

SECOND GRADE NEWS



September 13, 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am trying a new strategy with Mad Minute practice this year. For the past ten years students have been taking Mad Minutes at school about three times per week while sometimes also oral drilling and playing math games. But, as you know, memorization needs to be very consistent to make math facts become automatic rather than calculated and we have many other math concepts to master at school.

Although we do teach strategies for arriving at answers, these are only crutches until students can get their facts memorized. Memorization is absolutely necessary because they have to use the basic facts in all aspects of more difficult math. As in the past, parents need to drill their child at home.

Therefore, I am sending Mad Minutes home as daily homework in addition to other math homework. I would like you to be directly involved in the process so you can help your child with flashcards when you see him/her stagnating or get an extra workbook or math computer activity to do. You will know exactly which facts are tripping up your child and can work on those. I will record your child's Mad Minute homework score at school, return it, and will send home the same type for mastery. More challenging Mad Minutes will go home as your child progresses.

Each 2nd grader should have all basic addition and subtraction facts up to 20 memorized by the end of October. Once these facts are mastered they will move on to basic multiplication up to 5 X 5 and will go further if they are able, however those are the required skills for 2nd graders by the end of the year. I will begin teaching double digit addition and subtraction with and without regrouping soon and if basic facts are not memorized, that process becomes time consuming and exhausting for the child. Refer to the curriculum overview I sent home to see this year's pace.

Attached are instructions for giving the Mad Minute and I thank you in advance for helping me help your child. If you think about it, maybe your parents drilled you on facts in the car or at the dinner table. It is a necessary evil and an indication of how much repetition your child needs to memorize something! If you have any questions, please call or email me. Thanks!☺

SECOND GRADE NEWS

MAD MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS

The name Mad Minute implies giving one minute for the timed test. In the older grades that is the case. I have discovered over the years that 2nd graders can be a little slower and more overwhelmed. After checking with other 2nd grade teachers years ago I modified the requirements. Instead of one minute they are given 1 ½ minutes. Instead of 30 correct problems out of 30, they can pass with 26 correct out of 30 which allows for a little slower recall and the occasional “oops” problem. This requirement still means that they are writing an answer in at least 3 ½ seconds! I am looking for proficiency not perfection at this point. If your child is faster, yippee!

After making sure there will be no noises or distractions for 90 seconds, get ready to time your child. Make sure they put their name on their paper.

- Step 1: Say, “Ready, Set, Go!”
 - Step 2: When time is up (1 ½ min.) say, “Please stop.” Then make sure that your child draws a vertical line to show how far he/she got. (See the example, attached. If your child is done before time is up, write the time he/she finished at the top of the page.)
 - Step 3: Have your child complete the additional problems for extra practice but do not time him/her.
 - Step 4: Check over the problems, circle the incorrect ones, cross out the wrong answer and have your child write the correct answer. Do not erase. Make a note to do additional practice of those problems or other ones they struggled to answer.
 - Step 5: Return the homework in the folder for me to record.
 - Step 6: The same Mad Minute will come home the next day as homework until it is passed. More problems like it will come home in subsequent days until I see consistent skill.
 - Step 7: After passing basic addition, basic subtraction will go home so students can begin to memorize and apply “fact family” knowledge. Then harder addition and harder subtraction will go home, then problems that are mixed up such as easy and hard addition, easy and hard subtraction, then 40 problems in 1 ½ minutes with a new goal of 36/40! Finally, multiplication will begin to come home.
- TOOLS:** You need a “second” hand watch, clock or timer. Check your TOOL box on your cell phone for a stopwatch. I think most have one. Guessing the time as the numbers on a digital clock flip is not an accurate way of timing.

NO COUNTING ON FINGERS! Count up in your brain, tap it out with your free hand or do Touch Points until you memorize it. Make sure you start with the biggest number and count up or down. Good luck!