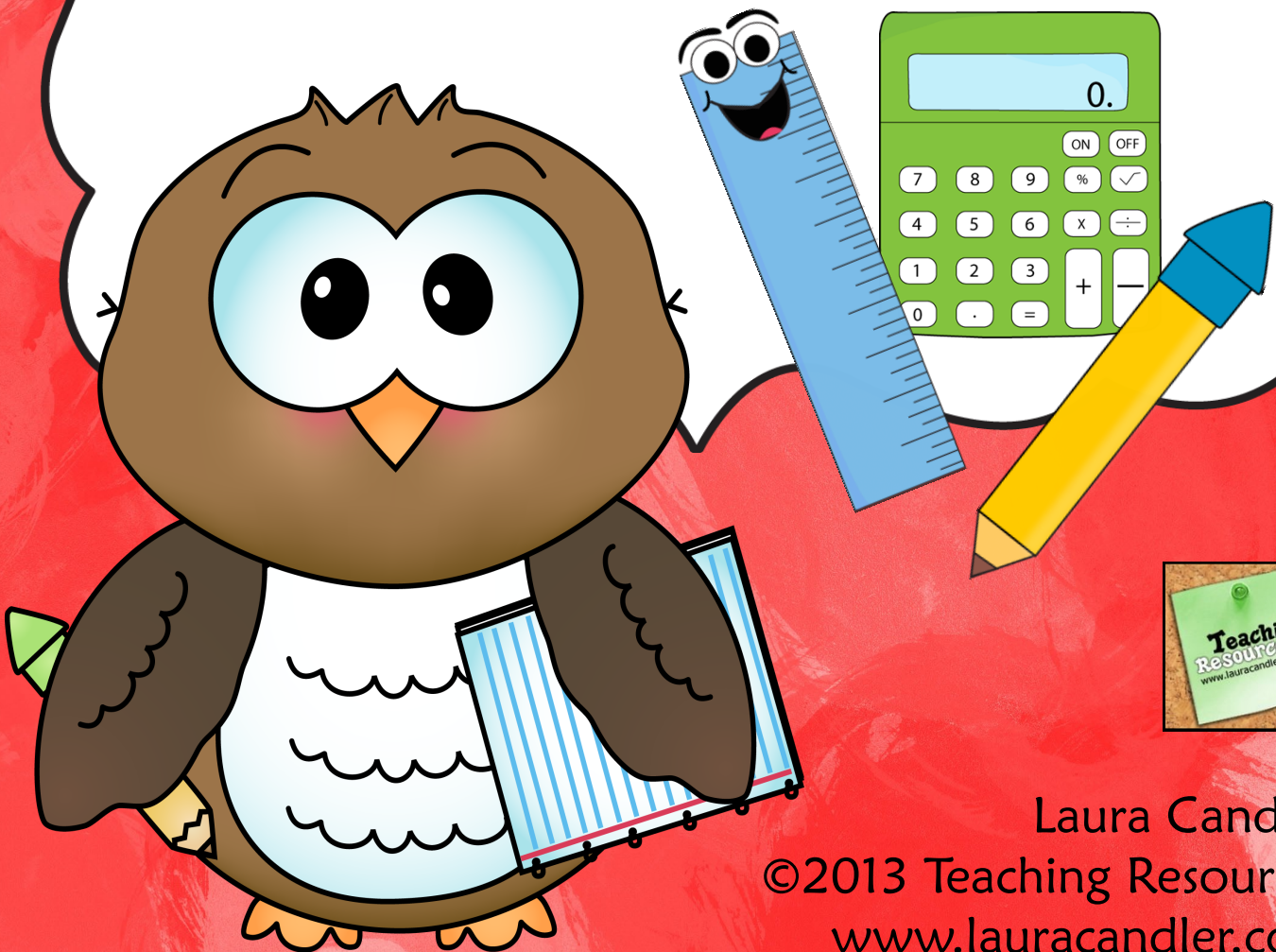


International Version

# Problem Solving Assessment

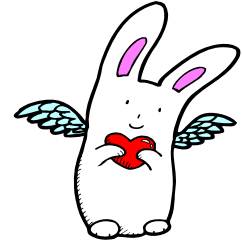
Math Pretest, Posttest, and  
Scoring Guide



Laura Candler  
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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the students and teachers listed below who field tested the word problems used in the Problem Solving Assessment Power Pack. Together we have created a wonderful tool for math teachers everywhere!



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Sharon Sensenich's Class  
Green Cove Springs, Florida, USA

Stacy Kasse's 3rd Grade Class  
Medford, New Jersey, USA

Suzann Falgione's 3rd Grade Class  
Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA

Jo-Ann Mumford's 4th Grade Class  
Brookfield, Nova Scotia, Canada

Laura Candler's 4th Grade Class  
Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA

Robin DiMartino's 3rd Grade Class  
Westminster, Maryland, USA

Stacy Lloyd's 2nd Grade Class  
Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA

Kathy Brewer's 6th Grade Math Classes  
Petersburg, New Jersey, USA

Kathy Sovine's 5th Grade Class  
Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA

Donna Casino's 6th Grade Class  
Schenectady, New York, USA

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Lincolnshire, Illinois, USA

Kathy Renfrew's Grade 5/6 Class  
Peacham, Vermont, USA

Jill Slayton's 5th Grade Class  
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Denice Dodge's 6th Grade Class  
Bethel, Pennsylvania, USA

Susie Highley's 6th Grade Enrichment Class  
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Pamela Reid's 2nd to 4th Grade Class  
Renfrew, Ontario, Canada

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## Copyright Free! Share it with a friend!

This **Problem Solving Assessment Power Pack** is available FREE at the Teaching Resources website ([www.lauracandler.com](http://www.lauracandler.com)). Feel free to pass it on to friends and coworkers, as long as the book is distributed at no cost to them. If you have been given a hard copy of this book, it's available in digital format by signing up for Laura Candler's bi-weekly newsletters on the Teaching Resources website. Enjoy this free resource, and visit [www.lauracandler.com](http://www.lauracandler.com) for more free educational materials!

## About the International Version

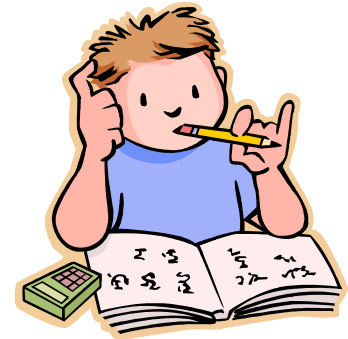
This version of the Problem Solving Assessment Power Pack is almost identical to the United States version. However, these math problems use metric measurements and spelling conventions commonly used outside of the United States.

# Problem Solving Assessment

## Power Pack Overview

### Power Pack Contents

- Assessment Overview.....Page 3
- How To Use the Assessments.....Page 4
- Pretest.....Page 8
- Pretest Answer Key.....Page 12
- Posttest.....Page 13
- Posttest Answer Key.....Page 17
- Solve and Write Page.....Page 18
- Assessment Results Form.....Page 19
- Daily Math Puzzler Program.....Page 20



### Assessment Pack Overview

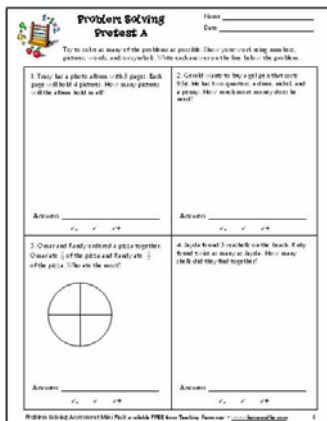
The Problem Solving Assessment Pack consists of two tests, a pretest and a posttest, designed to help you assess your students' problem-solving abilities. The pretest data will enable you to determine where to begin with your problem-solving instruction; the posttest data will help you track their progress later.

Not only will you be able to assess the problem-solving abilities of each student, you'll get an overall picture of your class's capabilities as a whole.

Assessment Level	Grade Level
A	3
B	4
C	5
D	6

**Test Format** - Each form of the test consists of four pages leveled A - D according to difficulty. Those letters correspond to the grade levels

displayed in the chart above, and they also correspond to the levels identified in the **Daily Math Puzzler (DMP)** program available from **Teaching Resources**. The test page layout is similar to the DMP activity page layout, with four problems to a page allowing plenty of room for students to show work and record their answers. Each problem includes an answer blank and a unique checkmark system for assessing the quality and correctness of each student's response.

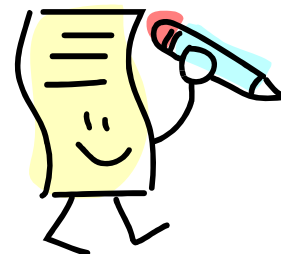


# Problem Solving Assessment

## Test Administration

### Test Page Selection

It is not necessary to administer all four pages of the test. You only need to use the two or three pages that are appropriate for your students. In some cases you may need to administer the entire test, but most teachers find a few pages to be sufficient. On the other hand, if you teach older students you may want to duplicate all four pages even though the first two are too easy. Students can gain confidence as they move through the levels, and they won't be so upset by missing the ones on Level C and D.



### Preparation

Duplicate one copy of the test for each student. If you want them to write explanations for each solution, you'll also need to duplicate a Solve and Write blackline for each page. However, you may find students to be overwhelmed by having to write narrative responses for every problem. Another alternative would be to select just one or two problems and ask students to write out an explanation for those test items.



Decide whether you will allow your students to use calculators on the test, and provide them if necessary. If your curriculum permits calculator use, it's recommended that you allow students to use calculators on these tests.

Answer	Explanation	Answer	Explanation

Solve and Write

### Test Administration

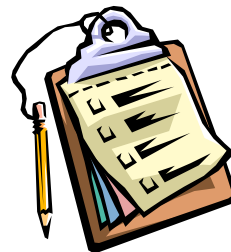
When introducing the first assessment, remind kids that this is just a pretest and some of the problems may get very difficult. If they have some idea of how to work the problem, they should give it a try. If they have no idea, they can leave it blank. Allow a large block of uninterrupted time for students to take the test. If students have difficulty reading the test items, provide test modifications as you normally would based on individual student needs.

# Problem Solving Assessment

## Interpreting Results

### Scoring the Assessments

You'll find Answer Keys directly following each test. When you score each student's test, you can simply mark each item as correct or incorrect. However, you may want to circle the check minus, check, or check plus to give you a more detailed record of student performance. Analyzing how your students attempted to solve the problems is frequently more useful than simply obtaining a raw percentage score of correct answers.



0	✓-	✓	✓+
Did not attempt to solve the problem	Attempted to solve problem, but the answer was incorrect	Answer was correct, but work was not shown or written explanation was confusing	Answer was correct, and labeled properly; work was shown or written explanation was clear

### Analyzing the Data

No matter what method you use, the Assessment Results form on Page 19 will provide a convenient place to compile and analyze your results. You'll need one copy for every two test levels you administer. Just fill in your students' names and circle the levels at the top of the columns. Then record a check or check plus for each problem they solved correctly.

To determine individual performance, tally the results by recording the number that each student solved correctly at the end of each row. To assess overall class performance, count the number of checks and check pluses in each column to see how many students solved each problem correctly.

Look for trends in the data. What level of performance is indicated by your overall results? At which level are most students scoring about 75% of the problems correctly on their own? Do most of your students miss the same problem? What strategies do they use when confronted with unusual problems or challenging math concepts?

# Problem Solving Assessment

## Data-driven Instruction

Now what? After administering the Pretest, you have a clearer picture of your students' problem-solving abilities. By analyzing the methods they attempted to use, you can determine where to begin your problem-solving instruction. But where do you go from here?



### The Daily Math Puzzler Program

In order to learn to solve problems effectively, students need daily exposure to a wide variety of math word problems. They also need explicit instruction in how to use a calculator effectively and how to apply appropriate strategies to math problems. The **Daily Math Puzzler (DMP)** program offers all three components. The books are available on four instructional levels, A - D, which correspond to the grade levels shown. The program is designed to be used just 15 minutes a day, yet it can result in dramatic gains in student achievement. (Note: International Versions are not yet available for all Daily Math Puzzler books. However, the others include MS Word templates so that problems with Imperial System measurements can be modified. More International Versions are on the way!)

Puzzler Pack	Grade Levels
Level A	2, 3 and 4
Level B	3, 4 and 5
Level C	4, 5, and 6
Level D	5, 6 and 7

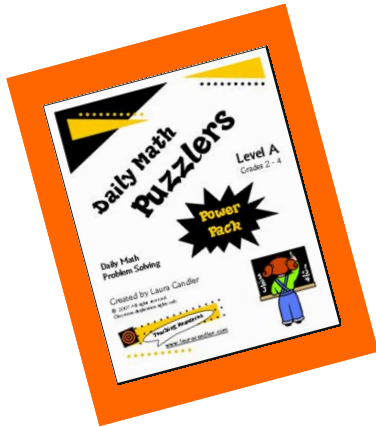
Using the Pretest will help you determine the appropriate instructional level for individual students as well as your class as a whole. **In most cases, the appropriate instructional level for your students will be the level at which they are answering about 50% correctly on the Pretest.** This level is challenging enough to keep them interested, but not so challenging that students are frustrated.

### Administer the Posttest

At the end of the year, administer the Posttest and compare the results to student performance on the Pretest. You'll be amazed at how much progress they can make with just 15 minutes a day of instruction!

# Daily Math Puzzler Program

## DMP Program Levels



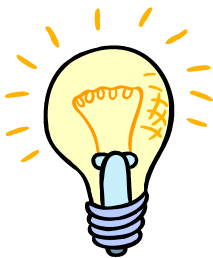
The Daily Math Puzzler Power Packs are leveled according to difficulty (A - D). Using a system of letters instead of grade levels gives you great flexibility when implementing the program. Each student activity page is coded with a letter and a number, so you always know which worksheet set you are currently using. Each Power Pack also comes with different calculator lessons, quizzes, enrichment games, and a unique problem-solving introduction. You can mix and match the lessons and activities to meet the needs of your students.

### How can you use the different levels to your advantage?

1. **Gradual Implementation** - When you first introduce the program, start with the lowest level that's appropriate for your grade level. For example, a 4th grade teacher may want to start with Level A for the first few weeks to ensure that students are successful as they learn the basics. Then move them up to Level B and later to Level C.



2. **Differentiation** - Even though the Daily Math Puzzler program was designed for whole class instruction, it can be used in small groups or stations to differentiate instruction. One method is to pair students with a buddy performing at the same instructional level and use one of the cooperative learning strategies described in the books. Within one class you might have several students on Level A, a few on Level C, and the majority on Level B. If your math class is structured around small group instruction and stations, you have even more options for using different levels. Have students complete the worksheets while at a station, and use small group instruction time to work with each level. See [Math Stations for Middle Grades](#) at [www.lauracandler.com](http://www.lauracandler.com) for more information on math stations.





# Problem Solving Pretest A

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. Tracy has a photo album with 5 pages. Each page will hold 4 pictures. How many pictures will the album hold in all?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

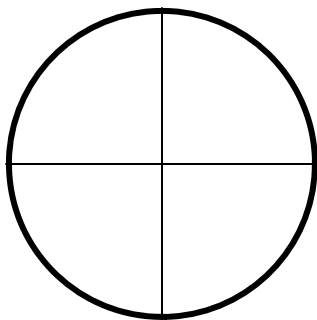
✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Gerald wants to buy a gel pen that costs 95¢. He has two quarters, a dime, and a penny. How much more money does he need?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. Omar and Randy ordered a pizza together. Omar ate  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the pizza and Randy ate  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the pizza. Who ate the most?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Jayda found 5 seashells on the beach. Ruby found twice as many as Jayda. How many shells did they find together?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+





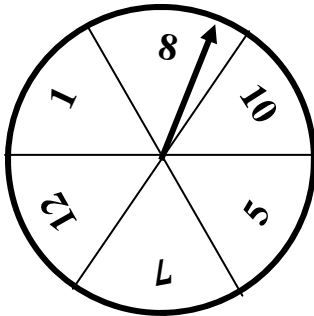
# Problem Solving Pretest B

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. On the game spinner below, what is the probability of spinning a number less than 8?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-   ✓   ✓+

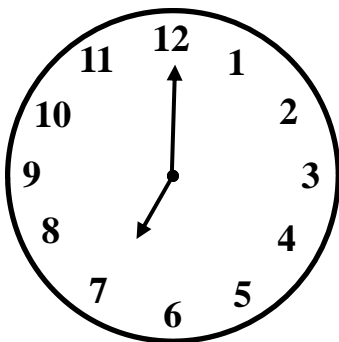
2. Portia's mother took Portia and her two friends to the movies. What was the total cost of all four tickets?

Movie Tickets	
Adult	\$6.25
Children	\$4.50

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-   ✓   ✓+

3. Lizzy started babysitting at quarter after five. She went home at the time shown below. How long did she babysit?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-   ✓   ✓+

4. On Saturday, Reggie had 16 minutes remaining on his cell phone plan. He used  $\frac{1}{2}$  of his minutes calling his mother. He talked to his friend for another 5 minutes. After he made those two calls, how many minutes did he have left?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-   ✓   ✓+



# Problem Solving Pretest C

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. The 145 fifth graders at Wayne Elementary will be taking a field trip. The school needs to rent buses for the trip. If each bus holds 42 students, how many buses does the school need to rent?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Cynthia downloaded some songs from the Internet. Brenda downloaded 18 songs, which was three times as many as Cynthia. How many songs did both girls download together?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. Jeremy created a garden that measured  $5 \times 7.5$  metres. How many 10-metre rolls of fencing will he need to buy to completely surround the garden? ?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Maria mixed a batch of punch for the class party. Her recipe called for 3.5 litres orange juice, 750 mL lemonade and 4 litres ginger ale. How many 250-mL servings does the recipe make?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+



# Problem Solving Pretest D

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. Gala Farms sells a 3 kg bag of apples for \$2.85. Golden Orchard sells a 5 kg bag for \$4.35. Which brand of apples is the better buy? What is the cost per kilogram of the cheaper brand?

Brand: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Two teams of students grew pumpkins for the local fair. The weights of the pumpkins were recorded below. Which team had the higher average pumpkin weight? What was the average weight of their pumpkins?

**Pumpkin Weights**

Team 1	Team 2
24.5 kg	21.6 kg
36 kg	38.3 kg
26.65 kg	25.6 kg
30.09 kg	33.7 kg

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Average: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. In Wesley's class, 9 students ride the bus, 5 students walk to school, and 6 students are dropped off by their parents. What percent of the students ride the bus?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Sofia is buying lace to sew around the edge of a round tablecloth. The diameter of the tablecloth is 155 cm. If lace is sold by the metre, what's the smallest number of whole metres she must buy to have enough lace for the tablecloth?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

# Pretest Answer Key

Assessment Level	Test Item	Answer	Math Concepts
<b>Level A</b>	1	20 pictures	Repeated Addition or Multiplication
	2	34¢	Money; Subtraction
	3	Randy	Fractions
	4	15 shells	Addition; Multiplication
<b>Level B</b>	1	3/6 or 1/2	Probability
	2	\$19.75	Multiplication; Money
	3	1 hour 45 min	Elapsed Time
	4	3 minutes	Fractions; Subtraction; Time
<b>Level C</b>	1	4 buses	Division with Remainders
	2	24 songs	Multiplication; Logical Thinking
	3	3 rolls	Geometry; Measurement, Decimals
	4	33 servings	Measurement, Fractions
<b>Level D</b>	1	Golden; 87¢	Money; Division
	2	Team 2; 29.8 kg	Decimals, Data & Statistics
	3	45%	Percents
	4	5 metres	Geometry, Measurement, Fractions





# Problem Solving Posttest A

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. Taylor has a photo album with 4 pages. Each page will hold 6 pictures. How many pictures will the album hold in all?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

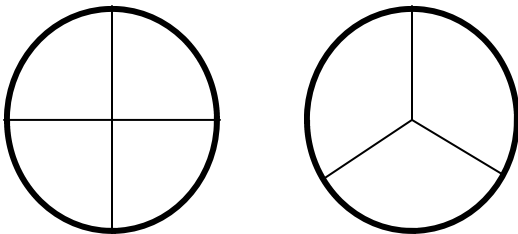
✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Bob wants to buy a gel pen that costs 87¢. He has one quarter, two dimes, a nickel, and a penny. How much more money does he need?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. Shelton and Gary each ordered a pizza. Shelton ate  $\frac{1}{4}$  of his pizza. Gary ate  $\frac{1}{3}$  of his pizza. Who ate the most pizza?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Megan found 3 seashells on the beach. Emily found 4 more than Megan. How many shells did they find together?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+



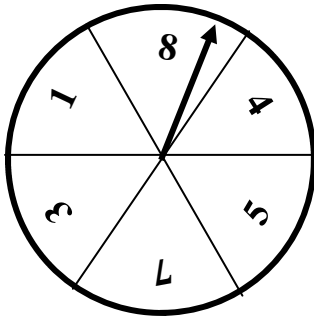
# Problem Solving Posttest B

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. Ronald needs to spin a number greater than 5 to win. On the game spinner below, what is the probability of him winning?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

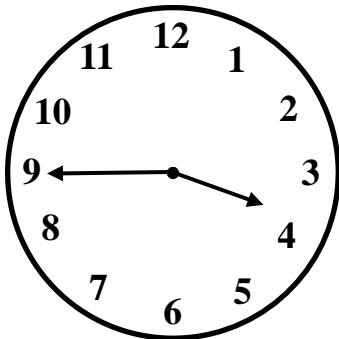
2. Ashley's father took her and her brother to the movies. What was the total cost of the three tickets?

Movie Tickets	
Adult	\$7.25
Children	\$3.50

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. Sarah started reading her book at quarter after two. She finished it at time shown below. How long did it take her to read the book?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. On Saturday, Ryan had 18 minutes remaining on his cell phone plan. He used  $\frac{1}{2}$  of his minutes calling his friend. He talked to his dad for another 4 minutes. After he made those two calls, how many minutes did he have left?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+



# Problem Solving Posttest C

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. The 175 fifth graders at Thompson Elementary will be taking a field trip. The school needs to rent buses for the trip. If each bus holds 52 students, how many buses does the school need to rent?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Victoria downloaded some songs from the Internet. Olivia downloaded 20 songs, which was four times as many as Victoria. How many songs did both girls download together?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. Zachary created a garden that measured  $7 \times 6.5$  metres. How many 8-metre rolls of fencing will he need to buy to completely surround the garden?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Lily mixed a batch of punch for the class party. Her recipe called for 2.5 litres orange juice, 750 mL lemonade and 3 litres ginger ale. How many 250-mL servings does the recipe make?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

✓-    ✓    ✓+



# Problem Solving Posttest D

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Try to solve as many of the problems as possible. Show your work using numbers, pictures, words, and/or symbols. Write each answer on the line below the problem.

1. Bargain Deli's 1.5 kilogram package of sliced ham sells for \$6.30. Deli Market's 2 kilogram package of sliced ham sells for \$7.70. Which brand of ham is the better buy? What is the cost per kilogram of the cheaper brand?

Brand: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

2. Two teams of students grew pumpkins for the county fair. The weights of the pumpkins were recorded below. Which team had the higher average pumpkin weight? What was the average weight of their pumpkins?

**Pumpkin Weights**

Team 1	Team 2
27.5 kg	16.4 kg
49 kg	58.3 kg
22.65 kg	35.6 kg
30.05 kg	18.46 kg

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Average: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

3. In Adrian's class, 7 students ride the bus, 4 students walk to school, and 9 students are dropped off by their parents. What percent of the students walk to school?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+

4. Alexa is buying lace to sew around the edge of a round tablecloth. The diameter of the tablecloth is 125 cm. If lace is sold by the metre, what's the smallest number of whole metres she must buy to have enough lace for the tablecloth?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
✓-    ✓    ✓+



# Posttest Answer Key

Assessment Level	Test Item	Answer	Math Concepts
<b>Level A</b>	1	24 pictures	Repeated Addition or Multiplication
	2	36¢	Money; Subtraction
	3	Gary	Fractions
	4	10 shells	Addition; Multiplication
<b>Level B</b>	1	2/6 or 1/3	Probability
	2	\$14.25	Multiplication; Money
	3	1 hr 30 min	Elapsed Time
	4	5 minutes	Fractions; Subtraction; Time
<b>Level C</b>	1	4 buses	Division with Remainders
	2	25 songs	Multiplication; Logical Thinking
	3	4 rolls	Geometry; Measurement, Decimals
	4	25 servings	Measurement, Fractions
<b>Level D</b>	1	Deli Market; \$3.85	Money; Division
	2	Team 1; 32.3 kg	Decimals, Data & Statistics
	3	20%	Percents
	4	4 metres	Geometry, Measurement, Fractions





# Assessment Results



Class Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

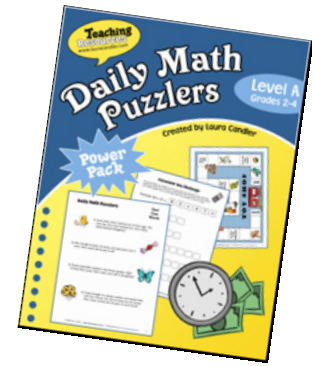
Name	Level: A B C D				Level: A B C D				Totals
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
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<b>Totals</b>									

# Daily Math Puzzler Program

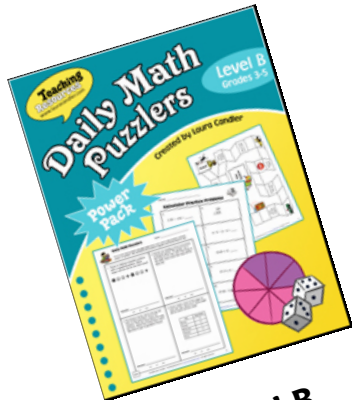
## Teacher Testimonials

In my 28 plus years of teaching the upper grades (4-8) in rural, suburban, and urban settings, I have not found a collection of word problems that actually appealed to my students. The Daily Math Puzzlers have challenged my students without frustrating them. They feel successful even if they do not achieve the correct solution; yet they strive to meet success with the next day's problem. Bravo to Laura Candler!

~ Kathy Brewer, Seaville, New Jersey



**Level A**  
Grades 2 - 4



**Level B**  
Grades 3 - 5

I love the Daily Math Puzzler Power Pack! The Puzzlers set the tone for our day by helping to focus and organize our minds. I honestly think that my students would be lost without a Daily Math Puzzler. Problem solving is not as "scary" to my sixth graders as it once was. I am grateful to you for prompting me to tell my students to think of word problems as brain teasers or puzzles. I don't know why I hadn't thought of that before!

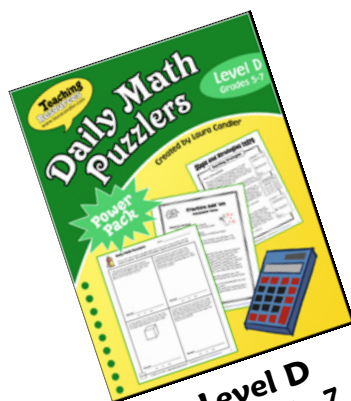
~ Betsy Clark, Evant, Texas

The Daily Math Puzzler program is easy to implement in any classroom. The directions are easy for students to read. The problems have an area for the solution to be worked out, and there is a quick assessment at the bottom. When reviewing the answers with my students, they begin to ask questions that lead to higher order thinking skills. I believe that these will help my students improve their state test scores. My students enjoy working on these puzzles and look forward to them.

~ Donna Casino, New York



**Level C**  
Grades 4 - 6



**Level D**  
Grades 5 - 7

I just implemented Laura's Math Puzzlers, and after two weeks I can already see changes in my class. They are picking up good habits like underlining key words, and writing complete answers already! Each day when we take out the sheet, they know what to do and enjoy doing it. I think part of the fun comes from the program's title "Math Puzzlers". Somehow, they seem to think puzzles are way more fun than math word problems. I also have to say that the breadth of topics and strategies covered in just one weekly sheet is impressive. It is a great way to keep math topics fresh, and have kids apply them to real situations. Each problem could be solved using different strategies, so it has been great for my kids to see all the different ways they could have approached the problem.

~ Dawn, Minnesota

Learn more about Daily Math Puzzlers online at [www.lauracandler.com/dailymathpuz.htm](http://www.lauracandler.com/dailymathpuz.htm)



Teaching Resources  
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Laura Candler

Classroom Book Clubs

Character Bio Reports

Analyzing Character Traits

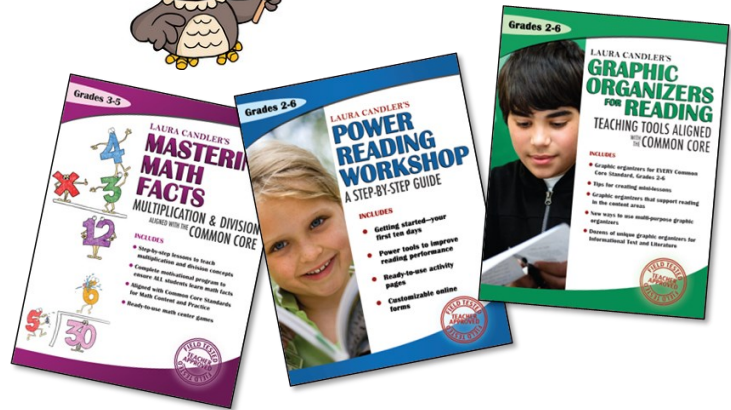
Powerful Poetry Combo

Plural Noun Showdown

Sentence Go Round

Writing Powerful Poetry

Customary Measurement  
Conversions



Geometry: Exploring the Basics

Math Stations for Middle Grades (3-8)

Polygon Explorations

Talking Sticks Discussions (CCSS Aligned)

Teaching Multiple Intelligence Theory

Place Value Spinner Games

Fraction Spinner Games

Simplify and Snap Fraction Game

Order of Operations Bingo

Seasonal  
Teaching Packs

October

November

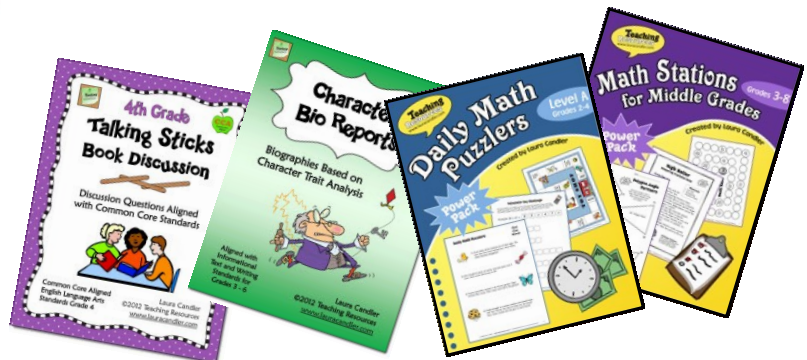
December

January

February (Free!)

March

April





## Thanks for downloading this freebie!

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