

Selections: The number kid

by Eileen Bourke

Activities author: Adrian Tennant

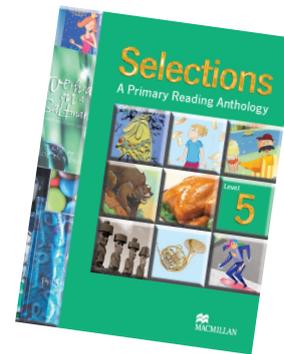
Level: Flyers

Recommended age: Grade 5, primary (10+)

Time needed: Indicated for each activity

Type of English: American

Note: These activities can be done one after the other, or can be done separately, depending on the length and focus of your lesson.



Activity 1 (5-10 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet and ask the children to match the symbols with the words.
2. Monitor and help where necessary.
3. Put the children in pairs and have them check their answers together.
4. Check the answers as a class.
5. Ask the children which school subject these symbols relate to (Math).

Key:

1. d; 2. e; 3. b; 4. f; 5. g; 6. c; 7. a

Activity 2 (10 minutes)

1. Put the children in pairs and hand out the worksheet.
2. Ask the children to discuss the questions with their partner.
3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Ask a few pairs to report back to the class on their discussion.

Activity 3 (5 minutes)

1. Next, ask the children to look at the two math sums in Activity 3 and see if they can do them. Explain that the sums are difficult and the children should not worry about getting them wrong.
2. Encourage the children to help each other.
3. Ask a few children to tell you their answers. Write these up on the board but do not check them yet.
4. Explain that when they listen to the recording (or read the story) they will get the correct answers.

Activity 4 (5 minutes)

1. Tell the children they will now find out the answers to the two math problems from Activity 3.
2. Either play the recording or hand out the story and get the children to read it.
3. Put the children in pairs and get them to check together.
4. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

a. 22.85714; b. 630.6316

Activity 5 (5 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 5 and ask the children to see if they can remember which of the characters were good at each particular subject.
2. Play the recording or get the children to read the story again and ask them to match the names and subjects.
3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Put the children in pairs and get them to check their answers together.
5. Finally, check the answers as a class.

Key:

1. Stephen c) Math
2. Carol a) Art/Painting
3. Thomas g) Geography
4. Mary e) History
5. Bart b) English

Note: There are two other subjects included on this list that aren't mentioned in the story (Science and Sports).

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Activity 6 (10-20 minutes)

1. Either play the recording one more time, or ask the children to read through the story again.
2. Then, tell the children you want them to write a short summary (between 30 and 60 words) of the story.
3. Set a time limit of ten minutes.
4. Monitor and help where necessary.
5. Next, put the children in groups of three or four and ask them to swap summaries.
6. Tell the children you want them to read each other's summaries and comment on them. How could they be better? Do they include all the relevant information?
7. Monitor and help where necessary.

Alternative procedure:

Ask the children to work together in groups and write the summary together (as a group effort). Post the summaries on the classroom walls and ask the children to walk around and read the summaries written by other groups.

Activity 7 (5 minutes)

1. Put the children in groups and ask them to discuss the four questions in Activity 7.
2. Monitor and help where necessary.
3. Ask a few groups to report back to the class on their discussion.

Activity 8 (15-20 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 8 and tell the children they are going to carry out a survey to find out which subjects are the most popular in their class.
2. Ask the children to complete the 'Me' column for themselves. You could either get them to check (✓) the subjects they like and cross (X) the ones they don't like, or you could ask them to rank them from 1-7, with 1 being the best and 7 the worst.
3. Next, elicit the question forms they will need to ask in order to complete the survey, i.e. *Which subjects do you like / dislike? What's your favorite / least favorite subject?* etc.
4. Then, ask the children to stand up, mingle and find four other students they can ask their questions to
5. They should write the name of each person they ask at the top of a column and then mark the

answers down the grid.

6. Monitor and help where necessary.
7. Finally, ask the children to report back on the results of their survey to discover which subjects are the favorites in the class.

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The number kid

Written by Eileen Bourke Illustrated by Dan McGeehan

'Stephen!' shouted Billy from the back of the class. 'What's 160 divided by 7?'

'22.85714,' replied Stephen without looking up.

'Good job! Thanks,' said Billy, copying the number down in his notebook.

'Stephen! When's Thomas's birthday?' asked Mary.

'It's February 16,' said Stephen, 'and he was born on a Tuesday.'

'Wow!' said Thomas, 'How did you know that?'

'You told me,' said Stephen.

'I did?' said Thomas, looking confused. 'When did I tell you?'

'On November 5 last year, at 3.05 p.m. We were in the yard, playing baseball and everyone was shouting about their birthday,' said Stephen.

'Don't you remember?'

'Well, no, I don't,' said Thomas. 'That's nearly ten months ago.'

'It's actually nine months, three days, four hours and sixteen minutes ago,' said Stephen, looking briefly at his watch.

'You did that calculation in your head?' asked Mary, amazed.

'Yes, of course,' said Stephen. 'How else would I have done it?'

'With a calculator,' said Thomas. 'Come on, you're doing it all on a calculator, aren't you?'

'No, I'm not!' said Stephen. 'I don't have a calculator,' he continued.

'Everyone has a calculator!' laughed Ginny from the front of the class.

'You mean you use a calculator for your homework?' Stephen stared at Ginny as if he didn't believe her. 'Don't you do it in your head?' he asked.

'No way!' laughed Ginny. 'I'm no good at math. I always check everything with my calculator.'

'Stephen, what's 11987 ... minus 5, divided by 19?' asked Bart.

'It's 630.6316,' Stephen said.

'You're amazing!' said Bart. 'OK, let's try again. When is Carol's birthday?'

'It's July 15. And before you ask, she was born in the Maryland Hospital at 6.00 p.m. exactly, on a Friday.'

Carol was so amazed that she fell off her chair.



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'Wow!' said Thomas. 'You know what? We have a real genius here. Right here, in our class!' He looked at Stephen and gave him a big smile.

Stephen turned bright red, like a tomato. 'I'm not a genius,' he said quietly. 'I'm just Stephen.'

'But you're so good at math and remembering things, surely you must be a genius,' said Bart kindly.



'I can prove I'm not,' said Stephen. He got up very slowly and went to Carol's desk. He picked up a painting of hers from Tuesday's art class. Then he went to Thomas's desk and pulled out Thomas's geography notebook. Next he walked over to Mary's desk and asked her to hand him her history homework. Finally he walked up to Bart and said, 'Can I borrow your English notebook, please?'

Stephen went to the front of the class and stood in front of the board where everyone could see him.

'Tell me what you see,' he said, and he held up Carol's painting.

'A really good picture of a river with houses in the background and a dog barking ...' said Thomas.

'Right,' said Stephen.

Next he picked out Thomas's geography notebook. 'Listen carefully,' he said. 'Test 1, May 7, 10 out of 10. Test 2, May 14, 10 out of 10. Test 3, May 21, 10 out of 10. Test 4, May 28, 10 out of 10.'

'Good job!' whispered Mary.

'Now you, Mary,' said Stephen. 'History project last semester – teacher's comments: an excellent piece of work. History project last year – teacher's comments: excellent, good job, Mary.'

'Now listen very carefully,' said Stephen. 'I'm going to read you a poem.' The class fell silent as Stephen read the poem aloud. It was from Bart's English notebook. When he finished, everyone clapped.

'What a beautiful poem,' said Carol.

'And what a nice way to prove you're not a genius,' said Bart. 'You just showed us all that we're all geniuses in our special ways, didn't you?'

'I hope so,' said Stephen, and he went back to his desk without another word.

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Before listening / reading

Activity 1

Match these symbols to the words

- | | |
|------|---------------------|
| 1. = | a. minus / subtract |
| 2. + | b. divide |
| 3. ÷ | c. more than |
| 4. × | d. equals |
| 5. < | e. add / plus |
| 6. > | f. multiply / times |
| 7. - | g. less than |

What school subject do these symbols relate to?

Activity 2

Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

1. Are you good at Math?
2. Do you like Math? Why? Why not?
3. Are you good at remembering dates? (E.g. people's birthdays)
4. What's your phone number?
5. How do you remember it?
6. Is it easy to remember?

Activity 3

Test your math. Can you do these sums?

- a. $160 \div 7 = ?$
- b. $11987 - 5 = ?$ Now \div this by $19 = ?$

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After you listen or read

Activity 7
Work in groups and discuss these questions.

1. What is your favorite subject?
2. Why do you like it?
3. Are there any subjects you don't like?
4. Why don't you like these subjects?

Activity 8
Carry out a survey and find out which subjects are the most popular in your class.

Subject	Me	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
English					
Math					
Geography					
History					
Art					
Science					
Sports					