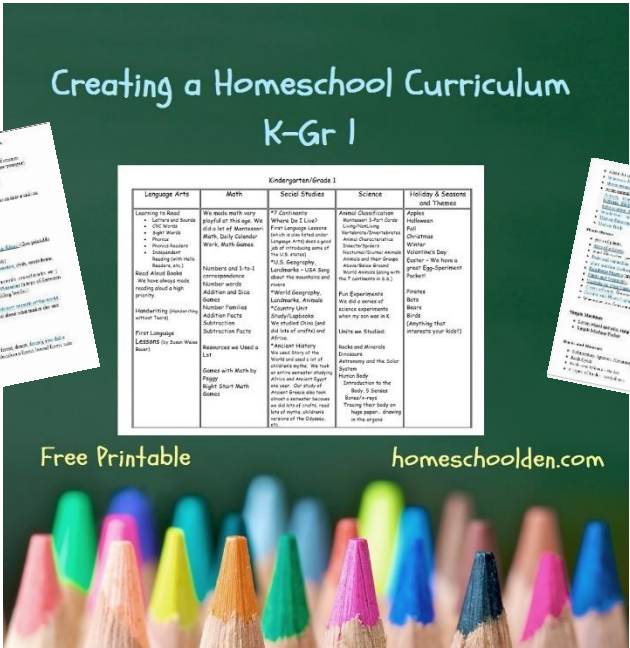


Kindergarten, Grade 1



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How to Create Your Own Homeschool Curriculum: K, Gr. 1

One of the things I hear a lot about our blog is that there is so much to take in, it can be overwhelming. That is especially true if you are a new homeschooler just starting out. I have set out to make a series of resource packets with ideas of what you could cover in your homeschool in K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8. I hope these resource packets are helpful.

I have three kids. All three of my kids have had a different experience as they've come up through the grades. That's partly while you'll find SO many options on our blog!

We do most of our units together, so my kindergartner and my 5th grader would have been doing the same units at the same time. The material might have been a stretch for my kindergartner. A few years later, though, we would cycle around and do our units again so the kids would get the material again on a different level. The reverse is also true. Sometimes we would do a unit geared more for my youngest like the States of Matter that we did this fall. My older two participated/reviewed the material. Then we went on into more depth (in this case with the Physical and Chemical Properties of Matter unit).

What I hope to do with this series is give you a framework of what we did. You can look at what we did and pick and choose what might work for your family. That's the wonderful thing about homeschooling, you create a curriculum path that works for you!

You can cover the material with purchased homeschool curriculum. Or, you can just borrow books from the library. You can do projects, lapbooks, or notebook pages. You can do experiments, crafts, posters, mini-research projects and all kinds of things to help your kids learn. You can read aloud non-fiction and fiction books. You can watch videos... anything from the Magic School Bus (for younger kids) to documentaries (for older students). In the right context, (fictional) movies can be very educational as well! You can go on field trips, to museums, and explore the online world. ... and much, much more!

My highest goals have been to make the learning creative and engaging for the kids. I want them to have the skills they need to write well (and creatively), to think critically, to be able to learn new things on their own, to be polite, kind people. I want them to value education and to see what it will do for them. I keep the end goals in mind... And that's **your** first step. Decide what skills you want the kids to have at the end of the year and at the end of this homeschool journey. Then slowly work towards those!

In the early years, my goals were small - I wanted to work on the basics of reading, writing, and math. Yet, I wanted to take advantage of their wonder in the world. We did a lot with science and geography... and we learned about some places far away and times long ago. We didn't learn the *facts* of history (though we talked about them) ... the kids were introduced to our wondrous world through crafts and activities, stories and photos.

Keep in mind that you will not and do not have to cover "everything." If you purchase a curriculum, you do not have to cover every page. If you look at a checklist of curriculum options... you do not have to cover everything. Use those as a resource, not as to-do list (or a ball-and-chain)!!

All that was kind of a disclaimer. I want to offer you a starting point (if it helps), but want you to know the YOU can and will create an amazing homeschool experience!! You CAN do this!! You know your kids better than anyone else!!

So, let's jump into the meat of things - building a curriculum for Kindergarten and Grade 1:

When my oldest was in kindergarten, we were doing a LOT of Montessori activities. He has two younger sisters, so that type of material worked really well for us at the time. He worked with a lot of Montessori 3-Part cards; we did a ton of geography-related activities (especially working with pin maps); we did lots of "cool" science experiments; we did a lot of crafts; and we did a lot of activities circling around the holidays and seasons.

When my youngest was in Kindergarten, she had a different experience because her siblings are 2 and 4 years older than her. By the time she was in Kindergarten, we were doing more formal "unit studies." She was in Kindergarten, for example, when we covered Simple Machines... I included that here, but I also put that particular unit in the Gr. 2-3 part of this series.

I have included some of the (purchased) curriculums that we used at this age such as Handwriting Without Tears, All About Spelling, or Story of the World. Just know that there are TONS of homeschool curriculum options out there. You might want to order the HUGE catalog from Rainbow Resource Center (it's free) to look for curriculum that fits with your needs.

Kindergarten - Grade 1 Resource Packet:

Table of Contents

Page 5	Printable Overview of Curriculum, K - Gr. 1
Page 6	Links to Language Arts Related Posts K-1
Pages 7-9	Links to Math Posts K-1
Pages 10-12	Links to Science Posts K-1
Pages 13	Links to Social Studies Posts K-1
Page 14-15	Links to Language Arts Posts with Photos and Explanations
Pages 16-22	Links to Math Posts with Photos and Explanations
Pages 23-43	Links to Science Posts with Photos and Explanations
Pages 44-48	Links to Social Studies and Geography Posts with Photos and Explanations

Kindergarten/Grade 1 - Overview

Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	Holiday & Seasons and Themes
<p>Learning to Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters and Sounds 2 Letter Words CVC Words Sight Words Phonics Phonics Readers Independent Reading (with Hello Readers, etc.) <p>Read Aloud Books We always made reading aloud a high priority.</p> <p>Handwriting (Handwriting without Tears)</p> <p>First Language Lessons (by Jessie Wise)</p> <p>We started using All About Spelling in Gr 1.</p>	<p>We made math very playful at this age. We did a lot of Montessori Math, Daily Calendar Work, Math Games.</p> <p>Numbers and 1-to-1 correspondence</p> <p>Number words</p> <p>Addition and Dice Games</p> <p>Place Value Activities</p> <p>Sunny-side-up Game</p> <p>Number Families</p> <p>Addition Facts</p> <p>Subtraction</p> <p>Subtraction Facts</p> <p>Skip Counting (by 2s, 5s, 10s)</p> <p>Clocks</p> <p>Counting Coins</p> <p>Resources we Used a Lot</p> <p>Games for Math by Peggy Kaye</p> <p>Right Start Math Games</p>	<p>*7 Continents</p> <p>*Where Do I Live?</p> <p>First Language Lessons (which is also listed under Language Arts) does a good job of introducing some of the U.S. states)</p> <p>*Where do things come from?</p> <p>*U.S. Geography, Landmarks - USA Song about the mountains and rivers</p> <p>*World Geography, Landmarks, Animals</p> <p>*Country Unit</p> <p>Study/Lapbooks</p> <p>We studied China (and did lots of crafts)</p> <p>*Ancient History</p> <p>We used Story of the World and used children's myths. We took an entire semester studying Africa and Ancient Egypt one year. Our study of Ancient Greece also took almost a semester because we did lots of crafts, read lots of myths, children's versions of the Odyssey, etc.</p>	<p>Animal Classification</p> <p>Montessori 3-Part Cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living/NonLiving Vertebrate/Invertebrates Animal Characteristics Insects/Spiders Nocturnal/Diurnal Animals Animals and their Groups Above/Below Ground World Animals (along with the 7 continents in S.S.) <p>Fun Experiments</p> <p>We did a series of science experiments when my son was in K.</p> <p>Units we Studied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rocks and Minerals Dinosaurs Astronomy and the Solar System, Layers of the Earth Human Body Introduction to the Body, 5 Senses Bones/x-rays Tracing their body on huge paper... drawing in the organs 	<p>Apples</p> <p>Halloween</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Christmas</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>Valentine's Day</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>Easter - We have a great Egg-Speriment Packet!</p> <p>Pirates</p> <p>Bats</p> <p>Bears</p> <p>Birds</p> <p>Whales</p> <p>(Anything that interests your kids!!)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">©homeschoolden.com</p>

Here are some of the activities that we did, with clickable links to the posts. For photos and examples, scroll further down in this packet.

Language Arts

Learning to Read

- [Letters and Sounds](#)
- [2 Letter Words](#)
- [CVC Words](#) – Games and Activities
 - [Hearts -at word Matching](#)
 - [Whales -it and -in Word Matching Game](#)
 - [-at -it -ot -ut words – Free File Folder Game](#)
- [Sight Words](#)
- [Phonics – Early Reading Skills](#)
 - [sh ch th Word Sort Activities \(Free!\)](#)
- [Phonics Readers](#)
- [Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten](#) (*affiliate link*)
- [Handwriting Without Tears Grade 1](#) (*affiliate link*)
- Independent Reading (with Hello Readers, etc.)
- We started using [All About Spelling](#) for the kids in Grade 1. (*affiliate link*)
- [First Language Lessons](#) (*affiliate link*) by Jessie Wise - We used this in Kindergarten and part of Grade 1.

Read Alouds

- [25 Books for ages 4 to 8](#)
- [15 Chapter Books my 7-year Old Loved!](#)
- [Books and Series my 8 Year old has been Racing Through](#)
- [25 Books for 4-8 year olds; 25 Chapter Books for 8-12 year olds](#)
- [10 Books \(and Series\) My Kids Love \(Ages 9, 11\)](#)
- [10 Australian Picture Books we Love!](#) (The kids were all born in Australia.)
- [15 Children's Books Your 4-7 Year Old Shouldn't Miss](#)
- [Encourage Independent Reading with This Cute Idea](#)
- [10 Books My 4 and 6-Year-Old Love](#)

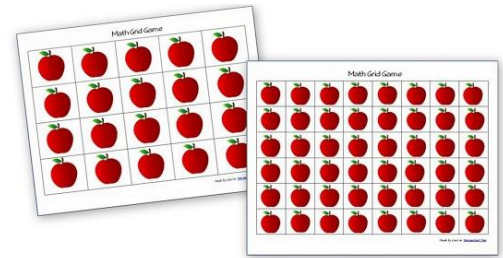
Math

Math Resources:

[Montessori Math,](#)

[Daily Calendar Work,](#)

[Math Games.](#)



Numbers and 1-to-1 correspondence – We did a lot of grid games... first rolling one die and covering the board. Then when they were ready, using two dice and adding them together to cover that number of spaces. We used different grid games to go with different seasons. Here's an example of an [apple grid board \(above\) that is free](#) on the blog:

[Fill in the Missing Numbers](#)



[Fill in the Missing Numbers St. Patrick's Day](#)

[Number words](#)

Addition and Dice Games – We used the [Ultimate Board Game](#) (free printable) for lots of math fact practice!

Place Value Activities

[Sunny-side-up Game](#)

Number Families

Addition Facts

Subtraction

Subtraction Facts

Skip Counting (by 2s, 5s, 10s)

- [Free Fall-Themed Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Thanksgiving Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Holiday Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Winter Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Valentine's Day Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Valentine's Day Skip Counting Mazes – Addition – Multiplication Practice](#)
- [Free Easter Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Skip Counting by 6s – Song and Clapping Game](#) – ED and DD really enjoyed learning the 6s; they did this clapping game a lot when ED was in 1st grade.
- [Free Skip Counting Mazes – Minecraft Themed](#)
- [Active Skip Counting Chalk Game](#) ED had fun skip counting by running around this huge chalk circle. DD reviewed her multiplication facts and LD worked on order of operations!
- [Skip Counting Card Game](#) – We also had the card game (made by a fellow homeschooling mom!), [Speed!](#) (*affiliate link*) ED and I played many rounds of these games. Find out how to play those card games at this post: [First Grade Math – Games for Math Fact Practice](#)

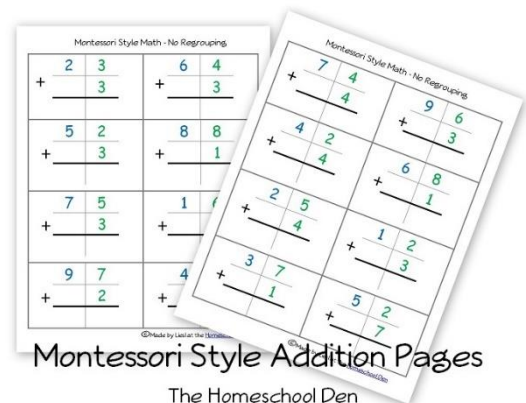
Clocks

- [Free Skip Counting by 5s Activity and Clock Printable](#)

[Coin Counting File Folder Game \(Free\)](#)

Montessori Addition Pages (Introducing **Double Digit Addition** without carrying, with carrying)

- [Montessori Style Addition Sheets \(No Regrouping/Carrying\)](#)
- [Montessori Style Addition Pages \(With Regrouping/Carrying\)](#)
- [Montessori Style Subtraction Pages with Borrowing](#)
- [Montessori Style Addition – Hundreds Packet with Regrouping/Carrying](#)



Winter-Themed Math

- [Penguin Addition Worksheets and Games](#)
- [Montessori Style Addition Pages – Winter Theme](#)
- [Free Winter-Themed Addition Worksheets](#)
- [Free Winter Skip Counting Pages](#)
- [Free Winter Division and Multiplication Worksheets](#)

Math Resources we used a lot. I highly recommend both of these books.
(These are affiliate links.)

[Games for Math: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Learn Math, From Kindergarten to Third Grade](#) by Peggy Kaye

[Math Card Games](#) by the Right Start Curriculum

Math Curriculum (That you can purchase.) – There are LOTS of different math curriculum options available. We used games and the Spectrum math workbook series for most of elementary. Other homeschoolers speak highly of these options:

- Singapore Math
- Math Mammoth
- Saxon Math
- Abeka Math
- Right Start Math – At this age, we used many of the ideas in this Montessori-based math curriculum though we used as an extra resource, not as a solo curriculum.

Science

Science Experiments

- [Science Experiment Packet](#) – Free printable with the series of science experiments we did when my son was in K (and the girls were younger)
- [Science Experiments](#) – A few more science activities that the kids enjoyed in preschool (I think LD was about 5 when we did these)
- [Science Egg-speriment Packet](#) – All egg related activities!

5 Senses – sight, hearing, touch, feel, taste (This could continue on into a unit on the human body.)

- [taste activities](#),
- [smell matching](#),
- [sound bingo](#)

Animals/Zoology: Some zoology topics you could cover:

- [living and non-living \(and the characteristics of living things\)](#) (free printable sorting cards)
- [vertebrates-invertebrates](#) (free printable sorting cards)
- [the 5 classes of animals: animals and their characteristics](#), (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals)
- [Animal Packet](#) (classification, domestic vs. wild animals, animal tracks, etc.)
- Invertebrates: [Hands-On Study of Earthworms](#), [Planarian](#) (a type of flatworm that regenerates), [Mealworms](#) (that turn into darkling beetles)
- World Animal Cards
- [Amphibian Mini-Unit: Frog Life Cycle, Amphibians](#); [animals of the world](#),
- [Nocturnal and Diurnal Animals](#) (we also talked about what makes day and night)
- the parts of the animal,
- animals and their babies,
- [animals and their group names](#)

- animals and their biomes (such as the rain forest, desert, [forest](#)), ([we did a study of the biomes here](#) – arctic, tundra, deciduous forest, boreal forest, rain forest, deserts, etc.)
- [animal tracks](#),
- where do animals live?
- [Where do things come from? What's in your cookie? \(where do things come from?\)](#)
- [above ground-below ground](#),
- ocean animals: [Ocean Unit Freebies](#) [Layers of the Ocean](#) [School of Fish Activity](#) [Ocean Animals and Their Groups](#) [Whale Unit \(and the Arctic\) — Icebergs, Blubber experiment, Buoyancy and more](#) [Whale Unit - Migration, Echolocation, Baleen vs. Toothed Whales](#)
- [Whale Unit - How salt water affect buoyancy - Drawing whales and dolphins](#)
- [Unit on Dinosaurs](#),
- [Unit on Birds](#)

Plants/Botany

- parts of plants,
- [parts of a flower](#),
- plant life cycles - germinating seeds,
- [fruits and vegetables](#) (free sorting cards here),
- [plant nutrition \(colored carnations and slurping celery\)](#)
- [Rainforest Plants s](#) (from around the world),
- [Plants and Symmetry](#);
- [Vascular vs. Non-Vascular Plants](#)
- [2 types of roots](#): fibrous roots (like grass) and taproots (like carrots)
- [Carnivorous Plants Lapbook](#)
- Where does my food come from?

Simple Machines

- [Simple Machine Packet](#)
- Hands-On Activities About: [Lever](#), [wheel and axle](#), [screw](#), [pulleys](#), [wedge](#), [ramp](#)

Rocks and Minerals

- [Rocks and Minerals Packet \(Free\)](#)
- [3 Types of Rocks \(Free Printable\)](#)
- [Igneous Rock Activities](#)
- [Sedimentary Rock Activities](#)
- [Sedimentary Rock Activity](#) (much older post, using sand)
- [Metamorphic Rock Activities](#)
- [Metamorphic Rock Activity](#) (another older post, where we took “core samples,” excavated and examined this baked rock — a cupcake!)
- [Minerals: Our Hands-On Activities and Seeing the BIGGEST Diamond in the World](#)
- [Earth-Space Science: Topographic Map](#)

Human Body

- the five senses: [taste activities](#), [smell matching](#), [sound bingo](#)
- [the bones of the body](#) (This post has various PreK-K ideas),
- (we also did tons of other activities about [how blood circulates](#) and [how food is digested](#) that my youngest really enjoyed with my older kids.

Social Studies

7 Continents

- [7 Continent – Free Montessori World Pin Map](#)
- [7 Continent Song](#)
- [Where Do I Live](#) – Help the kids understand the concepts city/town, state, country, continent, world, solar system
- World Animals

[U.S. Geography, Landmarks](#) – USA Song about the mountains and rivers

World Geography, [Landmarks](#), [World Animals](#)

Country Unit Study/Lapbooks

We studied China (and did lots of crafts) and Africa.

Ancient World History

- [Ancient Egypt](#)
We loved these resources. These are *affiliate links*.
 - [Ralph Masiello's Ancient Egypt Drawing Book](#)
 - [The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt](#) by Leonard Fisher
 - [Egyptian Treasures: Mummies and Myths](#)
 - [Great Ancient EGYPT Projects: You Can Build Yourself](#)
 - [Pyramids!: 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience Ancient Egypt](#)
- [Ancient Greece](#)
We loved these resources These are *affiliate links*.
 - [The Gods and Goddesses of Olympus](#)
 - We've read [Perseus and the Monstrous Medusa](#), [Odysseus and the Wooden Horse](#), [The Secret of Pandora's Box](#). There is also [King Midas's Goldfingers](#).
 - The Magic Tree House, [Hour of the Olympics](#).
 - [Tales from the Odyssey, Part 1](#) and [Tales from the Odyssey, Part 2](#).
 - [D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths](#) (*affiliate link*)
 - [Classical Kids: An Activity Guide to Life in Ancient Greece and Rome](#)

If you've come this far in the pdf, you're definitely an eager, awesome homeschooler!! In this next part, I'm going to offer a bit more depth into some of our hands-on activities. I'm a visual person, so I thought including some photos of our activities might give you a better idea of some of the things we did.

Language Arts

Learning to Read

- [Letters and Sounds](#)
- [2 Letter Words](#)



- [CVC Words](#) – Games & Activities



- [Hearts -at word Matching](#)



- [Whales -it and -in Word Matching Game](#)

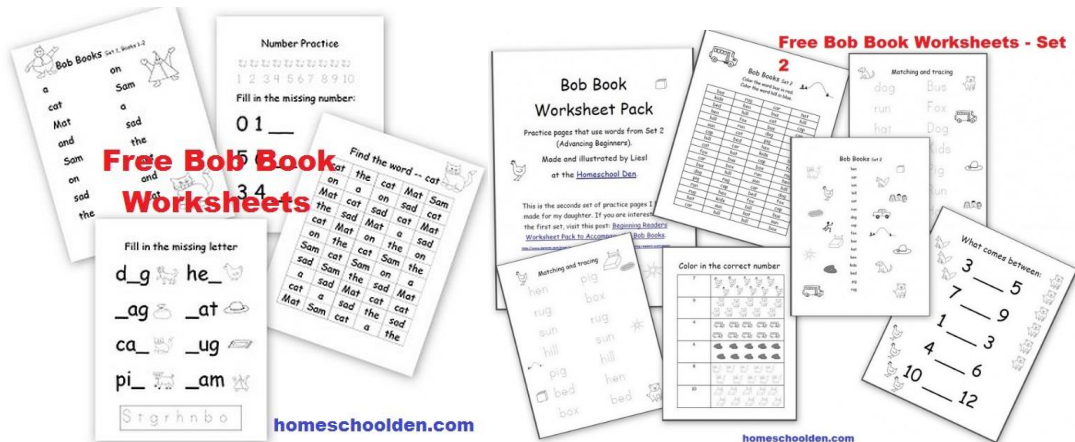


- [Sight Words](#)
- Phonics
 - [sh ch th Word Sort Activities \(Free!\)](#)



free at homeschoolden.com

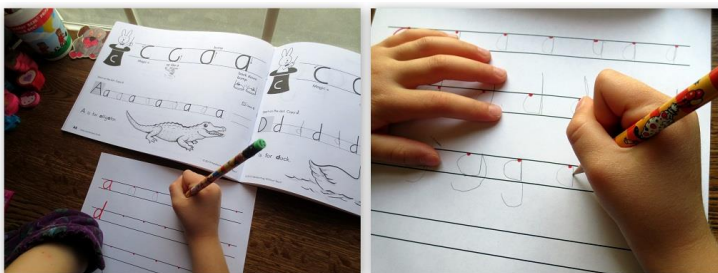
- [Phonics Readers](#)
- [Free Bob Book Worksheet Packs](#)



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- [Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten](#) (*affiliate link*)
- [Handwriting Without Tears Grade 1](#) (*affiliate link*)



We started using [All About Spelling](#) for the kids in Grade 1. (*affiliate link*)

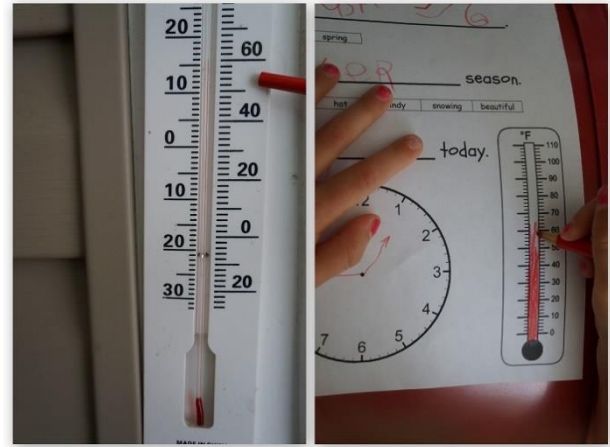
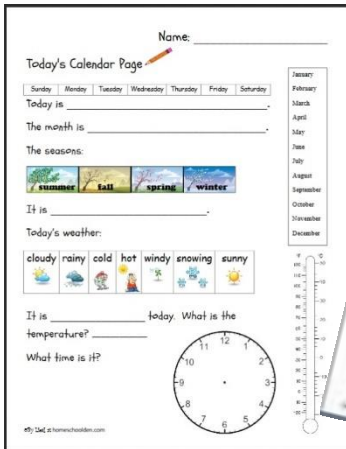
[Long A Spelling Sort](#)

[ow ou oy oi aw au Word Sort Activities](#)

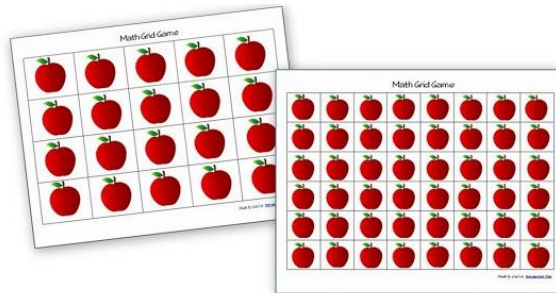


Math K-1

[Daily Calendar Work – Free Printable](#)



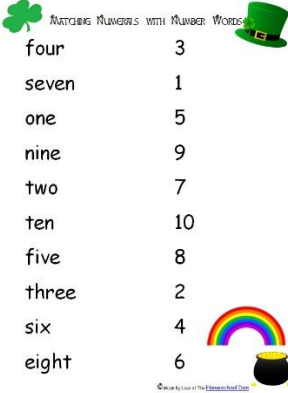
Numbers and 1-to-1 correspondence – We did a lot of grid games... first rolling one die and covering the board. Then when they were ready, using two dice and adding them together to cover that number of spaces. We used different grid games to go with different seasons. Here's an example of an [apple grid board that is free](#) on the blog. Here is a [St. Patrick's Day Grid Game](#).



[Fill in the Missing Numbers](#)




Fill in the Missing Numbers, Number Words -- St. Patrick's Day



Matching Numbers with Number Words

four	3
seven	1
one	5
nine	9
two	7
ten	10
five	8
three	2
six	4
eight	6



SHIP COUNTING

5 15 25 35 45 55 65 75 85 95

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

25 35 45 55 65 75 85 95

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

16 18 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36

45 55 65 75 85 95

60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60

Addition and Dice Games, Math War

Place Value Activities

Sunny-side-up Game




Place Value Activities


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Number Families

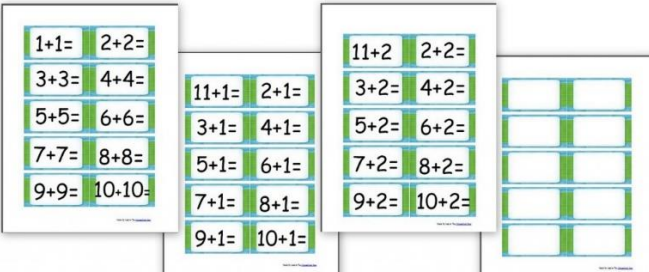
Addition Facts -- We used the [Ultimate Board Game](#) (free printable) for lots of math fact practice!



The Ultimate Game Board



The Ultimate Game Board
How to Use the Board



1+1= 2+2=

3+3= 4+4=

5+5= 6+6=

7+7= 8+8=

9+9= 10+10=

11+1= 2+1=

3+1= 4+1=

5+1= 6+1=

7+1= 8+1=

9+1= 10+1=

11+2= 2+2=

3+2= 4+2=

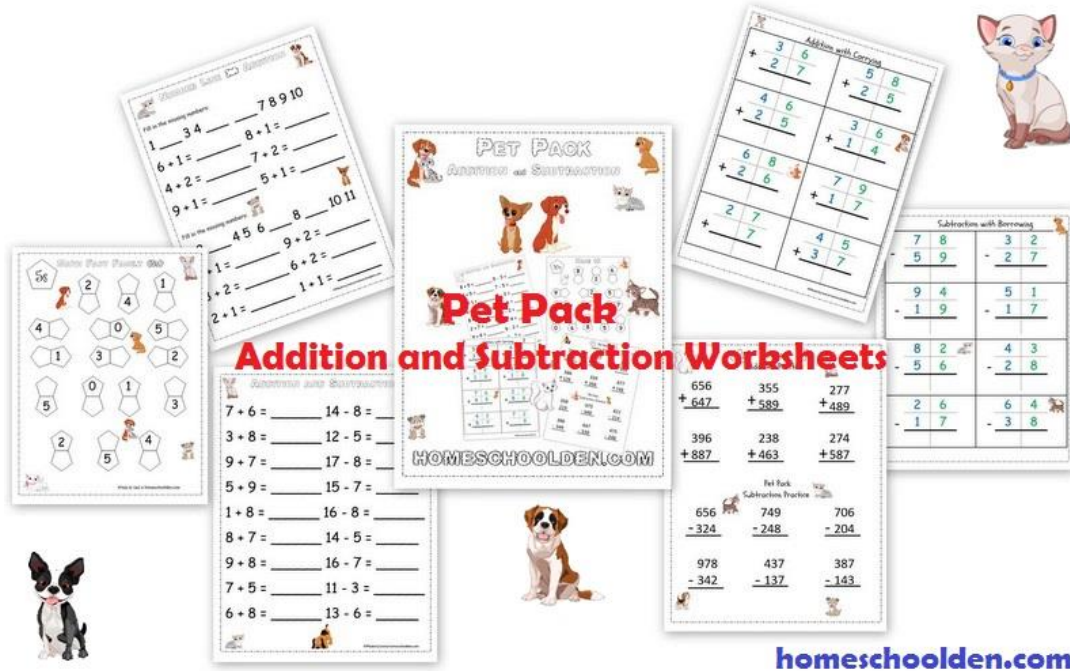
5+2= 6+2=

7+2= 8+2=

9+2= 10+2=

This was a packet I made that work on some of the addition facts and number families (ie. $0+5=5$, $1+4=5$, $2+3=5$)

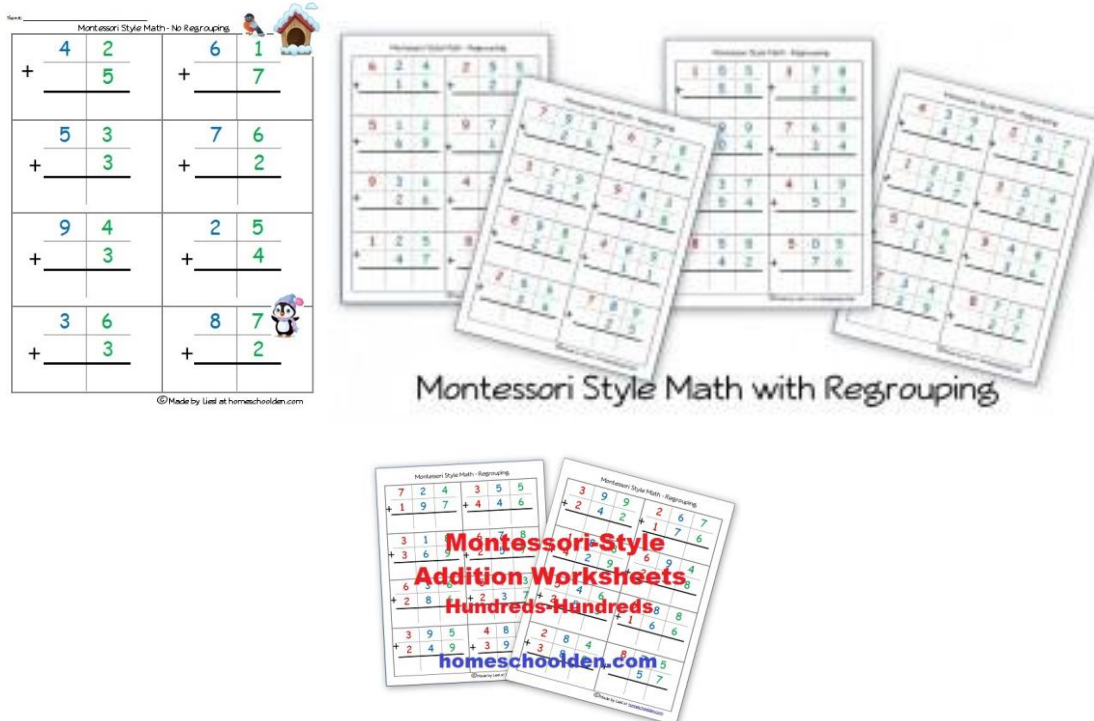
Pet Pack: Addition Subtraction



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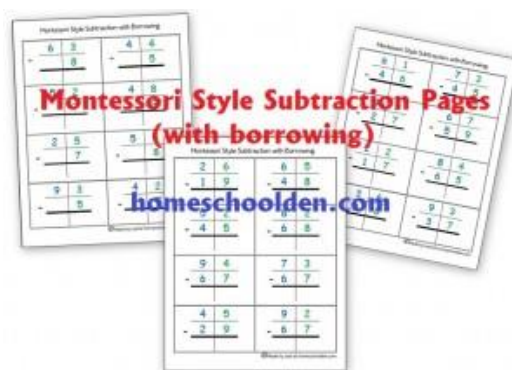
Montessori Style Addition Sheets These are some free pages that helped my kids as they started to learn to borrow.

- [Montessori Style Addition Sheets \(No Regrouping/Carrying\)](#)
- [Montessori Style Addition Pages \(With Regrouping/Carrying\)](#)
- [Montessori Style Addition – Hundreds Packet with Regrouping/Carrying](#)



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Subtraction – [Montessori Style Subtraction Pages with Borrowing](#)



Skip Counting (by 2s, 5s, 10s)

- [Free Fall-Themed Skip Counting Mazes](#)



Visit the Homeschool Den

- [Free Thanksgiving Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Holiday Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Winter Skip Counting Mazes](#)
- [Free Valentine's Day Skip Counting Mazes](#)



- [Free Valentine's Day Skip Counting Mazes – Addition – Multiplication Practice](#)

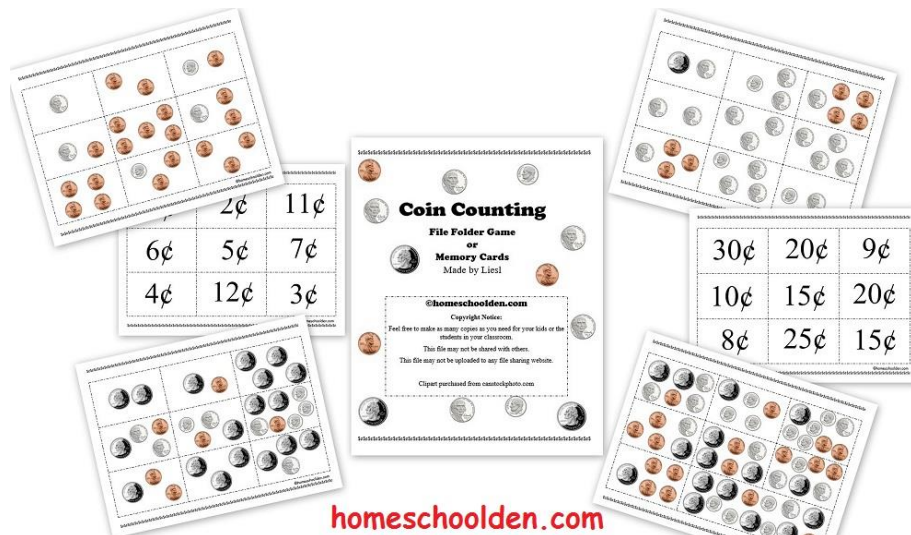
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- [Active Skip Counting Chalk Game](#) ED had fun skip counting by running around this huge chalk circle. DD reviewed her multiplication facts and LD worked on order of operations!
- [Skip Counting Card Game](#) – We also had the card game (made by a fellow homeschooling mom!), [Speed!](#) (affiliate link) ED and I played many rounds of these games. Find out how to play those card games at this post: [First Grade Math – Games for Math Fact Practice](#)

Clocks

- [Free Skip Counting by 5s Activity and Clock Printable](#)



[Coin Counting File Folder Game \(Free\)](#)



Pirate Math Packet: This is another math packet for K-1 we have available.



**Pirates
Doubling
&
Doubling +1
Activities**



Winter Theme

- [Penguin Addition Worksheets and Games](#)



- [Montessori Style Addition Pages – Winter Theme](#)



- [Free Winter-Themed Addition Worksheets](#)

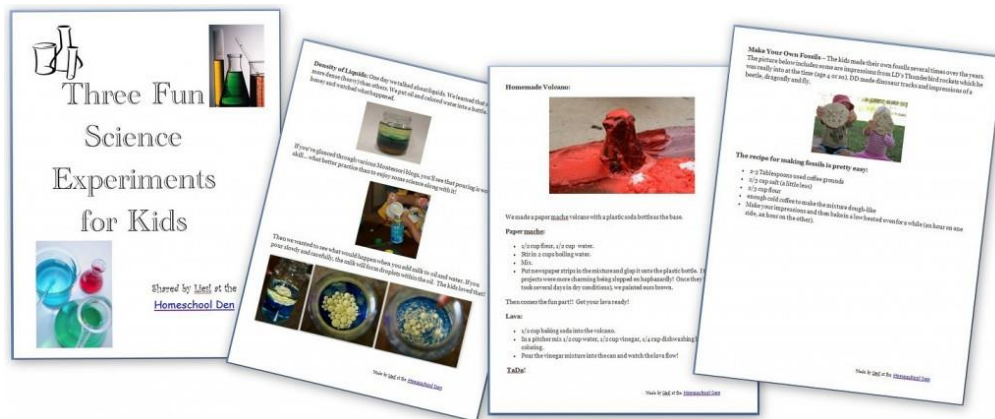


- [Free Winter Skip Counting Pages](#)
- [Free Winter Division and Multiplication Worksheets](#)

Science

Science Experiments

- [Science Experiment Packet](#) – Free printable with the series of science experiments we did when my son was in K (and the girls were younger)
- [Science Experiments](#) – A few more science activities that the kids enjoyed in preschool (I think LD was about 5 when we did these)



- [Science Egg-speriment Packet](#) – All egg related activities!



Zoology

Science in the early years should be as hands-on as fun as possible. Kids are natural learners and love exploring their world. What better way for young children to learn about the world around them than to go outside and explore?! Of course, you can take kids to zoos, the local reptile center; botanical gardens, the beach, and local nature parks, ponds and lakes. But, even the playground and walks around the neighborhood were opportunities for exploration.

Set up a birdfeeder and help the kids identify the birds that come each day. You might take photos of the birds, print them out, laminate them and label them for your kids to match with the live birds that they see in your backyard.



There are times, though, when the kids and I were inside for long stretches (being too cold or too hot outside or because of the other kids' nap schedules). For that reason, we tried to bring in a broad array of activities for the kids when they were preschool age.

Nature Table:

Set up a tray, shelf or table with a magnifying glass and various objects from the living world: shells, feathers, leaves, pine cones, rocks, nests, fossils, bark, sheep's wool, bark, etc. For young kids, display just a few items each day. Objects should be changed frequently to keep the kids' interest.

Hands-On Activities: Have the kids do leaf rubbings. Create pieces of art with the objects on the tray. Incorporate natural items into counting, sorting or tonging activities.

Put the tray away when the kids are done with it as many of these may be choking hazards.



"It" Box: Decorate a shoe box and allow the kids to collect their favorite treasures. Our kids collected feathers, fossils, "beautiful" rocks, snake skins, bark and all kinds of things. It was useful to have a designated spot for their beloved finds.

Living and NonLiving:

Ask the kids: What makes something alive? Why is a rock not alive? Some suggested answers:

- living things grow and develop
- living things take in nutrients
- living things obtain and use energy
- living things reproduce
- living things respond to their environment
- living things adapt to their environment
- living things move in some way
- living things get rid of waste

Activity: Have an assortment of items on a tray for the kids to explore. If possible collect both living things such as a leaf, snail or bug (in a jar), moss, mushroom, carrots - and non-living things -- a rock, hair brush, socks, etc. Talk about whether these items are alive or not... some things can be classified as "once living" but are no longer living because they no longer can grow/reproduce/adapt to their environment, etc.

Sorting Cards: Use some Montessori-style sorting cards and have the kids separate them into living and non-living columns. You can find [free Living – Non-living Sorting Cards](#) here.



bird

For more advanced children, print out 2 copies of a Montessori-style card. Leave one card uncut, cut the other card into two pieces (the photo and the word.) Have you child match the photo and word to the uncut card.

This helps build reading skills as well.



bird

[Mealworms](#): My kids really enjoyed studying mealworms. This really made the topics of invertebrates come alive (pun intended!!). More about invertebrates in general in a few pages. Mealworms are available at local pet shops.

We talked a lot about what makes something living. Living things

- eat
- drink (need water)
- breathe
- grow
- reproduce

We've been observing mealworms for the past couple weeks. We saw evidence of their growth because they shed their exoskeleton. We watched them for several weeks as they transformed into darkling beetles.



Here are some of the things we explored over the course of the week:

What do mealworms like to eat?

We placed a sliced apple, ground oatmeal, rice and raisins in a container. Most of the mealworms wound up in the ground oatmeal.



Wet or Dry Conditions:

We placed a wet paper towel and a dry paper towel in a container. Most of the mealworms actually wound up under the dry paper towel. Maybe this says more about light/dark!



Wet Food-Damp Food:

On a similar vein we placed an apple on top of ground oatmeal and had plain oatmeal in another corn. The majority of mealworms wound up in the plain oatmeal.



How do mealworms react when you lightly touch their antenna with a toothpick?



Living Things Grow:

One spring we planted sunflowers in our garden and kept track of how quickly they grow:

We kept track of the growth of three sunflower plants out in the garden. Our sunflowers have grown an inch every day so far. We water them every day.



In two weeks (above) ED's sunflower grew nearly a foot! (Below



To this morning when the sunflower towered over her head!



If it is winter-time try this activity instead: Place pumpkin seeds or peas on a damp paper towel. Place them into a baggie and seal it tight. Hang it in a window that gets afternoon sun. Check on it each day and watch as the seed sprouts and grows. You can also do the same things with Indian corn... just keep decorative Indian corn damp and watch it sprout and grow!



Vertebrates and Invertebrates:

[Vertebrate – Invertebrate Sorting Cards \(free\)](#)

[Free Montessori 3-Part Cards: Amphibians, Frog Life Cycle Notebook \(and lapbook\) Page](#)

[Animal Unit: Vertebrate-Invertebrate Animals Worksheet Packet \(40+ Pages\)](#)

Ask the kids:

What would we look like if we had no bones? Suggested answers

- We would look strange. We might look like a blob of skin. It would be hard to move.

What would happen if you had no backbone? Suggested answers:

- We would not stand straight. We could not twist around. We wouldn't be able to bend over. We might be very rigid.

Have the kids find their own backbone: Run your fingers on the back of your head and run your fingers down your neck as far as you can. Then try to find the bumps in the middle of your back. That is your backbone!

Your backbone is an important part of your body. It covers your nervous system. This network send signal from your brain all around your body. Do you know what these nerves tell us?

- When we touch something hot -- we suddenly pull our hand away because our brain sends a signal to jerk our hand away.
- When we want to run -- our brain sends messages to our legs to move the muscles.

A lot of animals have a backbone like we do. They are called **vertebrates**. Can you give some examples of animals that have a backbone?

- dogs, cats, mice, snakes, frogs, fish, birds, etc.

But not all animals have a backbone. Does a slug have a backbone? What about an earthworm, does it?

Those are called **invertebrates**.

For the adult: Here's a simple chart of vertebrates and invertebrates:

Vertebrates	Invertebrates
Fish	Sponges
Amphibians	Jellyfish, corals and their relatives
Reptiles	Worms
Birds	Snails, slugs, animals with inner or outer shells
Mammals	Animals with jointed feet, insects, lobsters, spiders, etc.
	Spiny skinned animals like starfish and sea urchins

Activity Suggestions: Have the kids sort cards into vertebrates and invertebrate columns. Be sure to use the proper terminology! Gather plastic animals (such as toob animals) and have them sort them into the different groups.

Have the kids sort animals into their various groups. You'll find these **card free** here: FREE: [Vertebrate-Invertebrate Sorting Cards](#).



At this age, I had the kids do some notebook activities ([from our Animal Packet](#).) about the different animal characteristics:

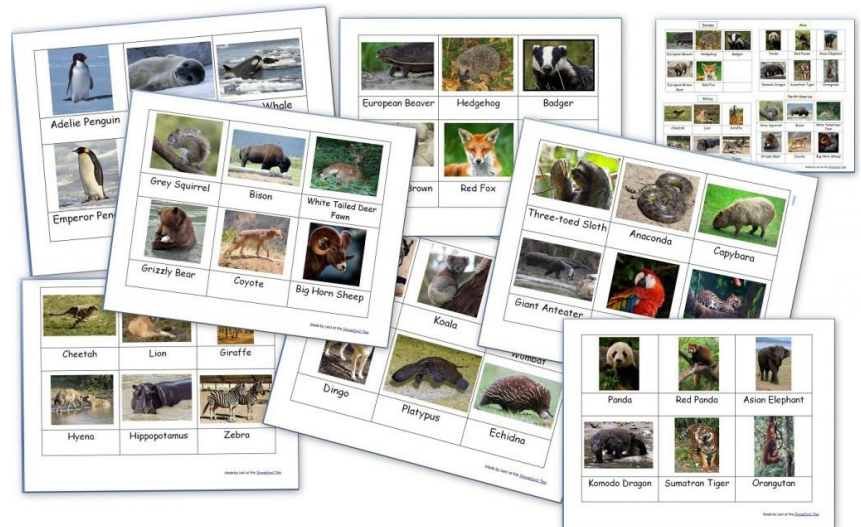


Herbivores vs. Carnivores Use cards or plastic play animals to sort animals into plant eaters and meat eaters. If possible, bring in a skull from each type of animal. You might have your child explore her dog or cat's teeth and compare that with their own teeth. Point out the different function

Wild vs. Domestic



Animals of the world:



Invertebrate Classification, Spiders vs. Insects



Animals and their babies: You can do this with any unit you are studying (ocean animals, animals of the forest, etc.). You can do this with simple matches for younger kids (pig-piglet; goat-kid, chicken-chick) For older kids you can do with family groups. For example, farm animal families might include:

- boar-sow-piglet;
- billy-goat, nanny-goat, kid,



When the kids were little, we often studied different units. I would gather books from the library on topics such as the ocean, rain forests, China, deserts, Africa... Then we would study animals and their group names. Here is an example of cards I made when we did a unit on the ocean. I would try to fit this in naturally as we did fun activities about the ocean:

[Where do animals live?](#) above ground-below ground, farm animals, ocean animals

Here's a quick activity we did to study where things lived.



Above and Below



Create a template for sorting the animals into the three areas you might find animals. We used blue, brown and green construction paper.

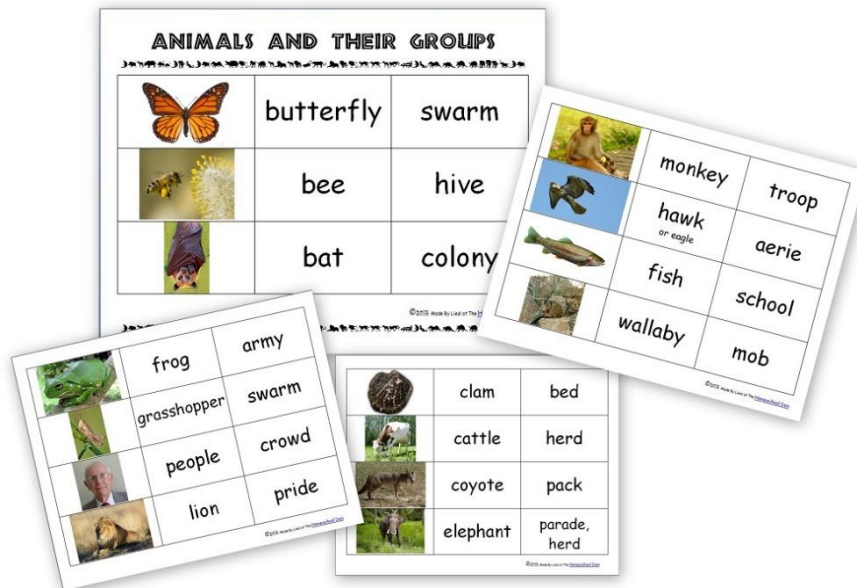
Sort the animals and plants on the following pages to the appropriate spot. Some animals can dwell both above and below ground.



Above Ground: robin, prairie dog, groundhog, woolly caterpillar, snail, bumble bee, ladybug, fall leaves, butterfly, turtle (or below), cicada (or below)

Below Ground: grub, Bess beetle & earthworm, ants, carrots, earthworm, baby rabbits in their burrow, turtle (or above), cicada (or above)

[Animals and their group names](#): We also went over various animals and their group names from time to time. You'll find these cards in the other packet.



animals and their biomes: (such as the rain forest, desert, forest),

We studied each of the biomes. We would read books and do crafts on each of the different animal habitats. I made a [biome pin map](#) that the kids used a lot in those years as well.



Biome Worksheets and Picture Cards

We also have biomes cards in our [biology pack](#).



8 x 11 Printable Photos of the 9 Biomes
(or print 4-per-page for smaller cards)

Part of our 70-page
Biology Packet

homeschoolden.com

animal tracks:

I found that when my kids were younger, they were intrigued by the different animal tracks they made.



We got sets of animal track stamps. We used matching cards from Montessori for Everyone and we played an animal tracks game we purchased from Learning Resources:

Each player spun the spinner. Then they had to guess which animal habitat the animal lived in and had a couple of guesses to pick the proper animal tracks. I'd give it two thumbs up (especially if you've been doing animal habitat studies). It fit into our unit really well!

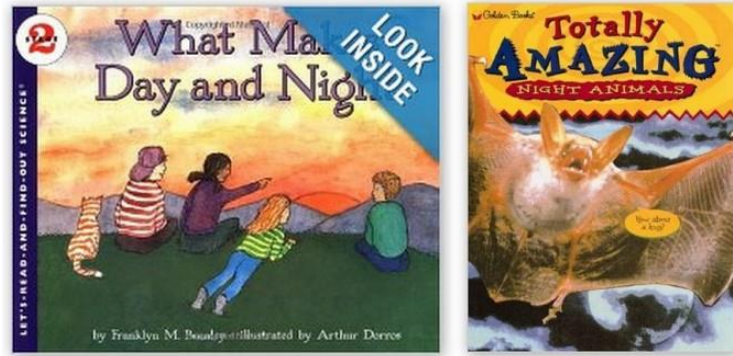


Where do things come from? [Montessori for Everyone](https://www.montessoriforeveryone.com) has some great cards that show how things are connected. The kids had to match wheat-flour-bread or cow-milk-cheese, wood-pulp-paper, sheep-yarn-sweater.



Nocturnal and Diurnal Animals

One week my daughter and I read [What Makes Day and Night](#) and [Totally Amazing Night Animals](#). ([affiliate links](#)) She really enjoyed both of them and we added in some activities to go with these books.

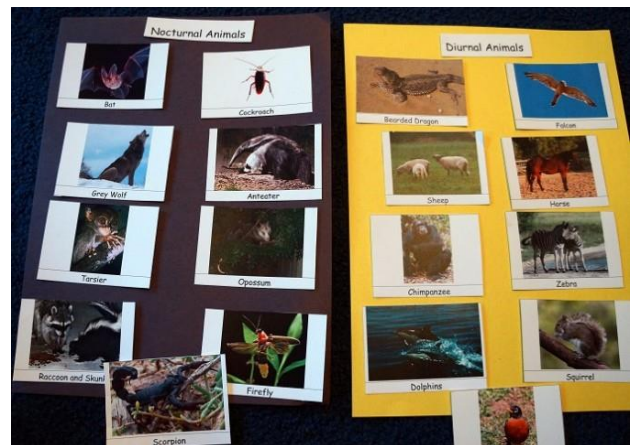


After we read through *What Makes Day and Night*, we spent a lot of time in the dark bathroom! First I held the flashlight and shined it at her as she spun around like Earth. Then we got out the globe and we spun it around as she watched:



Then we spent several days reading through the really fun book, *Totally Amazing Night Animals*. It has little snippets about all kinds of night critters. It's an amusing book with great pictures and cute cartoon type drawings on each page. My kids have TOTALLY loved this entire series (though you'd have to buy it used at Amazon).

I couldn't find quite what I wanted free out on the web, so I quickly made a set of Montessori type cards of Nocturnal and Diurnal animals. All of the kids took a turn sorting through the cards. ED also matched the names of the animals to the cards once she had sorted them. If your child is younger, you can have them match the pictures as well, but ED didn't have any interest in doing that this time round. You will find these cards are in the other packet.



[Free Nocturnal-Diurnal Cards](#) (pictured above right)

Mini Unit on Dinosaurs

Dinosaur Theme Time Table:

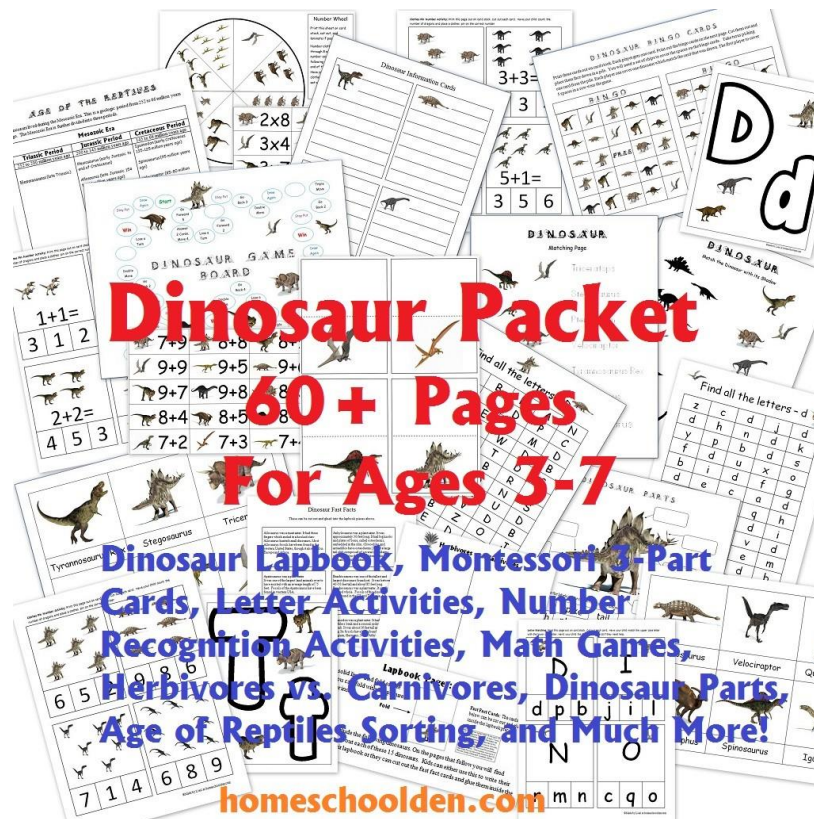
It's amazing how many books and things you find in various nooks and crannies around the house.

When the kids were little, we had a low table that we used for school-related things. Once a week after the kids went to bed, I would decide upon a theme. I did tables on bears, fairies, firemen, space, trucks, princesses, doctors and more. I'd gather various books, puzzles and games and display them nicely on the table. When the kids got up the next morning they would be SO excited for a new set-up! In this case, we gathered dinosaur books, puzzles, and plastic animals. I added in a puppet, board game and added in dinosaur themed math activities for my older kids.

One of my daughters did a large dinosaur unit when she was 7. She did a [dinosaur lapbook](#) and [various dinosaur activities](#). Find out more about our [Dinosaur Packet](#) [here](#).



We have a packet that has materials for ages 3 to 7. Find out more about it here:



Dinosaur Fossil Activity:



At the beginning of our activity we looked at this real fern fossil (from Pennsylvania). We talked about how ferns have been around for millions of years and fossil records indicate they were around well before dinosaurs (we referred back to the chart we have on [“what came first”](#) from a previous day.) Then we went into our woods and looked for different kinds of ferns for making our own fossil imprints.



We gathered our ferns and looked closely to see which one looked most like the shale fossil we had.

Using this cute coffee-clay recipe (below), we made impressions. After a lot of tries, the kids decided ferns just didn't make a very good impression. We talked about how conditions really had to be right for a fossil to be made.

Then we went on to make dinosaur tracks and trilobite impressions (I bought a plastic trilobite at the LaBrea Tar Pits in Los Angeles earlier this summer.) Of course I pointed out to the kids that trilobites and dinosaurs were not around at the same time (and once again we looked at the chart of "what came first.") ED especially enjoyed this activity and spent well over an hour making dinosaur tracks again and again!



Lots of people probably know about this "rock" clay recipe which is great for making fossils, but it's worth sharing again here:

- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup coffee
- 1 cup used coffee grounds

(I drank all my coffee that morning, so instead I put some coffee into a pot on the stove, brought it to a boil, let it cool a bit then added salt and flour. I didn't follow the recipe exactly as written.)

Since we now live in a more humid area, I opted to bake our fossils slowly at 325 for 45-60 mins since we have it hanging around while we do our dinosaur unit. (But warning—it's smelly!!)



human body

the bones of the body: We talked about the bones of the body at least once a year when the kids were little. We had a wonderful large puzzle that the kids put together:



I found a lot of excellent ideas in [Everybody has a Body](#). (*affiliate link*) It has such a wonderful array of hands-on activities for young kids.

ED has been putting this skeleton puzzle together for several days now. The book that comes with it has really intrigued her too -- so we've actually talked about digestion, the heart and things like that as well.



[Look Into Your Body All About You From the Inside Out with Floor Puzzle Skeleton](#) (*affiliate link*)

We liked this x-ray activity. My daughter made "x-rays" of her hand. First she made handprints, then we cut them out -- and we looked at some real x-rays we have.



When ED was little, she really wrestled with this concept that she has bones inside her hand... she kept asking why she can't take off her skin to see the bones... how neat to watch them think about new concepts (and how is it that I hadn't talked about bones/skeletons with her much before this? The poor third child!!!).



Somewhere there's an x-ray of my hand. I broke my pinkie finger playing field hockey a few years back, but I couldn't find that. :(



- **the five senses** [taste activities](#), [smell matching](#), [sound bingo](#)

Sink or Float Activities

Part I:

There were a heap of different objects I gathered from around the house and outside (enough for all three to be able to have LOTS of turns!). Before putting their object into the water they had to decide whether it would sink or float. I told them they had to make a hypothesis about whether the object would sink or float (I used that term and then told them it means to guess/predict).

Part II:

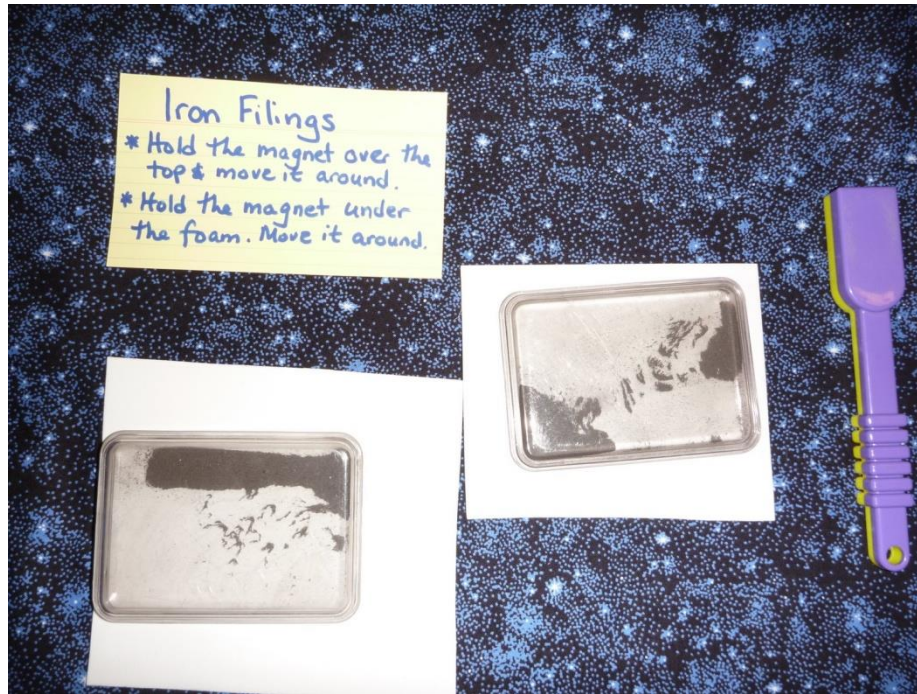
Next, they had to go around the house and gather five things they thought would sink and five objects they thought would float. Then they had to test their objects. If the kids were older I would have had them record their predictions and findings.



Magnetic and Particle Attraction: Occasionally I set up a Science Table with various magnet activities set up. We had a magnet play set which had some pretty fun activities (bouncing magnets, iron filing, etc.). There was a tray with various objects that said, "Are these objects magnetic? Yes No



I had a magnetic maze, which was a gift from a former kindergarten teacher.



Astronomy and the Solar System

[The Moon](#)



[Inner and Outer Planets](#) — Activity – ED still has this in her science notebook. We took it out and looked at the inner rocky planets and our gas giants... and the asteroid belt.

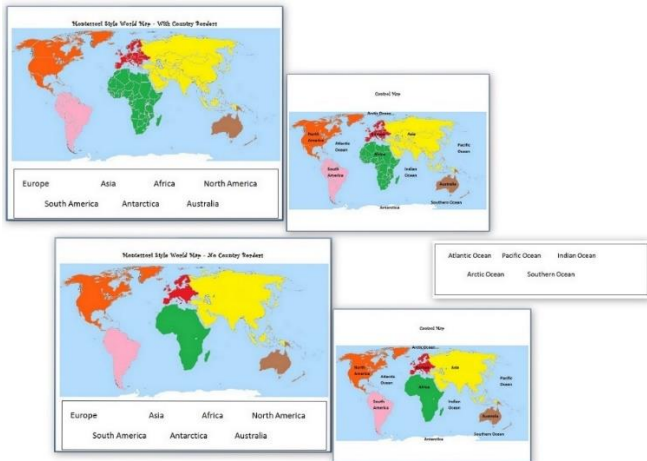


The [Phases of the Moon Activities](#) (plus a homemade oreo cookie recipe at that post!!)



Social Studies K-1

*7 Continents – Pin Map



Montessori World Pin Map

Make your own
World Pin Map with
cardboard, foam,
clear contact paper,
and a world map.



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Where Do I Live? (City, State, Country, Continent)

We did this with cut-out circles and also with stacking boxes...

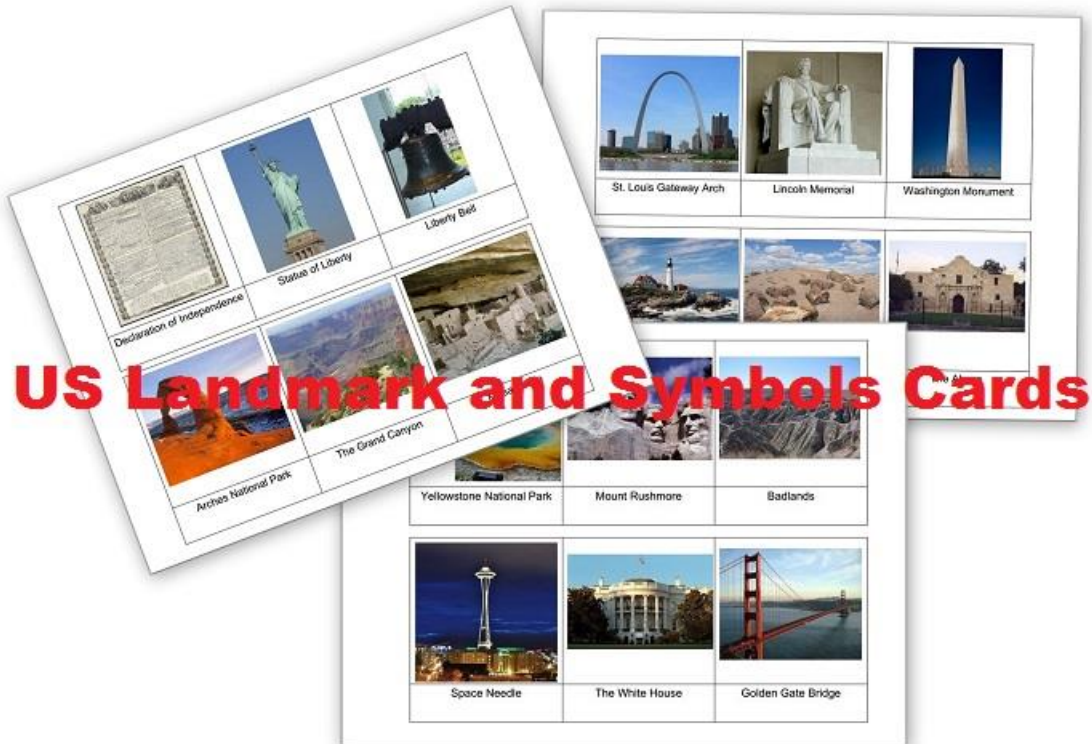


First Language Lessons (*affiliate link*) (which is also listed under Language Arts) does a good job of introducing some of the U.S. states)

*U.S. Geography, Landmarks – USA Song about the mountains and rivers



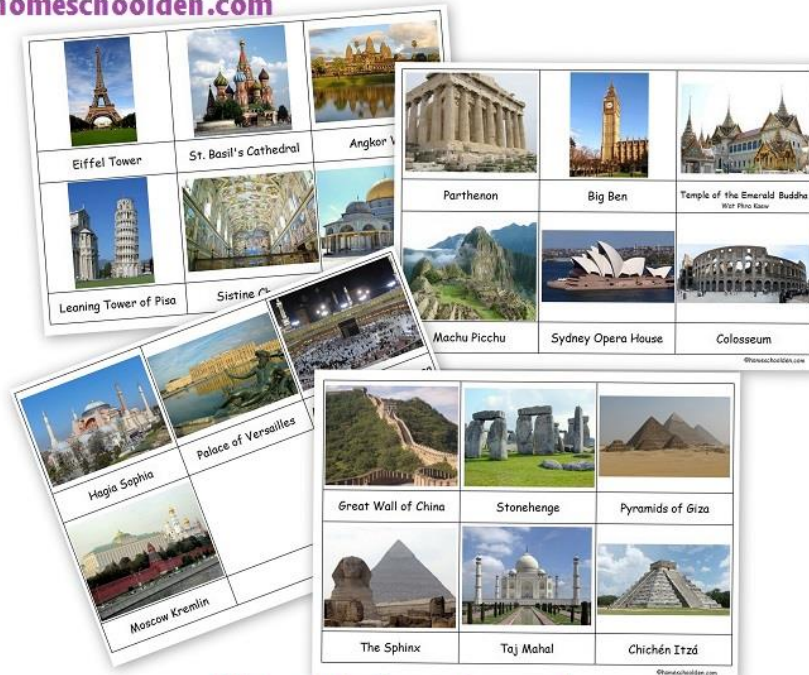
Free Landmark Cards



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Free World Landmark Cards

homeschoolden.com

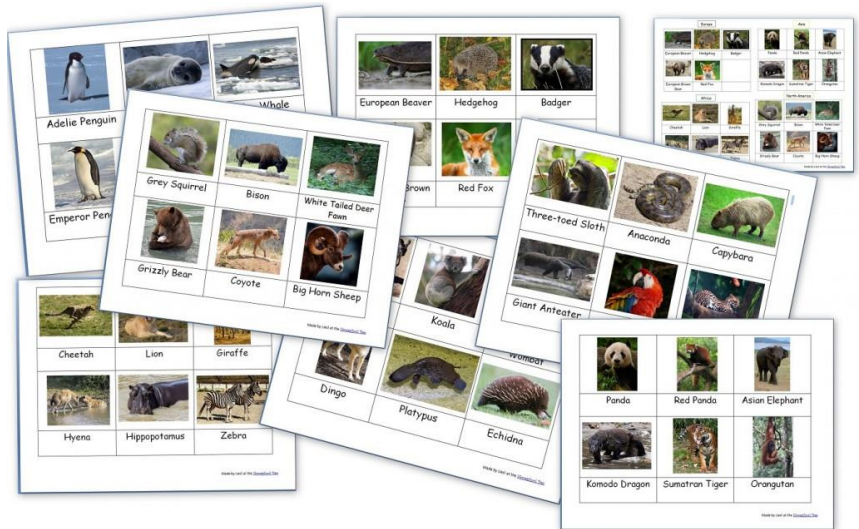


World Landmarks Montessori 3-Part Cards

*World Geography, Landmarks Craft Projects,



World Animal Cards



*Country Unit Study/Lapbooks

We studied [China](#) (and did lots of crafts) and Africa.

Chinese New Year Activities



*Ancient History

We used [Story of the World, vol. 1](#) and used a lot of children's myths. We took an entire semester studying Africa and Ancient Egypt one year. Our study of Ancient Greece also took almost a semester because we did lots of crafts, read lots of myths, children's versions of the Odyssey, etc.

- [Ancient Egypt](#)

We loved these resources. These are *affiliate links*.

- [Ralph Masiello's Ancient Egypt Drawing Book](#)
- [The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt](#) by Leonard Fisher
- [Egyptian Treasures: Mummies and Myths](#)
- [Great Ancient EGYPT Projects: You Can Build Yourself](#)
- [Pyramids!: 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience Ancient Egypt](#)



- [Ancient Greece](#)

We loved these resources These are *affiliate links*.

- [The Gods and Goddesses of Olympus](#)
- We've read [Perseus and the Monstrous Medusa](#), [Odysseus and the Wooden Horse](#), [The Secret of Pandora's Box](#). There is also [King Midas's Goldfingers](#).
- The Magic Tree House, [Hour of the Olympics](#).
- [Tales from the Odyssey, Part 1](#) and [Tales from the Odyssey, Part 2](#).
- [D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths](#)
- [Classical Kids: An Activity Guide to Life in Ancient Greece and Rome](#)



Geography Projects for Ages 4 to 10



Geography Activities for 4-6 year olds



Thank you so very much for reading to the end! You rock!

Enjoy your homeschool journey!

Happy Homeschooling!

Liesl

If you found this resource helpful (or even if you didn't), I'd love to hear from you! I always appreciate honest feedback.

And, if you ever have any questions, you can reach me via email:

Liesl@homeschoolden.com

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