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MATH

Write your own number riddles!

What even, 2-digit number is larger than 2 but smaller than 12? There's only one answer to that question and it's 10! Riddles like this appear on page 135 of the BRAIN QUEST GRADE 3 WORKBOOK. Challenge your child to write their own even and odd number riddles with only one possible answer. Each riddle should have some or all of this information:

- Whether the target number is even or odd
- If the target number is 2- or 3-digits
- A range for the target number: greater than 3 but less than 42, between 20 and 30, less than 25
- A calculation: the target number is a multiple of 5, divided by 3, composed of digits that add up to 9, etc.

Take turns making and solving riddles with your child. Who will be the best riddler in your family?

TECHNOLOGY



Loop the loop

A loop is a command that tells a computer to repeat an action. Loops simplify computer programs by grouping repeated commands together into a single line of code.

Use a real-world example like setting the table to illustrate how loops can make directions shorter and clearer. Write out each step for each person coming to dinner, for example, “place one plate on the table, place one plate on the table, place one plate on the table” for three people.

Show the instructions to your child and talk about how to shorten the instructions: “Place one plate on the table 3 times.” Ask them to write loops for placing napkins, silverware, and cups on the table. Then challenge them follow their own instructions and set the table.

LITERACY

Write a persuasive letter

Third graders are naturally persuasive, often trying to convince parents to let them stay up late or talk their teachers into giving less homework. Help your child apply these innate talents to persuasive writing and encourage them to write a persuasive letter to a person or organization.

Possible topics for persuasive writing include:

- Convincing an ice cream or candy company to make a specific flavor.
- Persuading an adult family member to grant a privilege.
- Influencing local government to make a change.



Remind your child that persuasive writing includes specific reasons to support their point of view. Guide them to do research and gather facts or examples before they start writing. Send the letter when it is complete—change might happen faster than they think!

Keep reading aloud

Parents and teachers tend to decrease the amount of time spent reading aloud to kids as they get older and become more independent readers. But research shows that children of all ages benefit from being read to. When reading to older kids, model reading with expression and enthusiasm. Think aloud to demonstrate what you do when you get confused while reading or encounter a word you don't understand. Try these suggestions for incorporating more reading with your child into your day:

- Dedicate specific time to reading, much like you would with practicing piano or brushing teeth. As with all routines, intentionally scheduling “read-aloud time” makes it more likely to happen.
- Choose (fun!) books together with your child. Don't worry about reading level or whether the books are “academic” enough—pick books that both of you will look forward to reading each day.
- Build in some time to chat after you read together. Talk about the cliffhanger at the end of a chapter, the characters' motivations, or the events you just read about.
- Make predictions and keep reading to see if they come true!

Word ladders!

Practice spelling and flexible thinking by playing Word Ladders. To play, pick two four-letter words: a “start word” and an “end word.” Change only one letter at a time and form a new word at each step. The goal is to change the start word into the end word in the fewest steps. Here’s an example with WARM and COLD:

WARM
WQRM
WORD
CORD
COLD



Play Word Ladders with or without pen and paper. Any pair of four-letter words will work, but some fun pairs include HEAD/TAIL, SOFT/HARD, or EAST/WEST. Play with two five-letter words for an even bigger challenge!

SOCIAL STUDIES

Lifetime timeline

Help your child practice using timelines by building a timeline of their life, from birth to now! Using whatever materials, you have (printer paper and pens, construction paper and markers, etc.) start by drawing a line with years marked out at even intervals. Start with your child’s birth year and ending the current year— or whenever you want—and mark year in between. (A ruler is helpful if you have one!)

Then fill it in together! Ask your child what important events have happened in their lives and help them fill in the early years with events and stories they might not remember.

Events could include:

- Starting preschool or kindergarten
- The addition of a sibling
- The adoption of a pet
- A move to a new house or city
- Meeting their best friend
- Starting an important hobby
- The death of a loved one
- A fun trip you took as a family
- Anything your kid wants to add!

You can be as creative or as simple as you want, just make sure that each event has a date attached to it, and the events are added in chronological order. Other fun things you could do:

- Display your timeline on the wall and keep adding to it as they grow up.
- Add newsworthy events that during their life such as the invention of new technology or the election of a president.
- Illustrate your timeline with photos, drawings, or any lightweight artifacts that could be fixed to it.

A timeline is a tool that visually represents important events in chronological order. They are often used in social studies classes to show when important events in history happened. This activity will not only help your child learn how create and read a timeline but provides the added benefit of showing your child how their life correlates with the history that's happening right now!

SCIENCE

What doesn't belong?

Classification is a core skill in elementary school science. Play this game with your child to help them strengthen their categorizing skills by comparing, contrasting, and observing. Remind your child that you can categorize using attributes like shape, color, size, texture, living or nonliving, etc. Then help them put their knowledge to use.

Gather a group of objects and put them in the box. The goal of the game is to have your child guess the object that doesn't belong to the group. Model one round for your child. Select a ball, a rock, a leaf, and a flower. Pretend you're guessing which of the items don't belong. Start by listing all the things the objects have in common and then all they ways they're different. Think aloud so that your child can hear your thought process. For example, you might say:

- "I found all these objects outside, so they have that in common."
- "The leaf and flower come can be found on plants, but not the ball and the rock."

- “The rock and the ball are both round, but the leaf and flower are different shapes.”
- “The objects are all different sizes, so I can’t use that to decide.”
- “The rock, flower, and leaf all came from nature, but the ball didn’t.”

Take turns with your child selecting four or five objects and guessing which of the objects don’t belong. Encourage your child to think aloud, and to use these questions as a guide:

- Do the objects have similar colors?
- Do they have similar shapes?
- Do the objects have similar sizes?
- Where do the objects come from?
- Are the objects living or nonliving?

For each round, encourage your child to find a different way to categorize the objects. Work with your child to think of other questions that might help them categorize.