Activities

Calendars and Time Measurement Websites

Grades 3-5, 6-8

Overview:

Useful web sites for supplemental materials re: methods of measuring time through the ages, ancient calendars of the Mayan civilization, the Gregorian calendar and a Multicultural Calendar.

- What better "time" to study the history and math behind our modern calendar than the beginning of a new year? Accurately tracking time has been one of man's obsessions throughout the ages, as you'll learn as you walk through time: (http://www.nist.gov/pml/general/time/index.cfm).

At this site, you can learn about early methods used to mark time — and how time measurement technologies have evolved since the days of Stonehenge.
Looking for something a little more specific? The ancient Mayans kept very detailed calendars, using a 20-day system not unlike our week to record the passage of time. Discover more about the complex system the Mayans used to keep track of time at the Mayan Calendar site (http://www.michielb.nl/maya/calendar.html) — and see today's date converted into Mayan. This site also provides equations that are ideal for a hands-on math activity about time measurement.

So when did society make the transition to today's calendar, the Gregorian? You can find out at the Julian and Gregorian Calendars site: (http://www.hermetic.ch/cal_stud/cal_art.html)

Astonishingly, the calendar we use today is remarkably similar to one adopted by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. Due to mathematical necessity, certain changes were made in the 16th century.

So now that you've got the history down pat, what's out there about the modern-day calendar? Well, you can find out about the mathematical significance of today's date at the site: (http://richardphillips.org.uk/numbers).

And to round out your celebration of the New Year, don't miss the KIDPROJ Multi-Cultural Calendar site: (http://www.kidlink.org/kidspace/start.php?HoldNode=3459). Here you and your class can browse articles by kids around the world about how they celebrate the New Year — and other favorite holidays as well. You can even add information on how your own class rings in the new year — just for auld lang syne.

Subjects

Time, Mathematics, Cultures, History