



# Teacher Tip of the Week

## New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

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Teacher Tip of the Week  
New Teacher Support  
Program  
Wilson County Schools  
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### Try these in the classroom: The Top Christmas Books for Children

#### HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



#### Room Arrangements

**TABLE GROUPS:** Arrange tables in groups if you want to encourage group work and cooperation. If your classroom has tables, you can arrange clusters of tables that allow students to work in groups or independently without moving furniture. The tables can be arranged so that everyone can see the front of the room without moving any chairs or tables.



*Tis the season. Kids are counting the days till Christmas. Parents and teachers are looking for ways to make the time go by quickly. Paper chains, advent calendars and countdown clocks are all ways that children keep track of "how much longer?" till the big day.*

*Why not combine the long wait and some wonderful holiday literature to make the days go by more quickly? Choose a different seasonal tale each school day to read and enjoy with your children.*

*Here's a list of five favorites to get you started.*

#### Christmas in the Big Woods

A favorite for younger readers is *Christmas in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder [HarperTrophy 1997]. This short tale from the famed "Little House" series focuses on Laura's winter in Wisconsin and how she helps her family get ready for Christmas. This version, illustrated by Renée Graef, is an adaptation for the original series aimed for younger children, but it will be loved and enjoyed by all.

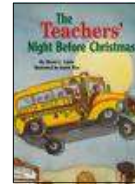


#### How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the famous Dr. Seuss tale *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* [Random House Books for Young Readers, 1957]. This tale of a hard-hearted Grinch, who learns the true meaning of Christmas, had been a holiday favorite since it was first published in 1957. It has been animated for TV, adapted for the stage and translated into many languages including Latin. Written in Dr. Seuss's unmistakable style, this classic is one to be enjoyed over and over!



#### The Teacher's Night before Christmas



This entertaining story by Stephen Lane [Pelican Publishing, 2001] is a story that will become a favorite of harried teachers as they prepare for this holiday. It is a teacher-oriented adaptation for Moore's tale and is sure to be a read-aloud favorite in those last few days of school before the holidays.

#### The Night Before Christmas



Two classic versions of Clement Moore's famous *The Night Before Christmas* are worth seeking out. Everyone knows the story, but the illustrated versions by Tomie De Paola [Holiday House, July 1980] and [Tasha Tudor](#) [Topeka Bindery, 2001] make this tale not only a treat for the listener, but a visual joy as well. Both are wonderful version of the classic tale, and reading them both will add to an appreciation of this classic.

#### A Wish for Wings That Work



Finally, try this lesser known, but wonderful Christmas story to read to young and old alike. *A Wish for Wings That Work: An Opus Christmas Story* by Berkeley Breathed [Little, Brown Young Readers, 1995] tells a delightful tale of a penguin whose one wish is that he can fly. Through a series of misadventures on Christmas Eve, Santa grants him that wish and this little guy not only gets his wish, he gets to save Christmas as well. This story is a refreshing take on the traditional Christmas story and will give readers and listeners a new "must-read" favorite to add to a long list of books holiday books.

## Using puzzles, riddles and games in the classroom

*What can children learn from and enjoy at the same time? Riddles and puzzles, that's what!*

*Puzzles and riddles have an inherent appeal to children, and through play, children can develop new concepts and reinforce skills in curriculum areas such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.*

Here are some ways to put online puzzles and riddles to work in the classroom:

- After students work with a particular kind of puzzle -- a crossword, for example -- invite them to work in groups to create their own crossword puzzles. Be sure to allow plenty of time for this kind of activity: Making a crossword puzzle, or just about any puzzle, is harder than it might look!
- Try thinking of ways that certain games can become cross-curricular. A game of

crambo, for example, will teach social studies as well as language arts if you have students invent rhymes that include facts about various states or other geo-



graphical areas you're studying. Or use historical figures to play ziggy piggy. You might also have groups of students work on constructing word finds based on, for example, things associated with Abraham Lincoln or another historical figure.

- Use online time that students spend on

puzzles, riddles, or other fun games as a reward for work well done or behavior you want to encourage.

- Invite students to use a unit theme, such as weather in science class, as the basis for creating a group of games: for example, a crossword puzzle, word jumble, word find, and hangman game. Students might work in groups or pairs to create the games.

Many sites on the World Wide Web offer puzzles and riddles; some sites provide links to many other sites that also feature puzzles. Visiting such sites engages students in learning through intriguing activities while enabling students to become more computer savvy.



**"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child."**

—Erma Bombeck

## A New Series: Testing Tips for Students #2



*Now that standardized tests are drawing near, a new series to help students and teachers prepare for the months ahead:*

**\*Create and provide students with a child-friendly rubric designed to help them learn to how to answer open-ended questions. Base the rubric on the scoring methods used for the standardized tests your students will take.**

'09-'10

## NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Amanda McNabb

Mt. Juliet Middle School

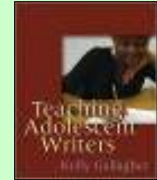
6th grade Resource

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

“There is nothing better than having a “light bulb” moment. I love it when all of the sudden I understand or grasp a concept of what something says or what someone is telling me. That is the reason I became a teacher. I love seeing students have “light bulb” moments. Working with kids is challenging, yet very rewarding. The challenge makes me a better person and the reward comes when I know I’ve made a positive impact on a student.”—Amanda McNabb



### OFF THE BOOKSHELF



### Teaching Adolescent Writers by Kelly Gallagher

In an increasingly demanding world of literacy, it has become critical that students know how to write effectively. From the requirements of standardized tests to those of the wired workplace, the ability to write well, once a luxury, has become a necessity.

Many students are leaving school without the necessary writing practice and skills needed to compete in a complex and fast-moving Information Age. Unless we teach them how to run with it, they are in danger of being run over by a stampede—a literacy stampede.

In *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, Kelly Gallagher, author of *Reading Reasons* and *Deeper Reading*, shows how students can be taught to write effectively.

Infused with humor and illuminating anecdotes, Kelly draws on his classroom experiences and work as co-director of a regional writing project to offer teachers both practical ways to incorporate writing instruction into their day and compelling reasons to do so.

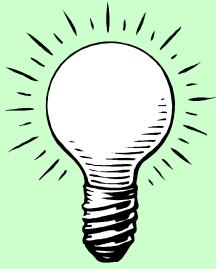
## TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:



[http://  
www.panaromas.dk/](http://www.panaromas.dk/)

**Panaromas.dk**

While teaching about the countries of the world, wouldn't it be nice to actually take your students to visit? That's not practical, of course, but this site is a pretty good substitute. Here you'll find thousands of QuickTime VR panoramas from all over the world, including many city tours. Many are full screen VRs which offer incredible detail and a new one is posted every week. You will need the current version of QuickTime for most VRs and a browser that understands Java for the rest but the technical requirements are well worth the effort for the great teaching materials you'll find here.



# Strategies for New Teachers . . .

## HOMEWORK

- Give homework assignments that students can complete independently. Assigning homework that requires supervision or support is unfair to students who do not have support at home.
- Avoid lengthy, rote assignments. More is not always better. Five practice problems that target the concept can be as or more effective as 40. Also, students are more likely to complete five problems than 40.
- Select homework for one of three purposes: practice, preparation or enrichment.
- Keep homework separate from class work. Class work that turns into homework can result in some students not earning any credit for work that was actually completed. Struggling students who do some work in class, take it home and then fail to return it the next day would receive a “zero” on class work that he or she actually completed. If you’re going to assign unfinished class work as homework, collect the work done in class and give credit for that work done. Then, let the homework be a separate evaluation the next day.

(continued next week...)



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**NATIONAL HANDWASHING AWARENESS WEEK**  
Dec. 6-12

**HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK**  
Dec. 10-17

**HANUKKAH**  
Dec. 12-19

**HUMBUG DAY**  
Dec. 21

**IT’S ABOUT TIME WEEK**  
Dec. 25-31

**Kwanzaa**  
Dec. 26-Jan. 1



## Back to school

**SON:** Dad, I'm tired of doing homework .  
**FATHER:** Now, son, hard work never killed anyone.  
**SON:** I know, but I don't want to be the first.