
Practical Problems at the Brentsville Schoolhouse



Reporting Category: Computation and Estimation

Topic: Solving practical problems of mixed numbers and integers involving operations

Primary SOLs: 6.5; 7.2; 8.4

Related SOLs: 6.6; 7.3

Materials: Interactive Video; Computation Worksheet (attached)

Directions:

- Students will watch and educational video illustrating the following concepts:
 - o The difference between school 100 years ago to schools today.
 - o Subjects taught in school (focusing on math).
 - o Video will tie into the worksheet that students will have to complete as part of their lesson.
- Complete Worksheet

Context:

The Differences of Brentsville Schoolhouse and Your School

The white schoolhouse at Brentsville was built in 1928. The first teacher in this new schoolhouse was Lucy Mae Motley. Her job was not only to educate the children of Brentsville, but to also act as caretaker for the schoolhouse. Everything from lesson plans to custodial work fell onto her shoulders.

The average attendance varied, but most of the time, 25 students attended school. During the 1930s, "...first through fifth grades were housed at Brentsville. The sixth graders were bused to different schools throughout western Prince William County.

Schools in the 1930s/1940s were different than they are today. The schoolhouse had no running water or electricity. The schoolhouse had a coal and wood burning stove to heat the room and used natural light from the five windows to light the building. Prior to World War II, the fires were lit in the morning by James "Cookie" Wolfe, a student of the school. According to his brother, "Freddy", and sister, Gladys, he was paid by the teacher for his help

during the colder months of the school year. Students all had their own cups but drank from the same bucket of water and used the outhouse for the bathroom.

Just as today, students looked forward to their two fifteen-minute recesses; one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Lunchtime is also another favorite, but compared with school lunches today, much is different. Lunchtime for the Brentsville School students lasted an hour, with most bringing something from home. Students lucky enough to live close by or have friends near, were able to go home for a hot meal during their lunch. During the chilly days of winter, many of the student's mothers sometimes brought in soup and heated it on the stove in the classroom giving students a hot meal.

Brentsville School remained open until the end of the 1943-1944 school year. A community and recreation center, private residence, arcade, and office were all part of its changing past, until in October of 2012, the building was formally restored to its 1928 architectural appearance.

Math at the Brentsville Schoolhouse

Math or "arithmetic" was one of the daily subjects taught at the Brentsville School and it can be seen everywhere in the schoolhouse today. From counting the number of desks and windows in the schoolhouse, to studying addition, subtraction, multiplication, and distance, math has been taught for hundreds of years and is important for students to learn today.

A math textbook called "Modern-School Arithmetic" used in the 1930s and 40s talked about the importance of learning math:

In their home, recreational, and school life we observe, children finding many uses for number in their daily activities. [Math] becomes essential to the child for satisfying participation in such activities as keeping weekly milk bills and school-supply bills, keeping daily temperature records...cooking, sewing, pottery making, reading music, managing and depositing in the school bank, keeping the height and weigh charts, financing and timing trips and excursions, measuring water for the goldfish bowl, keeping score in games, financing and sharing the cost of a club party, making lemonade and popcorn balls, timing the activities of the day, and using accurate measurements in art, science, and other work.

To practice your math skills, let's try some math problems taken from the "Modern-School Arithmetic".

Exercise: (See attached)

Name: _____



Solve the Problems:

Solve the problems using operations. Show your work on a separate piece of paper.



1. Mrs. Brown said, "Elsie, I can save you _____ by buying you a silk dress at this sale".
2. Elise said, "I wish you would buy me a velvet dress. You could save _____ on that."
3. Mrs. Brown said, "Yes, but even at the sale a velvet dress costs _____ more than a silk dress".
4. How much can Mrs. Brown save by buying Elsie a hat at the sale? _____
5. How much can she save by buying Howard a suit at the sale? _____ By buying him a sweater? _____
6. How much would both a suit and a sweater cost at the sale? _____

1. \$ 5.50
 x 9

2. \$16.37
 x 3

3. 7.49
 x 2

4. 6)150

5. 4)3600

Answer the Questions:

Math can be found everywhere in the Brentsville School. After watching the video answer these questions:

1. What year did the school close and how many years ago was it? _____
2. How many stars and stripes does the flag have? Why? _____
3. How many pieces of glass make up the windows? Use multiplication. _____