

Standards Based Lessons The Reason for my Rhyme!

Empower Your Students: Help them BELIEVE and ACHIEVE!

People ask me how I developed my successful teaching strategy where I empower my students to be independent. I refer to the quote that *“The mother of invention is necessity.”* I was going crazy and extremely frustrated!



My students needed to have centers, but there was only one me with 18 very needy 4 - year-old's all calling my name asking for help. If I didn't answer the "call" immediately, tables were absolutely destroyed and children were goofing around and covered in paint or whatever supply was at the station.



Then there was the fact that I was exhausted "reinventing the wheel" every day, dreaming up new centers so they wouldn't get bored and then having to teach directions (that they weren't listening to) all over again! There had to be a better way!

Furthermore, there was the problem with "Table Top" lessons. There were a few workbooks at the teacher stores but not really one that covered ALL of my report card standards specifically for Y5's. They were either for younger or older children. I could pull a few from many books if I wanted to spend \$50 to \$100 dollars and then I was still left with huge gaps, and nothing was consistent. My little ones couldn't read so I was constantly explaining directions, and because they had short attention spans, they weren't listening well, so I was repeating those directions every day because skill sheets were always different for the same concepts.



So I looked at the core skills they needed to work on (writing, coloring, (so they could increase fine motor skills and hold a utensil correctly) cutting, gluing-following directions) and the standards that I needed to hit,(number identification, sequencing, patterns, groups/.sets, greater/less than, shapes, graphing, small-medium, large, sorting, letter identification, writing their name etc.) and then I designed skill sheets that would be fun for the children to do.

I made the directions and format exactly the same so that they would get the hang of it and be able to practice the skill and demonstrate that they knew it. Sometimes little ones actually KNOW the answers, but get their papers wrong, simply because they don't understand the directions. Some are shy and don't ask for help, some think they know what they're doing and blaze on through. You think they don't understand the standard, and in reality they simply didn't understand the directions! Teachers go crazy because every time they hand out some sort of skill sheet they are constantly tied up giving directions instead of helping children with the concept!



The consistency empowers them and builds their self-esteem because they would look at a paper and know right away what they are supposed to do! They felt good about themselves right from the start instead of dependent, frustrated and confused! Because each of the skill sheet's "look" changed with the theme, they were interesting and fun for them. Because they followed a theme, my day was very organized and cohesive for them. The "table top" lessons matched the centers which matched their art activities, which matched the stories we read and the songs we sang. The Icon "following direction" system that I explained in the article before further empowered my students and freed up my life.

An added benefit of not having to explain, explain, and explain is that when kids KNOW what to do they are on task and not goofing around so you don't have discipline problems! Things run smoothly, you get things accomplished and you have more time to plug in extra things!



Now I needed centers with the same format: They needed to nail the standards, be consistent so my students could do them independently, and be easy for me to do each day in that all I had to do was change the theme and not the format. I came up with a bingo dot center. My little ones LOVE it. It nails several of my standards depending on how I design the sheet. It's definitely patterning: I can tell them what pattern I want them to do ABAB, ABCABC AABBCC etc. It's definitely counting, as I tell them that I want them to count as they place the bingo dots on their paper. Sometimes they are told only to place a certain amount of dots on the paper. I also use the dots to show groups and sets of numbers, and simple addition equations. I have them use 2 different color bingo dot markers and make a set of 5 and then a set of 5 in another color. They trace the equation $5 + 5 = 10$ and we later do the finger play "5+5 again, 5+5='s 10"



The other center they do each day is a graph. I sometimes combine shapes with graphing so I am hitting several standards with that as well. They do several cutting centers too.



I also have a simple art center for them to do that involves letters or science or other report card standards and an art center that they do one-on-one with me that involves a multitude of standards that will be a decoration for our hallway, or a bulletin board or keepsake gift. All of these come from my art books that I have in my shopping cart.

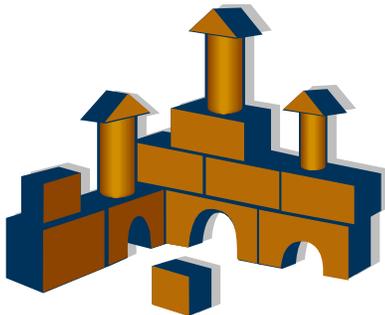


There IS time for art when it nails your standards, increases much-needed skill levels of your students, takes just a bit of time, uses materials you already have, children have fun, it builds their self-esteem, and you can decorate your room!

Because my students attention spans are best in the morning, I run Table Top from 8-8:45. Center Time is from 8:45-9:30. Some children will be done before then, some children will not get done. When I see this happening, I'll go over and work with them one-on-one.



We clean up and then go for a bathroom/drink break and then head out for recess.



After we come back in, we have Free Play Center Time. Any child who is not done with their morning work, works one-on-one with me 'til we are finished. We then move to lunch. After lunch I have a reading block which includes Story Time.



I want them to do some reading and writing on their own, but not forget about math That's why I developed all of the little booklets you see available in my shopping cart. Again, I tried to make all of my products so that they would teach the whole child and integrate all of the subjects and do it in such a way that they could do them independent of the teacher. Once my students have done a booklet twice, I simply pass them out and ask them "What do you do?" and they tell ME! It's wonderful!

The booklets lend themselves to great whole-group readings, discussions, and class books if you want to have them write an individual page of their own. You can also get your students up for a "get- the- wiggles- out" time by having them sing any of the "10 Little _____'s" books.



For each unit there is a matching booklet that includes a Shape, Counting, and *Where have all the _____'s Gone?* subtraction booklet which ties math to reading, + I have a spatial direction booklet. Again, I designed these little booklets so that they would be reinforcing my report card standards as they integrated and overlap the various subjects. The reason why I used the consistent format is that the child again feels empowered and even though they might not be able to read that book at the beginning, they know exactly what to do with it. They feel successful and are ready to learn concepts of print and the repetitive word wall words.



All of my Units are designed so there are plenty of lessons for you to choose something that fits your students' level. The beauty of the variety is that you have easier skill sheets for those who are struggling and more difficult ones for children who have mastered a concept. The units are also great if you need something to give parents when they want to work with a struggling child at home, or when a child is going on a trip and a parent requests a packet of take-along materials and you don't have the week figured out yet. These are also great fill-in's for the children who finish early, or nice for a substitute to plug in. They are extremely helpful as assessments and to include in portfolios.

However you use them, I know that my Y5's have excelled with this program. I truly believe that the number one reason is that I empower them to work independently and it has built their self-esteem to such a level that they realize they CAN do the lesson even before they start! Why not give it a try today! Remember to use the "following direction" Icons in the previous article.



I've included samples of my **CENTERS** as well as a sample of a morning of **TABLE TOP** lessons. Once you see that your students enjoy them, then perhaps you'll try a few. Once you've done these sorts of lessons at least twice, you'll see how quickly your students pick up the easy-to-follow directions and become empowered and independent and how easy your teaching becomes. The more "on task" they are, the less discipline problems you have as well. What a wonderful and happily engaged classroom you'll have, with everyone learning and knowing that they CAN and having FUN while doing so!





Why I do my centers this way:

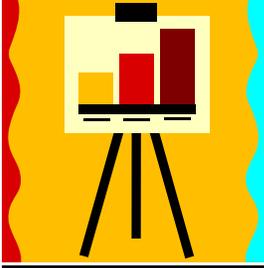
- They teach my report card standards.
- They empower my students because they know what to do and I don't have to explain directions every day.
- They can easily be changed with the season and theme to create variety and interest.
- They enjoy them and are fun
- They can do them independently
- They reinforce fine motor skills as well as life skills.
- They get to rotate around the room and get out of their seat.
- They are easy for me to set up.
- The children help keep the centers neat and organized.
- They can be kept out and simply changed for the next day.
- Because they are so simple for me to do, and take such a short amount of time for students to accomplish, I can offer them a huge variety and change them each day.

EXPLANATION of the centers:

Bingo Dot Center: Addition & Pattern page are set out on a long table with a selection of colored bingo dot markers and sample pages taped are taped on the table for them to refer to. I change the addition equation and pattern we are working on whenever I feel that most of the children have it nailed. They may choose their colors. I encourage them to count while they dab, as well as look at the numbers that they are patterning and dabbing. This is great for hand-eye coordination and one-to-one correspondence as well. I also point out that the paper is a rectangle, that the dots are circles etc. so they are getting shapes reinforced. Children who are done early can also bingo dot a letter or number at a TV tray. They simply LOVE bingo dotting!



Stamp a group/set of something. Is another math center they enjoy. Whatever theme we are studying I have a few stamps set on a TV tray with that sheet. I decide on a number that I want them to stamp. I write that number on the board. They write that number on their paper and stamp that many stamps on it.



Graphing: We graph all sorts of ways every day. To get them into graphing, I have a yes-no question of the day that we answer as part of our morning routine. They can see which column has the most in. We graph the letters of our names, our favorite colors, how we get home after school etc. Because we are studying shapes I want to overlap standards so I chose to use them with our daily center graph. All of my units have one in them; many have an additional graph as well. I do this as a center because it is not part of their skill sheet booklet. They can opt to get out of their desk, get a work mat and go do it on the floor if they choose to. They can also work with a buddy.



Pinch & Pokes: The 1st year I taught Transitional Kindergarten a K teacher shared a P&P with me. She said her kids LOVED them and they were great to build upper body strength as well as a great fine motor skill to increase finger dexterity and muscle control. I asked her where she got them and she said she had to make them up because there really wasn't a source. So I started dreaming up my own because they really are terrific for all of the above reasons! It's one of my students' favorite centers and takes just a minute to accomplish. They lay on their tummies on the carpet and poke a big thumb tack with a huge plastic end into the dot. If you explain the "no poking rules" to your little ones you won't have a problem. If you still don't feel safe about the thumb tacks or if you try them and a few are still naughty, give them **golf tees**.



Cutting Activities: My Y5's come to me at all different cutting levels. Some of them actually have quite a hard time of this. When I talked with my K teachers they said the #1 thing they wanted me to work on was cutting skills because all of their assessments involve cutting and gluing and that left many of their students at a disadvantage. Students may know the standard, but they were taking forever

to show it, because of their inability to cut. So I built that into my centers and we do it through out the day.

Surprisingly, children enjoy cutting once they get the hang of it. Children who don't have that finger dexterity are frustrated and often shut down. This sometimes leads them to not like school or doing activities just because they aren't adept at scissor skills. The more you snip the more their self-esteem grows. I have also learned that one of the reasons that some of my children are coming to me with no scissor practice is because scissors have been a "forbidden" object at home! Fear of their child getting hurt or cutting their own or a sibling's hair!



Snip & Cut's

Every unit has an easy straight line cut to start out with, and then a more advanced snip and cut where the lines are diagonal and squiggly. You can run off each kind and give them to the appropriate children.

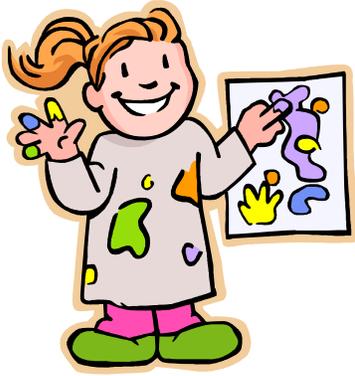
Pattern Sheets: also involve cutting and gluing. It's another way I teach students how to identify a pattern. We work the pattern out verbally on the board as a whole group. I'll cut and glue one to model what is expected of them. They come get their sheet at the center and can take it back to their desk or work somewhere else in the room on the floor or with a buddy.



Sorting: In the beginning, when they are 1st learning how to sort, I choose small and large, then later when they have mastered the skills, I'll let them choose how they want to sort. I don't put out all of the cutting sheets on the same day. Each day we have 1 or 2 depending on what art activities I also have planned.



Small-Medium-Large is sometimes tall-taller-tallest as is the case here.



Independent Art Center There is always an independent art center that is our last center. It's last because it's always the "favorite" because it's the new and different one. Sometimes it's related to our science theme; sometimes it's related to our language arts. For example when we are studying butterflies I'll have them make a butterfly life cycle bracelet with a pipe cleaner. They string pony beads on it. For language arts we may be reading. *The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* and I'll have them stamp a long strip of paper with the stamps in sequential order. (The stamps are numbered.) Sometimes they will get their turn to paint something at the easel.



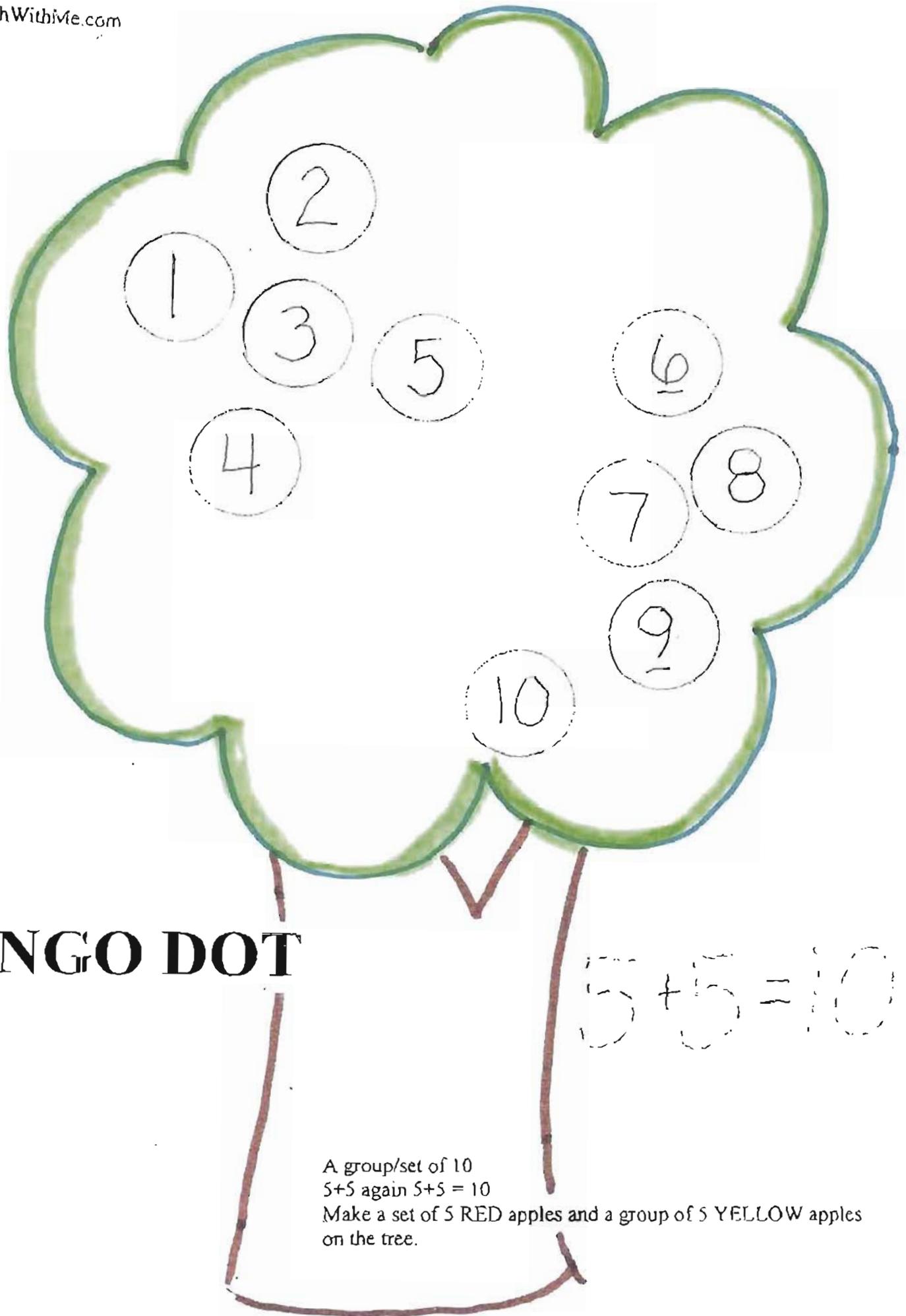
Guided Art Center While children are working at the various centers, I call them to work with me. Sometimes this is one-on-one; sometimes I can work with 2-4 children at a time. We are usually making some sort of keepsake art that will decorate our room or hallway for the month. These types of art projects involve science, math, and language arts as well. I verbally reinforce concepts with them as they work with me.

Tummy Tubby Time: When children are done with their Table Top they check their work, raise their hand for me to come check it, and then they transition to Centers. When they are done with centers, they look at the board to make sure they have completed all of the centers, make a nice neat pile of their work and raise their hand for me to come check their work. They take their work to their back pack and then can transition to Tummy Tubby Time.

I sometimes have a specific tub for Tummy Time that they must do and then they can have free choice. The children think they are playing but these tubs further reinforce

math, science and language arts concepts. i.e., letter matching, patterning with blocks, frogs, etc , stringing beads, counting and patterning with unifix cubes, identifying colors and shapes and making pictures with tetrominoes etc. I have over 30 tubs to choose from. + magnets, magnifying glasses, a microscope and all sorts of science tubs. I gage Table Top/Centers so that children who are on task will have at least 10-15 minutes for Tubby Tummy Time. They enjoy these tubs so much that they often ask to play with them during Free Choice - Play Time instead of the “toys”.





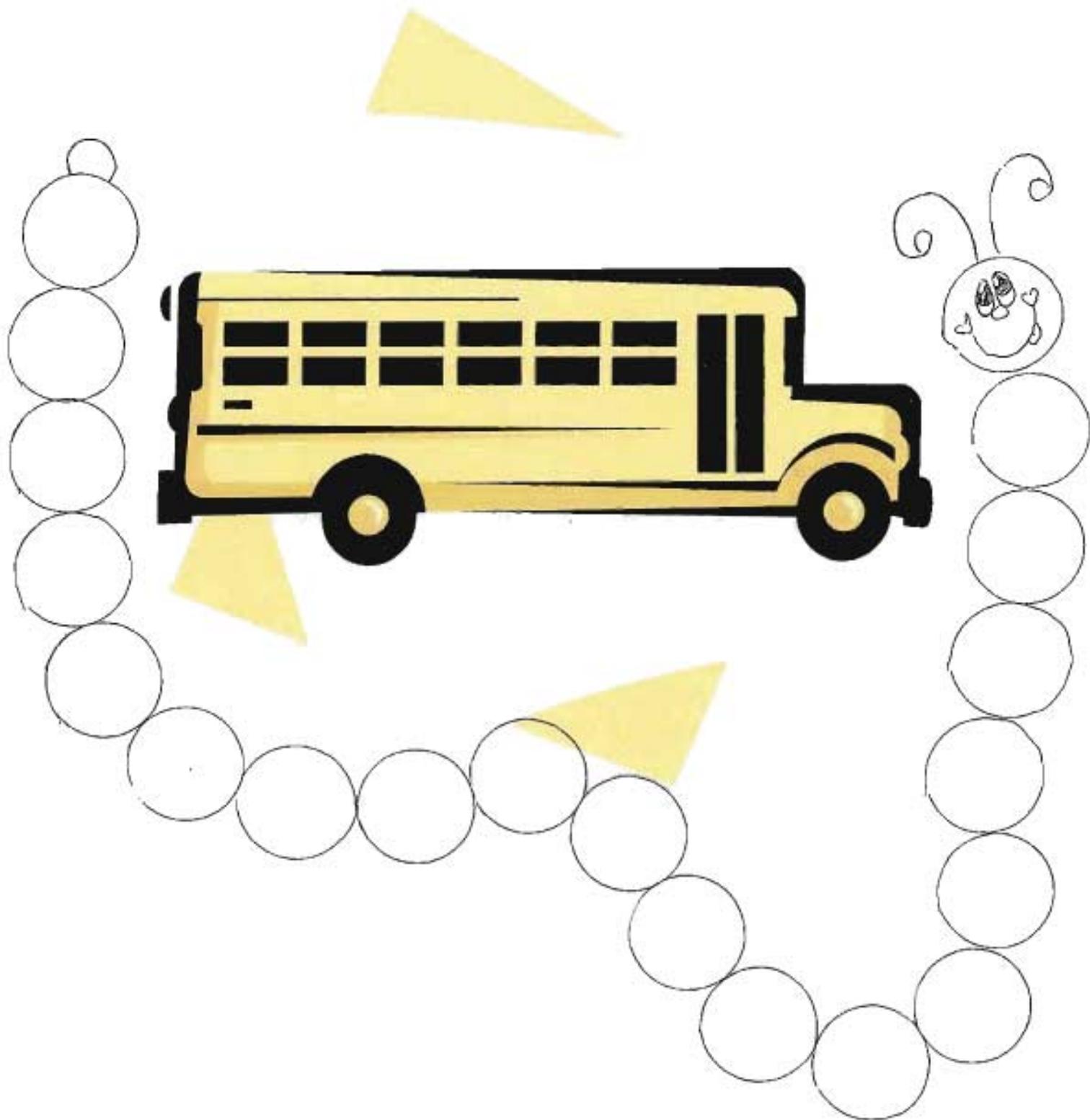
BINGO DOT

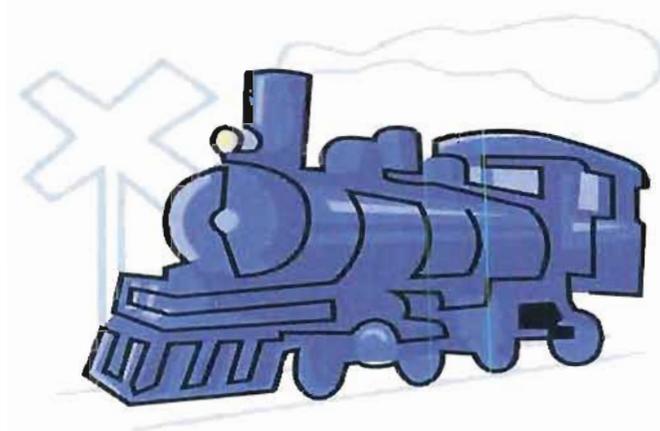
$$5 + 5 = 10$$

A group/set of 10
 $5+5$ again $5+5 = 10$
Make a set of 5 RED apples and a group of 5 YELLOW apples
on the tree.

Bingo Dot A PATTERN

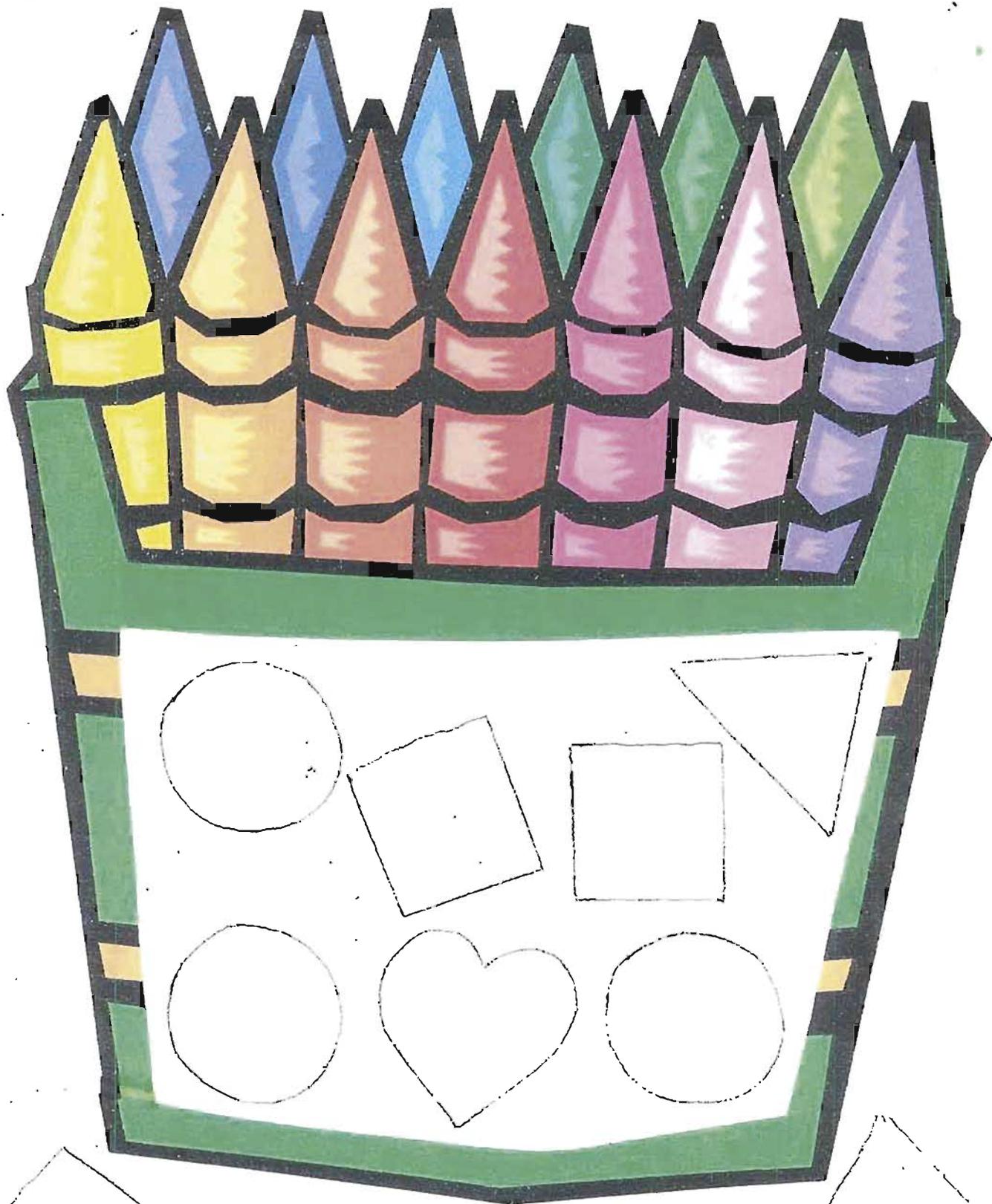
Choose 2 colors and make an ABAB pattern.





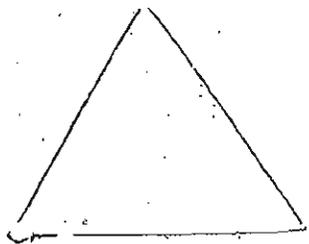
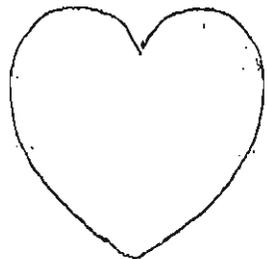
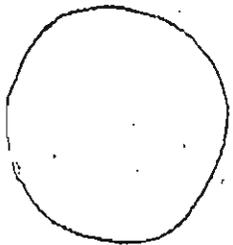
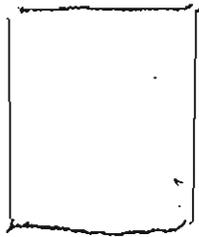
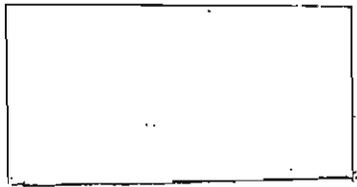
Stamping a group/set of

_____.



GRAPHING

COLOR all the triangles the same color. Color each different shape a different color.



GRAPHING

Color the shapes to match the colors on the picture. Count the shapes; mark that many X's in the box. Make the X's the same color as the shapes. Graph the picture.



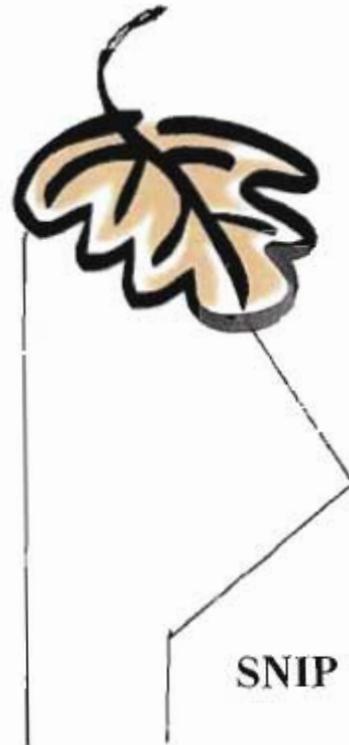
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SNIP & CUT

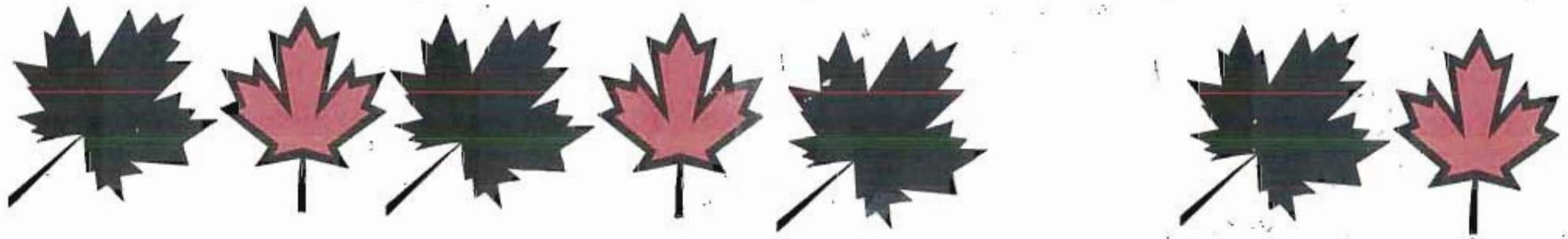


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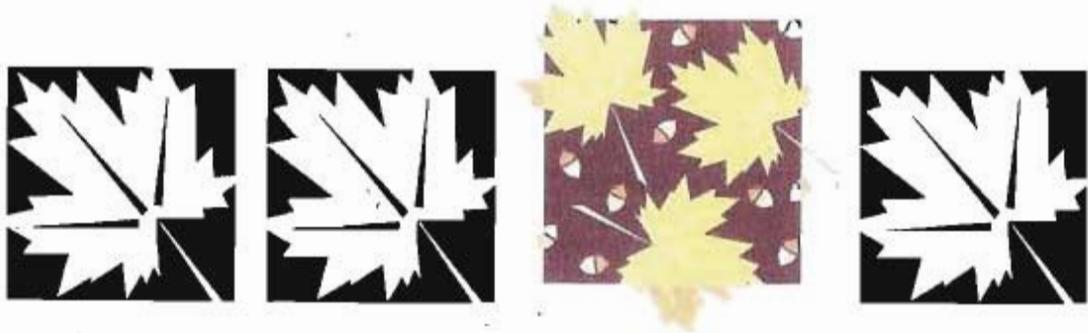


SNIP & CUT





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Finish the PATTERN.

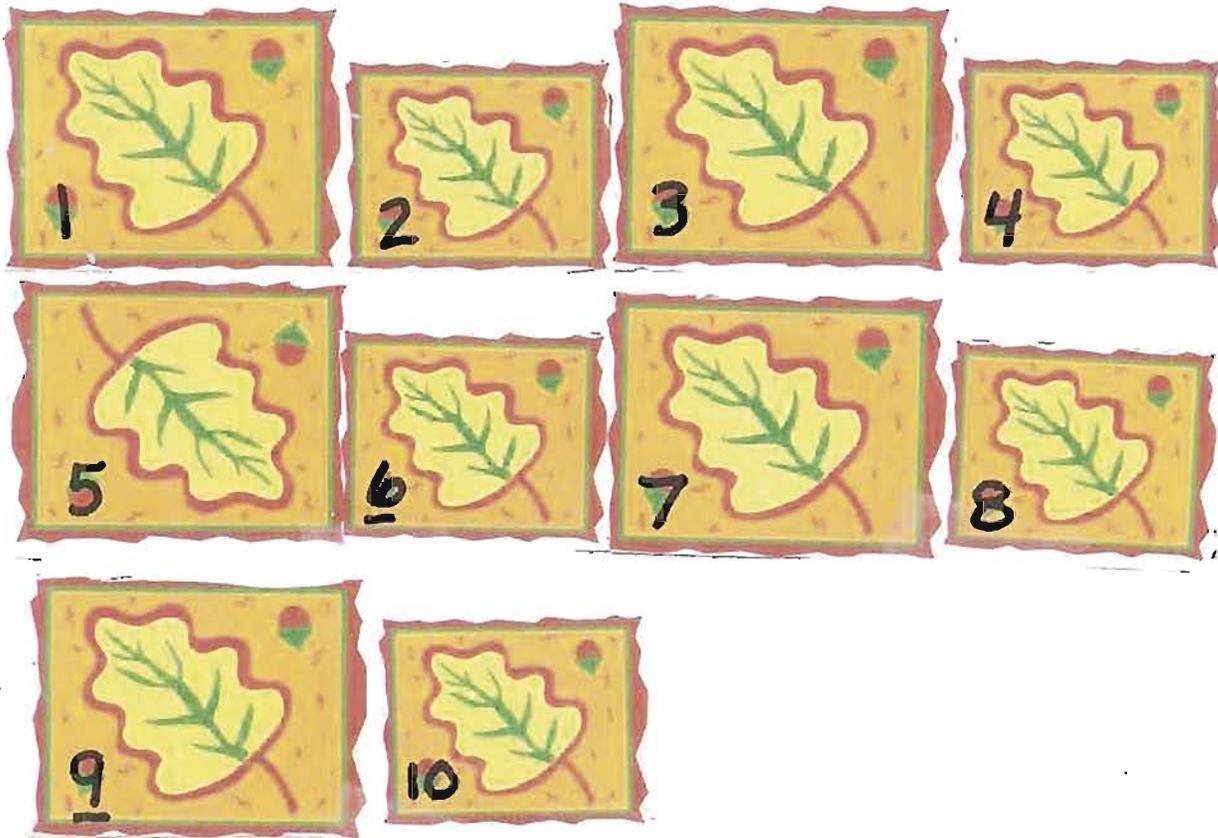


Sorting

Here are some things you can do with these leaves.

Your teacher will tell you what she wants you to do with your leaves.

- ❖ CUT out the leaves below and sort them into **small** and **large** piles.
- ❖ Sequence the numbers. Put them in order from 1-10
- ❖ Put all the **EVEN** numbers in one pile.
- ❖ Put all the **ODD** numbers in another pile.
- ❖ GLUE your leaves in a group of how your teacher wants you to glue them.



Sorting Sheet:

Odd

Even

<u>Odd</u>	<u>Even</u>

Sorting Sheet:

Objects Sequenced In Order

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



medium



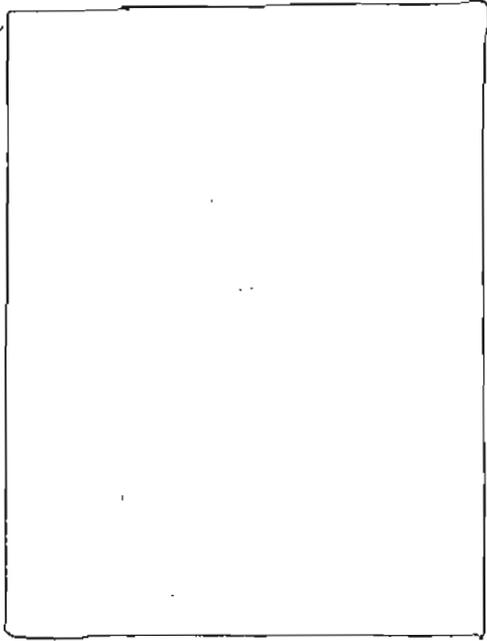
small



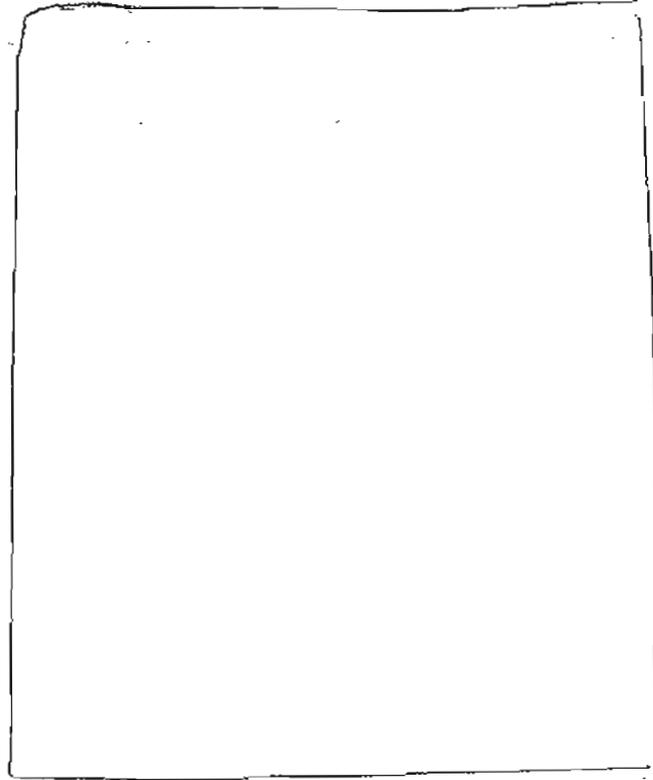
large

Dinosaur
Tall-Taller-Tallest +
SKILL SHEET

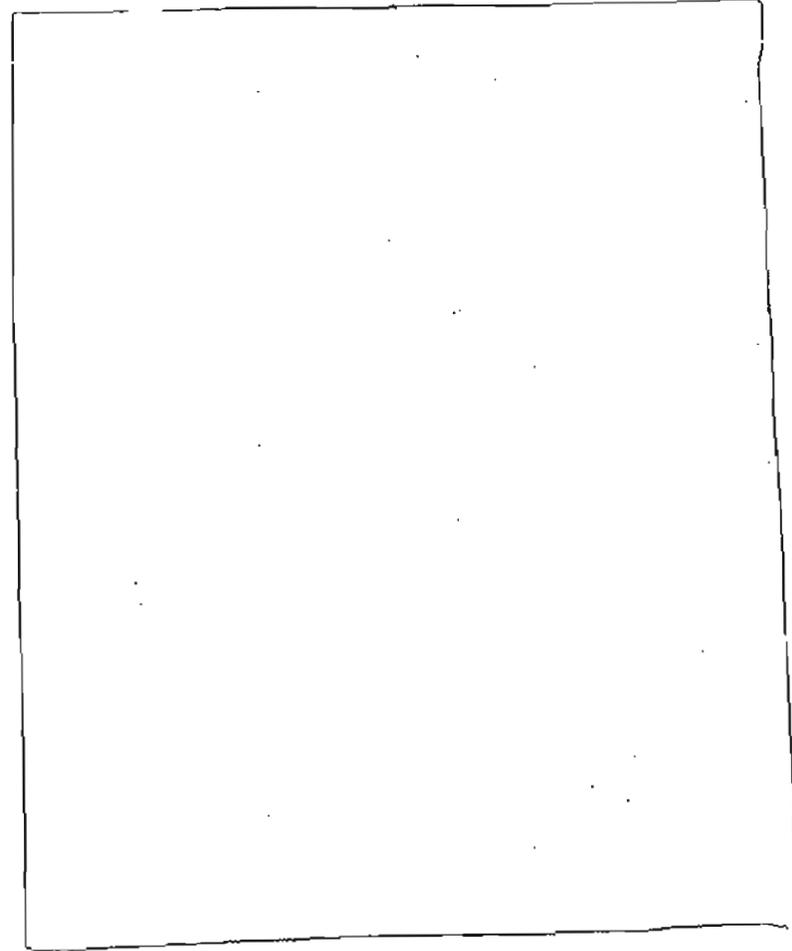
Some dinosaurs were very tall, as tall as 3-story buildings!
Please put these small, medium and large dinosaurs in order of
tall-taller and tallest!



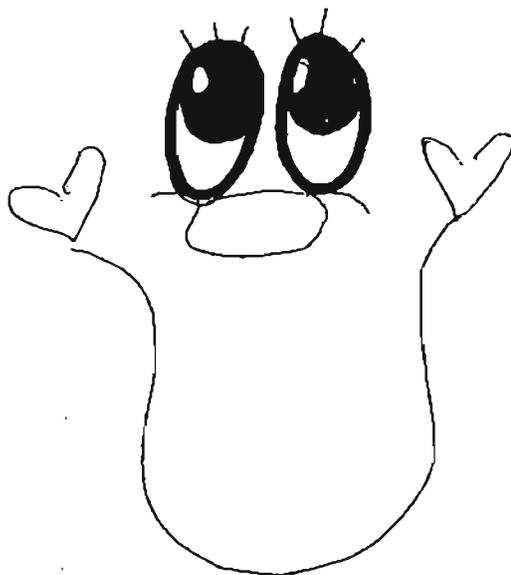
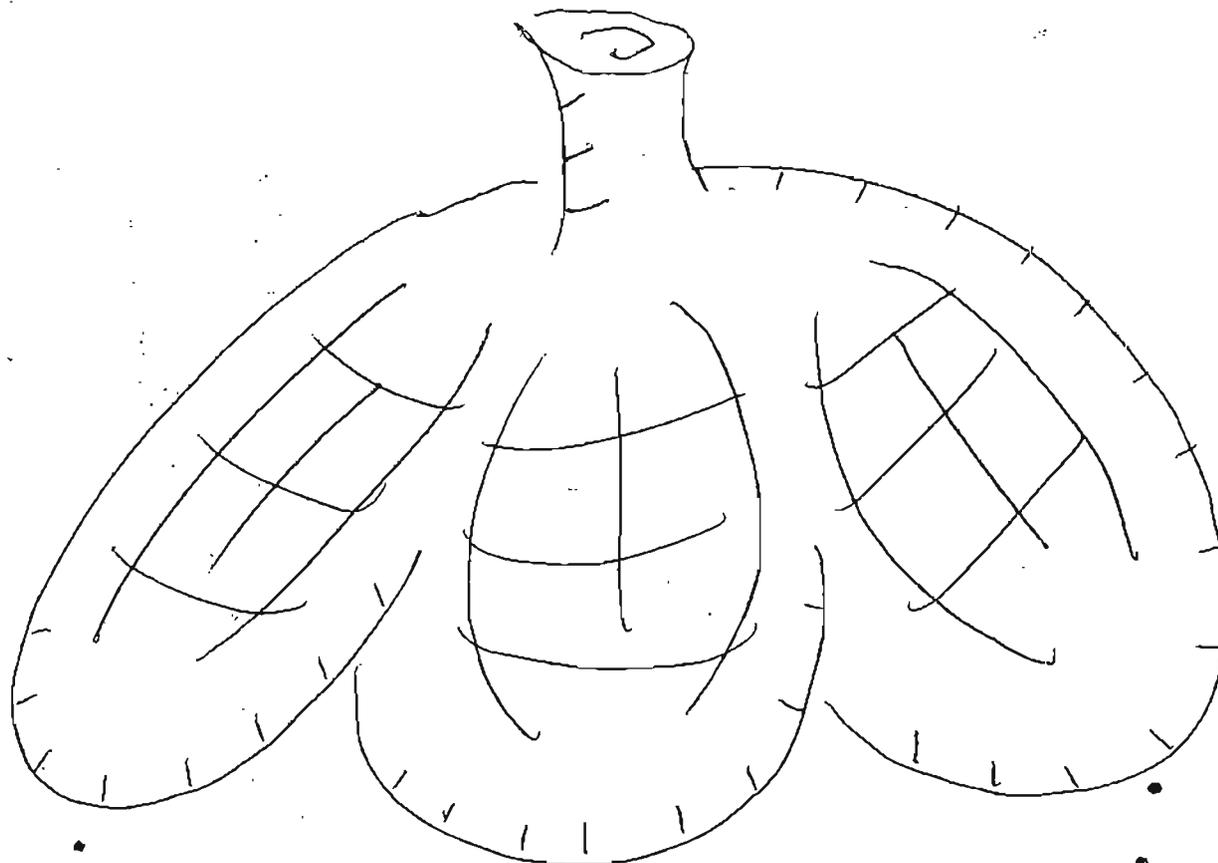
tall



taller



tallest



**Nutty Over
Pinch & Pokes**



Skill Sheet Booklet

- There are a variety of skill sheets in every unit.
- All of the skill sheet's directions are consistent; the theme changes.
- I do this so that the students get used to the directions so that they are empowered.
- Their self-esteem is built.
- They feel like they know how to do a worksheet, because they feel comfortable with the familiar format.
- They can then concentrate on the skill/concept/standard and not be frustrated with the directions.

One of the best things about the units is that you will have patterning, similarity & differences and graphing skill sheets. They are just not to be found anywhere else for every theme, yet they are a report card standard so we need to teach it every day! If you'd only like to buy a book on just **graphing** or **patterning** I have that available. Click on the links to see them. I'm currently working on a "Similarities & Differences" Book for the same reason.



We give a ranking as to where children are. 1-2-3-4.

That's typically my opinion. Sometimes parents want "proof. Before my units I really didn't have "proof" of exactly who was where because there weren't enough skill sheets available that gave me a paper trail. Because I do all of these things on a daily basis I feel "rock-solid" about giving my opinion about who has it nailed and who is still struggling at what particular level. I can now say that your child "almost" has it because he got it right on 10 out of 14 of these skill sheets etc.

Directions for skill sheets:

- Go through the unit.
- Choose whatever skills you want to work on.
- Staple them into a booklet.
- Refer to the sheets as “fun” or “skill” sheets never as work sheets.
- Put the sheets on your white board.
- Put the directional icons under each page.
- Have your children sit on the floor in front of the board.
- Ask them what they should do for the 1st sheet.
- Model the answers together.
- Move on to the next one.
- Children take their seats and do their booklet

EXPLANATION of skill sheets:



I Spy

I start each booklet out with an “I spy”. It’s a game so the children naturally enjoy it.

I make this the first page of my booklet, because we do it as a whole group.

I’m working on recognizing numbers 0-10. I also include the number 100 and 101 because we are counting up to that special day and I want them to become familiar with 3-digit numbers and that numbers continue on and on and that we will be learning to count as far as we can.



I include a blank-set of circles in all of the units so you can fill them in however you wish. This enables you to spy larger numbers or upper and lower case letters. It’s a wonderful way to whole-group assess at a glance and only takes 1-2 minutes to play.

So that my students can re-use the paper at home, I have them use a yellow highlighter at school. They can then use a crayon at home. Sometimes I have them CIRCLE the number; sometimes I have them TRACE the number. They then can do the opposite at home and get in more practice. I have also notified my parents via my newsletter to re-play this game at home so they help reinforce what we are learning at school. I bring it up again at Parent-Teacher conferences.

Similarities & Differences: Children get used to “looking” which helps them differentiate. How did I get my kids hooked and make it fun for them? I tell my students that they are detectives and that there is a spy in each line. He’s being sneaky and it is their job to catch him. There is something different about this spy. They need to find out what it is and ZAP him with an X. They really enjoy this.



Trace and Write: Whatever theme we are studying there’s a page to trace and write that letter and word. There is also a page to find and circle ten upper and lower case letters.



What’s Missing? There are several types of “What’s Missing” skill sheets. One is to fill in the upper case letters, one is for lower case and one is for numbers. The sheets vary. I will fill in various letters through out the boxes. Sometimes they might be at the beginning such as this sample; sometimes they will be scattered throughout the boxes. The other kind of “What’s Missing” page is in columns. It includes a variety of numbers and letters as well as skip counting.



Dot-to-Dots There is some controversy that little ones can’t do a dot-to-dot because they don’t connect the dots appropriately. I find that’s true at times IF I don’t model it at the board. That’s because they are learning to count and recognize the numbers. However, I keep my patterns simple and I recommend that you model them at the board. I don’t have a problem. I like dot-to-dots because the children are connecting something in a sequence and they can practice counting in a variety of ways. Most of my units have more than one dot-to-dot included --a basic 1-10, a more advanced 1-20 and then sometimes I’ll include a counting by 10’s to 100 or a counting by 5’s. If I have not included that in your unit, it’s easy to make by simply using white-out and changing the numbers. It’s a fun way to reinforce skip counting.



Number Match, X out the number and Trace and Write the number:

are all math skill sheets that work on various math standards. I have also included the number words for a child to trace to over lap reading. I have a simple word wall. By the end of the year because of these skill sheets and because of my counting booklets, my Y5's can read the number words. Numbers 0-10 are included in all of the units. 1-5 is on one page and 6-10 are on the 2nd page. In September I include the 1-5 page; in October I include the 6-10 page, by the end of October I'm including both pages in their booklet.



The best way to see a sampling of what other kinds of skill sheets are offered in a unit is simply to click on a season, click on a month, click on a theme and then click on a unit. I include at least 30 sample pages for you to see no matter what you choose. I want people to see before they buy. Click on the link to get to our **home page**.

I know once you try it, you'll see how easy this is for you, how it nails the standards in a fun way for your students and empowers them to be independent.

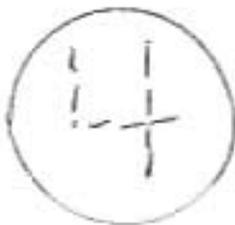
As always, if you have any questions feel free to e-mail me at diane@teachwithme.com



Diane

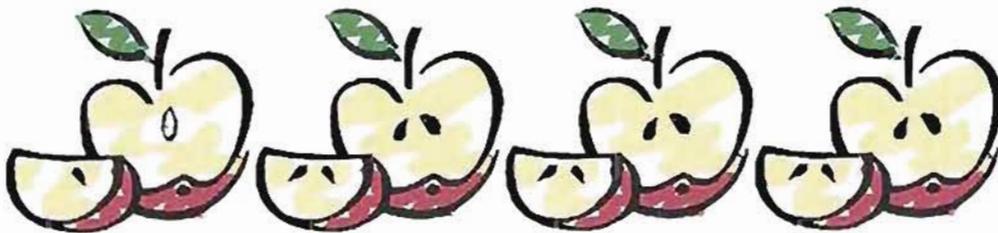
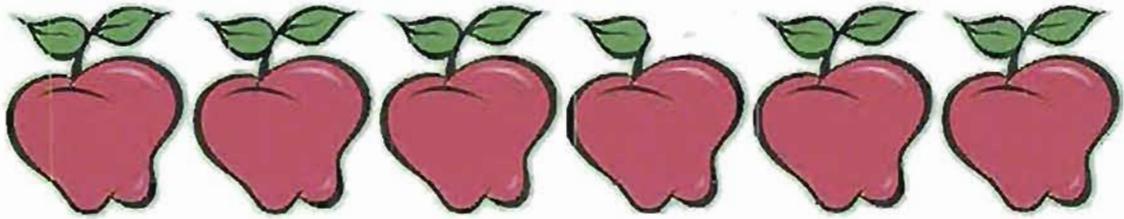
I Spy A Number!

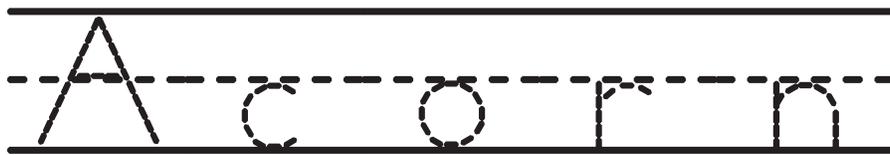
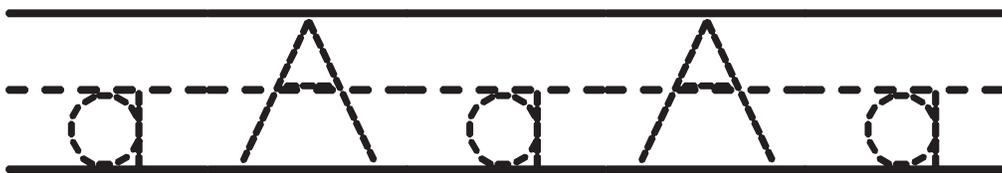
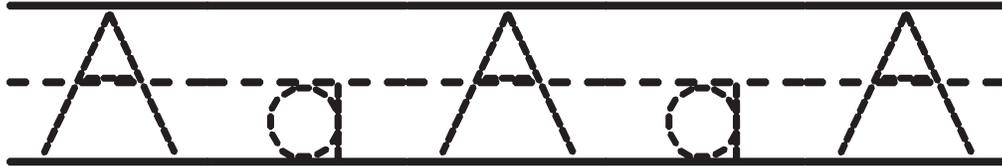
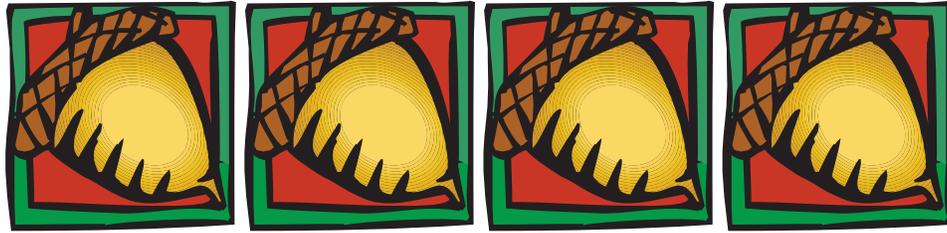
Please play "I Spy!" with me at home.



Similarities & Differences

There is a spy, one that is different in each row; zap it with an X.





Write some Aa's on your own on the bottom.

ALPHABET

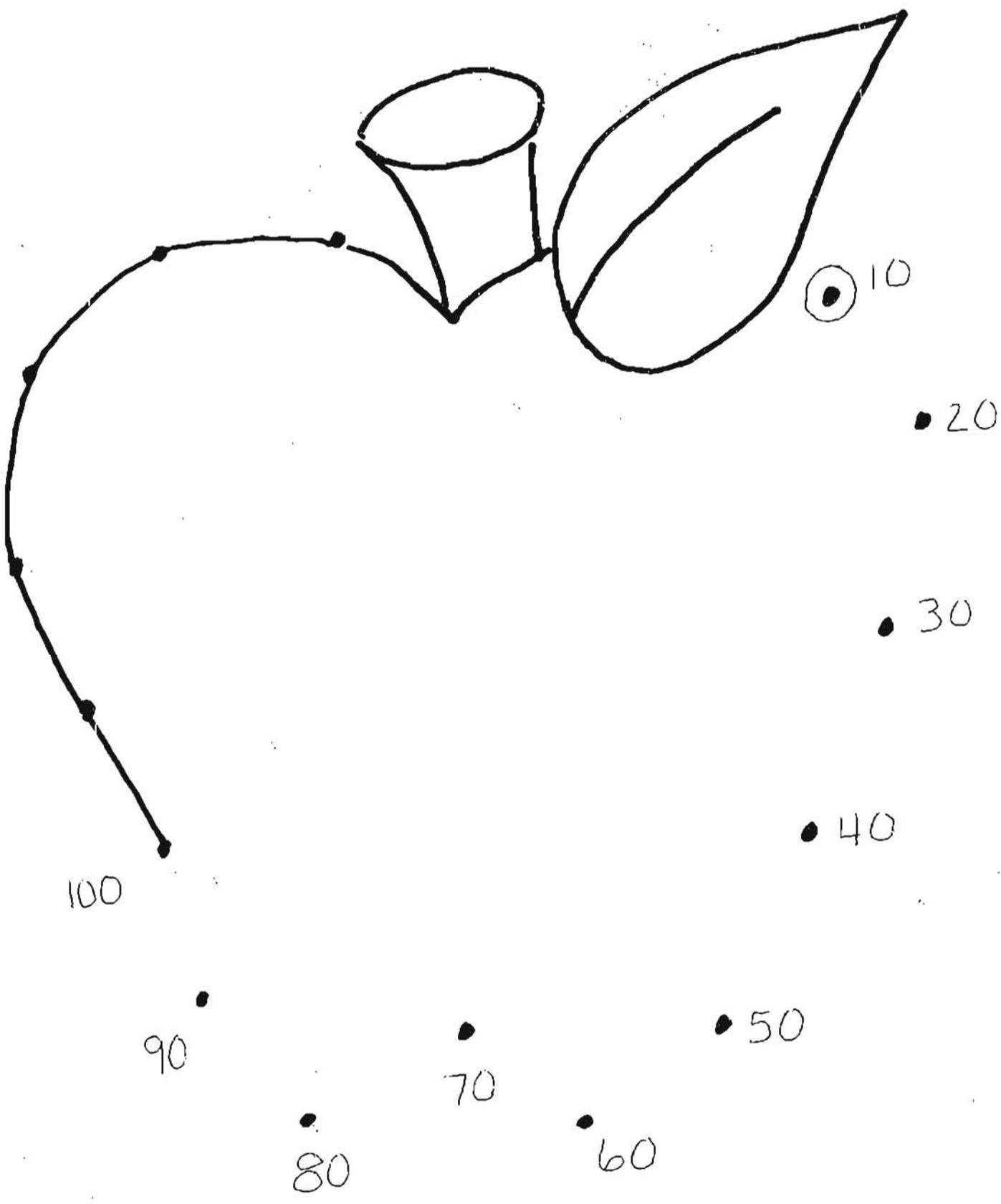
Fill in the missing letters.



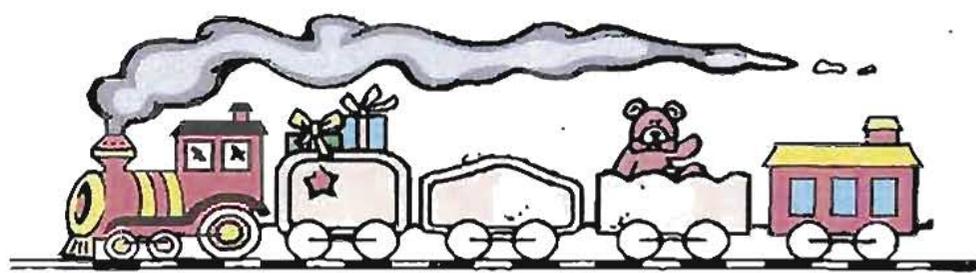
A				
F				
K				
P				
U				



Uppercase



Apple Dot-to-Dot



1

1

one

2

2

two

3

3

three

4

4

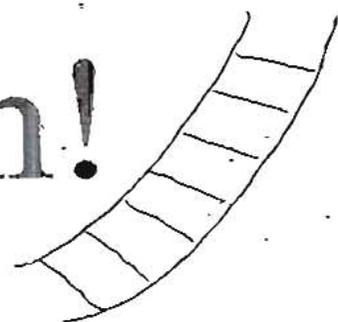
four

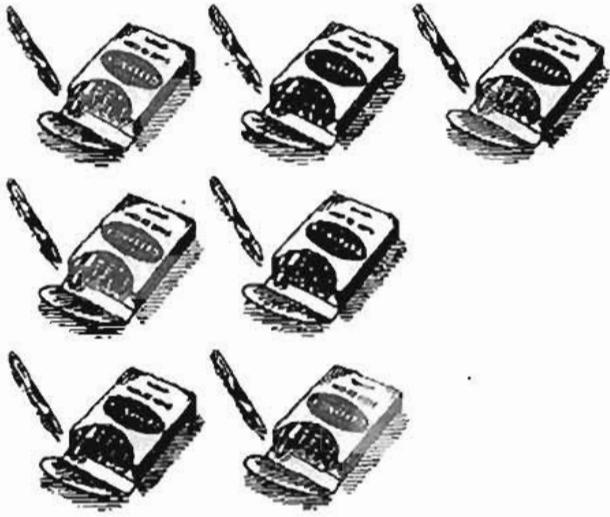
5

5

five

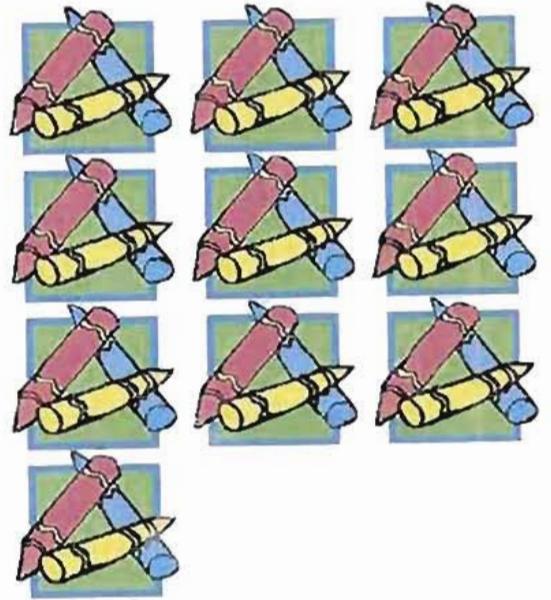
Number Fun!





6

7



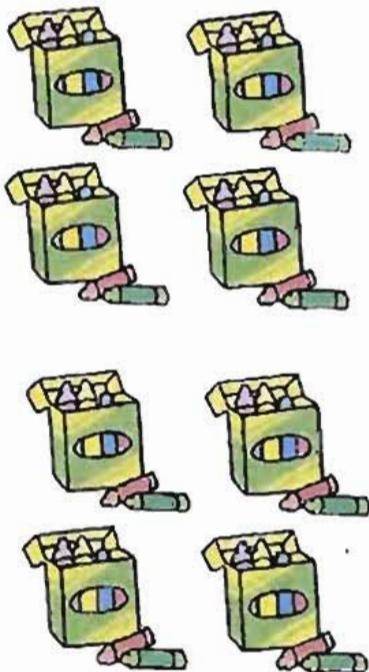
8



9



10

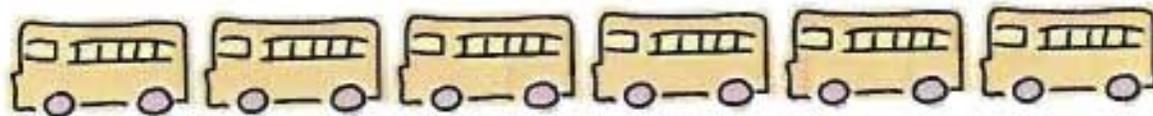


Match the number to the group/set.
Use a DIFFERENT color for each one.

1



2



3



4



5



Put an X on the number of busses to match the number next to its row.



umber Fun!