

TO THE TEACHER

Dear Fellow Educator:

The idea for *Facts Plus* and this *Activity Book* originated with a reference assignment given by one of my seventh grade teachers. I've often wished I could tell her how that activity, similar to those in this book, piqued my interest in reference books and planted a "seed" that changed my life! As teachers, *you* influence students in ways you may never know, as that teacher influenced me.

I wrote the *Facts Plus Activity Book* to *save you time* and to share tested ideas which sparked my students' interest in reference books and in learning. Most teachers who survey the reference book, *Facts Plus: An Almanac of Essential Information*, quickly think of dozens of ways to use it in their classrooms. They have plenty of ideas, but rarely the time to develop supportive materials. And why *should* everyone have to reinvent the wheel?

The activities in this book are yours to do with as you wish. Although the answers given are from *Facts Plus: An Almanac of Essential Information*, the activities may be used with any almanac. Activities are ready to use, but feel free to change and adapt them to fit your unique situation. The suggestions are just that, suggestions. Some are "seeds" which may lead you to your own much better ideas. Be creative! Have fun! And please, I want to hear from you! Call or write and share your success stories! Call 907-345-6689 or write me in care of Instructional Resources Company, P.O. Box 111704, Anchorage, Alaska 99511-1704.

My Philosophy About Facts

1. Facts are building blocks for both creative and critical thinking.
2. The ability to find the facts one needs at the time one needs them is more crucial today than at any time in the past, due to the information explosion. The ability to locate facts when needed is *distinctly* different from memorization.
3. Most facts found in reference resources need not be memorized.
4. Some facts should be committed to memory. People who do not "know" these things may have difficulty understanding what they read and may appear to others to be uneducated. Continually having to look up basic and commonly-known facts is a waste of time.
5. People who enjoy memorizing facts should be encouraged to do so.
6. Facts are best learned in the context of rich and varied experiences, including literature, hands-on activities, and discussion. Isolated and unconnected facts are of little value.
7. To be meaningful, new learning must be connected to what a person already knows. *Facts Plus* is intended to be used in building a schematic framework to help students connect and make sense of what they learn in all areas of study.
8. The more ways one organizes and views a set of facts, the greater the possibility of seeing patterns and relationships.
9. A person is more likely to learn a fact if it is needed to answer a question stemming from his/her own curiosity or if it relates to a current interest or concern.
10. Facts can be fun and *fascinating!*

A Ready-Reference Classroom

Just as students immersed in quality literature will come to enjoy and appreciate it, students surrounded by reference materials will learn the habit of consulting them when questions arise. Any or all of the following items in your classroom will facilitate the teaching of lessons and concepts in this *Activity Book*.

Alphabet cards which are generally used as handwriting examples can also help students learn to locate entries in a dictionary or index quickly. See *Activity Book* pp. 2 and 7.

Time line of world history. This can be hung high in the classroom and left there throughout the year for reference. I do not know of any commercially made time lines I would recommend. You can make your own out of a 30' long piece of butcher paper, cut to a 10" width with a black line 2½" from the top. Make "tick marks" on the line every seven inches (for every 100 years), starting about three inches from the left. Number 3000 B.C., 2500 B.C., etc. by 500 year increments to 2000 A.D. as shown at left. Pictures can illustrate major eras or events. Dates for eras are approximate.

Ancient Egypt, 3000 B.C. to 715 B.C.

Picture of Sphinx or Pyramids.

Ancient Greece, 800 B.C. to 300 B.C.

Picture of the Parthenon.

Ancient Rome, 500 B.C. to 455 A.D.

Picture of Roman Colosseum.

Birth of Christ, c. 1 A.D.

Picture of nativity scene.

Middle Ages, 476 A.D. to 1450 A.D.

Pictures of castles.

Columbus, 1492 A.D.

Picture of Columbus' ships.

U.S.A. began, 1776 A.D.

Picture of Liberty Bell or U.S. flag.

Memorizing the general sequence of events on the time line gives students a framework for learning about cultures and histories of people around the world. See *Activity Book* p. 91.

Large wall maps make excellent bulletin boards that can be left up throughout the year. Maps should be large enough to be seen from anywhere in the classroom and should always be visible.

Children as well as teachers are more likely to refer to maps to clarify small points if they are easy to access. The following National Geographic maps are excellent for this purpose:

World Map, product number 02690, size 70" x 49", paper flat, price \$12.95.

United States Map, product number 02208, size 70" x 49", paper flat, price \$12.95.

Order from National Geographic, 1145 17th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. 1-800-638-4077. \$4.75 shipping for one map, \$5.75 for both. If possible, also get a large map of your state and a map of Europe, as its countries are difficult to see on the world map.

Facts Plus: An Almanac of Essential Information for each student. Schools ordering class sets of 25 or more almanacs directly from the publisher qualify for a 25% discount.

The World Book Encyclopedia. Contact your local World Book representative about the "Partners in Excellence" program, which enables schools to obtain current encyclopedias at a discount.

Dictionary for each student.

World atlas, local telephone book, large calendar.