



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2015 Volume V: Problem Solving and the Common Core

Real World Problem Solving in Second Grade Mathematics

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For most second graders, the beginning of the year is a time for refreshing knowledge and skills from first grade. The summer away from direct instruction and opportunities for practice and guidance sometimes means a loss of solid understanding of learned concepts in mathematics. This three- to four-week unit is designed to review and build new understanding of one-step word problem solving using addition and subtraction as students develop skills and strategies they will use all year. The students, through a series of mathematical scenarios, will use the problem types identified in Table 1 of the Common Core Mathematics Glossary which covers addition and subtraction.

For the duration of the unit, the focus remains steadily on solving and later constructing a collection of word problems that provide robust and balanced practice. This integration of Language Arts and Mathematics throughout the unit guides students as they connect math to the real world using the scenarios of activities they engage in at school. A culminating activity includes the creation of a workbook filled with word problems, answer key included, authored by the second grade students themselves!

(Developed for Mathematics, grade 2; recommended for Mathematics, grade 2)

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