

December Activities

from Teaching Resources

Created by
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December Activities

from
Teaching Resources
www.lauracandler.com



These holiday activities will help make December an exciting yet productive time for your class! In this packet you'll find two pages of directions followed by more than a dozen pages of printables and answer keys. Check out the Seasonal section of my online file cabinet at www.lauracandler.com for more December activities and resources. Happy Holidays!

~ Laura Candler

December Printables in this Packet

- December Activities Parent Letter (Sample)
- Winter Mug Exchange Letter (Sample)
- Holidays Around the World
- Recharge and Write Directions
- Christmas Daily Math Puzzlers
- Dreidel Game Rules and Pattern
- Dreidel Math Explorations
- Christmas Word Challenge
- Silly Winter Stories
- Christmas Recipe & Comprehension Questions
- Happy Holidays Homework Pass
- Happy Holidays Book Coupon



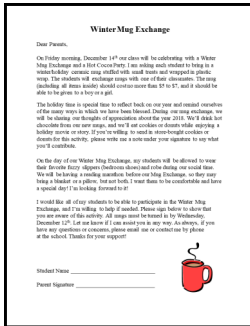
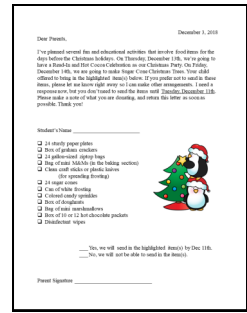
Editable Resources Located in Product Zip File

- December Holiday Letter (Editable PowerPoint Document)
- Winter Mug Exchange Letter (Editable PowerPoint Document)

December Activity Directions

December Activities Sample Parent Request Letter

A few of the activities in this packet require food items such as graham crackers and frosting. If you plan ahead, you can ask your students to volunteer to bring in the needed items rather than buying them yourself. **You can find an editable PowerPoint version of this letter in the product file zip folder.**

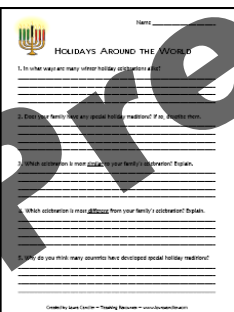
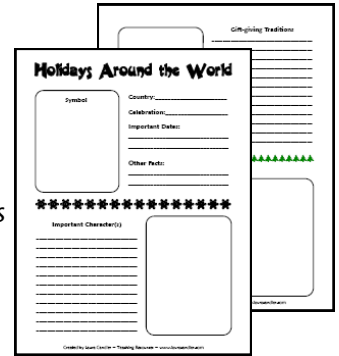


Winter Mug Exchange with Sample Parent Letter

If you've ever tried to have your students exchange gifts at Christmas, the whole process can be a disaster. Some students bring in elaborate gifts while others can't afford to buy anything at all. The Winter Mug Exchange is a nice alternative to the traditional gift exchange. One way to do the mug exchange is to have students sit in a circle and pass the mugs left and right while you start and stop Christmas music. When the music is over, they keep the mug in their possession. Another fun method is the Christmas Right/Left Game that can be found by searching for "Christmas Left/Right Game" on the Internet. **You can find an editable PowerPoint version of this letter in the product file zip folder.**

Holidays Around the World

Holidays Around the World is a wonderful way to engage students in online research. This activity is designed to be completed as a "jigsaw" cooperative learning activity with students in teams of four each researching a different winter holiday. Give each student one 2-page Holidays of the World handout and assign each person a different holiday. If you use Christmas as a holiday, be sure to specify the country such as Germany, Sweden, or Mexico. Other holidays include Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, or Diwali. Explain how to complete each portion of the handout, and allow students to research their countries using books and/or the Internet. When students have finished their research, give them class time to present a short lesson to their team about the many features of the holiday.

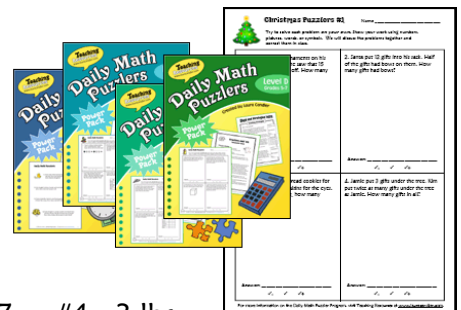


Holiday Questions/Recharge and Write

After students have researched their holidays and shared within their teams, use the Recharge and Write strategy to have them discuss and answer the Holidays Around the World questions. In this activity, students follow specific steps to discuss each question, one at a time, before they write their answers. Use one team to model the procedure. Remember, students may only talk when their pencils are in the "recharger." This holds students accountable for participating and prevents them from just writing down what someone else says.

Christmas Math Puzzlers

These leveled word problem worksheets have four problems, and students must show their work in picture or word form. They can be used with the Daily Math Puzzler program or as worksheets. For more information about how the Daily Math Puzzler program, go to www.lauracandler.com/daily-math-puzzlers.

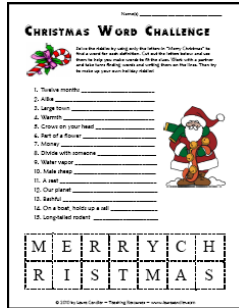
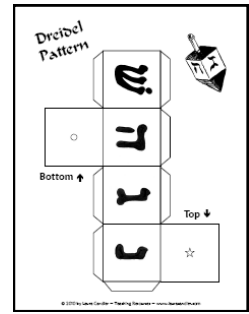


Answers: DMP 1 #1 - 17 #2 - 6 #3- 16 #4 - 9
 DMP 2 #1 - 28° #2 - 1 hr 45 min or 105 min #3 - 7 #4 - 3 lbs

More December Activity Directions

Dreidel Game and Math Explorations

To help students develop an appreciation for other holidays and traditions, read aloud a book about Hanukkah such as [Four Sides, Eight Nights: A New Spin on Hanukkah](#) or [Latkes and Applesauce](#). Then have students create their own dreidels and play the Dreidel Game. Use the Dreidel Math Explorations to explore different mathematical concepts like geometry and probability. You may want to purchase inexpensive wooden dreidels to use because the homemade ones are often inconsistent and don't spin well.

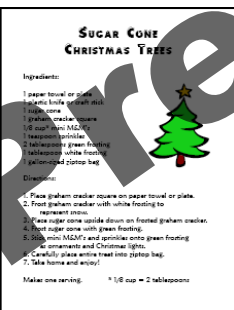
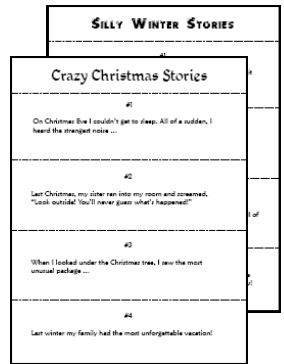


Christmas Word Challenge

This partner game is a twist on the usual "Words in a Word" game. Students cut out the letters at the bottom of the page and then move them around to form the words that fit each clue. Allow them to use other sources such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and internet searches to find the answers to the word riddles, but the words have to be created from the letters in Merry Christmas. Then ask them to create their own clues to post on the board for their classmates to solve.

Silly Winter Stories and Crazy Christmas Stories

Your kids will have loads of fun with this fast-paced writing activity. Place students in teams of 4 and give each student one story-starter slip of paper. Begin playing holiday music and allow them to write for 5 to 10 minutes. Stop the music and have them pass their papers and their slips to the left. Give them a few minutes to read the prompt and what has been written so far, then start the music and allow it to play for another 5 minutes. Students add on to the story until you stop the music. Continue in the same way until the story returns to the person who started it. The last person adds an ending. Then students pass the completed stories around the team, read them, and choose one to share with the class.

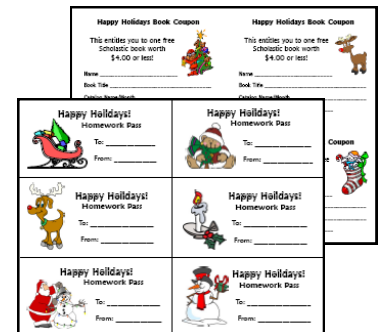


Christmas Tree Sugar Cone Recipe and Comprehension Questions

Kids have difficulty reading and understanding recipes. So this Christmas craft activity is a great way to have fun and reinforce reading skills. Use the Parent Letter in this packet to request the materials in advance. The day before you plan to create the sugar cone trees, have students read the recipe and answer the questions. To add structure to this lesson, use the Buddy Test Prep cooperative learning activity found in the Seasonal File Cabinet.

Scholastic Book Coupon and Holiday Homework Pass

The last two pages in the packet are easy gifts that you can give to your students. The Scholastic Book Coupon has no value at Scholastic - it's only good if you have plenty of bonus points in your teacher account. Students can select a book and you can use your bonus points to place the order. The Homework Pass can be used in a variety of ways. You can excuse students from completing an assignment, add points to an existing assignment, or let them "buy" an extra day to turn in work. You decide!



December 3, 2018

Dear Parents,

I've planned several fun and educational activities that involve food items for the days before the Christmas holidays. On Thursday, December 13th, we're going to have a Read-In and Hot Cocoa Celebration as our Christmas Party. On Friday, December 14th, we are going to make Sugar Cone Christmas Trees. Your child offered to bring in the highlighted item(s) below. If you prefer not to send in these items, please let me know right away so I can make other arrangements. I need a response now, but you don't need to send the items until Tuesday, December 11th. Please make a note of what you are donating, and return this letter as soon as possible. Thank you!

Student's Name _____

- 24 sturdy paper plates
- Box of graham crackers
- 24 gallon-sized zip-top bags
- Bag of mini M&Ms (in the baking section)
- Clean craft sticks or plastic knives
(for spreading frosting)
- 24 sugar cones
- Can of white frosting
- Colored candy sprinkles
- Box of doughnuts
- Bag of mini marshmallows
- Box of 10 or 12 hot chocolate packets
- Disinfectant wipes



___ Yes, we will send in the highlighted item(s) by Dec 11th.
___ No, we will not be able to send in the item(s).

Parent Signature _____

Winter Mug Exchange

Dear Parents,

On Friday morning, December 14th our class will be celebrating with a Winter Mug Exchange and a Hot Cocoa Party. I am asking each student to bring in a winter/holiday ceramic mug stuffed with small treats and wrapped in plastic wrap. The students will exchange mugs with one of their classmates. The mug (including all items inside) should cost no more than \$5 to \$7, and it should be able to be given to a boy or a girl.

The holiday time is special time to reflect back on our year and remind ourselves of the many ways in which we have been blessed. During our mug exchange, we will be sharing our thoughts of appreciation about the year 2018. We'll drink hot chocolate from our new mugs, and we'll eat cookies or donuts while enjoying a holiday movie or story. If you're willing to send in store-bought cookies or donuts for this activity, please write me a note under your signature to say what you'll contribute.

On the day of our Winter Mug Exchange, my students will be allowed to wear their favorite fuzzy slippers (bedroom shoes) and robe during our social time. We will be having a reading marathon before our Mug Exchange, so they may bring a blanket or a pillow, but not both. I want them to be comfortable and have a special day! I'm looking forward to it!

I would like all of my students to be able to participate in the Winter Mug Exchange, and I'm willing to help if needed. Please sign below to show that you are aware of this activity. All mugs must be turned in by Wednesday, December 12th. Let me know if I can assist you in any way. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please email me or contact me by phone at the school. Thanks for your support!

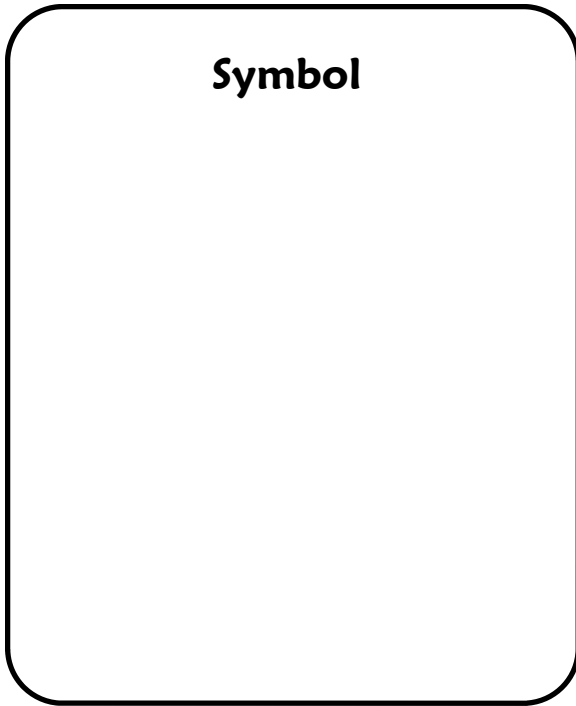
Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____



Holidays Around the World

Symbol

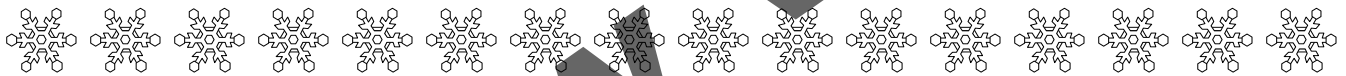


Country: _____

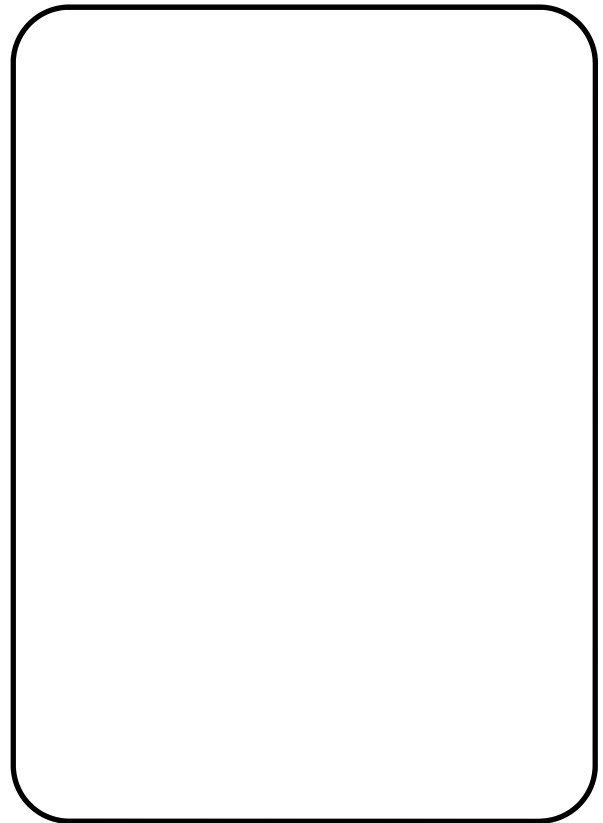
Celebration: _____

Important Dates:

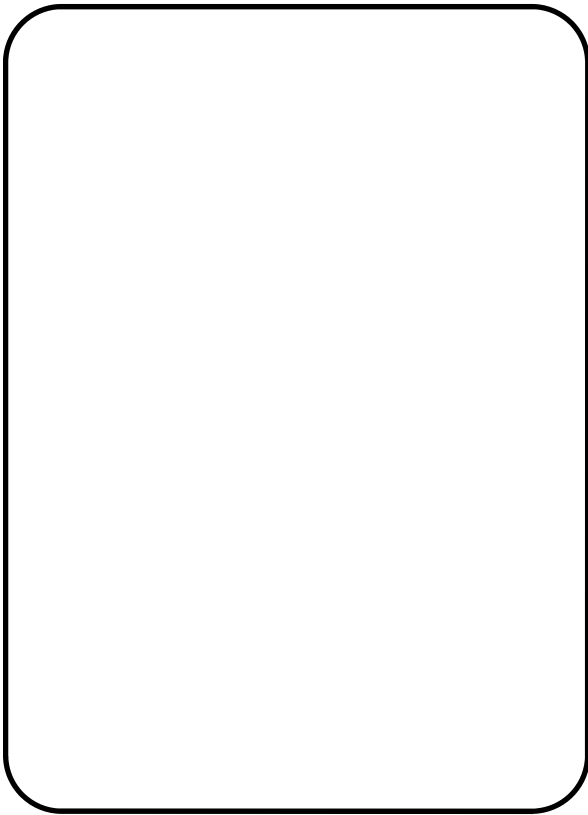
Other Facts:



Important Character(s)

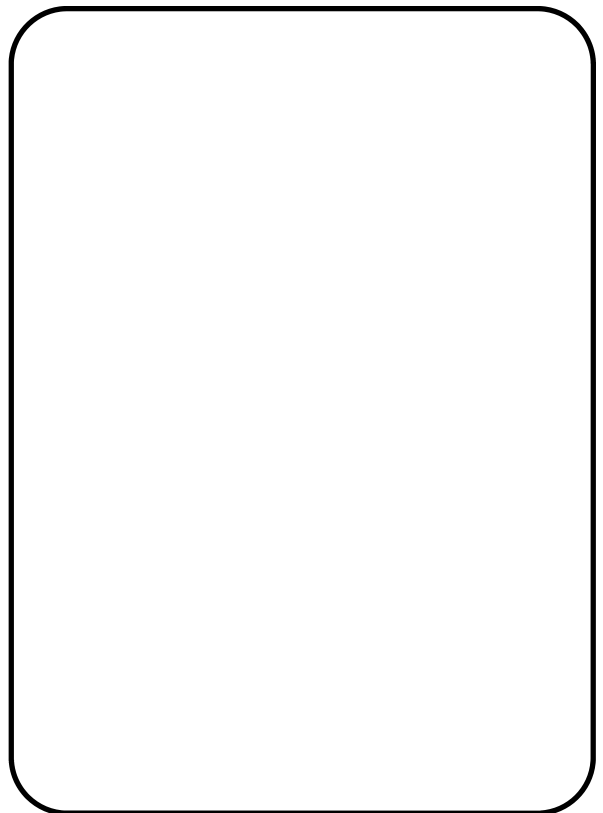


Gift-giving Traditions





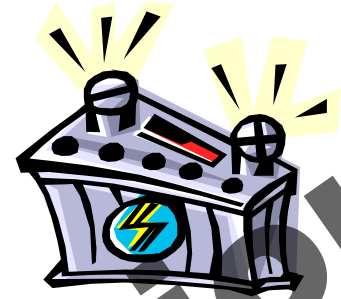
Other Traditions



Recharge & Write

Question
Response
Strategy

Directions



1. Each team places a cup or small box in the center of the team to use as a “recharger.” To begin, each person places his or her pencil into the recharger.
2. Decide who is first Leader. He or she reads the first question and the team discusses possible answers. Team members do not have to agree on the answer.
3. When the whole team is ready, everyone takes out their pencils and writes the answer to the first question. Be sure to answer in your own words. No talking while writing!
4. After everyone answers the first question, they place their pencils back into the recharger.
5. Rotate Leaders for each question. Remember to discuss each question as a team before writing your own answer on paper.



Recharger Rules

Pencils In = Talking
Pencils Out = No Talking



Name _____

HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

1. In what ways are many winter holiday celebrations alike?

2. Does your family have any special holiday traditions? If so, describe them.

3. Which celebration is most similar to your family's celebration? Explain.

4. Which celebration is most different from your family's celebration? Explain.

5. Why do you think many countries have developed special holiday traditions?



Christmas Puzzlers #1

Name _____

Try to solve each problem *on your own*. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, or symbols. We will discuss the problems together and correct them in class.

1. Ronald hung 32 ornaments on his Christmas tree. Later he saw that 15 ornaments had fallen off. How many were left?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

2. Santa put 12 gifts into his sack. Half of the gifts had bows on them. How many gifts had bows?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

3. Julie baked gingerbread cookies for Christmas. She used raisins for the eyes. If she baked 8 cookies, how many raisins did she use?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

4. Jamie put 3 gifts under the tree. Kim put twice as many gifts under the tree as Jamie. How many gifts in all?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+



Christmas Puzzlers #2

Name _____

Try to solve each problem **on your own**. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, or symbols. We will discuss the problems together and correct them in class.

1. The temperature began dropping on Christmas Eve. It dropped 2° every hour. If it was 38° at 7 p.m., what temperature was it at midnight?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

2. Snow began falling at quarter till 10 in the morning, and ended at 11:30 a.m. For how long did it snow?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

3. Mrs. Claus baked a dozen gingerbread cookies, and Santa Claus ate $\frac{1}{4}$ of them. Then Mrs. Claus ate two cookies. How many cookies were left?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

4. Greg was packing oranges in a box to send out to a friend for Christmas. The box held 2 rows of oranges with 3 oranges in each row. Each orange weighed 8 ounces. How many pounds did the box weigh?

Answer: _____

✓- ✓ ✓+

Dreidel Game



Dreidel is a traditional game played by children during Hanukkah. A dreidel (pronounced “dray-dle”) is a four-sided top. Each side is marked with a Hebrew symbol. The symbols are Hebrew letters that mean “A Great Miracle Happened There.” Children spin the top and take actions according to how the top lands. The rules of the game vary from family to family, but a basic version of the game can be found below.

Making Your Own Dreidel

You can make a dreidel by cutting out the pattern and gluing it onto posterboard or cardboard. Cut out the pattern again, and poke a hole through the top star and the bottom circle. Fold on the lines, and glue the sides together to form a cube. Push a capped pen or pointed wooden dowel through the top star and the bottom circle and tape the cube in place. This won't look exactly like a real dreidel, but it will work just fine. Practice spinning the top on a flat surface to make sure it works.

Dreidel Game Rules (Two to Four Players)

1. Everyone needs the same number of tokens such as pennies, dried beans, or wooden cubes. Ten to fifteen tokens work well.
2. Sit in a circle facing each other, and place a cup or bowl in the middle. This the “pot.”
3. Begin by having everyone place one token into the pot.
4. The youngest player spins the dreidel.
5. Depending on which side is facing up, he or she takes the action shown at right. Note: When taking half the tokens, round up if the number of tokens is odd.
6. Players take turns spinning the dreidel and adding or removing tokens from the pot.
7. If the number in the pot gets below two, everyone adds another token.
8. Play until someone has all the tokens or time runs out.

Shin (Put In)

Put 2 tokens in the pot

Hay (Half)

Take half of the tokens from the pot

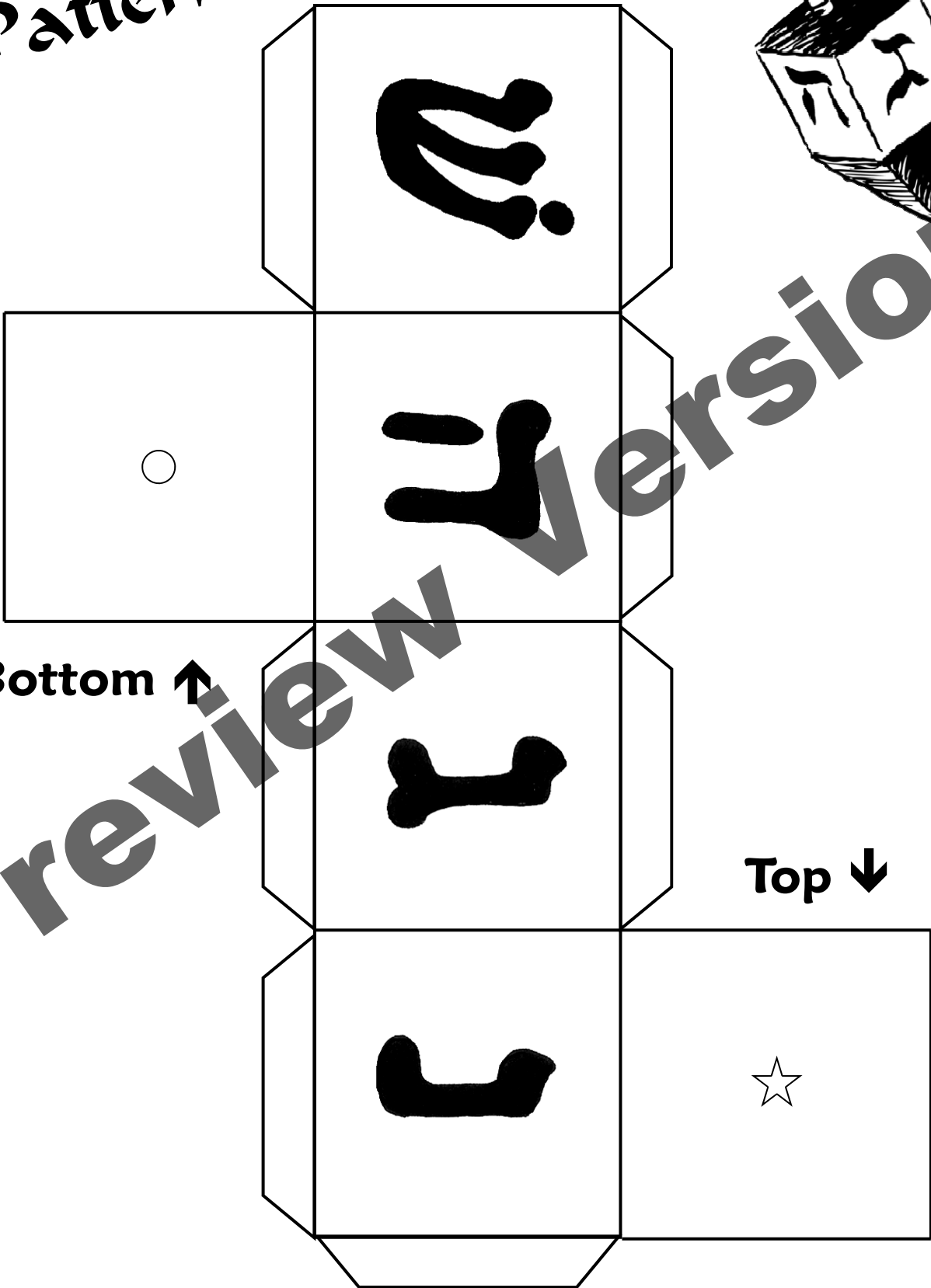
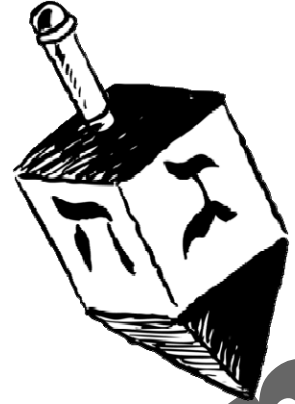
Gimel (All)

Take everything in the pot

Nun (Nothing)

Do nothing (lose a turn)

Dreidel Pattern



Bottom ↑

Top ↓

Preview Version

Dreidel Symbols

Shin (Put In)

Put 2 tokens in the pot

Het (Half)

Take half of the tokens from the pot

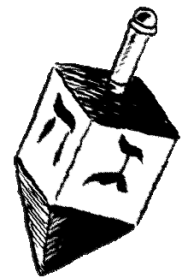
Gimel (All)

Take everything in the pot

Nun (Nothing)

Do nothing (lose a turn)

Dreidel Math Explorations



Teacher Information and Discussion Questions

Having your students create their own dreidels offers a perfect opportunity for some quick math lessons. The suggestions below are intended for review and discussion of previously learned concepts.

If possible, buy some inexpensive dreidels to use for comparison purposes with the probability explorations. Students will find that their homemade ones spin more inconsistently than the store-bought ones.

Geometry Explorations

- What shape will the pattern make after we cut it and fold it? (Discuss the difference in what the pattern will create, a cube, and the shape of a real dreidel, which is a cube with an inverted square pyramid on the bottom.)
- How many faces, edges, and vertices does this shape have?
- Measure the length of each side. What is the volume of the shape in cubic inches? (Sides of cube are 2 inches so volume is 8 cubic inches)

Probability Explorations

- What is the theoretical probability of the dreidel landing on each of its sides?
- If you spin your homemade dreidel 20 times, how many times would you expect it to land on each side? Do an experiment to find out, and use the Dreidel Probability Tally Table to keep track of your results.
- If your dreidel lands on one side more often than the others, look at the design and construction of the dreidel and discuss reasons for those results.
- Try spinning a store-bought dreidel 20 times, tally the results, and compare to the homemade dreidel. Which one is more consistent?

Computation Challenge

First allow students to play the game using the directions on the Dreidel Game handout. After they are comfortable with the procedures, challenge them to play the game and record their computation steps. Ask them to write down the number of tokens they have when they start. Each time they make a play, they should record a math problem to show what they did and the number of tokens they have left. The example at right shows the recording page for a student who started with 15 tokens, put 1 in the pot to begin the game, and continued for several more plays. If they are recording the steps correctly, their total number of tokens should always match the sum or difference on their running math problem.

$$\begin{array}{r} 15 \\ - 1 \\ \hline 14 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 18 \\ - 2 \\ \hline 16 \\ + 5 \\ \hline 21 \end{array}$$

Dreidel Probability Tally Table

Total Number of Spins _____

ש	Shin	
ה	Hay	
ג	Gimel	
נ	Nun	

Dreidel Probability Tally Table

Total Number of Spins _____

ש	Shin	
ה	Hay	
ג	Gimel	
נ	Nun	

Dreidel Probability Tally Table

Total Number of Spins _____

ש	Shin	
ה	Hay	
ג	Gimel	
נ	Nun	

Dreidel Probability Tally Table

Total Number of Spins _____

ש	Shin	
ה	Hay	
ג	Gimel	
נ	Nun	

SILLY WINTER STORIES

#1

My friends and I spent hours creating a huge snow fort. When it was done, we crawled inside and were astonished to see....

#2

I couldn't believe it! My dream of making it to the Winter Olympics had come true, and my event was about to begin....

#3

You'll never believe what happened when my friends and I climbed on our toboggan and began zooming down the hill. All of a sudden, the toboggan lifted off the ground and ...

#4

Yesterday I was so excited when it began to snow! I would have been even more excited if I had known that it was magical snow! I bundled up in warm clothing, raced outside, and

Crazy Christmas Stories

#1

On Christmas Eve I couldn't get to sleep. All of a sudden, I heard the strangest noise ...

#2

Last Christmas, my sister ran into my room and screamed, "Look outside! You'll never guess what's happened!"

#3

When I looked under the Christmas tree, I saw the most unusual package ...

#4

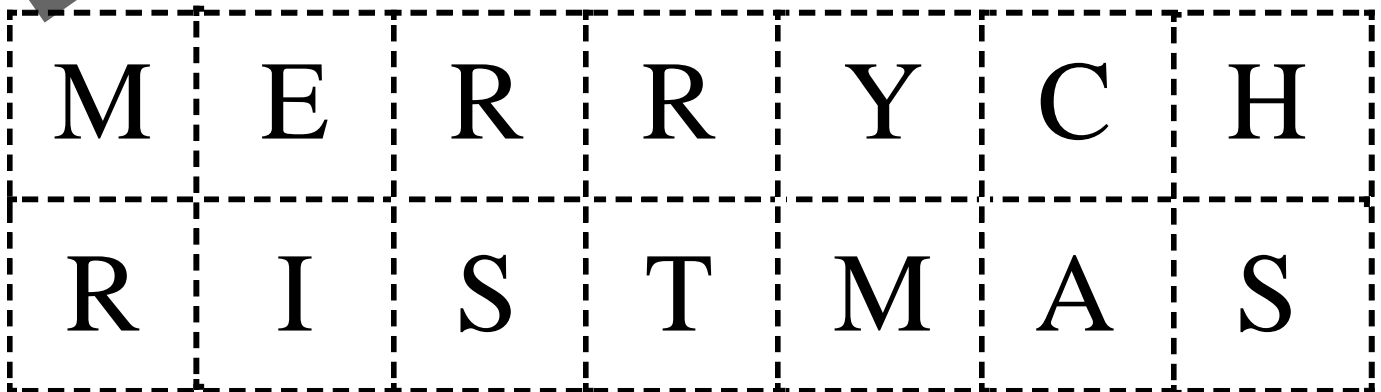
Last winter my family had the most unforgettable vacation!

CHRISTMAS WORD CHALLENGE



Solve the riddles by using only the letters in “Merry Christmas” to find a word for each definition. Cut out the letters below and use them to help you make words to fit the clues. Work with a partner and take turns finding words and writing them on the lines. Then try to make up your own holiday riddles!

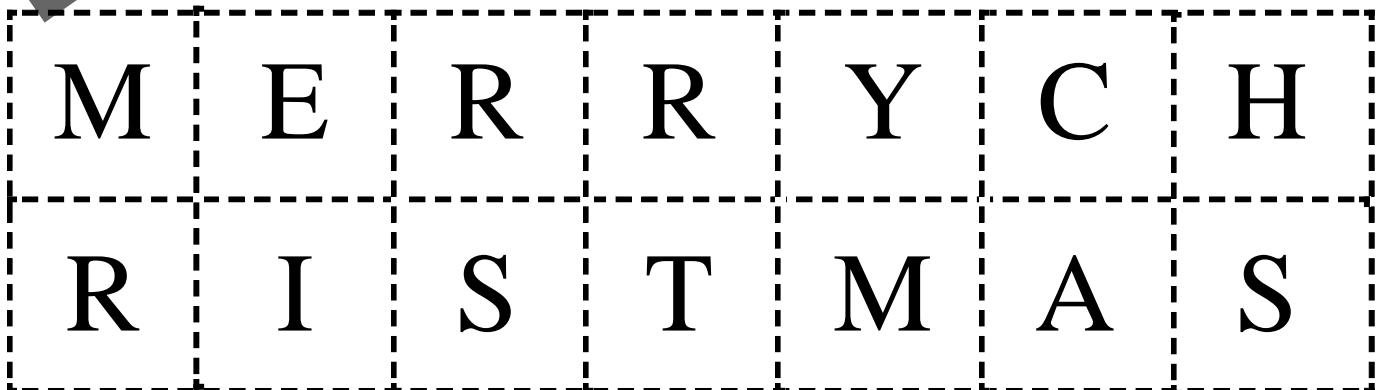
1. Twelve months _____
2. Alike _____
3. Large town _____
4. Warmth _____
5. Grows on your head _____
6. Part of a flower _____
7. Money _____
8. Divide with someone _____
9. Water vapor _____
10. Male sheep _____
11. A seat _____
12. Our planet _____
13. Bashful _____
14. On a boat, holds up a sail _____
15. Long-tailed rodent _____





CHRISTMAS WORD CHALLENGE Answer Key

1. Twelve months _____ **year**
2. Alike _____ **same**
3. Large town _____ **city**
4. Warmth _____ **heat**
5. Grows on your head _____ **hair**
6. Part of a flower _____ **stem**
7. Money _____ **cash**
8. Divide with someone _____ **share**
9. Water vapor _____ **steam**
10. Male sheep _____ **ram**
11. A seat _____ **chair**
12. Our planet _____ **earth**
13. Bashful _____ **shy**
14. On a boat, holds up a sail _____ **mast**
15. Long-tailed rodent _____ **rat**



SUGAR CONE CHRISTMAS TREES

Ingredients:

- 1 paper towel or plate
- 1 plastic knife or craft stick
- 1 sugar cone
- 1 graham cracker square
- 1/8 cup* mini M&M's
- 1 teaspoon sprinkles
- 2 tablespoons green frosting
- 1 tablespoon white frosting
- 1 gallon-sized zip top bag



Directions:

1. Place graham cracker square on paper towel or plate.
2. Frost graham cracker with white frosting to represent snow.
3. Place sugar cone upside down on frosted graham cracker.
4. Frost sugar cone with green frosting.
5. Stick mini M&M's and sprinkles onto green frosting as ornaments and Christmas lights.
6. Carefully place entire treat into zip top bag.
7. Take home and enjoy!

Makes one serving.

* 1/8 cup = 2 tablespoons



Sugar Cone Christmas Trees

- What are ingredients?
 - Directions
 - Items needed
 - Pots and pans
 - Candies
- Which of the following is an essential ingredient when making this treat?
 - Plastic knife
 - Sugar cone
 - Paper plate
 - Ziploc bag
- If you couldn't find a plastic knife, what does the recipe suggest you might use to spread the frosting?
 - Your fingers
 - Graham cracker
 - Fork
 - Craft stick
- Which ingredient is optional?
 - Small candies
 - Sugar cone
 - Paper plate
 - Frosting
- If you wanted to make Sugar Cone Christmas Trees for yourself and 2 friends, how many tablespoons of candy would you need?
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 6
- Suppose you buy a box with a dozen sugar cones, and your family makes 5 Sugar Cone Christmas Trees. How many cones are left?
 - 7
 - 6
 - 5
 - 12
- If you had 1 cup of green frosting, how many Sugar Cone Christmas Trees could you make?
 - 4
 - 1
 - 8
 - 12
- What should you do just before placing the sugar cone on the graham cracker?
 - Turn it upside down
 - Frost it
 - Decorate it with candy
 - Place it in a bag
- What does the word "entire" mean?
 - Whole
 - Sticky
 - Colorful
 - Green
- What's the best way to read and follow a recipe?
 - Read the recipe quickly
 - Read the recipe slowly, step-by-step
 - Read the ingredients, and then follow the directions
 - Read the whole recipe, then reread each step as you follow the directions



Reading and Math Practice Questions

Sugar Cone Christmas Trees

Answer Key

Answers in Bold

1. What are ingredients?

- A. Directions
- B. Items needed**
- C. Pots and pans
- D. Candies

2. Which of the following is an essential ingredient when making this treat?

- A. Plastic knife
- B. Sugar cone**
- C. Paper plate
- D. Ziploc bag

3. If you couldn't find a plastic knife, what does the recipe suggest you might use to spread the frosting?

- A. Your fingers
- B. Graham cracker
- C. Fork
- D. Craft stick**

4. Which ingredient is optional?

- A. Small candies
- B. Sugar cone
- C. Paper plate**
- D. Frosting

5. If you wanted to make Sugar Cone Christmas Trees for yourself and 2 friends, how many tablespoons of candy would you need?

- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 4
- D. 6**

6. Suppose you buy a box with a dozen sugar cones, and your family makes 5 Sugar Cone Christmas Trees. How many cones are left?

- A. 7**
- B. 6
- C. 5
- D. 12

7. If you had 1 cup of green frosting, how many Sugar Cone Christmas Trees could you make?

- A. 4
- B. 1
- C. 8**
- D. 12

8. What should you do just before placing the sugar cone on the graham cracker?

- A. Turn it upside down**
- B. Frost it
- C. Decorate it with candy
- D. Place it in a bag

9. What does the word "entire" mean?

- A. Whole**
- B. Sticky
- C. Colorful
- D. Green

10. What's the best way to read and follow a recipe?

- A. Read the recipe quickly
- B. Read the recipe slowly, step-by-step
- C. Read the ingredients, and then follow the directions
- D. Read the whole recipe, then reread each step as you follow the directions**

Happy Holidays Book Coupon

This entitles you to one
free Scholastic book
worth \$5.00 or less!



Name _____

Book Title _____

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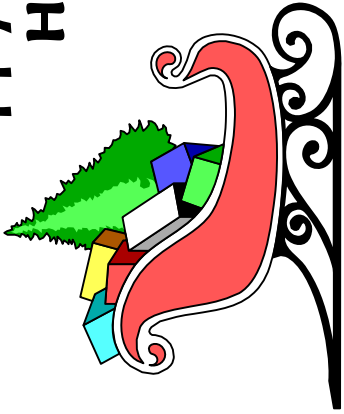
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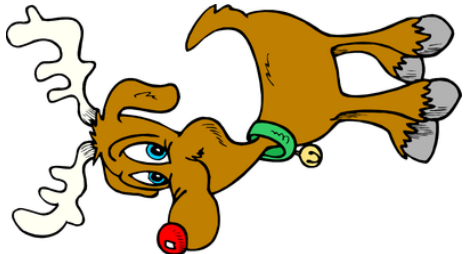
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Happy Holidays!
Homework Pass



To: _____
From: _____

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To: _____
From: _____

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To: _____
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