

## February Activities <br> from Laura Candler's <br> Teaching Resources



In February, we celebrate Friendship Month, Valentine's Day, President's Day and Black History Month. Sometimes the Chinese New Year falls in February, so I've included activities for that holiday, too. You'll find directions and printables for the activities listed below. I formatted most of the printables in black and white, but left most of the teacher directions in color. These activities are best for upper elementary students, but many can be adapted for younger or older students. I hope you enjoy this sample
 from my Seasonal Activities Bundle. If you do, be sure to check out the Seasonal Activities packs as well as the other resources in my TpT store!

## February Resources in this Freebie

- Valentine Math Puzzlers
- Valentine's Day Mix-Music-Math
- President Character Bio Report
- Black History Character Bio Report
- Reading Marathon Directions
- Valentine's Day Read 'n Roll
- Friendship Cinquains
- Heartfelt Thanks \& Just Wanted to Say

- Conversation Hearts Candy Fractions
- Valentine's Day Word Challenge
- Comparing American and Chinese New Years
- Sam and the Lucky Money Discussion Prompts
- Valentine's Day Homework Pass


# February Teaching Suggestions and Lesson Tips 



Valentine's Day Mix-Music-Math

The Valentine Math Puzzler worksheet is a thematic math problemsolving page that provides a place for students to show their thinking. You can have students complete one problem per day or do them all in one sitting. It's great for cooperative problem solving sessions or pair work. Try the Music-Mix-Math activity for a way to get kids up and moving to music while they solve problems. Each student will need his or her own worksheet, but they will be mixing around the room to find a partner after each problem.
Answers: \#1) 15 candies \#2) 3 cards \#3) 7 orange \#4) No

## Character Bio Reports for Black History Month and Presidents' Day

 During the month of February, we honor our Presidents as well as famous African Americans. Students can benefit from researching and writing about these famous historical figures, but the benefits are lost when students mindlessly copy notes and restate the facts in a report. Character Bio Reports require students to organize their report around three chosen character traits. They are asked to support each character trait with details from the famous person's life. Adding this requirement makes the assignment more rigorous because it requires students to think about what's really important in that person's life. Two report options are included in this freebie, and three more are included in my Character Bio Reports product. In the full product, you'll also find more complete directions for teaching this activity, including graphic organizers and a scoring rubric.

## Valentine's Day Reading Marathon - Read 'n Roll Story Board

Valentine's Day is filled with excitement, but your classroom doesn't have to be chaotic all day! Start the day with a Reading Marathon, an activity in which students choose their own books and read almost continuously for an extended period of time. In this packet, you'll find teacher directions for organizing a Reading Marathon, along with a Valentine's Day Read 'n Roll activity you can display on an overhead projector or whiteboard.

Each student or team will need one die which they will roll after every 15 to 20 minutes of independent reading. What they record in the next block depends on what number they roll. Kids love this activity, and it keeps them quiet and engaged in their books on a day when they would normally be somewhat hyperactive. As a special treat, you can provide a Valentine's Day snack break in the middle of the activity.


## Friendship Cinquains

Since February is International Friendship Month, it's a perfect time to write friendship poems. Cinquains are simple 5 -line poems, and this activity will lead your students through the creation of a poem about a classmate. Randomly assign partners within your classroom and give each student a copy of the Friendship Cinquain interview page and the heart pattern. Students simply follow the directions to create the poem. Let them work with their partners to revise and edit their poems before copying them onto the pattern. Prior to this activity, you might pair up with another teacher and interview each other to create sample poems.


## Heartfelt Thanks and Just Wanted to Say

As a part of Friendship Month, you can foster a sense of gratitude and appreciation within your classroom by implementing the Heartfelt Thanks activity. Give each student a sheet of paper with the four heart notes. Display a copy of the Heartfelt Sparks Appreciation Sparks. Ask students to cut the notes apart on the dotted lines and think about why they are grateful for their classmates, teachers, or other important people in their lives. Then have them create a heart note for 4 different people. They can use the Heartfelt Thanks spark ideas to get them started. If you do this on Valentine's Day, students can deliver the notes with their other valentines. For older students who might not want to write notes on hearts, you can substitute the Just Wanted to Say activity which uses scrolls instead.


You can use this activity all year round by making the hearts or scrolls available to students at any time. Encourage them to write positive notes about each other and deposit them into a class drop box. Each day, draw out a few notes to read aloud, being mindful of the fact that some may be too personal to read. It's not necessary to read the name of the person who submitted the note - just read the name of the person who is being recognized and what they are being recognized for. To encourage participation, award a small treat for the person whose name is drawn out as well as the person who submitted the compliment.

## Conversation Hearts Candy Fractions

If you've been studying fractions, this activity makes a good review. Several days before this lesson, ask parents to donate boxes of valentine conversation heart candies. Before you distribute the boxes of candy, you might want to review fraction concepts using colored link cubes or other manipulatives. Be sure to discuss strategies for finding the fraction of a number.

For example, if you have six cubes and you want to find the number that represents one third of them, you can physically divide them into three groups. Students can draw circles on an individual dry-erase board and either draw illustrations or place manipulatives inside the circles. In this way, they will see that $1 / 3$ of 6 equals 2 , and $2 / 3$ of 6 equals 4 . Eventually they may discover that to find the fraction of a whole number, you can divide by the denominator and multiply by the numerator. After this type of review, students should be able to handle the Valentine Candy Fractions activity either alone or with a partner. When they finish, let them create their own problems to present to their classmates.


## Valentine's Day Word Challenge

Need a word work activity for your literacy center? Word Challenges are always fun, but they also foster spelling and vocabulary development. You can have students complete this alone, but it's more fun with a partner. Have them cut out the letters of "Valentine's Day" and work with a buddy to find as many words as possible from those letters. It's best to choose partners rather than letting students choose their own. When everyone is ready, set a timer and give everyone 10 or 15 minutes to hunt for words on their own. Then allow them to work with their partners to continue finding words. Finally, have each pair swap papers with another pair and ask them to check their words to be sure all the rules have been followed. You might want to award simple prizes for the pairs who have the most words correct or who have found the largest word.

Word Challenge Rules

- No proper nouns including names of people, places, things, etc.

- All words have to have at least 3 letters.
- You can use words and their plurals if you have enough letters. For example, you can use "year" and "years," but you can't use "saw" and "saws" because there’s only one " $s$ " in the set of letters.
- Words must be spelled correctly.
- You can look up word spellings, but you can't use the dictionary to hunt for words you don't know.


## Valentine's Day Homework Pass

Drop these homework passes into your student's goodie bags to make their Valentine's Day special. If you haven't been using homework passes in your classroom, make sure your students know the rules in advance. In my classroom, a homework pass buys a student an extra day on an assignment, but they still have to complete the work. Both color and B\&W options are included.

## Chinese New Year Literacy Activities

These two activities work well with the suggested children's books. Click the blue links to find the titles on Amazon.

- Comparing Chinese and American New Years In this activity, students work with a partner to sort fact cards about the Chinese and American New Years onto a Venn Diagram. This activity works best after reading aloud a non-fiction book like Chinese New Year for Kids or after having students research facts about the Chinese New Year. To use the activity as a "hook" prior to reading the book or conducting research, give them time to sort the cards first. Then read the book aloud or have them conduct research to verify the correct placement of the cards.

- Sam and the Lucky Money Discussion Cards

Sam and the Lucky Money is a touching story with a wonderful message about what it means to be lucky. After reading the story to your students, use these discussion cards in a whole group discussion or in small guided reading groups. They also work will for team discussions using the "Talking Sticks" strategy described in my post on Corkboard Connections, Cooperative Learning - More Than Group Work.

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Solve each word problem below. Be sure to show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols.

1. Sarah opened a box of valentine chocolates and ate 4 of them that day. The next day she gave 3 candies to each of her 2 friends. Five chocolates were left in the box. How many candies were in the box when she opened it?

Answer: $\qquad$

|  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\checkmark-$ | $\checkmark$ |  |

3. Rebecca opened a box of valentine hearts and counted how many she had of each color. There were 30 candies in the box and half of them were pink. She also counted 5 purple and 3 green. The rest were orange. How many orange hearts were in the box?
4. Christopher bought two boxes of valentine cards for his class. There were a dozen cards in each box. How many cards will he have left if he gives one to each of his twenty classmates and his teacher?

Answer: $\qquad$
4. Xavier's class decided to have a Valentine's Day party. They want enough punch for each of the 24 students to have one cup. The punch recipe they want to use calls for one gallon ginger ale, 1 quart orange juice and 1 cup lemon juice. Will this recipe make enough punch for the class? Be sure to show your work or explain your answer!

Answer: $\qquad$
$\checkmark-\quad \checkmark \quad \checkmark+$

Answer: $\qquad$
$\checkmark-\quad \checkmark \quad \checkmark+$

## Valentine's Day Music-Mix-Math

Music-Mix-Math is a fun activity that gets kids up and moving as they work cooperatively with classmates to solve math word problems. It's also a
 great way to keep kids engaged on special days like Valentine's Day!

## Materials Needed

- Kid-friendly music (Try www.freekidsmusic.com)
- 1 Valentine's Day Math Puzzlers Worksheet per student


## Directions

1. Give each student a copy of the Valentine's Day Math Puzzler's page and explain how the activity will work.

2. Before starting the music, ask everyone to read the first problem and think about how they would solve it. However, they should NOT write anything on their papers at this point.
3. Begin playing the music and ask your students move quietly around the room mingling with their classmates. Remind them to bring their worksheets and pencils with them.
4. Stop the music and ask students to find a partner. Have them stand shoulder-to-shoulder and check to see that everyone is paired up before giving the next direction. If you have an odd number of students, you can be one student's partner.
5. Ask your students to discuss the first problem with their partners, decide how to solve it, and each write the solution in their own words on their papers. They must show their work, which could include drawings, charts, or number sentences. Students who finish early may discuss the next problem but may not write anything on their papers.
6. When most students are finished with Problem \#1, begin playing the music. When you stop the music this time, ask your students to find a different partner.
7. When everyone has a partner, ask them to compare their answers for Problem \#1 before moving on to Problem \#2. If their answers for Problem \#1 are not correct, they should quickly discuss that one before solving the next problem. You'll need to monitor this step to make sure they don't spend too much time on Problem \#1.
8. Repeat steps 3 through 7 until all the word problems are completed.
9. At the end of the activity, collect the papers to check for accuracy, or discuss the answers together as a class.


Look for more Daily Math Puzzler activity pages on Teaching Resources at www.lauracandler.com/books/dailymathpuz.php. This daily math problem solving program is available on four levels; download samples and a free problem-solving assessment pack from that page and try it with your class!

## President Bio Report

During the month of February, we often honor our Presidents. This month you'll research one President and writing a short report. You'll choose one President, past or present, whom you admire. Then you'll research facts about his life experiences and accomplishments and use this information to write a short report organized around his character traits. Following the steps below will ensure a dynamite report!


## Step 1: Select a President

Brainstorm a list of Presidents you admire. They may be living now or have lived long ago. You may have to do a little research before you can make your selection. Then choose one President as the focus of your paper.

## Step 2: Research President

Research this President using a variety of resources. Continue your research until you have listed at least 8 to 10 accomplishments or important life experiences that demonstrate that person's character. You'll also need to record basic background information about that President.

## Step 3: Select Character Traits

Think about the President's accomplishments and important life experiences. What traits describe this person? Refer to the Character Traits list and select three traits that are supported by your research.

## Step 4: Organize Ideas

Organize your ideas before writing. Write your three character traits, and under each one record the details that support your selections.

## Step 5: Write the Report

Write an essay using the information from your research. Start with an introduction followed by at least one paragraph on each of the three character traits you selected. Show that President demonstrates each character trait. Conclude with a paragraph that explains why you selected this President or a reflection on his accomplishments. Revise your first draft and write your final copy.

Important! This assignment is due $\qquad$ . Be sure to turn in your graphic organizer along with your final paper.

## Black History Bio Report

During the month of February, we honor African Americans for their accomplishments and contributions. What character traits are demonstrated by these individuals who have had such a positive impact on others? To find out, you'll be researching an African American and writing a short report in the form of a character analysis. You'll choose one African American, past or present, whom you admire. Next, you'll research facts and details about his or her life experiences and accomplishments. You'll use this information to write a short report organized around his or her character traits. Following the steps below will ensure a dynamite report!


## Step 2: Research and Record Facts

Research this person using a variety of resources. Begin by recording background facts and information about your person. Continue your research until you have listed at least 8 to 10 of the person's accomplishments or important life experiences.

## Step 3: Select Character Traits

Think about the person's accomplishments and important life experiences. What traits describe this person? Select three traits that are supported by your research.

## Step 4: Organize Ideas

Organize your ideas before writing. Write your three character traits on a 3-part graphic organizer, and under each trait record the details that support your selections.

## Step 5: Write the Report

Write an essay using the information from your research. Start with an introduction followed by at least three paragraphs, one paragraph per character trait. Conclude with a brief paragraph that offers a personal connection or a reflection on that person's accomplishments and/or impact on others' lives. Revise your first draft and write your final copy.



## How to Organize a Reading Marathon



## Overview

Reading Marathons are fun ways to motivate kids to read by giving them extended periods of time to experience the joy of a great book. On the day of the planned marathon, encourage students wear something comfortable and bring a special stuffed animal, blanket, or pillow for reading. It's also best to establish guidelines before you begin. Take a restroom break right before you start and make sure everyone has plenty of great reading material on hand.

Divide your Reading Marathon into "laps" and "checkpoints." A lap is the actual reading time, and the checkpoint is a quick reading-related activity. To begin, let everyone spread out on the floor and find a spot to read, then set a timer for about 15 to 20 minutes for the first lap. When the timer goes off, involve students in a 5-minute reading-related activity (see ideas below). Then have them return to the same spot for the next lap. The number of laps you read is determined by the total time you have set aside for the Reading Marathon.

## Suggested Guidelines

- Choose a reading location at least 3 feet from anyone else in the room. However, you must be actively reading, not sleeping, during the marathon. If you choose a spot on the floor and you aren't reading, you'll need to return to your desk.
- Stay in your spot during each lap of the Reading Marathon. You must have enough reading material for the full 15 to 20 minutes.
- Reading quietly and independently without distracting others.
- Keep the same reading location for each lap of the Reading Marathon.


## Suggested Checkpoint Activities

- Work on a graphic organizer or foldable - During each 5-minute checkpoint, complete one part of the graphic organizer or foldable.
- Buddy Chat - Present a discussion topic every five minutes. Have students pair up with a buddy to respond to the question.
- Literature Circles - If a group of students is reading the same book, let them write one question, then get together and discuss their questions.



## Valentine's Day Read 'N Roll Directions

Today we will read great books and create Sharing Boards to tell about what we are reading. Fold a piece of paper into 6 sections. Write the title, author, and your name in the first section. Every 15 minutes, each of you will roll a die to find out what to add to your Sharing Boards. When you roll a number, look at the chart to find out what to draw or write in the next section. Write the title at the top of each section. When we finish, everyone's board will be a little different!



## Valentine's Day Read N Roll Chart

|  | Character Sketch <br> Draw a sketch of the main characters in the book. <br> Label each character with his or her name. |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | Setting <br> When and where did this story take place? Draw a <br> sketch that will reveal the setting. |
|  | Prediction <br> What do you think will happen next? Write a few <br> sent or draw a sketch to show your prediction. <br> Write a short summary of the main events. Tell what <br> has happened so far, but only include important details. |
|  | Favorite Part <br> Draw a sketch and write a caption to describe your <br> favorite part OR write a few sentences about it. |
|  | Evaluation <br> How do you feel about this book? Would you <br> recommend it to others? Why or why not? |



## Friendship Cinquains

A cinquain is a five-line poem that follows a pattern. Interview a friend and use what you learn to write a cinquain about that person. Copy the cinquain onto the heart pattern.

## Interview a Friend



1. What is your name? $\qquad$
2. What are some adjectives that describe you? $\qquad$
3. What are some activities you enjoy? $\qquad$
4. What makes you a good friend to others? $\qquad$
5. Do you have a nickname? If so, what is it? $\qquad$
6. What else would you like to share about yourself? $\qquad$

## Write a Cinquain About Your Friend

(Friend's Name)
(Two adjectives describing the person)
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
(Three action words)
(A four-word phrase about friendship or the person you interviewed)

> (Nickname or noun)

Friendship Cinquain Heart Pattern


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## Heartfelt Thanks

## Appreciation Sparks



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from $\qquad$

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firom $\qquad$

## Just Wanted Say

 Appreciation Sparks

## Conversation Hearts Candy Fractions

1. What fraction of your candies are pink? white? purple?
2. Count out 8 candies. What number is $1 / 4$ of the 8 candies?

3. Count out 9 candies. What number is $1 / 3$ of the candies? What number is $2 / 3$ of them?
4. Count out a dozen candies. What number is $1 / 4$ of the candies? What number is $1 / 3$ of them? What number is $3 / 4$ of the candies?
5. What if you had 15 candies. You ate $1 / 3$ of them and gave 3 to a friend. How many of the candies were left?
6. Make up your own fraction problem!


## Valentine's Day Word Challenge

$\qquad$
$\qquad$

Cut apart the letters in Valentine's Day, and use them to make words. Write words with three or more letters on the lines below, and be sure to spell them correctly. Proper nouns and abbreviations may not be included. How many words can you find?

1. $\qquad$ 13. $\qquad$ 25. $\qquad$
2. $\qquad$ 14. $\qquad$ 26. $\qquad$
3. $\qquad$ 15. $\qquad$ 27. $\qquad$
4. $\qquad$ 16. $\qquad$ 28. $\qquad$
5. $\qquad$ 17. $\qquad$ 29. $\qquad$
6. $\qquad$ 18. $\qquad$ 30. $\qquad$
7. $\qquad$ 19. $\qquad$ 31. $\qquad$
8. $\qquad$ 20. $\qquad$ 32. $\qquad$
9. $\qquad$ 21. $\qquad$ 33. $\qquad$
10. $\qquad$ 22. $\qquad$ 34. $\qquad$
11. $\qquad$ 23. $\qquad$ 35. $\qquad$
12. $\qquad$ 24. $\qquad$ 36. $\qquad$

Valentine's Day Word Challenge Letters a a devil $n$ mtv


# Sam and the Lucky Money Reading Discussion Cards 

## Comparing New Years Answer Key

## Color Coding: American Both Chinese

| People celebrate with cheering and loud noise. | The calendar year is based on solar (sun) cycle. |
| :---: | :---: |
| The calendar year is based on the lunar (moon) cycle. | The first day of the new year is always January 1st. |
| The first day of the new year is different each year. | The years are named after 12 different animals. |
| People make new year resolutions or promises. | Everyone in the country turns a year older on the same day. |
| Parents give children red envelopes with "good luck" money. | Black-eyed peas are served on New Year's Day for good luck. |
| The new year is started by cleaning house to sweep out bad luck. | People celebrate with parades and fireworks. |
| People spend time with family and friends. | People sing "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight on New Year's Eve. |
| Baby symbolizes new year and new beginnings. | At midnight families pray to ancestors for a good year and then enjoy a fancy dinner. |

## Comparing New Years

## American and Chinese New Year Facts



People celebrate with cheering and loud noise.

The calendar year is based on the lunar (moon) cycle.

The first day of the new year is different each year.

People make new year resolutions or promises.

Parents give children red envelopes with "good luck" money.

The new year is started by cleaning
house to sweep out bad luck.

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## Seasonal Mini Packs from Laura Candler

 Click each Seasonal Activities Pack below to find the item on TpT.

More Terrific Teaching Resources


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