

Language Arts Quickie Lessons

Rubric Rating

Skill: Student organizes information effectively and clearly.

Have each student select an interesting story from the newspaper and rate the article using a rubric. A rubric (ROO-brick) is a scale created to judge something using different categories. A rubric for a newspaper article could include the following categories: Is the article organized? Is it fair? Does it have supporting details? A satisfactory closing paragraph? Have each student rate the story in each category (you can add categories) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. Then they can write a reason for their ratings. Have them compare stories and ratings.

Something Good and New

Skill: Student writes concise summary.

The news is often about the troubles in the world. Is there any good news as well? Encourage students to find a story of good news. What makes the news good? Does the story have any impact on their lives? Have them write a brief summary of the good news and share it with your class.

Comic Players

Skill: Student speaks with understanding and for various audiences or purposes including informal presentations.

The comic strips are really like little plays. Students can practice reading aloud with expression by reading the dialogue in the comics. Assign parts and have the strips read aloud in your classroom. Have fun and encourage students to really ham it up!

Comics and You

Skill: Students identifies details and uses information to construct meaning and make inferences.

Have students look through the comic strips in today's newspaper for a character that is most like them. They can make a list of the things they have in common as well as the differences.

Fun with Nouns

Skill: Students correctly identify parts of speech – nouns.

Review the definition of a noun with your class. Then have them select a story from the front page of today's paper and find the nouns. They can underline the people in red, the places in blue and the things in green. Then make a list of nouns you can find looking around the classroom.

“Jazz Up” and “Pair Up” the Headlines

Skill: Review antonyms, synonyms and homonyms

Have students define antonyms, synonyms and homonyms and then give a few examples. Students select five headlines that could use some “jazzing up” and then rewrite them using synonyms for nouns or verbs. Then “pair up” headlines into sets of antonyms, synonyms and homonyms.

Listen Up

Skill: Develop listening and reading comprehension skills

Read an interesting story from the newspaper and ask students (individually or in teams) to answer questions based on the 5W's and H (who, what, when, where, why and how) of the story. Stress attention to detail, as well as the gist of the story. Who recalls the most?

Headline Meaning

Skill: Predict, confirm and understand the meaning of words.

Have students study and then circle the headlines that have more than one meaning and identify the possible other meaning. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Context Clues**Skill: Use context and/or dictionary to determine meanings of vocabulary in content areas and literature.**

Have students choose three news or feature stories of interest from the newspaper. Using a black marker or pen have them mark out five words in each story (have them make a list of the words on a separate sheet, no proper nouns). Exchange articles between students and have them replace the words with ones that make sense. Then compare with the original words. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Reference Resources**Skill: Select and use appropriate resources for a given task.**

After students have selected a news story, display ad, an editorial and a sports story have them list the facts from each and then identify which reference source (Encyclopedia, Telephone Directory, Atlas, Dictionary, Newspaper or other source) could be used to verify each fact. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Court Opinion**Skill: Draw conclusions and make generalizations supported by facts.**

Have students carefully read a story about a court case and then list all the major facts and references to points of law. Then they describe the court decision in one or two sentences, give their opinions of the case and whether they agree or disagree. If the case is not yet decided, how would they rule? (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Think Positive**Skill: Student understands that word choice, figurative language or sentence structure may determine mood or meaning of text.**

Challenge students to make a list of people in today's newspaper that they believe are positive thinkers. Then they can make a list of negative thinkers. Have them compare the people on both lists. Who is more successful, happy, productive and satisfied? They can write their conclusions.

Sportsmanship**Skill: Student forms his/her own ideas about what has happened in a text and uses specific information from the text to support these ideas.**

All athletes are encouraged to be good sports and to play fair. Have students make a list of characteristics that a good sport should have. They can use today's newspaper to find an example of an athlete demonstrating good sportsmanship and explain why they think so. What athletes are not good sports? Why do you think so?

Sentence Quickie Skill: Sentence structure

Have students find examples of declarative, exclamatory and interrogative sentences in the paper.

Reading Quickie Skill: Reading for enjoyment

Give students time to read each day for no other reason than enjoyment.

Social Studies Quickie Lessons

Local, State, National, and World

Skill: Students Differentiates between local, national and international.

Students can do an interesting analysis of where news is happening as follows: Have them look at the front page of the newspaper and group the news that appears there. How many of the stories are about your state, the nation or the world? Discuss where most of the news is coming from and why. Locate the places on a map. Define some of the characteristics of that place and it's people.

Character Issue

Skill: Students understand the qualifications of leadership.

Americans are often thinking about the character of their elected politicians. Have students skim the Help Wanted ads in the newspaper and circle all the jobs that need a person of character as an important part of the job requirements.

Accentuate the Positive

Skill: Student is able to articulate a positive self-image

Believe it or not, most students describe themselves as having a positive self-image and as happy, responsible and self-reliant. Share this with your students and ask them to find a person in the news that fits each of those categories (and other positive traits). Then have them write a description of themselves. Are they positive or negative (or some of both)?

Random Acts of Kindness

Skill: Students understand personal responsibility and responsible behavior.

Have students look at the day's newspaper, choose 10 people from the stories and rate these people on a 1-to-10 scale (10 being best) to measure their kindness. Which were easiest to find and why? Discuss where historical figures rate on this scale.

Conflict Resolution

Skill: Describe how negotiations, mediations and arbitration are used to resolve conflicts.

Follow the stories on U.S foreign policy related to negotiations, mediations and arbitration throughout the world (Middle East, N. Ireland, etc.). Prepare an organizational outline of all attempts by the U.S. to intervene in these issues. Conclude with a detailed report.

Human Rights

Skill: Understand the meaning of human rights as it applies to U.S. foreign policy.

Search the newspaper for examples of situations (in the U.S. or abroad) where human rights are an issue or have been abused. How is our president or congress dealing with these human rights issues and abuses? Are there other organizations addressing these issues and abuses?

Individual Right and the Common Good

Skill: Identify situations which the exercise of individual rights may conflict with the common good.

Find 3-5 articles or photographs that identify individual rights that may be conflicting with the common good (ex.- individuals right to smoke vs. public health). What is the constitutional amendment or article guarantees individual rights in each situation? What common good may be violated. What might be a fair balance between the individual's rights and the common good?

Older and Wiser

Skill: Students is able to understand that different parts of the population have special needs and issues.

Older people are special in many ways and have unique needs and assets. Discuss with your class some of the stereotypes about the elderly. Then have them search the paper to see how older people are represented. Discuss the stories that they find and how the stereotypes are found or proven false in the stories. What are the concerns of the elderly (aging, health, death, money, etc.)?

Geography Hunt

Skill: Students understand geographic concepts.

Have students go on a geography scavenger hunt to find a foreign country and city, a U.S. city, town or neighborhood, a body of water, a country on another continent, a city in a direction (north, south, east or west) of where they live and other geographic concepts.

Mapping

Skill: Match maps with real places or photographs.

Find stories and pictures of three U.S destinations and three in foreign countries. Locate each place on your classroom map or globe. What is the approximate distance from the closest, farthest? What is the latitude and longitude? What is the place known for?

Law of the Land

Skill: Identify how local, state and national laws are made.

Students research newspaper stories on local, state and national legislation that are being enacted or is pending. What effect will the law have? If pending, will the law pass? Describe the process of legislation for one of the laws.

Other Social Studies Quickie Lessons

Analyzing the news, what are the most important concerns in the world, the nation, your community, in your life? Which one(s) concern you most and what can you do about them?

Look in today's newspaper; identify the name of leaders, what country they represent and their leadership roles.

Students read the newspaper for at least a two-week period. Have them list the people continually in the news. Who are they? Why are they in the news? Collect photos of the newsmakers and do a picture quiz of who they are, where they are from, and why they are in the news.

Students develop a glossary of terms, people, events, and places used in the newspaper that are unfamiliar to them.

Cut out a comic strip and eliminate the writing in the balloons and write a new story.

Have students read the comics and make headlines above their favorite comic. Have students read their headline and ask others to identify which comic the headline applies to.

Identify, clip and categorize news stories that reflect good, bad, and humorous news (or other traits). What types of events have you included in each category? What types of events appear continually in the news? Select one subject or event and classify news stories related to the subject.

Find examples of factual, interpretive, speculative, promotional and propaganda stories in the paper. Rewrite one of these types of stories into another type.

Find examples of articles that discuss what may happen as a result of an event. Develop a list of predictive statements (an oil embargo will lead to higher gasoline prices).

Young people of ten feel they receive unfavorable press. Analyze news stories on youth over a period of time and graph your results based on good, bad, or neutral news.

Identify problems and list them in the order of importance in your community, region, state or nation. What are possible solutions to these problems?

Identify community organizations in the news. What are the purposes of the organization? How do they contribute to the community? What is your personal view of the organizations?

Find a current national or international story that will effect your local community or state. What effect will it have? How should the community respond?

What evidence do you find in the newspaper of how your community is changing and growing and what the traditions are?

List products advertised in the newspaper that are from foreign countries. What countries are they from and are more from one particular country?

Identify customs and traditions reflected in the news. Are these practices linked to heritage, explain?

Find articles that represent “man vs. nature” and “nature vs. man.” Create a display on the interdependencies between human beings and nature.

In newspaper articles, identify cultural differences between foreign countries and ours. Make a categorized list of cultural differences by country.

Discuss what is meant by the “norms” of society. Have students find articles with examples of behavior that deviates from the norm and discuss them.

Create a community collage of articles showing the many aspects of their community.

Make a “Good News” bulletin board each week as the starting point for classroom discussion and sharing of good news of the students.

Science Quickie Lessons

Environment and Technology

Skill: Describe the relationship between technology and the environment.

Student finds articles and photos in the newspaper that illustrate aspects of water, air and land pollution that are related to technology that improves our lives. Have them determine what are the short and long-term consequences of the pollution described and offer suggests for preventive or corrective methods to deal with the problem.

Environment Editorial:

Skill: Relate the importance of the earth’s ocean environment to the future of mankind and the quality of life.

Have students clip at least on article on each of these topics: Ocean foods, research & medicine, ocean pollution, offshore drilling or fuel refineries, and ocean recreation. Based on the

information read in these articles, students write an editorial on the importance of the ocean environment to the future of mankind.

Catch the Wave

Skill: Describe and calculate the characteristics of a wave (wavelength, crest, amplitude, frequency).

Find the radio station listing in the paper and make a list of the frequencies they transmit. Using the formula $V = \lambda N$ calculate the wavelength of each station. N = frequency in cycles per second. λ = wavelength in meters. V = velocity of e-m waves per second (three hundred million m/sec).

Energy Sources

Skill: Classify energy sources as renewable, nonrenewable and/or inexhaustible.

Have students find five examples of energy sources from articles in the newspaper. Have them classify each as renewable, nonrenewable and or inexhaustible. Write a brief essay describing events that can lead to an energy crisis and give possible solutions.

Safe Responses

Skill: Identify safe and appropriate responses to a variety of hazardous and emergency situations.

Looking at articles about home or business fires, determine if combustion or chemicals (or other reasons) were the cause of the fire. Did conditions that could have been prevented, such as improper storage or handling, lead to these fires. What preventive measures could/should have been taken by the property owners?

Simple Machines

Skill: Identify simple machines

Have students find ads or photos that incorporate aspects of simple machines: levers, pulleys, inclined planes, wedges and screw. Also look for compound machines.

Other Science Quickie Lessons

Pull science stories daily for future science projects. You will usually find 1-5 significant science stories in the paper every day. Discuss one story briefly every day.

Find articles about natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and flooding? Study the causes of these disasters. What factors make the disaster worse? Take action to help the victims by collecting food, raising money, write letters of support or other activities.

Have students collect and analyze newspaper articles and ads related to topics of alcohol, tobacco or drugs. Have students write stories/editorials, and design ads against using these substances.

Have students read articles and columns that inform the public about new or proposed health and safety laws then summarize the laws and write an editorial expressing their view.

Students can find articles on new scientific or medical breakthroughs. Discuss how these breakthroughs are likely to affect our lives. How has science changed the lives of people since our nation began, last 50 years, last 10 years?

Find stories of accidents such as fires, poisoning, drowning, etc. Discuss and/or write about safety rules and other ways that they can prevent accidents.

Have students collect articles on diet and exercise programs. What claims do these programs make? Do students agree with these claims?

Students can create a collage on progress in science or current science topics in the news.

Have students locate articles related to different climates around the country and world. Have them identify the effect climate has on the way people live.

Using the daily weather map discuss all the elements that cause weather (highs, lows, temperature, fronts). Also discuss tides, phases of the moon, precipitation, sun rise and set, found on the map.

Look at the weather map daily and compare the prediction to the actual weather. Prepare a graph comparing the predictions to the actual weather.

In articles find agencies or organizations that have a goal of protecting the environment. Have the students analyze the effort of these agencies or organizations and the degree to which they appear to be succeeding. They might also contact them or visit their web site to learn more.

Research a current crisis headlining in the paper such as the energy crisis, famine, overpopulation, global warming. After collecting stories and information, have students propose possible solutions to the crisis.

Identify countries that are at war. Have students determine to what extent scientific factors (natural resources, climate, overpopulation, etc.) are involved in the conflict, if at all.

Have students find articles on population growth and/or decline. What effects do advances in medical technology or population control policies have on population growth and/or decline. Have them write an article on how unchecked population growth might affect their lives, the lives of their children and/or the lives of people living in underdeveloped nations.

Have students examine stories related to the potential extinction of different species around the world. Have them present their findings as a news or feature story or an editorial (use graphs too).

Students collect articles about various sources of energy (light, petroleum products, water, geothermal energy, radioactive sources, wood, wind, etc.) and report with chart that distinguishes between renewable and nonrenewable energy sources.

Have students locate, read and summarize newspaper articles on production, use and conservation of energy.

Students find stories on major technological breakthroughs and then do research to trace the scientific developments that led to these advances.

Have students find articles and/or ads with products where science was important to its development. How has that product reduced societies work load, improved worker efficiency and performance or improved the quality of peoples lives.

Locate articles on chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, etc., and have students do a summary.

Create a classroom bulletin board with newspaper articles, graphs, and photos about people, events and places in the news—all related to science.

Have students identify news about practical applications related to science they are studying.

Students read article on predicted events such as meteor showers, eclipses, tidal flooding, etc. They can research and then observe (personally or on TV) and then write an article on their findings.

Help students see the real-world application of science by having them find items in the paper related to topics in their science course.

Have students examine newspaper ads and articles to identify at least 10 products that were not produced 20 years ago. Discuss what scientific developments or discoveries made the new products possible. How have these new products and scientific developments changed our present lifestyle?

In selecting 5-10 science articles from the newspaper, have students evaluate the proportion of “good” news and “bad” news reported.

Have students list major science-related problems facing today’s society. Assuming it is 100 years from now; have them write about how the problems were solved.

Find a local or national issue related to science that citizens hold a variety of opinions on. Research the issue in teams and prepare a presentation that outlines a course of action. Take a class poll to see which group made its case most effectively.

Have students find common measurements in the newspaper and convert them to metric measurements.

Inches x 25.4 = millimeters

Feet x .3048 = meters

Yards x .9144 = meters

Miles x 1.609 = kilometer

Square yard x .836 = square meters

Quarts x .946 = liters

Ounces x 28.349 = grams

Pounds x .453 = kilograms

Fahrenheit $-32 \div 1.8 =$ Celsius

Math Quickie Lessons

Mean, Median, Mode

Skill: Student applies the concept of mean, median and mode.

Have students use the weather map (you may want to discuss weather for science and locations, climate and culture for soc. studies) information in the newspaper to list the high temperature for seven cities in the U.S. or the world. They should add the numbers and divide by seven to find the average or mean. Then they should list the temperatures from the highest to the lowest and find the number that is in the middle (the fourth one) to find the median. Are any of the temperatures the same? Ask them to identify the number that came up the most often. That temperature is the mode.

Math Is All Around

Skill: Student identifies math concepts in real-world applications.

How many math concepts can your students find in today’s newspaper? Have students skim the paper to see how many of the following they can find: age, time, date, amount, distance, money, or percentage (or other math concepts, whole numbers, fractions, decimals, formulas, etc.).

Fraction Parts Scavenger Hunt

Skill: Student understands fractional parts and conversion to decimals and percentages.

Fractions can be found everywhere in life. Have students find these in today’s paper:

A fraction that is more than $\frac{2}{10}$; $\frac{2}{3}$ of a comic strip; a store giving $\frac{1}{4}$ off; an ad larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ page; a team that has won over $\frac{1}{2}$ of its games; a picture that is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a page; a stock that gained or lost $\frac{7}{8}$ of a point. Now convert them into decimals and percentages.

Cost of Living

Skill: Student selects the appropriate operation to solve a problem.

Have students use the House for Sale ads to find 5-10 houses. They can list the houses in order of least to most expensive and compare them. What does the most expensive house have that the least does not? If they put 20% down on the most expensive house, how much will they need to borrow to buy the house? If they take out a 30-year loan, how many months will it take to pay for the house? Advanced – create an algebraic formula to determine the monthly payments based on current interest rates. How much is interest on the loan and how much is principal (equity). Find an amortization chart in the Friday home guide or other source to check if the formula works.

Buying Advertising

Skill: Student uses estimation strategies to predict results.

Discuss with students the fact that because newspapers are widely read, advertising is a cost-effective way to make people aware of a product or service. Have them suppose a full page of advertising is \$5,000. They can find 5 ads of different sizes in the newspaper and estimate how much each one would cost based on the \$5,000-per-page price. Then have them check their estimate by measuring the square inches of the page, the square inches of the ads, divide to determine the actual percentage of the ad on the page and multiply \$5,000 by the percentage to get a final cost for the ad.

Max Out

Skill: Students will practice their computation skills using large numbers.

Using number from the front page (or other pages if all numbers cannot be found) of today's newspaper, the students goal is to create the largest number (variation could be smallest number). The directions are to find the numbers and compute as instructed (solve a on separate sheet): a decimal number (or percentage), multiply it by a three-digit number, divide that number by a two-digit number, then add a number of your choice and finally subtract a prime number. (Example: $.70 \times 367 \div 24 + 2000 - 455 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$.) The student with the largest number wins.

Algebraic Problem Solving

Skill: Translate word phrases and sentences into algebraic expressions and equations.

Choose an item from the classified section (automobiles, refrigerators, boats, housing, etc.) and have students create a word problem involving algebraic equations. For examples, an automobile gets 30 miles per gallon. How many miles will it go on ten gallons? (Thirty equals "x" divided by ten.). If a car sells for \$6,000, how much cash would be required for a 5% down payment? (Five percent times \$6,000 equals "x.") Have students work their own problems and then trade with another student to work their problem.

Installment Plan

Skill: Compute the actual cost of an item purchased on an installment plan.

Find an automobile you like in the classified or AutoWeekend sections. If you are approved for a 12% three-year car loan, based on the price of the car, how much will you spend over the three years? How much per month? Advanced – create an algebraic formula for the amount of interest that you will pay.

Other Math Quickie Lessons

Have students find 5 stocks on the stock market page and write down the abbreviation, high, low, close and net change of the previous day. What stocks were worth the most and the least? What stock gained and lost the most and what was the percentage of gain and loss? Follow the stocks a few days, compare the data, and answer the questions.

Have student read a story and discuss the importance of numbers to the story. Have them rewrite the story without numbers. Can they still tell the same story?

Choose two to three cars from ads that show mile-per-gallon. Have students use a map to decide where they would like to go in the cars. How many miles is it to that place? Based on the current price of gasoline, how much will it cost to take the trip there in each car? Which car is the most economical?

Using the weather map, compute the difference between the high and low temperature for each (or some) of the cities listed. Which city had the greatest difference? Find the city on a world map.

Have students select six items to purchase then compute the cost of the six items plus state tax.

Find numbers that represent the same amount but are written different. (Example: fifty percent, 50%, .50 and half.)

In one minute have students circle all the numbers they can find on the front page. What kinds of numbers were found (dates, time age, odd/even, etc.). How do they relate to number concepts being learned in class?

Find a restaurant ad with prices for food. Choose some items you and your family would like to eat. How much will it cost for a family of 4 to eat including 5% sales tax and the tip is 15%.

In the help wanted ads, have students choose five jobs showing wages, some hourly and some yearly. Have them prepare a chart showing how much they will make per hour, per day, per week, per month, and per year from each job. If the federal tax is 15% and the state tax is 5%, how much money would they take home per week, per year?

Find various units of size and volume measurement in the newspaper (inch, mile, centimeter, gallons, pints, etc.). Rank them from the smallest to the largest.

Measure a picture, ad or story. In inches and centimeters, measure the perimeter and area.

Choose two carpet or floor coverings from an ad (showing a price). Measure the area of your classroom. What will it cost to cover the floor? Which is more cost effective?