



MATH In A Minute

Every day is filled with great opportunities to help children discover that math is fun...playing games is a terrific way to show kids just how exciting and enjoyable math can be. Games create a meaningful situation for kids to apply the skills they have learned, they provide children with an opportunity to build self-confidence in their abilities, and they can create a positive attitude toward math without fear of failure or error. Don't miss out on a chance to encourage kids to have fun with math as you invite them to join in the adventure of playing games.

What could be easier than having a collection of Math in a Minute games at your fingertips...games to play while standing in line, games to play while seated at desks, or games to enjoy while sitting in a circle. Reproduce these great game ideas on card stock, laminate for extended use, cut them out, and punch holes at the bottom so you can gather them on rings for safe-keeping. Don't forget to add your own favorites to the collection! Then when the opportunity presents itself, flip through the cards, find an activity, and get ready to help children explore math and have fun at the same time!

Math Games

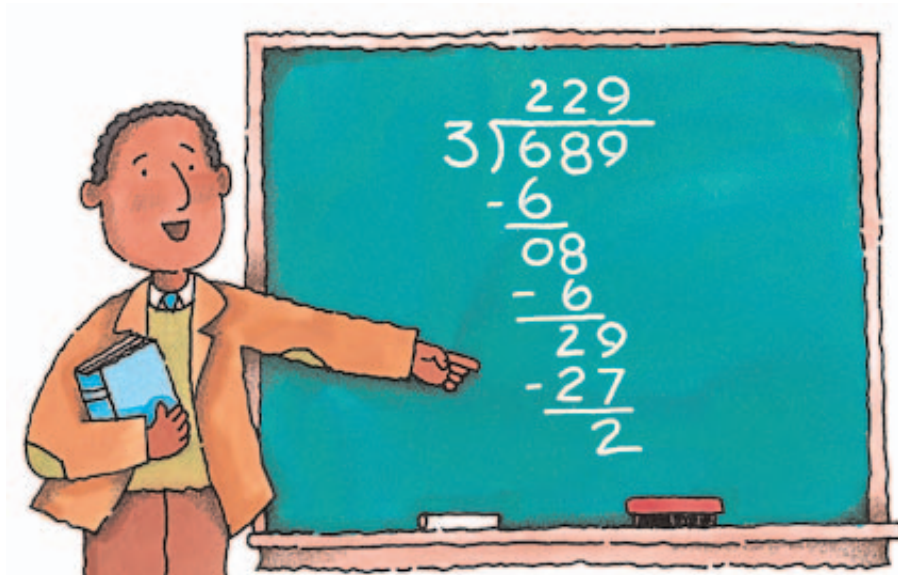


illustration by Shirley Beckes

CIRCLE GAME

Number, Please

“Number Please” gives children practice in counting, following directions, and listening. First determine how high the kids will count, taking into consideration the skill level of your class. As the children sit in a circle, one child begins to count. The child on his/her left continues the count until the designated stopping point is reached. Vary the practice and count by 2’s, 3’s, 5’s, 10’s, etc. You may also count backwards or, if you have an odd number of children, it might be fun to ask every other child to count. Everyone must listen for directions.

CIRCLE GAME

Bean Bag Toss

This game provides kids with additional practice on their basic number facts. Ask the class to sit in a circle and give one child a bean bag. The child with the bean bag calls out a basic number fact and tosses the bean bag to another child sitting in the circle. That child catches the bean bag and answers the fact. If correct, play continues with the catcher calling out a basic fact and tossing the bean bag to another child. If the answer is incorrect, the bean bag goes back to the child who threw it. Try again!



CIRCLE GAME

Concentration

Provide additional drill with basic number facts with this game. Divide the class into small circles to assure each child several turns. Concentrating is also easier in small groups of children. One child begins with a number fact and the child to the left gives the answer. The child to the left must then give a number fact using his/her answer as part of the new number fact. For example, the first child says "4+3," the child to the left answers "7" and then gives the fact "7-2." The game definitely needs some concentration and will challenge all involved.



LINE GAME

Draw A Shape

Practice those shapes you've been learning as the kids stand in line. Ask the children to use a finger to quietly draw one of the geometric shapes on the back of the person standing in front of them. The person guesses the shape, then turns and "draws" on his/her partner's back. This game gives everyone a chance to practice drawing and recognizing shapes.



LINE GAME

Shape Search

While the children are waiting in line, ask the class to search for different objects in the classroom that have familiar geometric shapes. Begin by saying, "I'm thinking of a circle." Children search with their eyes somewhere in the room. When a child finds an object that is the shape asked for, he/she raises a hand and answers with the name of the object. It's surprising how many different geometric shapes there are in one classroom.



LINE GAME

Human Number Line

How often we hurry up and wait! Put that waiting to good use by becoming a human number line. The first child in line begins with the number one, and counting continues with each child adding a number until the line is ready to leave. Keep your ending number written in a secret spot on the chalkboard until the next time you're waiting. Then begin counting where you ended the previous time. Do you think your class can count to 1,000, 5,000, or a million while waiting in line?



LINE GAME

Silly Line

Practice ordinal numbers while standing in a silly line. Younger children should stand in four or five equal lines. Older children will need fewer lines. The teacher gives directions such as, "the first person in line should place a hand on his/her heart, the sixth person should touch his/her nose, the third person should stand on one foot," etc. When the directions have all been given so that each person in the line has an activity, the teacher says "GO!" and each child does the action according to directions. Lines that have followed directions correctly are the winners. Your silly lines of kids have practiced their ordinal numbers.



DESK GAME

Nickname

Kids will have fun playing “Nickname” with their classmates. One child is selected to be “It” and selects a numeral from 1 to 20 (or whatever numerals are appropriate.) “It” then gives the class the number fact or “nickname” for the chosen numeral but does not give this fact to the group. Children in the class try to guess the ‘nickname that “It” is thinking of. A player may guess (“Is your number fact 5 and 4?”) an addition or subtraction fact equaling the numeral that “It” gave. The child who guesses the number fact correctly becomes “It.” Modify the game with multiplication and division facts for older children and it’s a game everyone can enjoy.



DESK GAME

Listen and Count

“Listen and Count” provides younger children with practice in counting. As the children are seated at their desks with their eyes closed, they listen and count to themselves the number of times the teacher claps his/her hands. When the teacher has finished clapping, the children open their eyes and answer with the number of claps they’ve heard. A child who answers correctly is chosen to be the “clapper” for the next round. A fun way to practice counting!



DESK GAME

I'm Thinking of a Number

A little scratch paper goes a long way in playing this game. Depending on how complicated the equation becomes, the teacher will probably need a pad of paper, too. Adapt "I'm Thinking of a Number" to the skills that your class is practicing. As the children sit at their desks with scratch paper, the teacher begins with a simple equation and then adds different steps until asking for the answer. For example, the teacher may say, "I'm thinking of a number: Add 4 and 3, plus 5, minus 2." (Pause after each step.) "The answer is ____?" After computing on scratch paper, the children raise their hand to give the answer. As the kids get skilled at this activity, the directions may be given faster and the number of steps increased. Kids love the challenge!



DESK GAME

Around the World

You will need a set of flash cards for this game. Choose one student to stand next to a seated student. Hold up a flash card for them to answer simultaneously. The student who first answers it correctly moves on to the next student in the row, continuing around the classroom until another student answers first. If a student makes it around the entire classroom (world), he or she is awarded with a special coupon, sticker, eraser, or pencil.

