/timeline.htm	10 ***Cam Jansen*** Who inspired this mystery-solving character? www.camjansen.com/bio.htm	11 ***Apollo 13*** How was the lunar module used on this mission? www.lpi.usra.edu/lunar/missions/apollo/apollo_13/overview/
14 **Alcatraz** When was this national park a federal penitentiary? www.nps.gov/alcatraz/	15 **Tennessee** What is the state wildflower? tennessee.gov/sos/symbols/	16 **Baseball** When did the first women's baseball team form? www.pbs.org/kenburns/baseball/	17 **Hadrosaurus** Who discovered this dinosaur? www.nj.gov/hangout_nj/cartoonhistory_hadro.html	18 **Amelia Earhart** Where was the first stop on this pilot's final flight? www.ellensplace.net/ae_lflt.html
21 **Barbara Park** What was this author's first children's book? www.randomhouse.com/kids/junieb/author/author.html	22 **Jelly Beans** How long does it take to make this candy? www.candyusa.org/Candy/jellybeans.asp	23 **Vitascope** Where was this projector first exhibited? memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edshift.html	24 **Italy** How many people farm in this country? www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4033.htm	25 **License Plates** Who was issued the first plate in Massachusetts? www.mass.gov/rmv/history/index.htm
28 **Utah** Who is the governor of Utah? www.utah.gov/governor/	29 **Duke Ellington** Which piano masters influenced this composer? www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_ellington_duke.htm	30 **Bugs Bunny** Which cartoon was inducted into the National Film Registry? looneytunes.warnerbros.com/web/stars/stars_bugs.jsp	**Visit us online for this month's live link calendar—perfect for a computer lab, classroom, or media center activity!** **www.classroom.com/community/connection/calendar.jhtml**	

A CONSUMER MATH TOOLKIT

According to a 2007 survey conducted by the investment firm Charles Schwab, only one-fourth of U.S. teenagers say they are very knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable about credit card interest rates and fees. Fewer than 50 percent of those surveyed said they understood how debit cards and credit cards work. Clearly, there is much to be done in educating young people about money management and financial literacy.

To address this need, more and more states have been adding consumer-math applications to their standards. The associated mathematical concepts span the curriculum and encompass everything from the four basic operations to exponential growth. Here are some of the best online resources for building a consumer-math toolkit for your classroom.

Start Young!

Financial literacy begins at an early age as children apply counting skills to money. The sites below offer a variety of settings in which students can practice this essential skill. The Piggy Bank site features a fast-paced money-counting game that even older students will enjoy.

Piggy Bank
fen.com/studentactivities/Piggybank/piggybank.html
Money Flashcards
www.aplusmath.com/cgi-bin/flashcards/money
Counting Money
www.hbschool.com/activity/counting_money
Let's Compare
www.hbschool.com/activity/lets_compare

It Pays to Save

Some financial experts believe that our spending and saving habits are established by the age of seven. In these days of credit-card debt and home foreclosures, it's more important than ever to have students explore the benefits of putting money aside for a rainy day. Fortunately, such investigations have a natural place in the mathematics classroom, particularly as students learn about addition, multiplication, and percents. Here are several sites that make it fun to learn about saving money while applying basic math skills.

Ed's Bank
www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/pop/games/p_ed_bank.html
Republic of Saving
www.orangekids.com/amy/save_intro.htm
Mad Money
pbskids.org/itsmylife/games/mad_money_flash.html

The Big Picture

One of the advantages of using online resources to teach financial literacy is the fact that the Web lends itself to in-depth simulations and interactivity. The two sites that follow both bring students into a world in which they earn and save money, make spending decisions, and see the results of their choices. The sites would be excellent supplements to units on financial literacy or they could serve as the basis of long-term projects. Moneyopolis is especially well-done, giving students a chance to invest, pay taxes, and plan for future education expenses. The site even includes a spreadsheet for setting up a budget. Hands-On Banking provides animated how-to's on bank accounts, credit cards, and much more. All of the site's features are customized for several grade ranges and are available in Spanish.

Moneyopolis
www.moneyopolis.com/new/home.asp
Hands-On Banking
www.handsonbanking.org/eng_modules.html

Home Improvements

A classic consumer-math problem asks students to find the cost of painting or wallpapering a room. The Internet makes it possible to turn this routine application into an open-ended investigation. For example, you might have students work in small groups to find the cost of painting your classroom. The activity can incorporate hands-on measurement as well as the use of online calculators. As an added challenge, you might have students explain how the calculators work. Ask them to explain the underlying mathematics that makes it possible for the website to take the user's inputs and return an estimate of the amount of paint or wallpaper that is needed.

Paint Calculator
www.benjaminmoore.ca/howto/paint_calculator.aspx
How Much Paint Do You Need?
www.paintquality.com/diy/calculator/calc.html
Paint Calculator
www.behr.com/behrx/expert/calc-choose-int.jsp?subnav=intcalc
Wallpaper & Border Trim Calculator
www.wallpaperstogo.com/calculator.htm

Learning About Credit Cards

For better or worse, credit cards are an essential part of everyday life. Although they are convenient to use, they can come with hidden costs. The sites listed below give students an opportunity to learn how credit cards work and to find out how much they would pay in interest if they make the minimum payment each month.

Credit Card Simulator
www.channelone.com/life/2005/11/02/credit/
Simulation of Credit Card Interest
vam.anest.ufl.edu/simulations/creditcardinterest.php

Bonus Sites

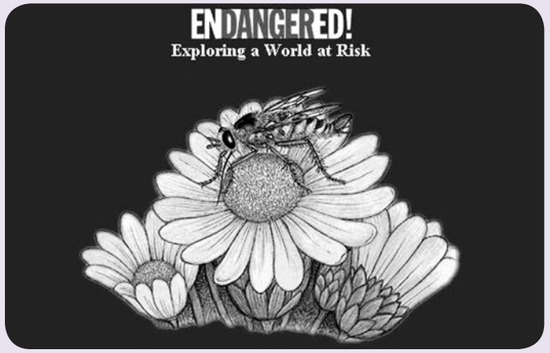
Here are two sites that are treasure troves for educators, students, and parents. Young Investor offers lesson plans, puzzles, and articles on every aspect of investing, from mutual funds to the Federal Reserve's role in monitoring the U.S. economy. Practical Money Skills, which was developed by Visa, also contains a wealth of lesson plans and interactive calculators, as well as several games with cool graphics.

Young Investor
www.younginvestor.com
Practical Money Skills
www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/at_school/

by Joe Todaro
Curriculum Developer & Consultant
jtodaro@pacbell.net

A+ WEB GALLERY
Sites That Get Our Highest Recommendation

Site of the Month!



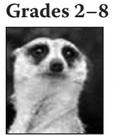
Endangered! Exploring a World at Risk
Grades 4–10

The American Museum of Natural History provides an excellent destination for Earth Day. Read the tale *Legend of the Meeps Island Flying Frog* and learn about the efforts to save this species. Endangered Animals examines over 30 species including the black rhino, Bengal tiger, leatherback sea turtle, and Asian elephant. Endangered Habitats looks at the disastrous effects humans have had on coral reefs, the Olympic Peninsula, Madagascar, and the Kapuas River in Borneo. Go to Terminology for a glossary or click Causes of Endangerment for a review of habitat destruction and overexploitation. Additional links and suggested reading are also available.
www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/Endangered/index.html

The Nature Conservancy
Grades 4–12

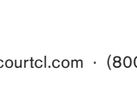
Established in over 30 countries and possessing over one million members, this nonprofit organization prides itself on high ethical and scientific standards. It operates 100 marine conservation projects, protects a million acres of land, and monitors 5,000 miles of rivers. How We Work has an excellent primer on conservation science. Go to Activities for a nice selection of eCards, stunning slide shows, and exceptional videos. On Earth Day, calculate your school's climate impact with the Carbon Footprint Calculator. And each week, Nature Stories offers audio commentary about people connecting with the natural world.
www.nature.org/?src=logo

Los Angeles Zoo
Grades 2–8



For a comprehensive list of the L.A. Zoo's birds, mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates, read the highly informative fact sheets. Did you know the leopard gecko can't climb vertical surfaces? That's one reason why it's a popular pet! The data for each animal includes the scientific name, a photo or video, habitat, diet, and physical characteristics. In addition, study the plants at the botanical garden or learn about the zoo's efforts to preserve pronghorns, condors, and tapirs.
www.lazoo.org/

Space Shuttle
Grades 8–12



How are payloads installed on the shuttle? How do the solid rocket boosters work? Learn about past, present, and future shuttle missions. Go to Behind the Scenes for articles that explain how a *Star Wars* lightsaber made it into orbit or what a dress rehearsal for a launch is like. Vehicle Structure presents shuttle details and diagrams. Click Multimedia for videos of a shuttle landing. Read interviews with astronauts, attend a webcast, or listen to a podcast. Examine the *Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter*, the *International Space Station*, or GLAST: the Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope.
www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/main/

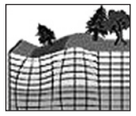
Thomas Jefferson
Grades 6–12

This companion website to Ken Burns's PBS film *Thomas Jefferson* provides students with a collection of important documents as well as transcripts of the interviews conducted for the documentary. Picturing the Pursuit of Happiness is an exploration of the meaning of Jefferson's phrase from the Declaration of Independence. Enlightenment in the Classroom reviews Jefferson's thoughts about the five basic freedoms (political, religious, social, intellectual, and personal) and critical Supreme Court cases that helped define the constitution.
www.pbs.org/jefferson/

Real Trees 4 Kids
Grades 3–12

Developed in 1999 in honor of Earth Day, this informative project has continued to grow. Elementary students learn about conifers, tree farms, growth cycles, tree types, and recycling. Middle school students can study plant cycles, classification, trees as microhabitats, stems and rings, and a year in the life of a tree farmer. High school students can investigate the importance of soil, supply and demand, farm jobs, plant genetics, and tree farm operations. There are also teachers' guides, vocabulary lists, crafts, printable worksheets, and useful links.
www.realtrees4kids.org/

Savage Earth
Grades 6–12



A joint production of PBS and WNET New York, Savage Earth first aired 10 years ago. This companion site is up-to-date and still as fascinating as ever. Examine the earth's changing crust, earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis. Each topic has a substantive article with rich illustrations. Computer animations use impressive graphics to visually represent the phenomena covered in each episode. Additional articles provide more in-depth information.
www.pbs.org/wnet/savageearth/index.html

Shadow Poetry
Grades K–12

This site began as an email listserv about poetry writing. It's a wonderful destination for all those who teach and love poetry. One of the best resources is Poetry Types, which provides examples of more than 50 different kinds of poetry such as the limerick, acrostic, ode, cinquain, villanelle, diamante, and sestina. There's information about writing a haiku, biographies of famous poets, advice for online publishing, poetry contests, and many other helpful resources.
www.shadowpoetry.com/

Today in History
Grades K–12

This outstanding site presents each day's important events with links to The Library of Congress and its "unparalleled collections of historical documents, moving images, sound recordings, and print and photographic media." For example, the entries for April 14 include primary source recollections on Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865 and the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912. April 26 presents facts about Frederick Law Olmsted, architect-in-chief of Central Park. And, on the same date in 1564, William Shakespeare's baptism occurred in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.
memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/

Games Kids Play
Grades K–8

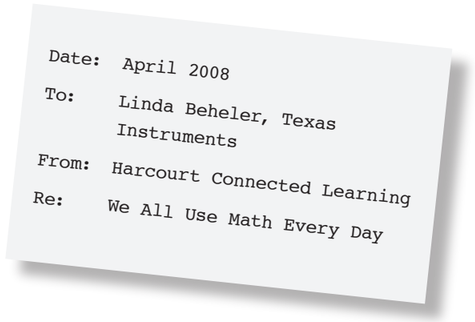
Created by Geof Nieboer, this unique site offers detailed instructions for dozens of classic kids' games. Check out Quick Favorites for details on car games, four square, capture the flag, duck-duck-goose, hopscotch, pickle, and red light/green light. Search by category for clapping, ball, chasing, circle, mental, sensing, and strength games. There are also sections on jump rope rhymes, jacks, marbles, and international games.
www.gameskidsplay.net/

Mind Over Matter
Grades 5–9

This program, which hopes to deter teens from ever trying drugs, was developed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institutes of Health. MOM hostess Sara Bellum explains how marijuana, opiates, inhalants, hallucinogens, anabolic steroids, stimulants, nicotine, and methamphetamines adversely affect the mind and harm the body. Information includes homework help, diagrams, and a teacher's guide. Materials are available in Spanish.
teens.drugabuse.gov/mom/index.asp

Live Links
If you would like a PDF containing all of the live URLs from this Newsletter, send an email to **links@classroom.com**

by Emily Beck
Preschool Music and Middle School Math Teacher
ebeck512@gmail.com



Q: This website features math activities based on the TV show *Numb3rs*. How did it start?
When the TV show premiered in January 2005, we at Texas Instruments were thrilled. We saw a show focused on using math to solve crimes and thought, how can we help get the word out to viewers? The show delivered the same message we wanted to promote: to demonstrate that math is relevant and useful. We wanted to use the show in the classroom. So we put our ideas together and approached the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to make sure that whatever we suggested would be something they could support. Then we approached CBS with the idea of a partnership. CBS broadcast the show and Texas Instruments put together an educational outreach program with NCTM. This program became the website We All Use Math Every Day. It launched in the fall of 2005.

Q: Who produces the classroom activities?
We had a group of classroom teachers who, in their free time (I say that with a smile), worked in four teams. We received the math concepts that were going to be used in each episode about three or four weeks before the show aired. The synopsis of the math used on the show would set the scene. Once the scene was set, each team would try to figure out the kind of classroom activities that could align with the math.

For the 2007-2008 season, we're adjusting the website based on last year's experience. We have a small group of teachers who watch each show and blog about the math that is featured. Then they give their ideas on how a teacher could use the math as part of the classroom curriculum. The blog is posted a few days following the show. We found that sometimes we created math activities for parts of the show that ended up on the cutting room floor. This way we can more accurately help teachers see how they can augment their math lessons with the television show.

Q: Do students have to watch the TV show to use the activities?
We set it up so teachers had two options. The first option allowed teachers to tape the show and show the segment. In the second option, teachers just described the situation where the math was used. Certainly kids were very excited abut the show, but it's on Friday night, and a lot of kids had other things to do.

Q: At what grade levels is the site aimed?
It's for high school students. It's always been a challenge to look at the math and adapt it for high school. We've had many requests for the activities to be adapted for middle school. But the show is on at 9 P.M. It's a bit more advanced, and we didn't think it was right to promote it at the middle school level.

Q: What kind of feedback have you received?
The first year we had a lot of feedback. Teachers thought it was great, but they asked us to include clips of the show so they wouldn't have to tape it. We went back to CBS and talked with them about this idea. From a legal point of view, because of copyright law, we couldn't insert clips. So at the start of the next season, we posted a letter from CBS giving teachers permission to tape the show and use it in their classrooms.

One of the other things that teachers wanted was to see all of the activities instead of having to scroll through all of the shows by date. The math concept that they plan to teach may not correspond with the math used on the show that week. So we developed an easier way to look at all the activities, share the math concepts, and point to the episode each concept is aligned to, so teachers can see the information at a glance.

Q: Do teachers have to register to use the site?
The program is free. You don't have to register to use it. However, registering ensures teachers will receive a weekly email that tells about updates to the site's blogs and any changes to the show's schedule.

Q: Here's a question from a student who is a fan of Numb3rs but a skeptic: Is the math described on the show actually useful in fighting crime?
Good question! I'm not an expert, but I bet that someone in law enforcement could comment on that. Let me know what the student finds out!

We All Use Math Every Day
www.weallusematheveryday.com/tools/waumed/home.htm

Linda Beheler <lbeheler@ti.com> *handles branding and communication for the educational technology business at Texas Instruments.*

by Mary Cupito
Assistant Professor of Journalism
Northern Kentucky University
cupito@fuse.net

Milestones of Flight
Grades K–8

Discover many of the impressive aircrafts that made the exploration of space possible. Featuring the 1903 *Wright Flyer* and the *Spirit of St. Louis*, this Smithsonian exhibit describes the initial development of flying machines to today's award-winning *SpaceShipOne*, the first privately developed vehicle to reach space. Color photos and historical summaries instruct students about the *Mariner*, *Viking*, and *Apollo* spacecrafts, as well as Russia's launch of the *Sputnik* satellite in 1957. A helpful timeline with dates and images makes navigation of this high-flying resource a breeze.
www.nasm.si.edu/exhibitions/gal100/gal100.html

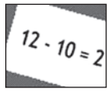
Big Apple History
Grades 4–8

Start spreading the news! This PBS site describes early New York City in the 1600s and continues through the development of today's lively arts, political, and business scenes. Read fascinating historical accounts and watch video clips. Check out images of important people from the past, the Harlem Renaissance, and Times Square. Recommended resources will help kids uncover facts about their own towns, and there are ideas on how to volunteer in your community. Dynamic lesson plans include Poetry of the City, Play the Market, Engineer a Solution, and The Melting Pot. Flash is required.
pbskids.org/bigapplehistory/index-flash.html

Strong National Museum of Play
Grades K–8

Rochester, New York, is home to a unique attraction devoted to play. Children and adults can explore favorite children's literature, a kid-sized supermarket, the *Sesame Street* neighborhood, and more. Plan a fabulous field trip or go to Just for Kids to answer quiz questions, manipulate tangrams, draw a family portrait, or make a paper bag puppet. This site also explains why play is essential to child development by identifying the elements of play, sharing the opinions of pediatricians in support of play, and addressing the importance of recess.
www.museumofplay.org/index.html

Mr. Martini's Classroom
Grades K–8



Practical and precise, this handy resource reinforces elementary math skills. The collection of interactive flash cards includes addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. These plain flash cards are just the tool for students who need review. When kids are ready for the next mathematical step, they can venture into the big number flash cards to review fractions, decimals, exponents, negative numbers, and more. Because teachers choose the number of flash cards and the level of difficulty, Mr. Martini's Classroom is easily adapted to meet the needs of every student.
www.thegreatmartinicompany.com/index.html

Pfizer FunZone
Grades 5–8

Inspire young scientists with interactive games. Snoop around The Lab to meet real scientists at work and learn about their training. Learn how disease has impacted history with the Time Machine. Next, use an online simulated electron microscope to examine a tick, an earwig, or an ant. Decipher mixed-up science terms with The Scrambler. Make a chemical reaction, one of four neat experiments. Go to Explore for a glossary of terms or a list of other excellent science-related websites. Shockwave is required.
www.pfizerfunzone.com/

Kids Science News Network
Grades K–5

Will NASA find water on Mars? In June 2008, the *Phoenix Lander* is scheduled to study the planet's deep basins for reservoirs of ice. This award-winning site answers kids' questions about science, math, and technology. Why is the sky blue? What are the northern lights? What makes bubbles round? Where did the idea of zero come from? What is the difference between bits and bytes? In addition, NASA Facts for Kids provides information on exploration systems, aeronautics, space operations, science missions, and special projects.
ksnn.larc.nasa.gov/home.html

Live Links
If you would like a PDF containing all of the live URLs from this Newsletter, send an email to
links@classroom.com

by Cara Bafile
Educational Writer & Former Kindergarten Teacher
carabafile91@hotmail.com

Online Tools for Young Children

"Today's child is brought up in the omnipresence of technology. A child may be exposed to digital technology even before he or she is exposed to books. Whereas the child of the recent past may have needed an introduction to computers and digital information upon beginning formal schooling, these things have very likely been a part of life for today's child from the beginning."

Developmentally Appropriate Digital Environments for Young Children *by Linda Z. Cooper*

Some people are surprised when I tell them I teach computers to children as young as four years of age. I have to wonder how in this digital age I could ever exclude them. As a Technology Integration Specialist, it is my responsibility to help teachers find developmentally appropriate technological tools that facilitate student learning in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Among these tools are interactive whiteboard activities, educational websites, software programs, and distance learning opportunities.

Integrating these technologies into classroom curriculum exposes children to different types of learning tools and creates more ways for students to practice key skills and explore them in interactive ways. Technology integration also addresses diverse learning styles and provides teachers with more opportunities to adapt their curriculum to fit the needs of every child. Here are some ideas and resources for integrating online tools in the classroom.

Touch Technology

Now that I have used an interactive whiteboard to teach, I do not know how I ever taught without one. One of the most useful features of this board is that it supports drag-and-drop activities. Manipulating objects on the whiteboard utilizes tactile and kinesthetic strategies and appeals to most students because it promotes active learning.

Imagine a first grade teacher introducing the concept of place value. Each student has a flat, long, and cube manipulative representing the hundreds, tens, and ones place. After asking students how many flats, longs, and cubes would be needed to make the number 324, the teacher goes to her interactive whiteboard and opens **LearningBox: BaseTen** (www.learningbox.com/Base10/BaseTen.html). Using this website on the whiteboard, the teacher drags three flats, two longs, and four cubes from the side of the screen to the correct place. After this demonstration, she asks her students to come to the board and drag and drop the correct number of flats, longs, and cubes in the appropriate columns to represent other numbers. This is only one example of how valuable the whiteboard can be during instruction. The Web is full of Flash-based and other interactive learning activities that teachers can use to demonstrate and reinforce concepts from any subject area.

National Library of Virtual Manipulatives
nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/grade_g_1.html
Primary Interactive Games
www.primaryinteractive.co.uk/maths.htm
Crickweb
www.crickweb.co.uk
Topmarks
www.topmarks.co.uk

Links for Learning

Aside from drag-and-drop activities and other virtual manipulatives created for the interactive whiteboard, the Web has a multitude of educational resources that teachers can use to illustrate concepts and/or reinforce key skills in all core subject areas. These websites are available to teachers and students at no cost but, in some cases, additional content might be available with a monthly or yearly subscription.

Early Literacy and Language Arts

Learn to Read at Starfall
Starfall reinforces phonemic awareness and early reading skills.
www.starfall.com
Quia: Class Page
A speech pathologist created this website to provide fun games that reinforce phonemic awareness.
www.quia.com/pages/havemorefun.html
ReadWriteThink: Word Build and Bank
This activity illustrates the concept of rhyming words and sorting words into word families.
www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordbuild/
ReadWriteThink: Word Family Sort
These activities help beginning and struggling readers develop word patterns.
www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=52

Math

MrNussbaum.com: Draggable Math
This site has activities for practicing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
www.mrnussbaum.com/draggable.htm
Create Your Own Interactive Games
Here are a variety of games that reinforce math concepts in the primary grades.
oswego.org/staff/cchamber/techno/games.htm
Ambleweb
These drills and games will make learning math facts fun.
www.amblesideprimary.com/ambleweb/numeracy.htm

Social Studies

MrNussbaum.com: Social Studies
These interactive games are appropriate for all ages.
www.mrnussbaum.com/circumcode.htm
U.S.A. Games
These interactive geography games will motivate students to study the globe!
www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm

Science

BBC School Science Clips
These colorful animated activities teach science concepts taught in the early primary grades.
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/scienceclips/index_flash.shtml

Other Websites

Jigsaw Puzzle Games
Students can practice solving jigsaw puzzles with this resource.
www.jigzone.com/
National Gallery of Art
Here are more interactive activities.
www.nga.gov/kids/zone/zone.htm

Software Savvy

Software can be a powerful tool when used appropriately in classroom curriculum. Most software titles can be purchased in CD format and installed on student workstations. Other programs can be purchased and downloaded directly from the Internet. Either way, the interactive features and colorful animations motivate students to learn and practice important skills.

One of the best examples of integrating software into the classroom curriculum involved third grade students who created a slide presentation on a Native American tribe assigned by their teacher. Using Scholastic Keys Max Show, students added text with bullets and images in their slide show and then presented the information to their classmates.

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten can use drawing and painting software to hone their fine motor skills while they express their creativity. Phonics software can be used to promote literacy skills and math programs can reinforce basic number concepts. StudyDog is a great example of software that teaches and reinforces phonics skills. This program was created for students in pre-kindergarten through second grade and can be purchased as a CD or as an online program. For more information, visit these websites.

Scholastic Keys
www.tomsnyder.com/products/product.asp?SKU=KEYKEY&Subject=LanguageArts
StudyDog
www.studydog.com

Students in older grades can independently practice reading, writing, math, and other skills while others complete their class work or projects. Teachers can take advantage of online writing programs (such as Sunburst's WriteBrain) that guide students through each step of the writing process and help them organize their thoughts. Math software programs such as FASTT Math help students learn math facts and apply them to solve word problems.

WriteBrain
store.sunburst.com/ProductInfo.aspx?itemid=186383
FASTT Math
www.tomsnyder.com/fasttmath/index.html

Educational software is most certainly not limited to the programs listed above. For information on selecting developmentally appropriate programs, these websites provide software descriptions and reviews.

SuperKids
www.superkids.com/
Best Educational Software
school.discoveryeducation.com/parents/reviewcorner/software/
Guide to First Class Learning Software
www.learningvillage.com/html/guide.html

Go the Distance

Videoconferencing programs, also referred to as distance learning or virtual field trips, can be successfully utilized as classroom technology integration tools. Many schools now have portable equipment available for teachers to use. This technology allows students to learn about specific concepts with audio cues and video images. Museums, zoos, and other institutions and organizations in the United States and abroad offer distance learning programs facilitated by trained educators. Teachers can search for programs online and schedule sessions to fit their curriculum and class schedule. In most cases, teachers can request modifications or customized programs.

Last year, two kindergarten classes at my school participated in a program on origami specifically created to correspond to a unit on Japan. The session focused on art that reflects some basics of Japanese culture and at the end of the program, the facilitator taught students how to create origami dogs and cats.

Fourth grade students participated in an interactive space mission. With audio and visual cues from mission control, students were given the directions necessary to find a missing spaceship. This program required students to work in small groups and use their problem-solving and graphing skills to locate the lost ship. Visit the websites below to learn more about videoconferencing, distance learning, and virtual field trips.

Videoconferencing for Learning
www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/vidconf/vidconf.html
Welcome to K-12 Videoconferencing
www.netc.org/digitalbridges/vc/
Resources and Information on Videoconferencing
www.trecc.org/education/videoconf.php
Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration
www.cilc.org/c/education/content_provider_programs.aspx
Virtual Field Trips
www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/
Tramline Virtual Field Trips
www.field-guides.com/trips.htm

This article offers a glimpse of the resources that teachers can use to integrate technology into their classroom curriculum. These educational tools create new opportunities for active learning and take into consideration the extent to which young children are exposed to digital environments on a daily basis.

by Elise Kurzon Quill, Technology Integration Specialist
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FileMaker Pro Lesson: American Revolution Research Database

Grades 5–6

Introduction

This lesson is designed to help students become effective information problem solvers. They build a class database that will help them research various aspects of the American Revolutionary War. Students will become informed consumers as they learn to use appropriate websites for research.

Objectives

- Use search strategies to locate websites.
- Make records in a database.
- Enter data into records.
- Sort records.

Time Estimate

Two 45-minute class periods

Preparation

Prepare a FileMaker Pro database template that includes these categories: site name, URL, description, Webmaster's or developer's organization, and date the site was last updated. Save the template to a folder on your school network that is easily accessible. You may need to enable file sharing.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that they will be creating a database of websites about the Revolutionary War. As a class, write a list of attributes that describe a good website. Responses should include the following.
   - Information is current, accurate, and organized.
   - Author is a recognized authority; contact information is available.
   - The content is free of grammar and spelling errors.
   - All of the hyperlinks work.
   - Graphics are simple and easy to read.
   - Images are interesting and useful.
   - The site is easy to navigate.

2. Use a large screen display to review the American Revolution sites below. Demonstrate how to use the class list to evaluate a website.

   Liberty! The American Revolution
   www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/
   Timeline: The American Revolution
   memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwtimear.html
   The American Revolution
   www.nps.gov/revwar/about_the_revolution/timeline_of_events.html
   The Blue Darter's Guide to the American Revolution
   darter.ocps.k12.fl.us/classroom/revolution/index.html

3. Each student should locate two or three sites to contribute to the class database. Keep the database file open while students are working on it. Monitor students as they create new records. See the FileMaker Pro online help files for more information.
   FileMaker and K-12 Education
   www.filemaker.com/solutions/k12/index.html

4. Students can insert images to add interest and make the database easy to use.

5. Have students add to the database as they learn about America's fight for independence.

Assessment

Students should write a short paragraph about how to evaluate a website. *Was the database easy to create? Did the database help you learn more information about the American Revolution? Did you use the websites to write history reports?*

Extension

Students can research websites about historical events that occurred in other parts of the world during the time of the American Revolutionary War. Add the sites to the class database.

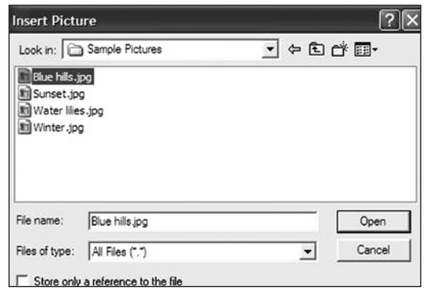
Helpful Tips for Using FileMaker Pro

Share these guidelines with students to help them learn how to use a database.

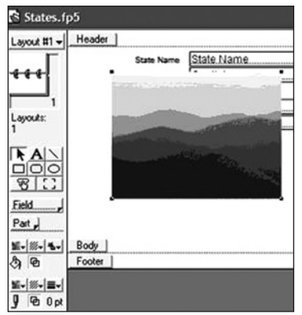
Insert an Image into a Layout

You can add images to layouts in FileMaker Pro.

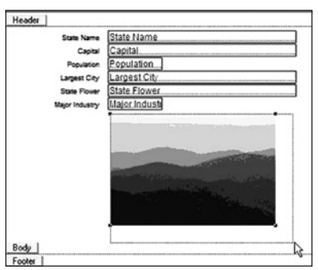
1. Go to the View menu and choose Layout Mode. Go to the Insert menu and choose Picture. At the Insert Picture dialog, navigate to the location of the image. Click the file you want to use. Click the Open button.



2. The image will appear in the layout.



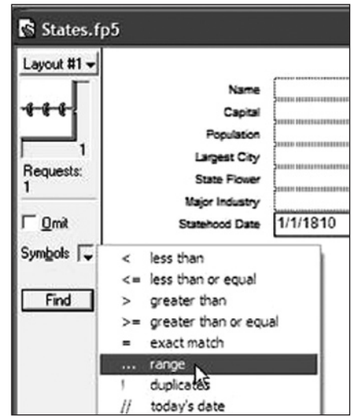
3. To move the image, click and drag the image to a new location in the layout. To resize the image, click it. A handle will appear at each corner of the image. Click and drag one of the handles to enlarge or reduce the image.



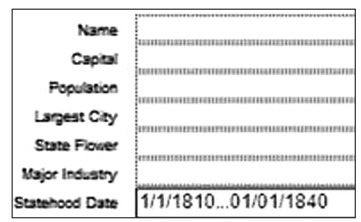
Find Records in a Date Range

Use a symbol to find records within a specific date range.

1. Go to the View menu and choose Find Mode. Click a field that contains dates. Type the date you would like to begin with in the field. In this example, 01/01/1810 is used for the Statehood Date. Click the Symbols pull-down menu on the left side of the screen. Choose Range from the list of options.



2. Three ellipses (...) will appear next to the date. The date field will still be active. Type the date you would like to end with. Click the Find button. FileMaker Pro will display all of the records that match the date range you requested.



The software applications lesson and helpful tips are excerpts from Connected Tech, a Web-based instructional program from Harcourt Connected Learning that enables K–8 teachers to integrate critical technology skills. For a free trial, or to learn more about Connected Tech, visit **www.harcourtcl.com** *or call (800) 638-1639.*

tumblr
Replaces Traditional Blogging

According to Wikipedia, "a *tumblelog* is a variation of a blog that favors short-form, mixed-media posts over the longer editorial posts frequently associated with blogging. Common post formats found on tumblelogs include links, photos, quotes, dialogues, and video. Unlike blogs, this format is frequently used to share the author's creations, discoveries, or experiences without providing a commentary."

Educators will like tumblelogging because it is easier to use than blogging and less intimidating. Teachers who fear the use of blogging with students because of safety and educational privacy restrictions can use this alternative form. Traditional blogging can be time-consuming because of the large number of posts. Tumblelogging is so quick and effective that even younger students can participate.

Tumblr: Blogging for Dummies

Tumblelogging is currently being popularized by the site **Tumblr** (**tumblr.com**). A simple analogy from Tumblr states, "If blogs are journals, tumblelogs are scrapbooks." Tumblr is a free service that requires a quick registration process. The concept is to share things quickly, with less of the physical and mental overhead of the traditional blog. There are built-in tools for posting content including text (for traditional post blogs), photos, quotes, links, chats, audio, and video clips. Tumblr can be an online replacement for a traditional bulletin board or used to create a classroom website. It's both visually appealing and accepts ongoing changes. You may wish to have students create their own sites as well!

Navigation

Tumblr is divided into three major areas. The Dashboard is where you create and edit content. The Channels section provides the option to create a special channel that gives access to selected students. The Account area provides various site settings such as theme, personal information, creating RSS feeds, and a help section.

Vimeo

You might think that creating videos is too complicated. Tumblr allows users to list any URL from various video sites. Embellishing your Tumblr site with pre-existing educational videos and creating original class videos will bring the educational experience to a new level. **Vimeo** (**vimeo.com**) is a social networking site that stores user-created videos to be shared. Vimeo lets users choose whom they want to view their videos. It also has the capacity to create high definition video that reveals a full-screen picture without distortion. Vimeo integrates well with Tumblr.

Vimeo saves files in Flash format so that it is compatible for both PC and Mac users. Be sure to have the latest version of Adobe's Flash Player (**adobe.com/products/flashplayer**) installed on your computer.

Entry level digital camcorders such as the **RCA Small Wonder** (**mysmallwonder.com**) or **Flip Video** (**theflip.com**) can be purchased inexpensively for approximately $100. Many digital cameras also support video mode, as well as still shots.

Additional Video Ideas

Here are some additional ideas to help you use digital videos.

- Digital pictures from a scanner or camera can be placed on a timeline within iMovie (free with Macs) or **Windows Movie Maker** (**www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.mspx**). For audio, add a song or narration with a microphone, insert video titles and transitions, and save your completed video. Vimeo will import your finished product.

- YouTube is a viable source for using video with Tumblr. The **YouTube Help Center** (**www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=80692&ctx=sibling**) explains in detail how to make a video out of JPEG images and upload your movie.

- For PC users, turn your student PowerPoint presentations into digital movies using the free version of Microsoft Producer 2003. Then, upload to Vimeo or YouTube and post to your Tumblr site. For a tutorial and download go to **www.123ppt.com/newsletter/edition-004/presentation-tutorial.asp**.

- For Mac users, export your PowerPoint presentation into a movie and add to Tumblr. Here are the directions: **www.absoluteppt.com/movie/makemoviemac/index.html**.

Your students are your best trainers. If you feel overwhelmed by the daunting task of creating videos, have your students assist you (trust me… they will know exactly what to do). As the facilitator, all you have to do is give them the specific guidelines for the video content. This special demo site was created for this article to provide a visual example of Tumblr's style and format.

Tumblr and Vimeo: Additional Tips and Information
cc-april08.tumblr.com

by Domenic A. Grignano
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The Global Sun Temperature Project
Online correspondence, online research

From April 7 to June 13, 2008, students can measure the temperature and keep track of the hours of sunlight in their town each day. The data will be compared and contrasted with other schools to determine how geographic location affects the environment. The website includes useful lesson plans, reference materials, and a discussion area.

Subject Areas: Science, Social Studies
www.k12science.org/curriculum/tempproj3/en/

Science Explorations
Online research, online correspondence

Courtesy of Scholastic, this extensive science-based website offers a number of interesting interactive projects. The Environmental Report Card, for example, has a forum to discuss issues such as wildfires, alternative energy, and endangered species. Ask a Scientist lets students send queries to the experts at the American Museum of Natural History. And, Write a Letter gives their voices a chance to be heard in Washington, D.C.

Subject Areas: Science, Social Studies
teacher.scholastic.com/activities/explorations/

Monarch Watch
Online correspondence, online research

From the University of Kansas, this site not only shows students how to raise monarchs and build your own butterfly garden, it also has a perfect spring research project that lets students pair up with scientists to monitor larvae and tag monarchs.

Subject Area: Science
monarch@ku.edu
www.monarchwatch.org/

To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion
Online correspondence

This online book club focuses on Harper Lee's classic novel. It is notable for using Web 2.0 blogs, IRC chat programs, and Wikis. With these tools, students improve their writing fluency as they discuss the themes and elements of the novel. The project is aimed at middle school students and ends May 29, 2008.

Subject Areas: English, Social Studies
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The Perils of Pollution
Grades K–5

Earth is becoming more polluted every day. Toxic trash, chemical spills, and acid rain can poison the water and change the climate. Students can use Internet resources to research solutions to the problems caused by pollution.

Learning Goals
- Name the causes and effects of pollution.
- Use an online calculator to find one's carbon footprint.
- Write a news story about ozone depletion.
- Draw a picture to show how to protect oneself from UV rays.
- Identify a pollution problem in the school.

Activities


People pollute when they drive instead of walk, dump chemicals into rivers, or run factories that pump fumes into the air. Ask students to list pollution-makers. For more examples, use the sites below.

Pollution: A Guide for Kids
tiki.oneworld.net/pollution/pollution_home.html
Especially for Kids
www.oceansidecleanwaterprogram.org/kids.asp
ESA: Pollution
www.esa.int/esaKIDSen/SEM2WKXJD1E_Earth_0.html
What's Happening to Our Frogs?
proteus.pca.state.mn.us/kids/frogswhat.html

A *carbon footprint* is the amount of carbon dioxide one produces through daily activities. Demonstrate how to enter the information into the website calculator and then help students find their families' carbon footprints. They should list the number of cars per household, how far each one is driven per month, and approximate miles per gallon per car. Have them check out their homes' energy usage by examining utility bills: electricity, natural gas, heating oil, or propane. Students can compare the results and share the information with their families.

Home Energy and Transportation Calculator
www.safeclimate.net/calculator/ind_calc_form2.php
What's Your Carbon Footprint?
ecomall.com/greenshopping/carbonfootprint.htm

This website shows the Air Quality Index around the country. Students can play interactive games to learn more about protecting their health during high pollution days.

AIRNow: Kid's Air
airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqikids_new.main

The ozone layer protects Earth from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. Thinning of this layer of the atmosphere is dangerous to all life on the planet. Assign characters (Farley, editor, scientist, George Global, doctor, refrigeration engineer, computer manufacturer, and car repair technician) and let students read the parts. Then have students write news stories about ozone depletion.

EPA: On the Trail of the Missing Ozone
www.epa.gov/ozone/science/missoz/index.html

Ask students to draw a picture of how they dress on warm, sunny days. They can use the website to find out how to reduce the harmful effects of the sun and try the interactive games. Discuss the site and have students draw new pictures that show the best way to protect themselves from UV rays.

EPA: SunWise Kids
www.epa.gov/sunwise/kids.html

Introduce Auntie Pollution on a large screen display. Read the captions and discuss the pictures. Then have students use the interactive coloring tools. Print the Environmental Coloring Sheets for students to complete at home.

NIEHS Kids: Auntie Pollution Coloring Book
kids.niehs.nih.gov/colauntie.htm
Environmental Coloring Sheets
www.pca.state.mn.us/kids/coloring.html

Make school a healthier environment by asking students to join the Green Squad. Display the presentation on a large screen. As a class, investigate the Envir-o-meter in each room of the online school. Then print out the Green Squad progress report and have students tour their school to find areas that need improvement. Review the website for tips and information sheets. Students can write letters to staff members who are responsible for making changes. Remind students to offer solutions in their letters. Invite the principal to your class to discuss students' concerns.

Natural Resources Defense Council: Green Squad
www.nrdc.org/greensquad/intro/intro_1.asp

Assessment
- Can students name the causes and effects of pollution?
- Did they use an online calculator to find their carbon footprint?
- Did they write a news story about ozone depletion?
- Were they able to show how to protect themselves from UV rays?
- Were students able to identify a pollution problem in the school?

If you would like a PDF containing all of the live URLs from this Newsletter, send an email to **links@classroom.com**

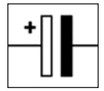
Electric Circuits
Grades 5–9

Help students find out how an electric current makes light bulbs glow. Keep safety in mind as students experiment with conductors, insulators, and hands-on circuit activities.

Learning Goals
- Describe an electric circuit.
- Use symbols to design a circuit.
- Identify items as conductors or insulators.
- Use an interactive website to review circuits.

Activities
When switches on an electric circuit are closed, the circuit is complete and the free electrons can flow. If the switch is opened the circuit is broken and the flow of electrons stops. Use the websites to review this concept.

Dr. D's Lab: Circuits
scifiles.larc.nasa.gov/text/kids/Problem_Board/problems/electricity/circuits2.html
Basic Electronic Circuits Explained
www.electronics-lab.com/articles/basics/theory/circuit.htm
What's a Watt: Glossary
nppd.apogee.net/kids/glossary.aspx
How Light Bulbs Work
home.howstuffworks.com/light-bulb3.htm



Review online circuit drawings. Ask students to design and draw their own electric circuits. Provide the supplies and have them build and test their designs. Use a video camera to record the results and let students explain why their circuits did or did not work.

Electrical Symbols
www.zephyrus.co.uk/electricalsymbols.html
Circuit Diagrams and Symbols
www.kpsec.freeuk.com/cdiags.htm
Designing a Door Alarm
www.teachersdomain.org/resources/phy03/sci/phys/mfw/zalarm/index.html

Conductors allow energy to pass through them. Insulators stop the flow of energy. Use a battery and light bulb or buzzer circuit to test everyday objects. Have students experiment with metal and nonmetal items and record their results in a table or spreadsheet.

Physics Classroom Tutorial: Conductors and Insulators
www.glenbrook.k12.il.us/gbssci/phys/Class/estatics/u8l1d.html
Conductors and Insulators
hyperphysics.phy-astr.gsu.edu/hbase/electric/conins.html
How to Make an Electrical Circuit
www.webmutations.com/energy/experiments/lightcircuit.html
PBS: Electrical Messages
pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/electricalmessages.html

Batteries are not the only portable power source available for circuits. How about a potato? Have students experiment with fruits and vegetables to light a bulb.

Food Batteries
www.madsci.org/experiments/archive/889917606.Ch.html
Using Fruits and Vegetables to Produce Electricity
www.finishing.com/262/03.shtml

This guide provides additional concept reinforcement. Have students work in teams to review conductors, insulators, switches, changing circuits, and circuit diagrams. The activities and quizzes are a great way to assess learning.

Blobz Guide to Electric Circuits
www.andythelwell.com/blobz/

The ChildMedia site demonstrates how circuit components work, investigates changing circuits, and gives directions for a fun wire experiment. In the second site, students can click and drag the components to create a complete circuit.

ChildMedia: Electric Circuits
www.hyperstaffs.info/work/physics/child/index.html
Electric Circuits
www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/vtc/learnpremium/electric_circuits/Introduction/default.htm

Assessment
- Were students able to describe an electric circuit?
- Did they use symbols to design a circuit?
- Could they identify items as conductors or insulators?
- Did students use an interactive website to review circuits?

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A-Z SITE INDEX