The Mini Page®

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Next Week: Good citizens

Math Fun

Mini Fact:
Weather forecasters use math to predict what the day will be like.

image courtesy NOAA

Math is everywhere in our world. You use it every day, and you're probably better at math than you think you are.

Let's explore some examples of how we use math in our everyday lives.

Shopping math

Shopping is packed with math. We use it to figure out:
• what size to buy
• if we can afford it
• how many things we need
• how much a sale item really costs.

Can you figure out how to solve these math problems?

You are helping your dad shop for a party, and you are in charge of getting the hot dogs and buns. There are 12 hot dogs in each package. But there are only 8 buns in a package.

• If you want to serve 24 hot dogs, how many packages of them will you need?

• How many packages of buns do you **estimate**, or guess, that you'll need?

• What if 30 people are coming to the party? How many packages of hot dogs will you need? How many packages of buns will you need?

Fraction fun

Fractions are a way to talk about a part of something. For example, say you have a birthday cake. Your mom has divided it into four equal pieces. Since it is your birthday, your mom gives you two pieces.

You could say that you got two pieces of cake. Or you could say that you got 2/4 (two-fourths) of the cake. This means you got two of the four pieces. This is the same thing as saying you got 1/2 of the cake.

• If your brother got 1/4 of the cake, how many pieces did he get?

Cracking the fraction code

The bottom number of a fraction tells you how many equal pieces there are in the whole thing. The top number tells you how many pieces of the whole you are thinking about.

You got two-fourths of the cake. The bottom number tells you there were four equal pieces. The top number tells you that you got two of those four pieces.

$$2/4 = 1/2$$

We know that 2 is half of 4, and 1 is half of 2. You got two pieces of the cake — you got 1/2 of the cake.

Be a math spy

Look at the back of a $1 bill.
• How many arrows is the eagle holding?
• How many steps are on the pyramid?
• How many leaves are on the olive branch?

When you've counted these items, ask yourself why the dollar designers chose these numbers. What do they have to do with our country?

Cooking the numbers

We use math every time we cook. We use it to measure ingredients, figure out how long it will take to make something and to cook it, and how healthy it is.

Answers:

Shopping math answers: If you want to serve 24 people, you need to buy 2 packages of hot dogs (2 x 12 = 24), and 3 packages of buns (3 x 8 = 24). If you want to serve 30 people, you need to buy 3 packages of hot dogs, and you will have 6 hot dogs left over (3 x 12 = 36). You will need to buy 4 packages of buns, and you will have 2 buns left over (4 x 8 = 32). Fraction fun answer: Your brother got one of the four pieces.

$1 bill answer: There are 13 arrows, 13 steps and 13 leaves on the olive branch. The number 13 represents the 13 original American Colonies.

Resources

On the Web:
• to.pbs.org/1O4v0Gb
• coolmath4kids.com

At the library:
• "Bedtime Math: A Fun Exercise to Stay Up Late" by Laura Overdeck
• "40 Fabulous Math Mysteries Kids Can't Resist" by Marcia Miller and Martin Lee

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of math are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

AFFORD, COOKING, COST, COUNT, DIVIDE, EQUAL, ESTIMATE, FRACTION, FUN, MATH, MEASURE, NUMBERS, PARTS, PREDICT, PROBLEM, SALE, SHOPPING, SIZE, WHOLE.

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T S W G V U Y T C I D E R P K
E N H U S L E B F M E A B U E
Q U T A O R C E P A D B J C M
U A N F O M P E A Q S F Y T L
A L U F Z M C I W I I G Y R K
L G F O M A T H N U V T B S O
P A R T S R I S I G N W I K D
X T D N S I Z E V W C D L O L
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(partial grid as shown)

Cook's Corner

Cherry Cheesecake Pops

You'll need:
• 1 (16-ounce) can cherry pie filling
• 8 ounces light cream cheese, softened
• 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
• 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

What to do:
1. In a large bowl, combine the pie filling, cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Mix well.
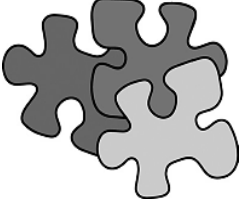2. Spoon the mixture into eight ice-pop molds. Freeze until firm, about 1 hour. Makes 8 pops.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

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Mini Jokes

Barry: Who was the king of fractions?
Barbara: Henry the 1/8!

John: Why was the math book so sad?
David: Because it had so many problems!

Eco Note

In a grocery store, find the soda aisle. Count 58 six-packs. Now do the math: How many cans are there? That's how many the average person in the U.S. uses every year! Start recycling aluminum cans at home and at school!

adapted with permission from "The New 50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth" by The Earthworks Group, Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com)

Answer: 348 cans.

For Later:

Find math problems at school and at home. Challenge other students or your family to solve the problems.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit:
bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of math fun.

riaftcon _____
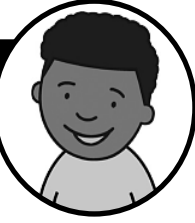
bnremu _____

lehow _____

tmsetiae _____

Answers: fraction, number, whole, estimate.