Activities

Calendars

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Overview
Students will understand that the year can be sub-divided in various ways—Lunar calendars and solar calendars; calendars throughout history and calendars in use today.

Getting Started
Begin this section by carefully looking at a calendar with your students. Challenge students to discuss everything that a calendar tells them.
Turn the discussion to the number of days in the cycles of the moon and the sun. The moon has a cycle of about 29 1/2 days, counting from one new moon to the next. Twelve lunar cycles add up to 354 days. The sun has a cycle of about 365 1/4 days. The quarter day is made up every four years (with certain exceptions) by an extra day in a leap year. Throughout history peoples have devised different ways to reconcile the discrepancy between the lunar and solar cycles.

Linked Learning
1. Ask students to research the calendars of other cultures, e.g., Chinese and Egyptian.
2. Find more information about how dates are set for various special days, such as birthdays of famous men and women, Election Day, etc.
3. Read about the Ishango bone, recently redated to about 25,000 years ago, and thought to represent a six-month lunar calendar (Zaslavsky, 1979).

4. Student can write down the ways that the Iroquois calendar is like ours and how it is different.

- Subjects:
  
  Cultures, Time, Planets, Moons, Solar Systems, Sun, Science, Measurement