



THE ULTIMATE

Holiday

ACTIVITY GUIDE



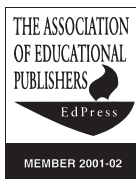


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RESOURCES

Chase's Annual Events
The Teacher's Calendar
World Book Encyclopedia
www.theholidayzone.com
www.holidays.net
www.geocities.com
www.wilstar.com/holidays/
www.education-world.com
www.usmemorialday.org
www.patriotism.org
www.teacherlink.ed.usu.edu
www.kidlink.org



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Designed by Liz Manion
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Note to Teachers:

Tired of the same old everyday routine? Sick of searching for interesting material that will bring a little fun into the classroom?

If so, this Newspaper in Education curriculum guide might be just what the doctor ordered. It's chockfull of information and activities that will literally make every day a special day — for you and your students.

The Ultimate Holiday Activity Guide is a day-by-day guide to the special days set aside to honor events and people. It includes the holidays observed by the federal government, religious feasts and festivals, historic occurrences and birthdays, and many of the sponsored events that give us reason to celebrate the everyday aspects of American life. Some of the holidays observed in other countries are also noted.

More important, *The Ultimate Holiday Activity Guide* provides information and activities that will not only motivate your students, but reinforce the basic skills you've been teaching them. Plus, by connecting to the daily newspaper, these activities will help you bridge the gap between what's happening in the real world and what's happening inside school walls. ■



Before you get started:

- Contact the Newspaper in Education office to have classroom copies of the newspaper delivered on a regular basis. One newspaper per student is preferable.
- Become familiar with your newspaper, including the way it's laid out and the writing styles used.
- Review this guide to find out the types of activities and topics included. Keep in mind that the activities range from simple to complex; some might take longer than others to complete.
- Give students plenty of space when using the newspaper. They can sit at tables or on the floor.



About this guide

The holidays, observances, birthdays, and other days noted in this guide were compiled from a variety of sources, including *The Teacher's Calendar*, *Chase's Annual Events*, and *Call It a Day — A Holiday: A Calendar of Usual and Not-So-Usual Holidays*. It is not an all-inclusive list.

The federal holidays — those days established by Congress and observed by federal employees — are listed and accompanied by expanded information and activities, as are some of the common observances and religious holidays. Special months, including Black History and Women's History Month, as well as Newspaper in Education Week, are likewise set apart with background information and related activities.

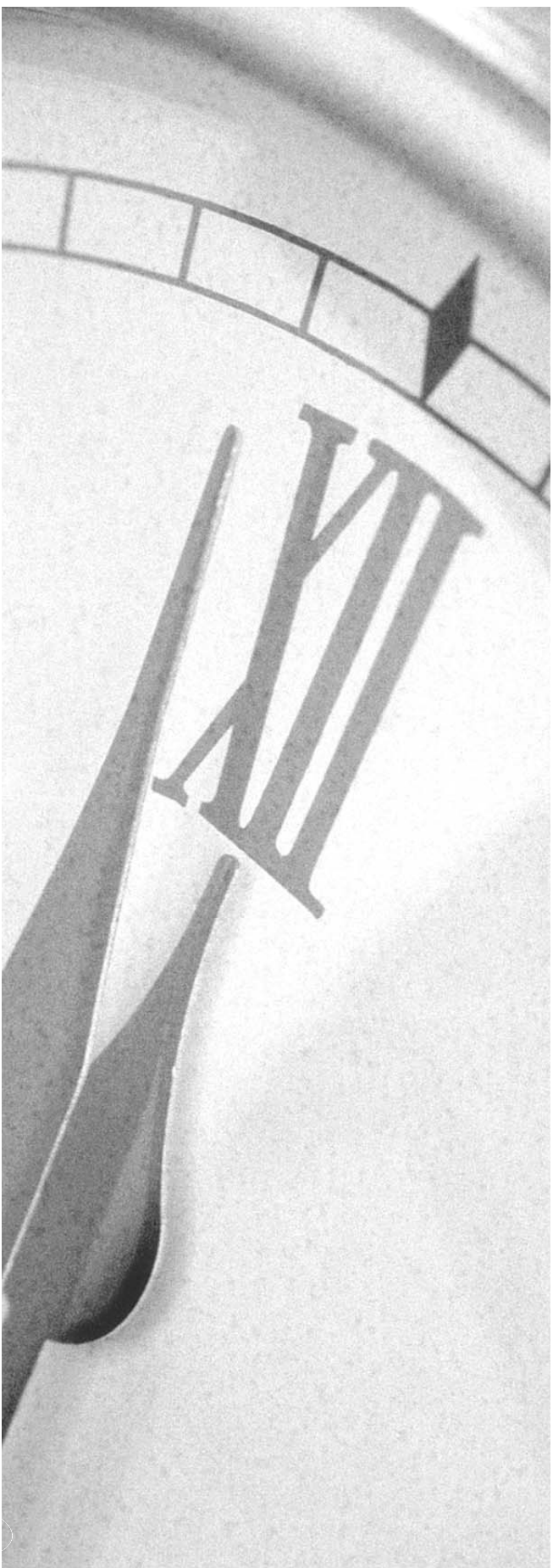
You will also notice a brief activity to go along with some of the other, lesser-known holidays.

Many of the holidays, especially those observed in other countries, might be unfamiliar to you and your students. Consider having students research the customs associated with the holidays or compare and contrast them to similar holidays observed in the United States. Additional resources are available at the public library and on the Internet.

For sponsored events, such as Be Late for Something Day (Sept. 5), you might want to check sources such as *The Teacher's Calendar* or *Chase's Annual Events* to find out more. Both publications provide information about many of those events, including contact names and addresses. ■

*** Holidays and events marked with an asterisk have varying dates.**

January



January is:

- It's OK to be Different Month
 - National Bath Safety Month
 - National Book Month
-

January

1

Z Day
Ellis Island opened (1892)

→ **New Years Day (federal)**

The custom of celebrating the first day of the year goes back to ancient times when people performed rituals to do away with the past and purify themselves for the new year. In Ancient Rome, for example, people gave each other gifts of branches from sacred trees or coins with pictures of Janus, the god of gates, doors, and beginnings and after whom the month of January was named.

In early America, colonists in New England celebrated New Year's Day by firing guns into the air and shouting, perhaps a precursor to the modern-day custom of making noise to ring in the new year. Today, we celebrate with such rituals as New Year's Eve parties, visiting friends and relatives, attending religious services, watching football games, and making resolutions.

- Talk to your students about calendars. Tell them that Jan. 1 is the first day of the year on the Gregorian calendar, a calendar that was adopted by most Western nations in the 16th century. Then divide the class into 12 groups and assign each group a month of the calendar to learn about. Ask the groups to create a pictorial calendar page representing their months. Have them use pictures and other graphics cut out of the newspaper to illustrate activities, events, and special days during the month. Bind the pages into a calendar to display throughout the school year.
- One ritual many Americans observe on New Year's Day is the making of resolutions. Talk about resolutions people might make and whether it's easy to stick to them. Then ask students to turn to the newspaper's comics and pick a character that needs help making a resolution. Have each student write down the resolution and create a "plan of action" for carrying it out.
- People in different countries celebrate New Year's Day in different ways. In Belgium, for example, children write their parents New Year's messages on decorated paper. In China, where the new year doesn't begin until sometime between Jan. 21 and Feb. 19, adults dress up as dragons. And in Japan, people decorate their front doors and visit shrines. Ask students to find a story in the main news section of the newspaper that originates in a country other than the United States. Then ask them to research that country's New Year's customs and share their findings with the class. Plan a class New Year's festival that incorporates some of those customs.
- Using words cut out of newspaper ads, have students write a cinquain to describe New Year's Day. Remind them that a cinquain is a five-line poem: Line 1 has one word; Line 2 has two words; Line 3 has three words; Line 4 has four words; and Line 5 has one word.

2

Good Luck Day
Haiti: Ancestor's Day
Russia: Passport Presentation Day

3

Tom Sawyer's cat's birthday
• Have students search newspaper ads for a gift for Tom's cat.

4

Sir Isaac Newton born (1643)

Trivia Day

- See who can find the most trivia facts on today's front page.

5

First woman governor elected (1925)

6

National Smith Day

7

First U.S. presidential election (1789)

Orthodox Christmas

8

National Joygerm Day

*Japan: Coming of Age Day (2nd Monday)

9

Panama: Martyrs Day

Philippines: Feast of the Black Nazarene

10

First big oil strike (Texas, 1901)

11

Banana Split Day

Nepal: National Unity Day

12

National Handwriting Day

13

Stephen Foster Memorial Day

First radio broadcast (1910)

- Have students rewrite a front-page newspaper story into a radio broadcast and perform it before the class.

14

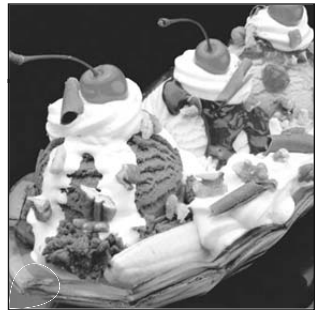
Ratification Day

- Ask students to write headlines for stories that might have appeared when the Revolutionary War ended.

15

Do Something

Kindness and Justice Challenge



➔ ***Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday** (3rd Monday, federal)

Since 1986, the United States has observed the birth of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. as a legal public holiday. It is always celebrated on the third Monday in January.

This day is set aside each year to honor King, the powerful black minister from Atlanta who was the main force behind the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. He was also a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize (1964) for leading non-violent civil rights demonstrations.

Despite his belief in peaceful demonstrations, King himself was often the target of violence. It ended King's life at the age of 39, when an assassin shot and killed him while he supported a strike by black garbage workers in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

- Even though slavery was officially abolished in 1865, Martin Luther King Jr. talked often about his desire for freedom for African-Americans. Ask students to discuss what they think King meant by "freedom." Then ask them to cut out words and pictures from the newspaper that illustrate "freedom" to use on a poster.

- Martin Luther King Jr. was a hero to many people — both when he was alive and after his death. Have students look through the newspaper for a present-day hero. Then have them make a list of the character traits that make that person a positive influence. Conclude by having them find a person featured in the newspaper who would not be a good role model. Allow them to discuss their thoughts.
- Civil rights, such as the right to free speech, are the freedoms a person has because he or she is a member of a civilized society. Ask students to imagine what it would be like to lose their civil rights. What freedoms would they have to give up? Now, ask students to look through the newspaper for a story about someone who is denied his or her civil rights. Have them discuss their thoughts in small groups.
- Provide students copies of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" Speech along with examples of news stories and editorials from the newspaper. Ask each to assume the role of reporter and pretend they were present when King gave the speech. Conclude the activity by having them write either a newspaper story about the speech or an editorial expressing opinions about what was said.

16 National Nothing Day
National Religious Freedom Day

17 Hat Day
Mexico: Blessing of the Animals at the Cathedral
Benjamin Franklin born (1706)

18 Pooh Day: A.A. Milne's birthday (1882)
• After reading one Milne's Pooh classics, ask students to write a newspaper-style review of the book.

19 Confederate Heroes Day

20 Brazil: Our Lord of the Happy Ending Festival

21 Ethan Allen born (1738)
Stonewall Jackson born (1824)

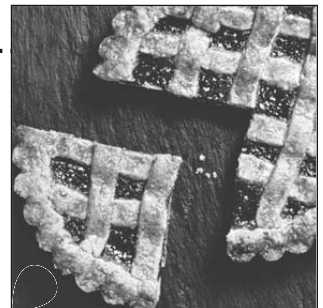
22 Answer Your Cat's Question Day

23 National Pie Day
• Have students create a pie chart using statistics gathered from the newspaper (number of used cars by year advertised in the classifieds, etc.)

24 National Compliment Day
National School Nurse Day
California gold discovery (1848)

25 A Room of One's Own Day

26 Australia: Australia Day
India: Republic Day



27

Vietnam War ended (1973)

- Have students look up past issues of the newspaper to find out more about this important date in history.

28

National Kazoo Day

29

National Puzzle Day



30

Purple Cow Day

- Purple cows? Sounds like something out of the comic strips. Ask students to create a newspaper comic strip about a purple cow.

31

McDonald's "invades" Soviet Union (1990)

➔ **Chinese New Year (cultural/religious)**

The traditional Chinese lunar year begins at sunset on the day of the second new moon following the winter solstice. It can begin any time from Jan. 10-Feb. 19 and a special celebration marked by fireworks, a lantern festival, and dragon parades. As part of the new year tradition, people also clean their houses, pay off debts, and give children money in red envelopes.

- Explain to students that the ancient Chinese used a lunar calendar that is grouped into sets of 12, with each year represented by an animal. The animals, called zodiac signs, are believed to have certain characteristics that are shared with people born under those signs. Have them compare and contrast the Chinese zodiac to the Western zodiac that people interested in astrology are familiar with. Point them to the Horoscope in your newspaper, for starters. Then allow them to do further research. For fun, ask students to write their own newspaper horoscopes for a specific day of the week.

Notes

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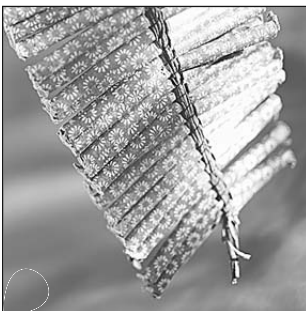
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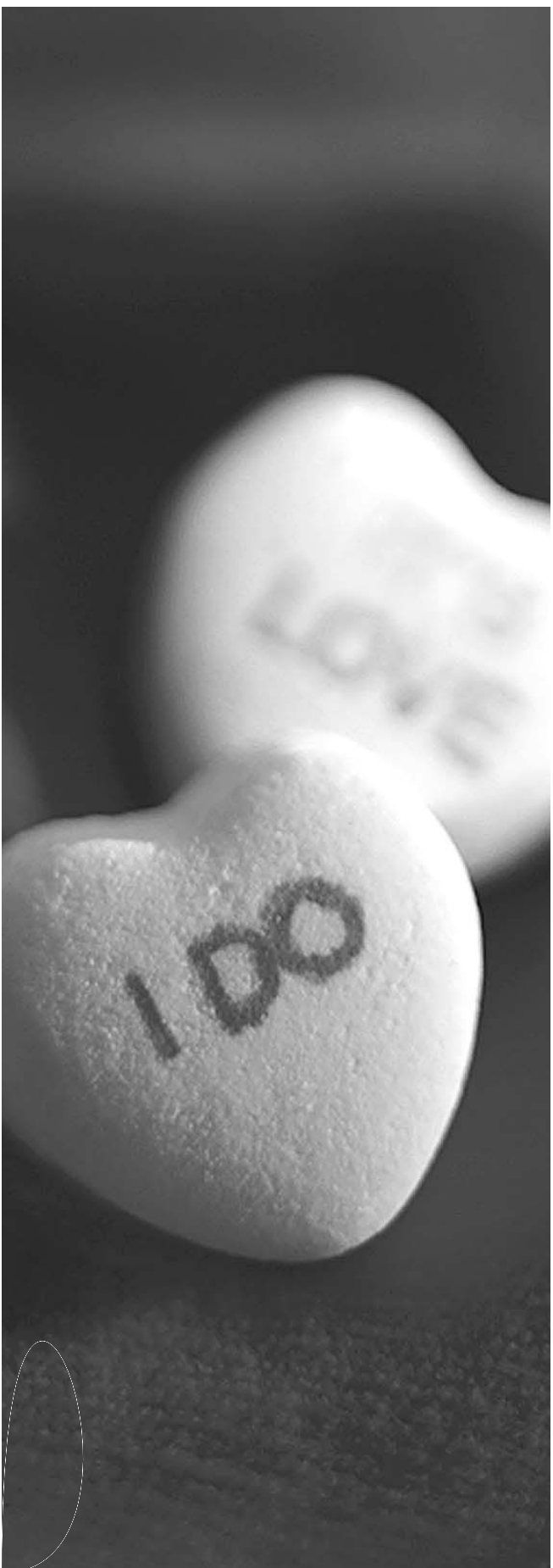
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February



February is:

- Black History Month
- American Heart Month
- Library Lover's Month
- National Cherry Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- National Sign Up for Summer Camp Month
- National Wild Bird Feeding Month

February

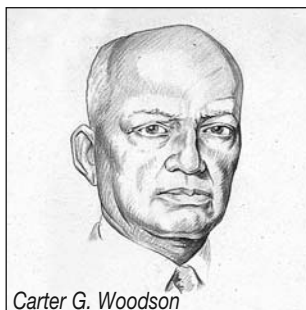
➔ Black History Month

As the son of former slaves, Carter G. Woodson knew firsthand that there was plenty to be told about the black experience in America. The problem was, no one was telling it at least in school.

Woodson, a teacher, was so troubled by the fact that there was no information on black history that he took it upon himself to start the American Negro Academy to study the history of blacks and, in 1926, established Negro History Week to celebrate their proud heritage.

That weeklong observance grew into Black History Month in February. Today, Black History Month not only provides Americans an opportunity to learn about the African-American culture and its contributions, but also about how all people, regardless of race, religion, or nationality, have a rightful place in the story of our country.

- Ask students to clip stories, photos, and other information from the newspaper that illustrate African-American contributions to our society. Discuss what life would be like without those contributions.
- Have students assume the role of newspaper reporter and pretend they were present when the first slave ship arrived in Jamestown. Have them conduct research about the event and write a newspaper story describing what they might have seen and heard. Be sure to have them use the five W's of newspaper writing: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Throughout U.S. history, many African-Americans dedicated themselves to making the world a better place. Have students look in the newspaper for pictures of or stories about African-Americans today who are making a difference. Ask them to describe the impact they have on society.
- Segregate your class into two groups — blue-eyed people and everyone else. The blue-eyed students will sit in the front of the class, go through the lunch line first, and get other privileges throughout the school day. At the end of the day, conduct a group discussion about how segregation makes people feel. Conclude by having each student write a letter to the editor expressing his or her thoughts.



Carter G. Woodson

1

National Freedom Day
Robinson Crusoe Day

2

Candlemas Day

Groundhog Day (cultural/religious)

Does the groundhog seeing his shadow on Groundhog Day really mean anything? Legend has it that if he sees his shadow when he awakens from his winter sleep, six more weeks of winter will follow. But if it's cloudy and the groundhog does not see his shadow, spring will arrive soon.

There is a grain of truth to the beliefs associated with the American tradition of Groundhog Day. Most of the time, mild, sunny weather in January and February will be followed by wintry weather in March. After bad weather in January and February, spring often comes early.

- Although most people don't take Groundhog Day seriously, the custom of predicting the arrival of spring on this day is based on a few traditional weather signs. For example, people have looked to the awakening of hibernating animals as one of the first signs of spring. Talk to your students about the weather and how we predict its conditions. Then, using the weather forecast reported in the newspaper, have them chart the predicted temperatures, precipitation, air pressure, and wind speed for a week. Next, have them chart each day's actual weather. How accurate were the forecasts? Allow discussion to follow.
- Talk about other ways we predict what's going to happen. Have students demonstrate understanding by finding newspaper examples of predictions. Ask: Are they based on science or on personal beliefs? Allow discussion to follow.

3

Japan: Bean-Throwing Festival

4

African-American Read-In
Switzerland: Homstrom

5

National Girls and Women in Sports Day
Weatherman's Day

- Have a local meteorologist speak to your class. Prior to the visit, instruct students to prepare a list of reporter's questions to ask him or her.



6

New Zealand: Waitangi Day

7

Eat a Pickle Day
China: Lantern Festival

8

Tu B-Shvat (Jewish Arbor Day)
Boy Scouts Day

9

Celebrate Your Own Way
• Ask your class to search today's newspaper for an important event or happening worth celebrating.

10

Malta: Feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck

11

Vatican City: Independence anniversary

12

Lost Penny Day

13

Get a Different Name Day

- Have students search the newspaper for a new name.

14

Ferris Wheel Day
Race Relations Day



➔ **Valentine's Day** (cultural/religious)

Valentine's Day, one of the most widely observed unofficial holidays, is a day in which people exchange gifts and cards to express their affection for one another. There are several beliefs about how Valentine's Day got started. Some people trace it to an ancient Roman festival called Lupercalia. Others believe the day was set aside to honor one or more saints of the early Christian church. Still others believe it originated from the old English belief that birds choose their mates on Feb. 14. Most likely, it was a combination of all three beliefs.

Many customs are associated with Valentine's Day, some that go as far back as the 1400s. Today, students throughout the country celebrate Valentine's Day with parties and the exchanging of greeting cards called valentines. It's also a day for couples to express their love to each other with gifts of flowers and candy.

- Valentine's Day is one of the most commercialized holidays in the United States today. To illustrate this, have students search the newspaper for ads with a Valentine's Day theme. Ask them to make a list of items advertised, then talk about the businesses that benefit most from this special day.
- Have students find a newspaper ad featuring Cupid, a symbol of Valentine's Day. Explain to them that Cupid was the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Then ask them to conduct further research on Cupid. Conclude the activity by having them write a mock newspaper story about Cupid making an appearance in your town this Valentine's Day.
- Send students on a newspaper scavenger hunt for words that express affection. See who can find the most words. You can also have them create a Valentine's Day message using words and/or pictures cut out of the newspaper.

15

Galilei Galileo born (1564)

16

Heart 2 Heart Day

17

National PTA Founder's Day

18

First cow flew in airplane (1930)

19

Japanese internment ordered (1942)



➔ **President's Day** (3rd Monday, federal)

President's Day officially observes the birthdays of two famous American leaders: George Washington (Feb. 22) and Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12). However, many Americans take this day to honor all those who have served the United States as president.

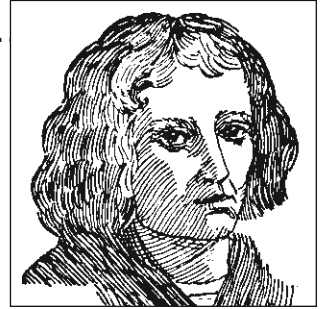
- Tell students that the office of the U.S. president is the most powerful elective office in the world, partly because he is the leader of the world's richest, most productive nation but also

because he wears many hats. He serves as chief executive, commander-in-chief, chief diplomat, chief lawmaker, and chief of state. Ask students to find out more about each of these roles. Then ask them to write a "Help Wanted" ad for president of the United States. Direct them to the classified section of the newspaper for examples of Help Wanted ads.

- Although a woman has never been elected president, nothing in the U.S. Constitution prevents women from serving in this capacity. Ask your class to discuss why a woman has never been president. Then tell them to search the newspaper for prominent women in America. Who do they think would make a good woman president?

19

Nicolas Copernicus born (1473)



20

Northern Hemisphere Hoodie-Hoo Day
Student Volunteer Day

- Tell students to look through the newspaper for at least five ways they could volunteer their time.

21

Bangladesh: Martyr's Day

22

George Washington born (1732)

23

W.E.B. Dubois born (1868)

24

Brazil: Carnival
Gregorian Calendar Day

25

Pierre Auguste Renior born (1841)
Germany/Austria: Fasching
Cyprus: Green Monday

26

Iceland: Bun Day

27

No Brainer Day
Dominican Republic: Independence Day



➔ ***Mardi Gras** (cultural/religious)

Mardi Gras is a colorful celebration that takes place on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent, a 40-day period of fasting and penitence in many Christian communities. In the United States, especially in New Orleans and other Southern cities, Mardi Gras has become a popular two-week festival of balls, parties, and parades leading up to Lent.

- Tell students that Mardi Gras means "fat Tuesday" in French. See if they know any other words that have French origins. Have them look through the newspaper for words they think might be French in origin. Ask them to look up the words in a dictionary or word origin book.
- Tell students that the custom of celebrating Mardi Gras was brought to the United States by French colonists. Talk about other groups of people who brought their holiday customs to this country, such as the Germans (Groundhog Day) and the Irish (St. Patrick's Day). Then ask students to think of a holiday custom they and their families cherish. Instruct them to write an editorial that might persuade others to adopt that custom for their families. Point them to the editorial pages of your newspaper for examples of how editorials are written.

March



March is:

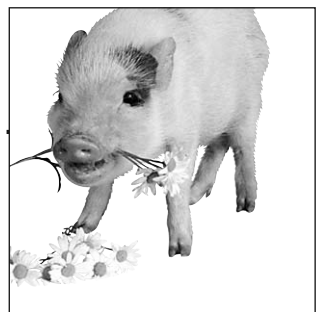
- American Red Cross Month
- Irish-American Heritage Month
- Music in Our Schools Month
- National Craft Month
- National Frozen Food Month
- National Nutrition Month
- National Umbrella Month
- National Women’s History Month
- Optimism Month
- Play the Recorder Month
- Youth Art Month

Also in March: Newspaper in Education Week

March

1

National Pig Day.....



2

World Day of Prayer

Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) born (1904)

- Dr. Seuss was famous for his use of invented words and silly names. Have students invent their own words or names using letters, words, or phrases cut out of the newspaper.

Read Across America Day

- Have students celebrate by reading and summarizing their favorite sections of the newspaper.

3

National Anthem Day

National Women’s History Month (cultural/religious)

Schools and communities have been celebrating March as Women’s History Month since 1987. As you plan your classroom celebration, consider creating a bulletin board display of women in history or publishing a Women’s History Month newsletter. You could also stage a play about a milestone in women’s history or sponsor a school debate to discuss women’s issues.

In addition, you can use the newspaper to demonstrate the effect that women have on society today, as well as illustrate the contributions women have made in the past. Consider the following activities:

- Encourage students to keep a scrapbook of newspaper stories about women who achieve success or make a difference in people’s lives.
- Tell students about Deborah Samson, a young woman who in 1782 disguised herself as a man to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Revolutionary War. Samson could have faced execution for lying to the army, but she served fearlessly. Now, have students find a story about a woman who exhibited bravery and courage in the line of duty — a military officer, policewoman, firefighter, etc. Allow them to share their stories and discuss whether a woman would have been allowed to do such a job 20, 50, or 100 years ago.
- Talk about women in government and the many ways they serve — as governors, senators, cabinet secretaries, and in other positions once held only by men. Compare the number of female political figures featured in the newspaper to the number of male political figures. Ask them to discuss their conclusions.

4

Old Inauguration Day

5

Eid al-Adha, Islamic Feast of the Sacrifice

6

Elizabeth Barrett Browning born (1806)

- In honor of this famous poet, have students write a poem about something covered in today’s newspaper.

→ ***NIE Week**

Newspaper in Education Week, the first full week in March, is a special week aimed at promoting the value of the newspaper as an educational resource. This is a great time to motivate your students and enhance basic skills with a variety of newspaper-related activities, such as:

- Conduct a newspaper scavenger hunt. Give students a list of specific items found in the newspaper and allow a set amount of time to find them. Examples of items to find: a movie they would like to see, an apartment for rent, a car they would like to buy, a score for a professional sports team, and a letter to the editor about a local issue.
- Talk about the roles of a newspaper: to inform, protect, influence, and entertain. Have students demonstrate understanding by finding stories, photos, and information that would fall under each of these important roles.
- Ask students to find a newspaper story featuring an interview with a prominent person. Have them analyze the answers and determine the questions the reporter might have asked.
- Engage students in a discussion about the things they like to read in the newspaper. Then ask them to find stories, pictures, advertisements, and other features that relate to their interests.

7

“Monopoly” invented (1933)

8

International Working Women’s Day

- Have students find a story about a working woman they admire.

9

**Purim (Jewish celebration)
Panic Day**

10

**Telephone invented (1876)
First U.S. paper money issued (1862).....**

- Send students on a scavenger hunt for pictures of money or money graphics in newspaper ads.



11**Johnny Appleseed Day****12****Girl Scouts Day**
*United Kingdom: Commonwealth Day (2nd Monday)**13****National Open an Umbrella Indoors Day**
• Have students find a story about someone who has had bad luck.**14****Moth-er Day (honors moth collectors)**
Albert Einstein born (1879)

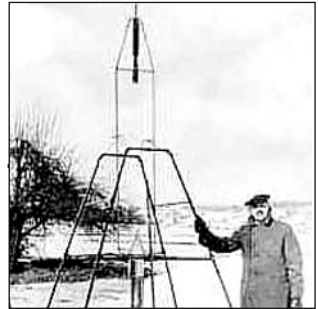
➔ National Nutrition Month

Each year, schools and organizations across the country observe National Nutrition Month in an attempt to teach basic nutrition and sound eating habits. It's sponsored by the American Dietetic Association's National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics and the ADA Foundation. Following are a few activities that will make your observance of this special month informative and fun:

- Tell students that food is many things to many people. Then have them look through newspaper advertisements that feature food. Ask: How is the food presented? As nourishment? As reward? As a way to impress someone? Then discuss the messages conveyed.
- Instruct students to use the newspaper's grocery/food ads to plan a meal that includes at least one serving from each of the five major food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid. Have them cut out pictures of the foods they choose and paste them onto a piece of paper.
- Explain that food supplies the body with nutrients — the substances we must have to stay healthy. The six major nutrients are water, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, and vitamins. Following discussion of these nutrients, have students cut out newspaper pictures of foods that represent each group.
- Invite the head of the school cafeteria to speak to your class about how school lunches are planned, including nutritional guidelines that must be followed. Students should prepare by writing 10 reporter's questions to ask. Then, following the talk, ask students to write a story based on their "interviews."

15**Ides of March**
Absolutely Incredible Kid Day

- Ask students to interview an "incredible kid" and write a newspaper-style story about him or her.

16**Goddard Day (1st liquid-fueled rocket flight)****17****Save the Florida Panther Day**

➔ St. Patrick's Day (cultural/religious)

In Ireland and Northern Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a religious holiday in honor of the patron saint of Ireland. But in the United States, it is primarily a secular, or non-religious, holiday in which people don green attire and lucky shamrocks in celebration of Irish heritage. Parades are also a big part of St. Patrick's Day in more than 100 U.S. cities.

- The shamrock plant with three leaflets — is a national symbol in Ireland. Have students find information on the shamrock, then, in the days leading up to St. Patrick's Day, have students collect shamrocks found in newspaper ads. Instruct them to make a shamrock poster.
- Ask students to pretend they are going on a trip to Ireland to celebrate St. Patrick's Day this year. First, have them do research on Ireland to find out what the weather is like and which places they would like to visit. Then have them "pack their bags" using items found in the newspaper's ads. Remind them to take raincoats!

18

Aruba: Flag Day

Michael Jordan returns to Bulls (1995)

- Have students look in the sports section for an athlete who would be missed if he or she retired today.

19

Swallows Return to San Juan Capistrano (St. Joseph's Day)

20

National Agriculture Day

- Have students look through the newspaper for stories, pictures, and other evidence of agriculture's importance in society.

21

Higan (Buddhist celebration of the equinox date varies)

Naw-Ruz (Baha'i New Year)

22

International Goof-off Day

23

Liberty Day

- Ask students to assume the role of reporter covering Patrick Henry's famous "give me liberty or give me death" speech in 1775. Have them write a news story as if they were there.

Near Miss Day

- Let students look through past newspapers for this date in 1989 when a giant asteroid nearly missed hitting Earth.

24

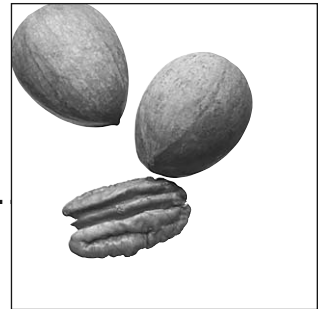
Harry Houdini born (1874)

25

Education and Sharing Day

Pecan Day

Greece: Independence Day



26

***Islamic New Year (date varies)**

Make Up Your Own Holiday Day

- Allow students to make up their own holiday, only this time have them take a classroom vote to determine the best idea. Have each create a newspaper ad to promote this day.

27

American Diabetes Alert

28

Czech Republic: Teacher's Day

29

Taiwan: Youth Day

30

Doctor's Day

No Homework Day

31

Eiffel Tower unveiled (1889)



April

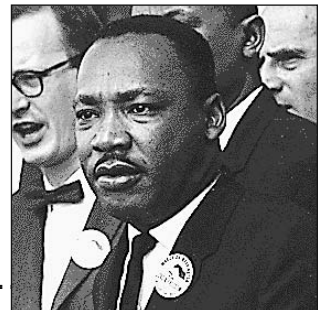


April is:

- Alcohol Awareness Month
 - Keep America Beautiful Month
 - Mathematics Education Month
 - National Child Abuse Prevention Month
 - National Humor Month
 - National Poetry Month
 - National Youth Sports Safety Month
 - National Poetry Month
 - School Library Media Month
 - Zam! Zoo and Aquarium Month
-

April

- 1** April Fool's Day
Check Your Batteries Day
- 2** Rama Navami (Hindu celebration)
International Children's Book Day
- 3** Don't Go to Work Unless It's Fun Day
- 4** Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated (1968).....
 - Have students write newspaper headlines that might have appeared when King was killed.
- 5** Taiwan: National Tomb-Sweeping Day
- 6** Scotland: National Tartan Day
- 7** World Health Day
 - Discuss good health habits, then ask students to create a series of newspaper ads promoting good health.



8

Home run record set by Hank Aaron anniversary

***Christian and Jewish Holy Days**

The Christian observances of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter, and the Jewish Passover are important religious holidays that usually fall in April. The Eastern Orthodox Easter, called Pascha, also falls into this time period.

- Spring holy days provide many opportunities for you to discuss such concepts as tolerance and respect for each other’s beliefs. Begin a discussion of tolerance by explaining to students that tolerance means to put up with practices and beliefs that are different from your own. Then ask them to find five items in the newspaper — stories, photos, comics .that are examples of tolerance or intolerance. Conclude by asking them to describe the effects of the acts of tolerance or intolerance in each example.
- Instruct students to find a newspaper photo that shows diversity among a group of people. Ask: What differences do you see between the people pictured? Have students discuss the level of tolerance or intolerance portrayed in the photo.

9

Winston Churchill Day

10

Salvation Army Founder’s Day
Commodore Perry Day

11

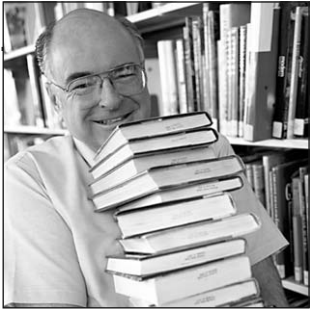
Thank You School Librarian Day

- Ask students to conduct a classroom interview of the school librarian. Then ask them to write a feature story about him or her.

12

National D.A.R.E. Day

- Talk about the skills kids needed to avoid drugs. Then have students look in the newspaper for activities and events that provide a safe alternative to drugs.



➔ **Mathematics Education Month**

No one needs to tell you how important math is. But it wouldn’t hurt to tell your students over and over again. That’s one of the reasons the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics created Mathematics Education Month.

- Start the fun with a math scavenger hunt through the newspaper. Give your students a list of math-related items to find, then send them searching through the pages of the newspaper. Examples: Find the average rainfall (snowfall) for your area this month, the average age of death in today’s obituaries, and the total amount of time for all movies listed in the movie listings. You can also take your scavenger hunt to the classified advertising section and send students searching for such things as the most expensive car, the highest-paying job, the average age of used cars listed for sale, and the number of jobs that require math skills.
- The sports section of the newspaper is filled with potential math problems — involving percentages. To help students understand percentages better, have them find team standings, won-loss records, or other statistics and create as many percentages as possible. Expand the activity by explaining that percentages allow us to compare numbers using a common language. In sports, they help us figure out how good a team or player is. Have the students compare percentages and draw conclusions about the “best” teams and players.

13

National Youth Service Day

- Talk about the benefits of public service. Then have students look in the newspaper for ways they could serve their community.

14

YMCA Healthy Kids Day

15

Income Tax Day

- Have students watch for news stories about this oft-dreaded day.

➔ **National Humor Month**

One of the most beloved sections of the newspaper is the comics, or funnies. Where else can you turn each day for a few moments of amusement with old friends?

In honor of National Humor Month, point your students to the comics for a unique lesson in humor and the value of laughter. Then guide them through the following activities for an up-close and personal look at this popular newspaper feature.

- Have students interview a parent or grandparent about comic strips from his or her childhood. They should find out if any of today's comic strips appeared when the interviewee was young and which of his or her favorites have disappeared. Following a discussion of the students' findings, have them look at the comics in the newspaper today. Ask: Which ones will still be here 20 or 30 years from now? Why? What might new comics in the future be like? Instruct students to work with a partner to think of ideas for comic strips of the future.
- Have students find comic strips that focus on: children, family life, animals, work, and sports/leisure activities. Then expand the activity by having them find newspaper stories about events or happenings in each those categories. Ask them to pick one story that would make a good comic strip.

16

Moment of Laughter Day

17

Verrazano Day (Founding of New York Harbor, 1524)

18

Pet Owners Independence Day.....

19

***Iceland: First Day of Summer (3rd Thursday in April)**



20

Holocaust Day (Yom HaShoah)

This is a day to memorialize the Jews who died during World War II at the hands of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and his war machine.

Recounting the Holocaust in the classroom — or in any setting — is not easy. But it is important. Whether you set aside one day, such as Holocaust Day, or an entire semester, a study of this tragic story allows you to teach not only an historical account of the Holocaust but also its present-day implications.

- In 1933, Hitler started his “reign of terror” in Germany by suspending individual freedoms, such as freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Help students understand the impact of losing such freedoms by having them go through the main news section of the newspaper and marking out all the stories that would NOT have been published without freedom of the press. Then have them scan the editorial pages and mark out all the opinion pieces that would NOT have been published without freedom of speech. Ask them to draw conclusions.
- Although it might seem unimaginable that another Holocaust could occur, there are still individuals and groups that are targets of racism, stereotyping, bigotry, discrimination, and, yes, extermination — all the negative actions that occurred during the Holocaust. Have students watch the newspaper for stories about so-called “hate crimes” that often result from these actions. Then instruct them to create a newspaper ad encouraging people to stop the violence. Display the ads on a classroom or school bulletin board.

21

Italy: Birth of Rome Kindergarten Day

22**Earth Day**

Every day is Earth Day for people who care about the environment. But for one day each year, people all over the world join forces to call attention to the beauty of the Earth and the ways in which we can protect it. Here are a number of activities to help you call attention to this special day:

- Talk about environmental problems in your community. Have students find a newspaper story about one of those problems. Ask them how they would solve the problem, then have them write a letter to the editor of the newspaper expressing their thoughts.
- Have students look through the newspaper's advertisements for products that are promoted as environmentally friendly or safe for the environment. What conclusions can they draw from their findings? Encourage discussion.
- Ask students to pick one product advertised in the newspaper and discuss the effects that product might have on the environment.
- Instruct students to look through the newspaper for items that can be recycled. Ask them to list the items and find out if each can be recycled in your community. Conclude by having students come up with their own ways to recycle the newspaper (use as wrapping paper, line the bird cage, etc.). Encourage them to be creative.

23**First public school in America opened (1635)**

Spain: Lover's Day

24**National Teach Children to Save Day**

- Ask students to find something advertised in the newspaper that they would be willing to save for. How long would it take to save enough money if they put away \$10 a week? A month?

25

Italy: Liberation Day

26National Playground Safety Day
Richter Scale Day**27****Babe Ruth Day**

- Have students search the newspaper for a modern-day sports hero who they think deserves his or her special day.



➔ **National Arbor Day**

Usually the last Friday in April, Arbor Day is a day in which Americans are encouraged to plant trees. It was begun by Julius Sterling Morton, a Nebraska newspaper publisher who wanted to promote the benefits of trees, which enrich the soil and conserve soil moisture. Today, most states observe Arbor Day, although some celebrate it at various times from December to March.

- Schoolchildren are often the most eager participants in Arbor Day festivities. This year, have them create further interest in Arbor Day designing a newspaper ad promoting the value of trees.

28***Astronomy Day (Saturday near 1st quarter moon)**

Israel: Independence Day

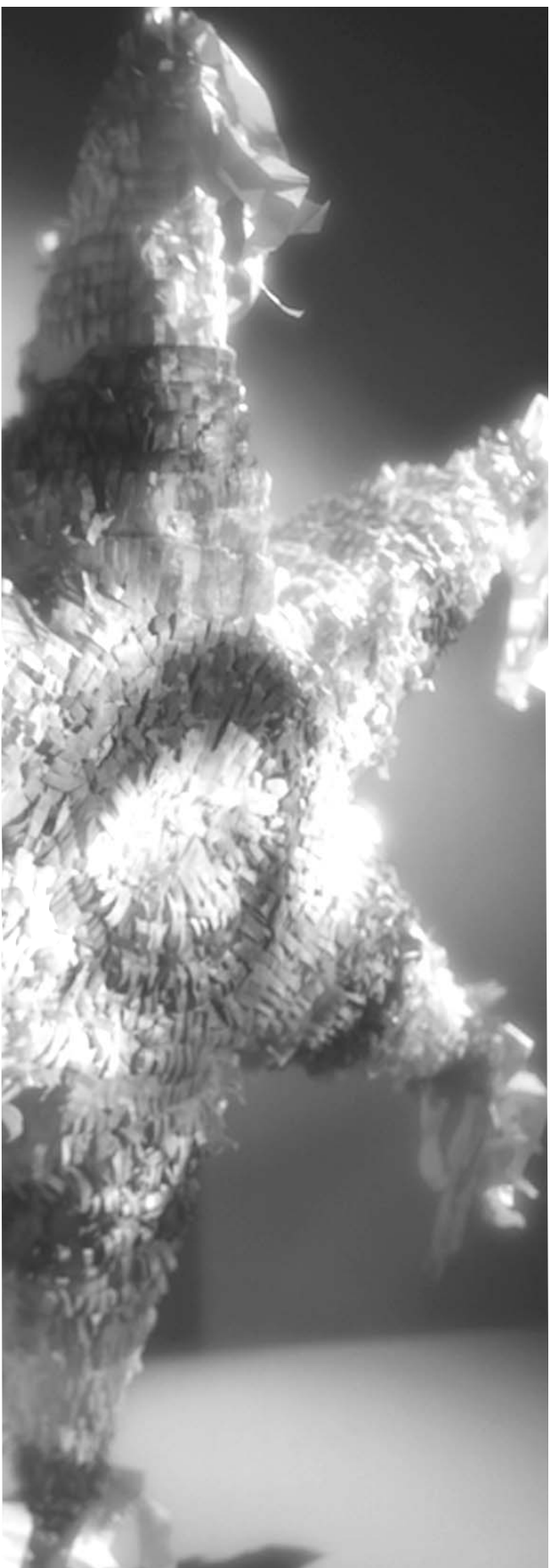
29

Zipper patented (1913)

30**National Honesty Day**

- Have students find a newspaper story about someone who is dishonest. Ask: What would have happened if, in the same situation, the person had been honest?

May



May is:

- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
 - Get Caught Reading Month
 - National Bike Month
 - National Egg Month
 - National Hamburger Month
 - National Salad Month
 - Older Americans Month
-

May

1

Law Day

- Have students compile a list of responsibilities of U.S. citizens, such as obeying the law. Then have them identify newspaper examples of these responsibilities in action. Discuss what happens when people fail to fulfill their responsibilities.

Lei Day

Loyalty Day

- Talk about loyalty as a character trait. Then have students find a comic strip character who is loyal.

Mother Goose Day

Save the Rhino Day

- Have students design a newspaper ad that calls attention to the rhino's plight.

School Principal's Day

- Ask students to write letters to the editor that tell the public about their principal's accomplishments.

➔ May Day (cultural/religious)

The first day of May marks the traditional arrival of spring and has been celebrated as a holiday in Europe since ancient times. It was often marked with spring festivals, dancing around the Maypole, and the gathering of flowers — traditions that continue today. In the United States, such May Day festivities are usually reserved for schoolchildren.

Since the 1880s, May Day has also been a workers' holiday, or Labor Day, in most countries, evolving from the struggle for the eight-hour work day. It resembles the U.S. Labor Day holiday in September.

- The Puritans, members of a religious and social group that spread to the United States when it was first settled, disapproved of the May Day festivities. Therefore, the holiday has never been celebrated with enthusiasm in the United States. Ask students to research this ancient holiday to find out why the Puritans disapproved of May Day. Then have them assume the identity of an American settler and write an editorial or letter to the editor that might have persuaded the Puritans to rethink their position and allow May Day festivities to proceed. Prior to the assignment, point them to the editorial pages in the newspaper for examples of persuasive writing.

2

Project Aces Day (Everyone exercises simultaneously)
Robert's Rules Day
Backwards Day

3

National Day of Prayer
World Press Freedom Day

4

National Weather Observer's Day

- Tell students to “observe” the weather forecast in today’s newspaper, then compare it with the actual weather conditions. How accurate was the forecast?

International Tuba Day

- Have students write a classified ad for a well-used tuba. Encourage them to include some of the ways the special tuba has entertained people.



➔ **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (cultural/religious)**

Americans of Asian descent make up one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States today, but they make up only a small percentage of the total population. Still, the influence of Asian Americans is visible throughout our culture, whether it's the popularity of the martial arts or America's love affair with Asian cuisine.

- Have students find and clip stories, photos, and other information from the newspaper that illustrate the Asian influence on American culture. Ask them to discuss what life would be like without those important contributions.
- Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, and Middle Eastern restaurants have popped up everywhere in the United States. Encourage students to visit an Asian restaurant in their community. Then have them write a newspaper-style review of their dining experiences. Before they start writing, have them look for examples of reviews in the newspaper.
- The Japanese form of poetry, called haiku, consists of 17 syllables arranged in three lines. The first line has five syllables; the second has seven, and the third has five. Ask students to write a haiku using words cut out of the newspaper. Or ask them to write a haiku about something reported in the newspaper.

5

Cinco de Mayo (cultural/religious)

Cinco de Mayo is a national holiday in Mexico, but it is also widely celebrated by Mexican-Americans in the United States. This festive holiday commemorates the Battle of Guadalupe in 1862 when Mexico defeated an invading French army led by Napoleon III.

- While most Mexican-Americans celebrate the traditional American holidays, many also continue to observe the major holidays of their homeland, such as Cinco de Mayo. Often, they do so with fiestas. Explain to students that fiesta means festival, a colorful celebration that can include fireworks, dancing, the ringing of bells, parades, and plenty of food and drink. Another Mexican tradition, the pinata, is also usually present. Pinatas, which are commonplace in many American celebrations, are usually made of papier-mâché and are shaped like animals. Find a papier-mâché “recipe” and old newspapers and help your students make a pinata for Cinco de Mayo. Display their work throughout the school.
- Discuss other ways Mexican-Americans have had an influence on American society and your community. Ask students to find and clip newspaper stories and photos that illustrate this influence. They can create a bulletin board display in honor of this important Mexican national holiday.
- Mexico is an important American neighbor. Things that happen in Mexico often affect the United States and vice versa. Have students look for a news story about an event or happening in Mexico that will have an impact on the United States. Allow them to discuss their conclusions. Then have them look for a U.S. story that might have an effect on Mexico.

6

Robert E. Peary born (1856)

- Ask students to research Robert E. Peary and find out his famous accomplishment. Then have them find a newspaper story about a person who, like Peary, did something first or accomplished a long-time goal.

7 Beaufort Scale Day

8 V-E Day
National Teacher Day
No Socks Day
World Red Cross Day

9 Russia: Victory Day
The Read-In

10 Trust Your Intuition Day

11 Eat What You Want Day

12 Limerick Day
• Explain limericks to students. Then have them write a limerick about something featured in today's entertainment section.

13 Mother's Day first observed (1907)
*Mother's Day (2nd Sunday)

14 "The Stars and Stripes Forever" Day

15 Peace Officer Memorial Day
National Bike to Work Day

16 Biographers Day

17 New York Stock Exchange established (1792)
• Ask students to find the stock listings in the newspaper and find five stocks on the NYSE. Have them chart the stocks' performance over a period of days. Extend the activity by having students make note of news events that might affect stock performance on the NYSE.

18 Visit Your Relatives Day
National Defense Transportation Day

19 Malcolm X born (1925)
*Armed Forces Day (3rd Saturday)

20 Eliza Doolittle Day

21 Canada: Victoria Day

22 National Maritime Day



23

Sweden: Linnaeus Day

24

Bulgaria: Enlightenment and Culture Day

25National Tap Dance Day
National Missing Children's Day**26**

Georgia: Independence and Restoration Day

27Amelia Jenks Bloomer born (1818)
Italy: Wedding of the Sea**28**

Savuot (Jewish Festival of Weeks)

➔ ***Memorial Day** (Last Monday, federal)

To many people, especially children, Memorial Day is a three-day weekend heralding the arrival of summer and the end of school. They often overlook the true meaning of the holiday.

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for those who died in service to our country. It was originally called Decoration Day because of the tradition of decorating the graves of the fallen men and women.

- Have students work in small groups to research a war in which American soldiers were killed. They should find out what caused the war and why the United States was involved. Have them draw conclusions about U.S. involvement and conclude by asking each student to write a newspaper opinion piece about whether the loss of lives was justified.
- Ask students to search the newspaper for news about U.S. servicemen and women on duty in other countries. Have them read the stories to find out if conflict is involved and whether those servicemen and women are at risk. What measures are being taken to minimize the risks? Again, have students draw conclusions about whether the risks are justified.
- Instruct students to create an acrostic using the word "patriotism." Have them cut letters out of the newspaper to spell "patriotism" and come up with a patriotic word for each letter.

29

John F. Kennedy Jr. born (1917)

30Trinidad: Indian Arrival Day
First American daily newspaper published (1783)**31**

Johnstown (Pa.) flood anniversary



June



June is:

- Cancer from the Sun Month
 - Children’s Awareness Month
 - Fireworks Safety Month
 - June is Turkey Lovers’ Month
 - National Candy Month
 - National Rose Month
 - National Safety Month
-

June

1

Bahamas: Labor Day
Stand for the Children Day
Repeat Day

2

Yell “Fudge” at the Cobras in North America Day

- To keep poisonous cobra snakes out of North America, everyone is asked to go outside and yell “Fudge!” Fudge apparently makes cobras gag and hearing the word makes them scat. Ask students to write a day-after news story about events that took place in a fictional North American city on this unusual day.

3

Chimborazo Day
Japan: Day of the Rice God

4

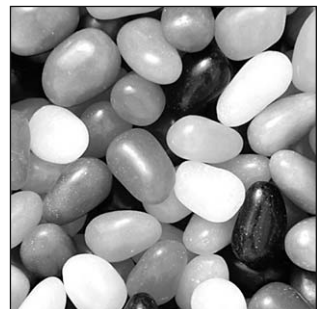
Finland: Flag Day
National Candy Month

It’s no wonder we pay homage to candy with its own special month. Americans buy 5 billion pounds of candy each year. That’s about 20 pounds per person! Create your own concoction of fun with these activities in honor of National Candy Month:

- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group invent a new candy, complete with a list of ingredients, a name, logo/packaging, and a newspaper ads series introducing it. Conclude by taking a vote to see which group’s candy has the best chance for sweet success.
- Have students conduct a schoolwide survey to find out their schoolmates’ Top 10 candy preferences. Instruct them to show their findings on a chart or graph, then summarize the information in the form of a press release. Submit their press releases to the school newspaper staff.
- Everyone knows that candy is made mostly of sugar. That’s why we love it so much. But in the interest of good health (and fewer cavities), have students go through newspaper ads to find a healthy alternative to candy.

5

World Environment Day



6 D-Day (1944)
National Yo-yo Day

7 First VCR introduced (1975)

8 Frank Lloyd Wright born (1867)
• In honor of this famous architect, have students search the newspaper for pictures of architecturally interesting buildings and houses.

9 Donald Duck's birthday (1934)
United Kingdom: Trooping the Colour

10 Portugal: Day of Portugal
*Race Unity Day (2nd Sunday)

11 King Kamehameha I Day (Hawaii)

12 Anne Frank born (1929)

13 Miranda Decision handed down (1966)

14 Flag Day (cultural/religious)

In memory of the day in 1777 when the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States, the president proclaims June 14 as Flag Day every year. Americans respond by displaying the flag and holding other patriotic demonstrations.

- The American flag is a symbol of national pride. Ask students to look through the newspaper for other American symbols. Have them make a poster with items cut out of the newspaper.
- When a flag is no longer usable, the most dignified way to destroy it is to burn it. But burning a flag that is still fit for display is considered a sign of political protest. It's also the subject of much debate. Ask students to research the issue of flag-burning. Then ask them to write a newspaper opinion piece — editorial, letter to the editor, editorial cartoon, column — that summarizes their thoughts about this issue.

15 Magna Carta Day

16 World Juggling Day

17 Iceland: Independence Day
*Father's Day (3rd Sunday)

18 National Splurge Day
• Tell students to pretend they've just inherited \$1 million, but they must spend it all in one day. Then have them to go "shopping" through newspaper ads for things to splurge on.



19 Juneteenth
Garfield's birthday (1978)
• Have your students search the newspaper for the perfect gift for Garfield.

20 Chicago Bulls claim third consecutive NBA championship (1993)
• Have students search the sports section for an extraordinary accomplishment.

21 Martha Washington born (1731)

22 National Forgiveness Day

23 National Columnist's Day
• Have students locate all the columnists in today's newspaper. Which one is their favorite writer?

24 Denmark: Mid-summer Eve
*America's Kids Day (4th Sunday)
Canada: Newfoundland Discovery Day

25 Battle of Little Big Horn (1876)

26 Pearl S. Buck born (1892)
International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

27 Happy Birthday to "Happy Birthday to You" (1859)



28 Monday Holiday Law passed (1968)

29 Peter and Paul Day

30 Last Hurrah for British Hong Kong (1997)
Congo: Independence Day

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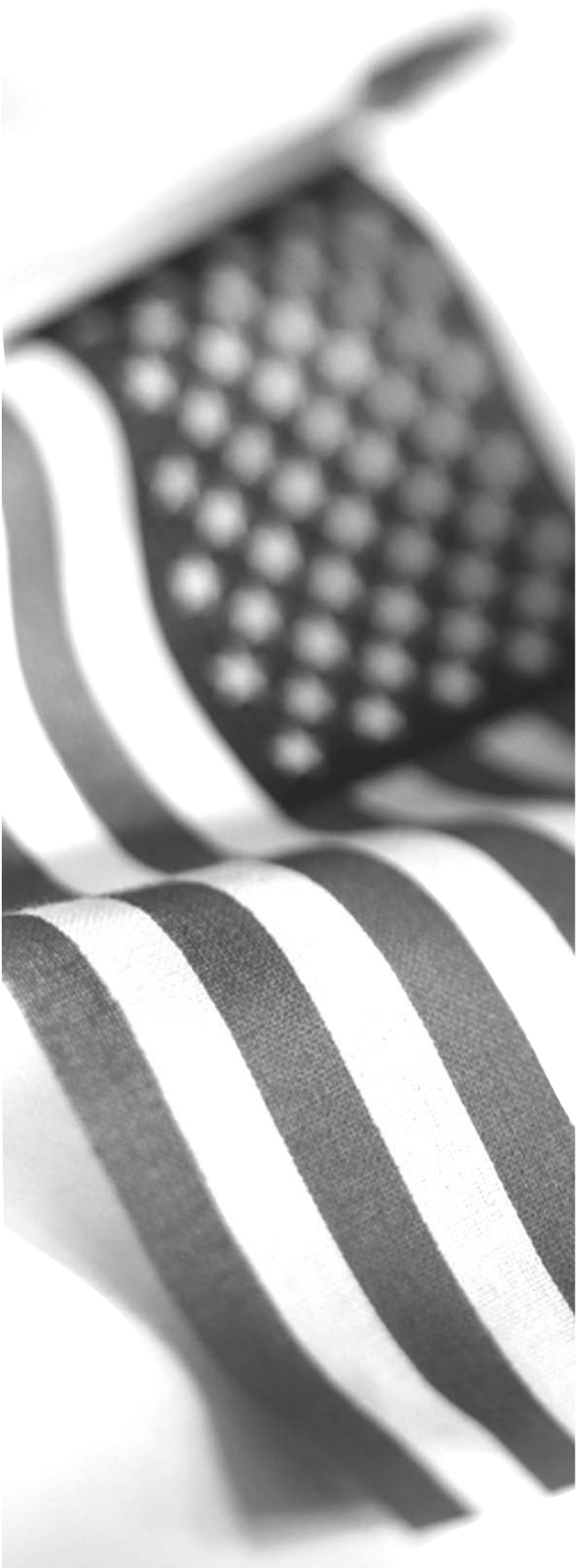
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July

July is:

- National Baked Bean Month
- National Foreign Language Month
- National Hot Dog Month
- National July Belongs to the Blueberries Month

July

1

Canada: Canada Day
First zoo established (Philadelphia 1874)
ZIP codes introduced (1963)

- Send students on a ZIP code scavenger hunt through the newspaper.
See who can find the most ZIP codes and the one for an area farthest away.

2

Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed
Caribbean Day

3

Air Conditioning Appreciation Days begins
Dog Days begins
Stay Out of the Sun Day

4

Independence Day (Fourth of July, federal)

It was on July 4, 1776, that the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence and officially declared the American colonies free and independent states. When the declaration was read, people responded by ringing bells, playing music, and rejoicing in the streets.

Today, America celebrates the Fourth of July in similar fashion. Fireworks, picnics, parades, patriotic concerts, and more each year help the nation commemorate its birthday.

- Ask each student to assume the role of a reporter living when the Declaration of Independence was created. Tell them they have the opportunity to interview one of the crafters of the declaration. Have them make a list of reporter's questions they would have asked that person. Then have them conduct research to get the answers to those questions. Conclude by having the students write a newspaper story based on their mock interviews.
- Have students watch for newspaper stories about festivities that celebrate the Fourth of July. Then have them analyze one of the events and the traditions behind it.
- Have students compare American lifestyles today to those of Americans living during the Colonial period. During their research, have them find five products or services advertised in the newspaper and to find out if those or similar products existed during the time when America was born.

5

Venezuela: Independence Day
Algeria: Independence Day

6

First Major League Baseball All-Star Game (1933)



7 Father-Daughter Take a Walk Together Day

8 Liberty Bell first rung (1776)

9 Argentina: Independence Day

10 Don't Step on a Bee Day
Clerihew Day

- To pay homage to the author after whom this day is named, Edmund Clerihew Bentley, tell students about the humorous verse he invented: the clerihew. It consists of two rhymes of unequal length. Then have them turn to their favorite section of the newspaper and write a clerihew about something featured.

11 Day of the Five Billion (1987)

- This is the day the five billionth person was born on Earth. Have students find out more about this baby, Matej Gaspar, born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, at 1:35 a.m. EST. Then have them write a newspaper birth announcement.

12 Etch-A-Sketch introduced (1960)

13 Japan: Feast of Lanterns

14 France: Bastille Day

15 Saint Swithin's Day
Respect Canada Day

16 Ida B. Wells born (1862)

- In honor of this early African-American journalist who spoke out against injustice, have students look on the editorial page for an opinion piece that speaks against something. Have them underline the facts in blue and opinions in red.



17 Disneyland opened (1955)

18 Presidential Succession Act passed (1947)

19 First women's rights convention (1848)

20 National Ice Cream Day
Moon Day

- On the anniversary of man's first landing on the moon, have students write newspaper headlines that might have appeared following this historic event in 1969.



21 Guam: Liberation Day

22 Spooner's Day

23 Virgin Islands: Hurricane Supplication Day

24 Pioneer Day

25 First test-tube baby born (1978)

26 Cuba: National Holiday (anniversary of revolution, 1953)

27 Take Your Houseplants for a Walk Day

28 Peru: Independence Day

29 Parent's Day

30 Paperback books introduced (1935)

31 U.S. Patent Office opened (1790)



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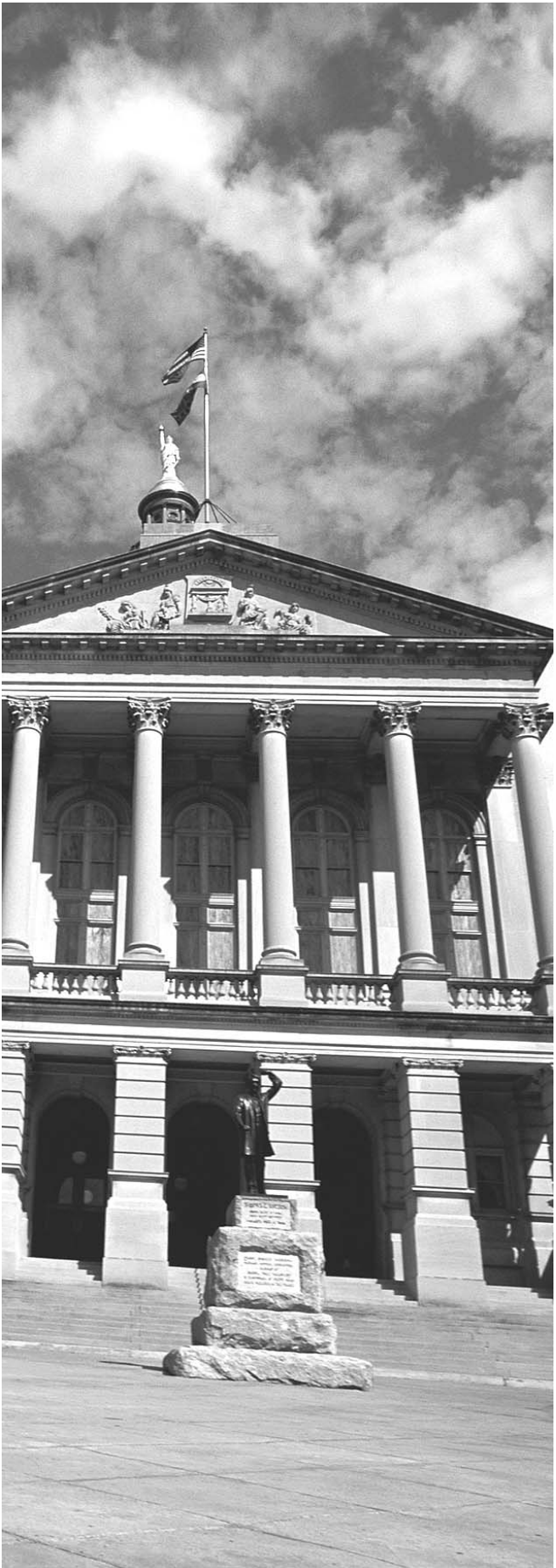
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August

August is:

- National Inventor’s Month
- National Back-to-School Month
- National Night Out

August

- 1 First U.S. Census (1790)
- 2 Declaration of Independence signed (1776)
- 3 Columbus sets sail (1492)



➔ National Inventor’s Month

Creating an awareness of the importance of creativity and inventiveness and of the impact that inventions have had on our lives is the goal of National Inventor’s Month, sponsored by the United Inventor’s Association of the USA. Begin your discussion of this topic by asking students to define “invention,” then follow up with these activities:

- Have students scan the newspaper for information about an invention — a new device, process, or product. For each invention they identify, have them describe whether it will help people live better, easier, and happier lives. Allow discussion to follow.
- Take a poll to determine students’ picks for the 10 most important inventions of all time. Then divide the class into groups of 10 and have each group research one of the inventions on the list. Conclude by having each student pretend that the invention he or she researched has disappeared from Earth and write a newspaper story about the disappearance and its effects.
- For an invention to be accepted, it must meet a need: an economic need, a military need, or a social need. To illustrate this point, have students identify 10 devices, processes, and products advertised in the newspaper. Then have them label each according to whether it meets an economic, military, or social need.
- Most inventions have benefited people. However, some have had harmful effects as well. For example, the automobile provides transportation but it also contributes to air pollution. Have students look through the newspaper for an example of an invention that has both positive and negative effects on society. Discuss.

- 4 Coast Guard Day
- 5 National Mustard Day
- 6 Hiroshima Day
*Sisters’ Day (1st Sunday)



7 Iceland: Shop and Office Workers' Holiday

8 Odie's birthday (1978)
• Ask students to scan the newspaper comics for other characters like Odie who are sidekicks to the main characters.

9 Veep Day
• This day commemorates the day in 1974 when Richard Nixon resigned the presidency and Vice President Gerald Ford took his place. Have students find a news story that mentions the current vice president. Discuss whether he would make a good president.

10 Smithsonian Institution founded (1846)

11 Frederick Douglass speech (1841)
• Ask students to find a newspaper story about someone who, like orator Frederick Douglass, champions the rights of others.

12 Thailand: Birthday of the Queen

13 International Left-Handers Day.....
• Have students switch handedness. Have them write a passage from the newspaper using their "other" hands.

14 China: Festival of Hungry Ghosts

15 Chauvin Day

16 Bennington Battle Day

17 Davy Crockett born (1786)

18 1st mail-order catalog published (1872)

19 National Aviation Day
• Have students write newspaper headlines that might have appeared following five major events in aviation history.

20 Hungary: St. Stephen's Day

21 Hawaii: Admission Day
• Have students assume the role of newspaper editor in 1959 and write an editorial in support of adding Hawaii as the 50th state.

22 Be An Angel Day.....



23 First man-powered flight (1977)

24 Italy: Vesuvius Day

25 The Wizard of Oz first released (1939)

26 Women's Equality Day

27 Beginning of "America Goes Back to School"
*Belgium: Wedding of the Giants (4th Sunday)

28 Radio commercials first broadcast
• Ask students to work in small groups to create a 30-second commercial from information found in a newspaper ad.

29 "According to Hoyle" Day

30 Turkey: Victory Day

31 Trinidad and Tobago: Independence Day



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September

September is:

- Children’s Good Manners month
- Library Card Signup Month
- National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
- National Honey Month
- National Piano Month
- National School Success Month

September

1

National History Day

- It has been said that today’s news is tomorrow’s history. Have students find a newspaper story about something they think will make history. Have them write a summary of the story as it might one day appear in a history book.

2

V-J Day (Victory in Japan)

3

Treaty of Paris signed (1783)

*Labor Day (1st Monday, federal)

Labor Day is the day we celebrate America’s working men and women and their social and economic achievements. Although some labor groups sponsor celebrations, Labor Day for most people is a day of rest and recreation. It also has become a symbol for the last day of summer.

- Students will enjoy learning about the many jobs held by America’s workers. Start by pointing them to the classified ad section of the newspaper. Have them identify as many different jobs listed as possible within a set amount of time.
- Explain to students that the American labor force is made up of four occupational groups: white-collar workers (clerical, professional and technical, sales, managers), blue-collar workers (operatives, craftworkers), service workers (private household, etc.), and farm, forestry, and fishing workers. Next, have students categorize the help wanted ads in the newspaper according to these occupational groups. What conclusions can they draw about jobs in their community?
- Ask each student to write a classified ad for his or her “dream job.”
- Allow students to do some career matchmaking for their favorite comic strip characters. Remind them to consider the characters’ traits, likes and dislikes, and other factors that might determine their career choices. As an extension activity, have students write letters of recommendation for their characters.

4

Newspaper Carrier Day



5

Be Late for Something Day

6

Swaziland: Independence Day

7

Grandma Moses Day
Neither Snow Nor Rain Day

- This is the anniversary of the opening of the New York Post Office Building in 1914. The building contained the words that have become the U.S. Postal Service’s motto: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” Have students search the newspaper for other mottos. Then have them write a motto for their school.

8

International Literacy Day
*Federal Lands Cleanup Day (1st Saturday after Labor Day)

9

Colonies become United States (1776)

10

National Grandparents’ Day



11

911 Day
• Discuss what constitutes an emergency. Then have students look through the newspaper for examples of emergencies. Would they have called 911 in those situations?

12

*Korea: Chusok (15th day of 8th lunar month)
*Far East: Moon Festival (15th day of 8th lunar month)
Video Games Day
• Have students write a newspaper-style review of their favorite video game.

13

“Star-Spangled Banner” inspired (1814)

14

First solo transatlantic balloon crossing (1984)

15

National Hispanic Heritage Month (thru. Oct. 15, cultural/religious)

- Each year, from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, schools, organizations, and entire cities and states celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. It’s one way for Americans to recognize the many contributions that people of Hispanic origin have made to our country.
- Throughout the month, have students clip stories, photos, and other information in the newspaper that illustrates the Hispanic-American contributions to society and your community.
 - Though they come from varied backgrounds, Hispanic-Americans share common bonds that have long united them. The most common is the Spanish language. Tell students that Hispanic-Americans have greatly influenced our country through their language. Many American place names, for instance, have Spanish origins, including: Arizona, California, and Los Angeles. Then have students scour the newspaper for words they think are derived from the Spanish language. Hint: Many Spanish words end with a vowel and place names often include San, Santa, Rio, and Los or Las.
 - Discuss the subject of stereotypes. Talk about whether Hispanic-Americans have been stereotyped on television and in the movies. Ask: How are stereotypes harmful? Then have students write a letter to the editor outlining their thoughts.

16

Mayflower Day
Mexico: Independence Day
National Kidsday
National Play-doh Day

17

Citizenship Day (cultural/religious)

This day honors all native-born American citizens of voting age, as well as naturalized foreign-born citizens, and is intended to help all appreciate the privileges and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.

- Discuss the qualities of a good citizen. Then give students the newspaper and have them find stories about people who exemplify good citizenship. Students can share their stories orally or write their thoughts in brief reports.
- Ask your class to compile a list of rights (freedom of speech, freedom of religion) guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Using the newspaper, have students identify examples of those rights in action. Discuss how life would be different without them.
- Now, have students compile a list of responsibilities of U.S. citizens (voting, paying taxes). Have them identify newspaper examples of those responsibilities in action. Discuss what happens when people fail to fulfill their responsibilities. Extend the activity by having the students write an editorial about the importance of being a responsible citizen.

18

Chile: Independence Day

19

Evaluate Your Life Day
International Day of Peace and Freedom

20

21

National Student Day

22

Higan (Buddhist celebration)
Ice cream cone invented (1903)

23

National Hunting and Fishing Day

24

Hong Kong: Birthday of Confucius
South Africa: Heritage Day

25

First American newspaper published (1690)

- The first American newspaper was also the shortest-lived. *Public Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick* appeared once before the government ordered it to cease publication because officials didn't like some of the things it printed. Ask students to go through today's newspaper and circle stories that government officials might not like. Talk about freedom of the press and how our constitution ensures newspapers the right to publish the news.

26

Shamu the whale's birthday

27

Ancestor Appreciation Day



October



October is:

- Child Health Month
- Computer Learning Month
- Diversity Awareness Month
- Family History Month
- International Dinosaur Month
- Month of the Young Adolescent
- National Caramel Month
- National Crime Prevention Month
- National Pasta Month
- National Popcorn Poppin' Month
- National Roller Skating Month
- National Stamp Collecting Month
- Polish-American Heritage Month

October

- 1** **National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence**
 - Have students create a newspaper ad encouraging kids to sign the “Student Pledge Against Gun Violence,” a promise to never bring a gun to school or to use a gun to settle a dispute.
- 2** **“Peanuts” comic strip debuts (1950)**
Child Health Day
 - Ask students to search the newspaper for examples of healthy foods and healthy ways to spend their time.
- 3** **Korea: National Foundation Day**
- 4** **National Walk Our Children to School Day**
- 5** **Tecumseh dies (1813)**



6**National German-American Day****7****Cabbage Patch Kids debuted (1983)*****National Frugal Fun Day (1st Saturday)**

- Instruct students to search the newspaper for fun things to do that are free or cost less than \$5.

8**National Children's Day**

- Have students find a newspaper comic strip that centers on children. Ask them to pick one strip and identify the main idea.

➔ ***Columbus Day (2nd Monday, federal)**

Christopher Columbus is one of the most famous names in history. When he voyaged across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, his discoveries changed the world forever.

In honor of Columbus' landfall in the "New World" on Oct. 12, 1492, Americans celebrate the second Monday in October as Columbus Day. It was first celebrated in 1792 but didn't become a legal federal holiday until 1971.

- Tell students to assume the role of a reporter at the site of Columbus' famous landing on the island of San Salvador. Have them write a short story about the landing and Columbus' first meeting with the natives. Remind them to include the five W's of newspaper writing: who, what, when, where, and why.
- When Columbus lived during the 15th century, people had no way of knowing about other countries and the people who lived there. They waited for months to hear about Columbus' voyage. Today, of course, newspapers and other media keep us up to date about what's happening in the world. A dateline, which appears at the beginning of a news story, tells us where a story comes from. Have students look in today's newspaper for stories from countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and other faraway lands. Allow them to share one story with the class.
- Was Columbus a hero or a villain? That's the subject of much debate, even today. He was a brave and able seaman whose discoveries led to the world we know. But his treatment of the Native Americans he encountered along the way has been criticized. Allow discussion on this topic, as well as additional research. Then have the students write a newspaper editorial titled: Columbus: Hero or Villain?

9**Canada: Thanksgiving Day*****Yom Kippur (Jewish day of atonement; falls in September or October)****Leif Erikson Day****10****Double Tenth Day**

- Today is the 10th day of the 10th month. Have students find and circle all newspaper numbers that are multiples of 10.

11**General Pulaski Memorial Day****12****Mexico: Day of the Race****13****White House cornerstone laid (1792)**

- Have kids visit the White House Web site at www.whitehouse.gov/WH/kids/html/home.html to find interesting facts about the White House. Then have them write a story about what it would be like to live there.

**14****Sukkot begins (Jewish festival of thanksgiving)****Winnie the Pooh published (1926)**

15

My Mom is a Student Day
White Cane Safety Day
National Grouch Day

- In honor of grouches, have students each find a comic strip character whom they consider a grouch and write a character profile of him or her.

16

World Food Day
Dictionary Day

- Ask students to find 10 words in the newspaper that they are unfamiliar with. Then ask them to write a definition for each word, based on its usage in the newspaper. Conclude by having them look up the words in the dictionary for the official definition.

17

Black Poetry Day

18

Shel Silverstein born (1932)

19

Yorktown Day

20

Guatemala: Revolution Day

21

Taiwan: Overseas Chinese Day

22

Holy See: National Holiday
Simchat Torah (Jewish holy day; concludes Sukkot)

23

TV Talk Show Host Day

24

United Nations Day

- One of the United Nations' primary responsibilities is to keep peace throughout the world. Have students make note of world conflicts and disagreements as reported in the newspaper. Which ones do they think might require U.N. peacekeepers?

25

Pablo Picasso born (1881)

26

Mule Day

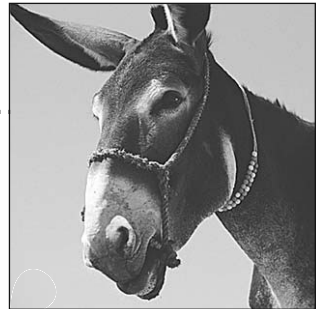
27

Navy Day

28

Internet created (1969)
Make a Difference Day

- Ask students to look in the newspaper for a story about someone who is making a difference in the world.



29

Stock market crashed (1929)

- Two animals are often associated with the stock market: bulls and bears. Have students define these terms as they relate to the stock market. Then have them read the stock market summary in today’s newspaper. Was investor behavior bullish or bearish?

30

Emily Post born (1872)

- In honor of this famous etiquette expert and newspaper columnist, have students find a comic strip character who has bad manners. Then instruct them to write letter of advice on proper behavior.

31

National Magic Day

Halloween (cultural/religious)

Halloween, or All Hallow’s Eve, is an ancient celebration that can be traced to the early Catholic Church and “All Saints Day,” an observance in honor of saints. However, in the 5th century B.C., in Celtic Ireland, people began celebrating All Saints Day as the Celtic New Year and developed customs designed to ward off spirits who came back to Earth that day looking for living bodies to possess.

Halloween was brought to America in the 1840s by Irish immigrants fleeing their country’s potato famine. Although the belief in spirit possession had waned, many of the customs that had developed over the years were still being observed. One custom — dressing up like ghosts and goblins and “begging” for candy and gifts — remains a popular Halloween tradition today.

- Tell students to search the newspaper for ads with a Halloween theme. Have them cut out pictures and graphics that they think best symbolizes this age-old holiday. They can use their cutouts to make a poster or bulletin board display.
- Ask students to talk about Halloween safety. Then ask them to create a newspaper ad to encourage trick-or-treaters to be careful this year.
- Have students search the newspaper for a real or fictitious character to dress up as this year. Ask each to describe in writing or draw the costume he or she would wear.

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November



November is:

- Aviation History Month
- International Drum Month
- National American Indian Heritage Month
- Peanut Butter Lovers' Month

November

1

All Saints' Day
Mexico: Day of the Dead
National Family Literacy Day
National Authors' Day

2

Daniel Boone born (1734)

3

Sandwich Day
• Have students write a newspaper-style review of their favorite sandwich.

4

Mischief Night (England, Australia, New Zealand)
*Sadie Hawkins Day (1st Saturday)

5

England: Guy Fawkes Day

6

Saxophone Day

7

Roosevelt elected to 4th term (1944)
*Election Day (1st Tuesday after 1st Monday in even-numbered years that can be divided by four)

8

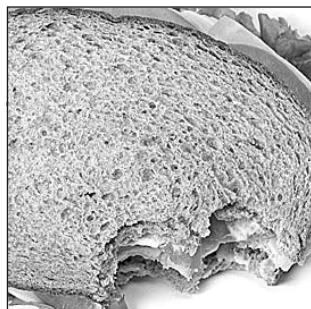
National Young Reader's Day
• Include the newspaper in your reading plans!

9

Berlin Wall opened (1989)

10

"Sesame Street" premiere (1969)



11

Veterans Day (federal)

The men and women who have served in the United States armed forces have their own special day each year. Veterans Day, which coincides with the anniversary of the end of World War I in 1918, is a time to celebrate American veterans' patriotism and willingness to sacrifice their lives for our country.

At first, Veterans Day was called Armistice Day and was set aside to honor veterans of World War I. It was changed in 1954 to include veterans of all wars. In 1968, with the passing of the Uniform Holiday Bill, Veterans Day was slated to be celebrated on the fourth Monday in October. That move proved so unpopular that the official Veterans Day holiday was returned to Nov. 11 in 1975.

- As Veterans Day approaches, watch your newspaper for stories about local veterans. Ask students to read the stories and underline quotes that illustrate pride, patriotism, and love for our country.
- Invite a veteran to speak to your class about his or her experiences. Prior to your guest's visit, have students make a list of reporter's questions to ask and, afterward, write a story based on what they learned.
- Have students look through the newspaper for stories about world conflict. Ask: Are United States servicemen or women involved in any way? If so, ask students to identify the U.S. role in the conflict.

12

Elizabeth Cady Stanton born (1815)

13

Robert Louis Stevenson born (1850)

14

National American Teddy Bear Day



15

National Educational Support Personnel Day

- Have students interview and write a story about a support person on the school's staff.

16

International Day for Tolerance
*Great American Smokeout (3rd Thursday)

17

World Peace Day

18

Mickey Mouse's birthday (1928)

19

Puerto Rico: Discovery Day

20

Universal Children's Day

21

World Hello Day

- Ask students to find five newspaper datelines from countries whose people speak a language other than English. Then have them conduct research to find out how to say "hello" in each country's native language.

22

What Do You Love About America? Day

National Stop the Violence Day

- Using the library or online newspaper archives, have students look for a major act of violence that occurred on this date in 1963.

23

Japan: Labor Thanksgiving Day

***Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday, federal)**

Thanksgiving Day is what its name implies: a day to give thanks for the blessings we receive during the year.

Originally, this day was set aside to give thanks for a plentiful harvest. But modern Thanksgiving observances not only celebrate Earth's bounty but also all good fortune. Families gather together for big dinners and reunions.

Surprisingly, the first Thanksgiving observance did not involve food. But less than a year after the Plymouth colonists settled in America, they held a three-day harvest festival complete with ducks, geese, clams, plums, leeks, cornbread, and, yes, turkey.

- Thanksgiving Day is a day normally associated with food — lots of it. Have students scan the newspaper's grocery ads and identify the traditional Thanksgiving Day foods. Talk about how some of those foods, such as cranberries, became "traditional" because of their availability for the first Thanksgiving observances. Discuss whether those foods are produced or grown locally today or are shipped from other parts of the country. Conclude by asking them to plan a Thanksgiving Day menu that includes only items locally grown or produced.
- Talk about food as symbols. For example, Indian corn is often used as decoration during the Thanksgiving season because the Native Americans taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn. The Pilgrims survived their first harsh winter in America thanks to the corn harvest. Illustrate this concept by having students research other Thanksgiving foods to see if they are symbolic. Then have them search newspaper ads for foods that are used to stand for or represent something else. Ask them to share their examples with the class.
- Today, Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the winter gift-giving season. In fact, the day after Thanksgiving is traditionally the busiest shopping day of the year. Have students watch the newspaper on the days leading up to Thanksgiving. Have them chart the number of stores that have scheduled after-Thanksgiving sales and specials. Extend the activity by having each student pretend he or she is going on a shopping excursion the day after Thanksgiving. They can "shop" for a specific item(s), comparing prices in the newspaper. Or they can map out their day by pinpointing which stores they want to go to and how to get there. They can do this individually or in small groups.

24

Buy Nothing Day

25

Speed limit reduced to 55 (1973)

26

First U.S. holiday proclaimed by president (Thanksgiving, 1789).....

27

28

Panama: Independence from Spain holiday

29

Louisa May Alcott born (1832)



30

Mark Twain born (1835)

Ramadan (cultural/religious)

Ramadan is the Islamic month of fasting that begins on Ramadan 1, 1421, on the Islamic lunar calendar. The date varies in the United States.

During Ramadan, Muslim adults of sound body and mind may not eat or drink from dawn until sunset. They cannot inhale tobacco smoke or perfume and are not supposed to swallow their own saliva. The fast is broken by a light meal called the iftar, which usually includes dates and water.

Ramadan is also a time for special prayers and recitations from the Quran, the holy book of Islam. At the end of the month, Muslims celebrate with a great festival.

- Islam is the world’s second-largest religion, next to Christianity. Muslims live in every country, including the United States. More than half of the world’s Muslims live in South and Southeast Asia. About one-fourth of them live in the Middle East. During Ramadan, encourage students to watch the newspaper for news from Asia and the Middle East. Have them determine if the news being reported is connected to this special religious observance. What conclusions can they draw?
- Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Faith in the Islam religion. It is believed to help people achieve spiritual and physical purification and self-discipline. Tell students about the other four pillars: shahada (the act of bearing witness), prayer, almsgiving, and pilgrimage. Then invite a Muslim to speak to your class about the Five Pillars. Have the students prepare by making a list of reporter’s questions to ask. Have them write a newspaper-style story that explains this component of Islam.

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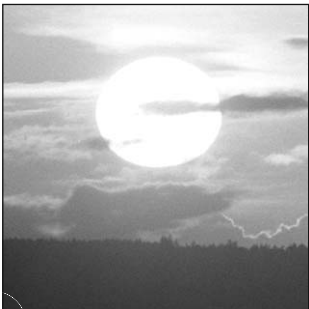
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December



December is:

- Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- Universal Human Rights Month

December



1 World AIDS Day
Rosa Parks Day

2 Pan-American Health Day

3 International Day of Disabled Persons

4 International space station launched (1998)

5 Walt Disney born (1901)
Bathtub Party Day

6 St. Nicholas Day

- Widely observed in Europe, St. Nicholas Day honors the patron saint of children. St. Nicholas became the now-familiar Santa Claus in the 1800s. Have students compare and contrast the two beloved figures. They can present their findings in a newspaper feature story, a comic strip, or advertisement.

7 Pearl Harbor Day

- Ask students to research the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to find out the five W's (who, what, when, where, and why) of this historic event.

8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic)
Bodhi Day (Buddhist celebration)

9 Clarence Birdseye born (1886)

10 Human Rights Day

- Discuss the differences between a "right" and a "privilege." Have students search the newspaper for examples of both.

National Children's Memorial Day



11 UNICEF founded (1946)

➔ Hanukkah (cultural/religious)

Hanukkah is the Jewish Feast of Lights, or Feast of Dedication. It begins on the evening of the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev (about December) and lasts eight days.

Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees (led by Judah) over the Hellenistic Syrians in a famous revolt. While the victory itself was considered miraculous, Jewish legend provides another explanation for Hanukkah rituals, the most important of which is candle lighting.

According to legend, when the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, it had to be rededicated. But there was only one jar of sacramental oil ... enough for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, from which the eight days of Hanukkah was derived.

- The Jews observe many traditions during Hanukkah, including eating foods fried in oil, playing the dreidel game, and giving gifts or “gelt” (money) to children. Ask students to compare and contrast Hanukkah to Christmas or another winter holiday. Have them make a comparison chart illustrated with pictures and graphics cut out of the newspaper.
- The menorah is a special candleholder that holds nine candles; one for each of the eight days of Hanukkah and a ninth candle called the shamas. The shamas is lit every night and used to light each of the other candles, one each day. Send students on a search for menorahs in newspaper advertisements. Have them make a menorah poster with information about this important Jewish ritual.
- Have students find out how the dreidel game is played. Then have them write a how-to story for the school newspaper. Ask: Can you think of games we play in observance of other holidays? Discuss.

12

Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

- This day honors the Roman Catholic patron saint of Mexico and other Latin American countries. Tell students about the legend of Guadalupe. Have them watch the newspaper for stories from Mexico and the annual pilgrimages to the shrine for Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Poinsettia Day

13

Sweden: Santa Lucia Day

14

Halcyon Days begin (Dec. 14-18) South Pole discovered (1911)

15

Bill of Rights Day

- This is the day the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution — known as the Bill of Rights — became effective. Discuss the 1st amendment: Freedom of the Press. Have them name countries in the news today that lack this freedom. Ask: Do they lack other freedoms as well? Have them compare societies that guarantee a free press with societies without such guarantees.

Sitting Bull dies (1904)

- Have students find out who Sitting Bull was and write an obituary that highlights his life.

*Underdog Day (3rd Friday)

16

Boston Tea Party anniversary (1773)

17

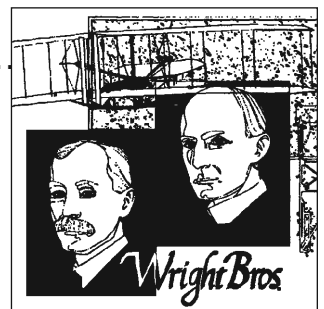
Wright Brothers Day

18

International Clown Day

19

First radio broadcast from space (1958)



20

Louisiana Purchase Day

21

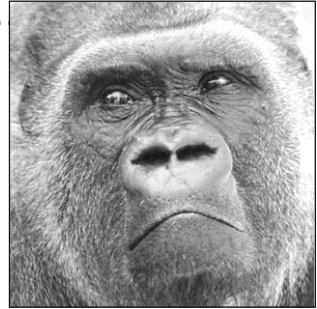
First crossword puzzle published (1913)

- What better way to celebrate this day than to help students work the puzzle in today's newspaper! You could also have them create their own crossword puzzles using words found in the newspaper.

Humbug Day

22

First gorilla born in captivity (1956)



23

Mexico: Feast of the Radishes

24

Christmas Eve

25

Christmas (federal, cultural/religious)

The most popular of Christian observances is Christmas, a festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, founder of the Christian faith. Although no one knows the exact date of Jesus' birth, most Christians celebrate on Dec. 25.

Christmas is celebrated throughout the world. In the United States it is one of the most joyous times of the year. People decorate their homes and Christmas trees. They sing Christmas carols, attend church services, send cards, feast with family and friends, and exchange gifts.

- Many of the Christmas traditions observed in the United States originated in other countries. In small groups, have students find newspaper datelines for five countries that celebrate Christmas. Then have them conduct research to see if any American Christmas traditions originated in those countries. Allow a spokesperson to report each group's findings.
- Have students cut out words, graphics, and pictures from the newspaper that symbolize Christmas. They can use the cutouts to create their own Christmas cards.
- Since Christmas is one of the busiest and most hectic times of the year, have students write a letter of advice to someone who wants to know how to slow down and enjoy the holiday. Point out your newspaper's advice column beforehand.

26

National Whiner's Day

***Kwanzaa** (Dec. 26-Jan. 1, cultural/religious)

Many of the traditions observed by African-Americans today have roots in African culture. The seven-day festival known as Kwanzaa is one of them. This holiday is widely celebrated by African-Americans each year and is based on the traditional African festival of the first crops.

M. Ron Karenga first introduced Kwanzaa to the United States in 1966. It combines traditional African practices with African-American ideals. The holiday centers on the Nguzo Saba, seven principles of black culture developed by Karenga. Each evening during Kwanzaa, family members light one of the seven candles in a kinara (candleholder), discuss the principle for that day, and sometimes exchange small gifts. Near the end of the holiday, the community gathers for karamu — a feast of traditional African food.

- Ask students to watch the newspaper for information about Kwanzaa activities in your community. Have them pick one they would be interested in attending.
- Plan a Kwanzaa feast for your class. Assign each student a traditional African-American food to bring. After they taste-test each item, have students write a newspaper-style review of their favorite African-American delicacy.

- Tell students about the seven principles of Kwanzaa: Umoja (unity); Kujichagulia (self-determination); Ujima (collective economics); Ujamaa (cooperative economics); Nia (purpose); Kuumba (creativity); and Imani (faith). Have them illustrate their understanding of these principles by finding newspaper examples of them “in action.” They can make a poster or bulletin board display with their findings.

27

“Howdy Doody” premiere (1947)

- Have students look in the newspaper television listings for children’s programs. Ask them to identify one program that might one day be considered a classic, like “Howdy Doody.”

28

Pledge of Allegiance recognized (1945)

29

YMCA founded (1851)

30

Rudyard Kipling born (1865)

31

New Year’s Eve!!!!



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THE ULTIMATE

Holiday

ACTIVITY GUIDE

