Activities

Calendar Math Activities

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2, 3–5

Overview
A web site provides many fun facts and fascinating trivia to expand learnings connected with a daily date: math, science, language, sports, history, etc.

Many primary classes begin their morning with calendar activities. Students start their school day by working on various activities that contain aspects of math, science, and social studies. They learn about days of the week, months of the year, days in a school year, the concepts of before and after, various counting skills, and many more concepts.

I discovered a Web site (http://richardphillips.org.uk/number/) where you can find out about the mathematical significance of today's date.

The first section of the page takes the number of the month for example, 5 for the month of May and offers these mathematical facts:

- Five is a prime number.
- We have five digits on each hand and foot.
- *Penta* means five; therefore, a pentathlon is an athletic contest with five events and a pentagon is a figure with five sides and five angles.
- There are five Olympic rings.
- When you cut through an apple "the wrong way" you get a five-pointed star.
- Five-fold symmetry is found in apples and plants in the rose family.
- There are five vowels in the English alphabet.

The second section of the page focuses on the date of the month for example, 16 for May 16. It then gives similar math figures and facts matching the date:
- There are 16 ounces in a pound.
- The number $16 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$; $16 = 1 + 3 + 5 + 7$; 16 is a 4 x-4 square.
- Sixteen pieces are used by each player in a game of chess.
- Caterpillars typically have 16 legs until they emerge from their chrysalis as a butterfly or moth when they have only 6 legs.
- A *sixteenmo* is a book made by folding each sheet of paper into 16 leaves.

I choose several interesting and age-appropriate facts to read aloud and discuss with the children. We also have a math activity in which students collect and record information on various types of number combinations, such as doubles or pairs, trios, quartets, quadruplets, and so on. We use this information for work on counting patterns and beginning multiplication story problems. The "About Today's Date" Web site adds interesting information and a worldwide perspective to the student-made lists.