

Places & Things

The Middle



June 30 marks the very end of the first six months of the year. July 1 will begin the second six months.

How old are you? _____ years, _____ months

How old were you when you were exactly half as old?

_____ years, _____ months

At what age will you graduate high school?

_____ years, _____ months

What age is exactly half of that?

_____ years, _____ months

☐ I have passed that age already.

☐ I have not reached that age yet.

When does your school year begin? _____

When does it end? _____

What day will be exactly halfway through the school year?

Ask an adult to help you look up these other halfway marks:

Halfway between your home and school: _____

Halfway between you and your farthest relative or friend:

Halfway between the birth of the oldest relative you know about and when you were born: _____

On the back, draw a picture of yourself halfway to achieving an important goal. What is it?

When is the last time someone took your picture?

Nowadays, it might feel completely normal for some people to have their pictures taken every single day. But when cameras were first invented, a person might only have their photograph taken once in a lifetime! And that was only if they were considered important enough to have their photograph taken at all.

Pinhole cameras have been around since 400BC. But it wasn't until 1825 when a French scientist first printed an image from a camera. It only took eight hours of light exposure to work! In 1839 the Daguerreotype was invented. This printed an image onto a metal plate. In 1888 the Kodak roll allowed photographs to be printed on a flexible material. By 1900 cameras that could be kept at home were sold. In the 1990s, digital cameras were invented, and in 2000 the first phone with a camera came out.

If you had to sit still for hours to take one photo, how often do you think you would do it?

What is your favorite thing to take photos of?

On the back, draw a picture of it.

Leap Day

Have you ever heard this poem? It helps people remember how many days are in each month. If you wonder why February has fewer days than all the other months? And why does it change every four years?

Do you know how many days are in a year? _____

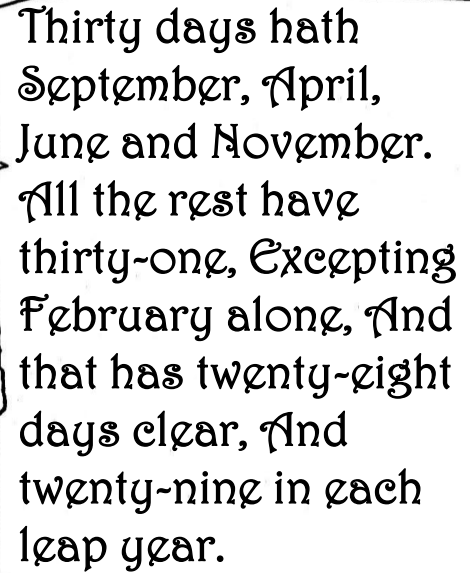
Nope! It's actually 365.2421.

That extra quarter of a day

means that after several centuries the date doesn't match up with our orbit around the sun. So, every four years we add an extra day called Leap Day on February 29th.

Imagine if we didn't have Leap Day. Calculate how many days would be lost:

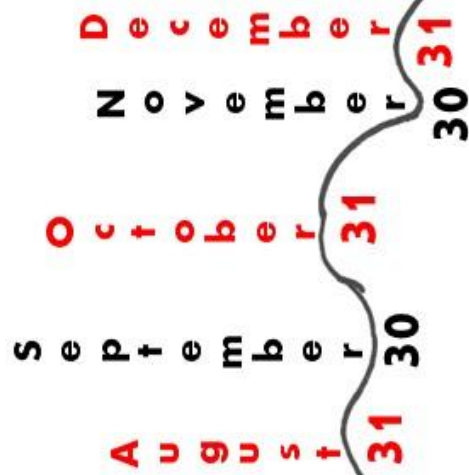
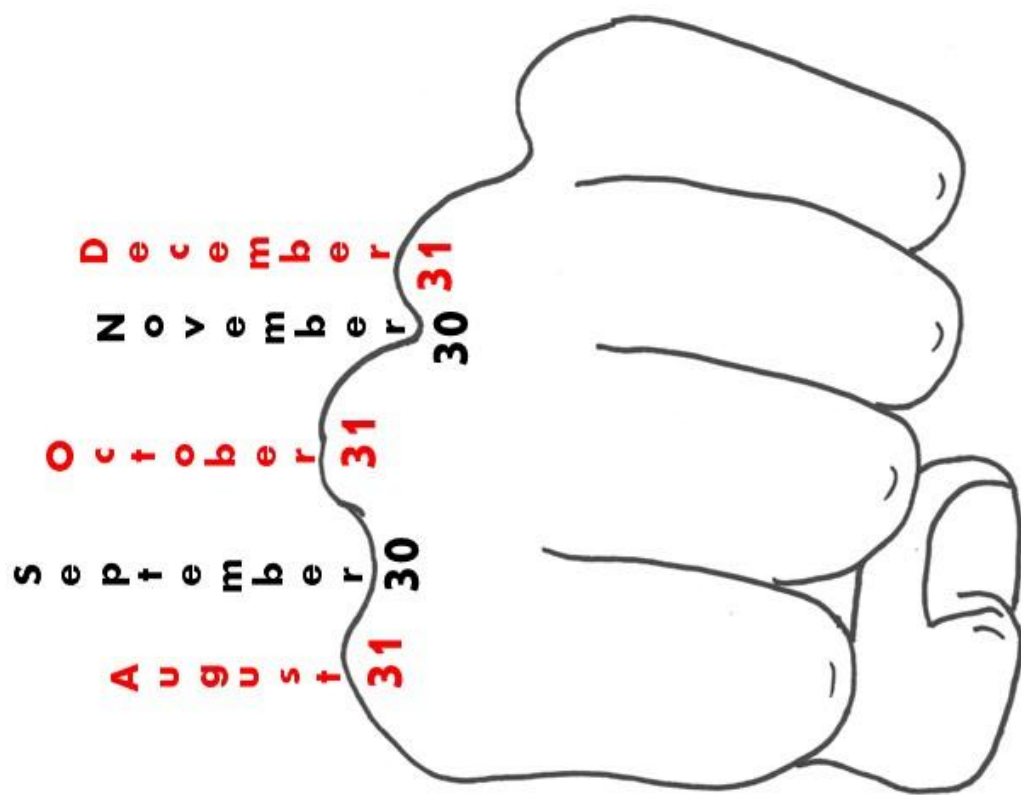
4 years	1 day
8 years	_____ days
12 years	_____ days
16 years	_____ days
20 years	_____ days
100 years	_____ days
500 years	_____ days



Thirty days hath
September, April,
June and November.
All the rest have
thirty-one, Excepting
February alone, And
that has twenty-eight
days clear, And
twenty-nine in each
leap year.

~Mother Goose

Here's another trick for remembering the days in each month. Make a fist and touch the top of each knuckle and in between each knuckle as you say the months. The months that land on the top of a knuckle have 31 days.

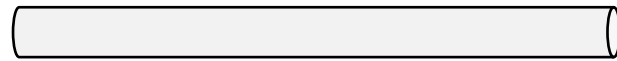


Parallels



Parallel actually has lots of meanings. You may have learned about parallel lines in math. Those are lines right next to each other. Draw a pair of parallel lines:

In gymnastics some gymnasts do routines on the parallel bars. Draw a stick figure of a gymnast on these bars:



Some people like to imagine stories that take place in parallel universes. It's fun to make up a place that is almost like our world, but lots of things are slightly different. If you created a parallel universe, what four things would be very different from our world?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

On the back draw a picture of your parallel universe.

Bubble Wrap

Do you like to pop bubble wrap? _____ It can be fun and even relieve stress. Bubble wrap is used to keep fragile items secure when they are being shipped.

But is that really enough of a reason to have a whole holiday for bubble wrap? Actually, the holiday is meant to celebrate turning an idea around when it doesn't work out the first time.

In 1956 Marc Chavannes and Alfred Fielding sealed two shower curtains together with air bubbles in Hawthorne, New Jersey. They originally sold this as a wallpaper. When that didn't work, they tried selling it as greenhouse insulation. But then in 1961 it was used to ship an IBM computer (which used to be huge). People realized it had a great use that hadn't been thought of before.

This goes to show you that if your idea doesn't work out how you expect it to the first time, keep re-thinking how to use it. It might take several tries before you discover how to best use it. Think about something you use every day that could be used another way. Draw a picture on the back of your idea. This could be the "next bubble wrap."

Remember: bubble wrap can't be recycled, so always try to reuse it (as tempting as popping it is).



Knock-Knock Jokes

Do you enjoy knock-knock jokes? They are popular all over the world. French knock-knock jokes begin with “Toc-Toc” and the punchline is a song title. Spanish knock-knock jokes usually rhyme. Dutch knock-knock jokes are called “Klop-Klop.” Korean and Japanese knock-knock jokes are called “Kon-Kon.”

A children’s game from the 1920s, called the Game of Buff, seems to have the first form of a knock-knock joke.

(banging a stick) Knock Knock

Who’s there?

Buff

What says, Buff?

Buff says Buff to all his men,
and I say Buff to you again.

Then in 1934 a newspaper humor column wrote the first modern knock-knock joke.

Knock Knock

Who’s there?

Rufus.

Rufus who?

Rufus the most important part of your house

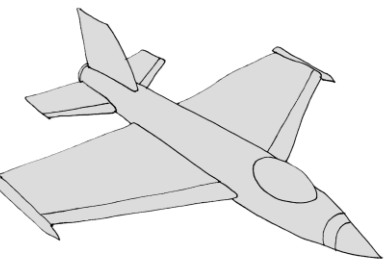
How to Write a Knock-Knock Joke

A knock-knock joke needs a good pun. Think about one word that sounds like two other words:

- Europe early this morning.
- Jamaican me crazy not answering this door.
- Dozen anyone like my jokes?
- Olive you, too!

In 1968 a comedy TV show called *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In* made knock-knock jokes a part of each episode.

On the back write as many knock-knock jokes as you can think of.



Checklist

Do you like checklists? _____

Do your parents make you keep a checklist? _____

For chores? _____

For homework? _____

Does your teacher give you checklists? _____

You might think checklists are pretty boring, but the word “checklist” actually came about because of a tragic accident that was the result of a pilot forgetting to check a simple button in 1935. Since then, pilots have checklists, because no human can remember everything all the time. Checklists save lives! The most famous checklist lover was Leonardo Da Vinci.

But here are some more fun ways to use checklists:

- ✓ Next time you go somewhere fun, like a theme park, make a checklist ahead of time to help focus on top priority attractions.
- ✓ Make a checklist of your favorite things to do, eat, and watch in each season.
- ✓ Make a summer checklist of every toy and game you have and make a goal to play with each one at least once.
- ✓ Make a checklist of all the books you have read and want to read.
- ✓ Make a checklist of all your friends' birthdays so you remember to make them a card.

On the back make a checklist of all the things you would like or need to do this week.

Poinsettias

Do you like poinsettia flowers in December? _____

Here are some fun poinsettia facts:

- ❖ Poinsettias are NOT spelled with a T in the middle!
- ❖ Poinsettias come in a variety of colors!
- ❖ Poinsettias are originally from Mexico.
- ❖ Poinsettias were a favorite of the Aztec King Montezuma.
- ❖ The Aztec name for poinsettias is cuitlaxochitl.
- ❖ Your pets can get a bad stomachache if they eat them, so remind your family to keep them out of their reach!
- ❖ Poinsettias can be planted and re-bloom each year.
- ❖ Unpotted poinsettias can grow to the size of large bushes.
- ❖ Joel Roberts Poinsett was the US ambassador to Mexico. In 1828 he sent cuttings to study at home in Charleston. He's the person they are named after.

Imagine if a flower were named after you. It could be based on your first, middle, or last name. What would the name of your flower be? _____

What part of the world would your flower be from?

What would be the story of how you introduced this flower to your own country? _____

On the back draw a picture of your flower.

Whether the Weather

What is the weather like today? _____

Do you like to go outside whether the weather is warm or cold? _____ Whether it is dry or wet? _____

Whether you live on a tropical island, or on a cold mountain, the weather in your area probably changes from time to time. And whether or not you have all the kinds of weather near you, you have probably travelled at least once to a place where the weather is different.

What is your favorite thing to do when the weather is:

Hot and Sunny: _____

Rainy: _____

Snowing: _____

Windy: _____

Thunderstorm: _____

Crisp and Cool: _____

Foggy: _____

On the back draw a picture of the weather today and say whether or not it is weather your like.

Dance

Do you like to dance? _____

Do you like to watch others dance? _____

What is your favorite kind of dance? _____

Different types of dance come from all over the world. Here are some of the most famous ones. After reading about them, rank them in order of your most favorite.

____ Ballet involves graceful moves, spins, leaps, and flexibility. Dancers have to hold difficult poses for several seconds. Female dancers wear point (toe) shoes and male dancers need strong muscles to lift their partners in the air.

____ Tap dancing developed in America in the 19th century when African and Irish dance styles were combined. Dancers wear shoes with metal on the toes and heels. Tapping their shoes in specific ways makes loud noises.

____ Breakdancing began in the 1980s in the Bronx, New York City. Moves include footwork, threading limbs through each other, flips, frozen poses, and the most famous move, spinning on your back on the floor.

____ Flamenco dancing comes from Spain. Dancers carry small percussion instruments called castanets in their hands. They tap their shoes on a hard floor to make noise as they dance. Women wear flowy skirts that they twirl.

____ Swing dancing involves fast motions where a couple swings around each other. Sometimes the man tosses the woman up in the air and she will land in a split!

On the back draw a picture of yourself dancing.

The Teddy Bear

Do you have a teddy bear at home? _____ Did you have one when you were younger? _____ What is/was your favorite stuffed toy? _____

Did you know that Teddy bears are named after one of America's most famous presidents? In 1902 President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt was out bear hunting. When he saw a bear cub he refused to shoot it. The story made the news and people began selling stuffed toy bears with round glasses and a "slouch" hat that looked like the ones President Roosevelt would wear.

Imagine someone created a stuffed animal toy named after you. What animal would it be? _____

What accessories would it have to show that it represents you? _____

Have you ever chosen to do something noble or selfless that others would consider an admirable act? What was it?

If you were famous, how might this act be remembered in toy form? _____

On the back, draw a picture of the toy named after you.

The Beach

What is your favorite thing to do at the beach?

Where do you prefer to swim?

Rank them first to last:

_____ ocean

_____ pool

_____ lake

_____ river

What makes a good beach?

Rank them first to last:

_____ white sand

_____ big waves

_____ warm water

_____ a boardwalk

But the most important thing for any beach is to be clean!

How can you help keep beaches clean?

- ✓ Leave nothing behind after a day at the beach
- ✓ Always clip six-pack soda plastic rings
- ✓ Don't dump liquids into storm drains
- ✓ Put a roll of compostable doggie bags in your beach bag and fill it with garbage each time you go to the beach

Don't forget your sunscreen!

Did you know that the sun hits you twice at the beach? Once from above, and once when it reflects off the water. So you need SPF protection even more at the beach than other times you are in the sun.

On the back, draw a picture of a perfect beach day.

Radio

Do you like to listen to the radio? _____

What is your favorite channel? _____

Most radio stations focus on:

- ✓ Music
- ✓ Talk shows
- ✓ News
- ✓ Sports

Which of these is your favorite to listen to? _____

What type of music/sport/etc. do you like the most?

- Guglielmo Marconi transmitted the first radio signal in 1901.
- The first commercial radio broadcasts began in 1920.
- The 1930s and 1940s were the “Golden Age” of radio, before television took over as the most popular form of home entertainment.

If you were to invent something that changed the way people communicate, what would it be? _____

Fun Fact:

Radio stations that begin with a K are usually west of the Mississippi, while those that begin with a W are usually east of the Mississippi.

If you had your own radio station, what letters would you give it?

What would it's nickname be? _____

What kind of station would it be? _____

Lighthouses

Have you ever visited a lighthouse? _____ Where was it?

Before modern guidance systems, lighthouses were crucial to preventing ships from crashing into rocky coastlines and small islands. How else would life be different before GPS?

Lighthouse Fun Facts

- The first lighthouse built in North America was in St. Augustine, Florida.
- The oldest existing (and still used) lighthouse in the USA is the Sandy Hook Lighthouse in New Jersey, built in 1764.
- At the end of the 19th Century, the USA had more lighthouses than any other country.
- On August 7, 1789, Congress placed lighthouses under federal control. In 1939, the Coast Guard took over operation of lighthouses.
- Today, many lighthouses are closing because they are no longer needed and are too expensive to maintain.

Would you enjoy being a lighthouse keeper? _____

Why or why not? _____

On the back of this page, draw a picture of a lighthouse.

Rollercoasters

Do you like going on rollercoasters? _____ What is your favorite rollercoaster? _____ What do you like about it? _____

Would you believe the first early rollercoaster was invented in the 15th century! Russians built giant wooden slides covered in ice that they rode on large ice blocks covered in straw, sliding up to 50 miles per hour. In the 18th century, Czarina Catherine the Great made a wooden version she could ride all year long. Would you rather ride a wooden rollercoaster, or an ice rollercoaster? _____ Why? _____

In 1827, people in Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania used to ride downhill at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour in railway cars that were used for mining coal. Do you think this was a safe trip? _____ The first official rollercoaster was invented in 1884 by LaMarcus Adna Thompson. It was called Switchback Gravity Railway and operated at Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York. It was powered by gravity and only moved 6 miles per hour. What do you think the first rollercoaster riders thought of this new invention? _____

In 1898 Edwin Prescott of Massachusetts invented the first vertical loop. Do you prefer rollercoasters that go upside down? _____ Why? _____

The oldest wooden rollercoaster still in operation was built in 1902!

On the back, design your own rollercoaster. Label its parts.