

StraightTALK

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A Glimpse at the J Level Math Topics

Education for a Bright Future

The Goals of the Kumon Method of Education by Hiroshi Kumon



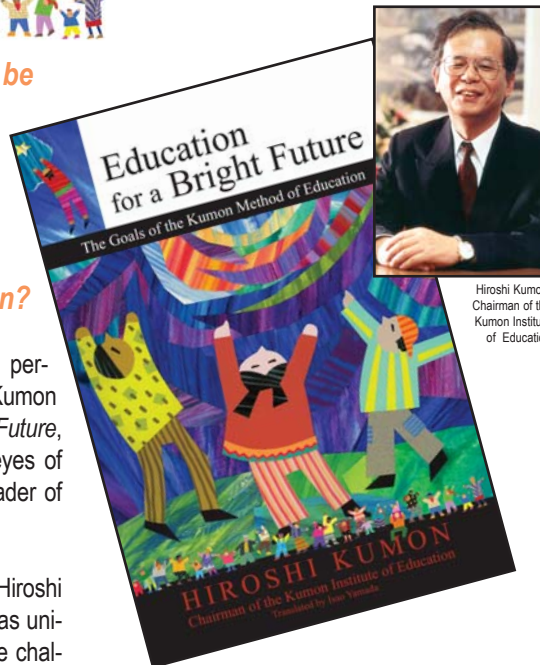
Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be the original Kumon student?

Do you ever wonder what Kumon is like in other countries?

Have you ever questioned the value of advancing beyond grade level in Kumon?

If any of these questions have crossed your mind, perhaps you'd find the recent book published by Mr. Kumon an interesting read. Entitled *Education for a Bright Future*, the book is an inspiring look at Kumon from the eyes of Hiroshi Kumon, the Chairman and Instructional Leader of the Kumon programs worldwide.

In the words of the translator, Mr. Isao Yamada, "Hiroshi Kumon speaks to parents everywhere. The book has universal appeal. Even though it mentions some of the challenging issues facing Japan, it talks about Kumon's place in the education of children worldwide. I believe that it's a touching and easy 133 page read as told through the eyes of an educator, parent and student all in one."



Hiroshi Kumon, Chairman of the Kumon Institute of Education

Please see your child's Kumon Instructor for more details on how to get a copy.



Think Ahead! Think New Level J Math!

Level J math...chances are your child is still climbing towards it! One thing he or she should know is that this level has been totally updated. The recent revisions concentrate on making the level smooth, even for elementary school students who have completed Level I, while still maintaining the difficulty needed to capture the attention of the advanced high school student. And as an added bonus for many U.S. students, Level J will also be appropriate for students taking the new SAT I which will include some Algebra II. For Canadian students looking to get a head start on high school, Level J spans the Grade 9 and 10 math curriculum.

Let's hear what one student has to say about the new level.



"In comparing the revised J to the old J, I found the revised J easier to follow since it gives detailed examples and a summary at the end of each section. As a result of studying the revised J Level, the math I was faced with in high school was more simple and at the end of the course, I achieved the highest mark in the class."

—Tharini Siva
Solved both the old and new Level J math at Anne Hui's suburban Toronto Center.

Polynomial expansions

Factorization

Fractional expressions

Irrational numbers

Quadratic equations

Simultaneous equations

Remainder theorem

Factor theorem

Proofs of identities

Equalities and inequalities

THOUGHTS BY TORU KUMON

"The Kumon Method is a learning method by which children can build a foundation to enhance their creativity."

Kumon Math Challenge 2002: A Big Hit with Students

A Few Facts About The Math Challenge 2002:



5,113 students from cities across the US East, US Midwest and Canada took *The Challenge* on July 14th of this year.



The top 10 students in each grade, 1 through 10, won scholarships ranging from \$100 to \$1000. In total, over \$30,000 was paid out in scholarship money.



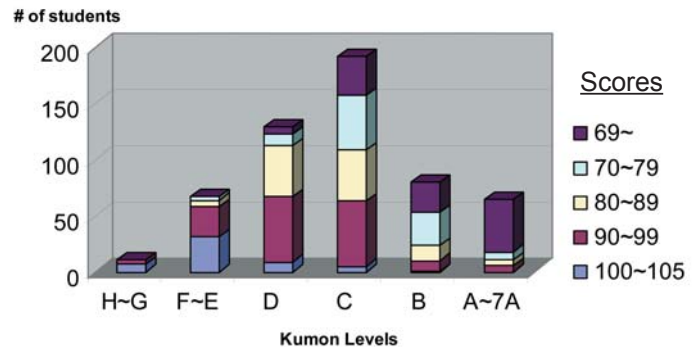
The Challenge was held at select universities across North America. This year, children in 13 cities across the US and Canada took part.

The Challenge was made up of 30% non-calculation questions such as geometry, word problems and math reasoning. The remaining 70% was math calculation.

This is Kumon's 5th annual *Math Challenge* and the first year to invite non-Kumon students to participate. Kumon students outperformed, on average, the non-Kumon students winning 100 of the 115 scholarships awarded.

All students who participated will soon receive a follow-up report detailing their individual results. Look for more U.S. cities to be added next year to *The Kumon Math Challenge 2003*.

Kumon Levels vs *The Math Challenge* Scores
Grade 2



Year after year, the results demonstrate that the more advanced the Kumon students are in relation to their grade, the better the score on *The Challenge*. We believe that these results reflect the fact that long term Kumon students have a great opportunity to master basic calculation (elementary through high school) and this allows them to spend time manipulating and processing higher order math questions such as those on this test.

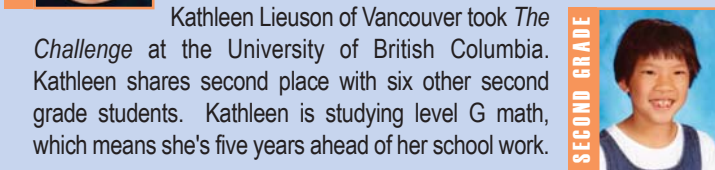
Some of the Winning Faces This Year



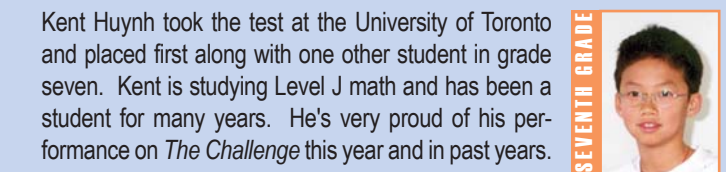
Alexander Bloom took *The Challenge* at Monmouth University in New Jersey. Alexander is studying Level D and shares fourth place spot with six other children in first grade. Alexander is three years ahead of his grade level.



Pablo Martin started Kumon in Mexico and transferred to Washington, D.C, last year. This dedicated sixth grader shares fourth place along with one other student. Pablo took *The Challenge* at the University of Maryland. He's currently in Level L, which puts him several years ahead of his grade level.



Kathleen Lieuson of Vancouver took *The Challenge* at the University of British Columbia. Kathleen shares second place with six other second grade students. Kathleen is studying level G math, which means she's five years ahead of her school work.



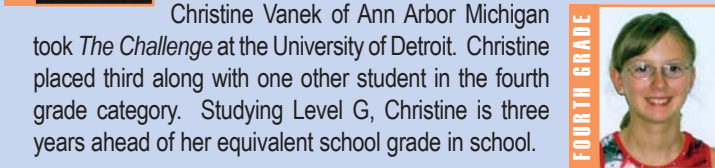
Kent Huynh took the test at the University of Toronto and placed first along with one other student in grade seven. Kent is studying Level J math and has been a student for many years. He's very proud of his performance on *The Challenge* this year and in past years.



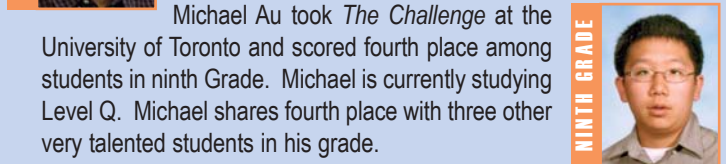
Sameer Farooq took *The Challenge* at Columbia University in New York City. Sameer placed third along with six others in the third grade category. He's currently in Level F making him three years ahead of his grade in Kumon.



Rahul Banerjee of Boston scored first place among eighth grade students. Rahul took *The Challenge* at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is very glad he did. He is currently studying Level O.



Christine Vanek of Ann Arbor Michigan took *The Challenge* at the University of Detroit. Christine placed third along with one other student in the fourth grade category. Studying Level G, Christine is three years ahead of her equivalent school grade in school.



Michael Au took *The Challenge* at the University of Toronto and scored fourth place among students in ninth Grade. Michael is currently studying Level Q. Michael shares fourth place with three other very talented students in his grade.



Lisa Ando of Buffalo Grove, IL, took *The Challenge* at Northwestern University in Chicago. Lisa's very proud of her first place finish among fifth graders. She's been in Kumon for eight years and is now four years ahead of her school grade, studying Level I.

Congratulations to you and all the other winners of The Kumon Math Challenge 2002.

* The above mentioned schools of higher education are not affiliated with Kumon Math and Reading Centers and do not specifically endorse *The Kumon Math Challenge*.

** All Levels/grades reflect actual as of July 2002.



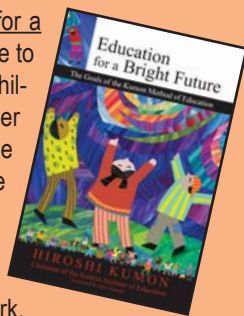
Doctor on Call

Dr. Andi Addresses Today's Parenting Issues

Learning Begins at Home

A parent is a child's first teacher. Since parents possess an enormous influence over their children's learning, infancy is not too early for their home education to begin. When parents sing to their infants, recite nursery rhymes, or play simple games with them, (such as 'peek-a-boo' or 'this little piggy') at changing or bath times, they are stimulating their babies' brains and teaching them that learning is fun. When parents read aloud and play word games with their preschoolers, they are not only providing them with knowledge that is essential for their future success in reading, but activating certain learning centers in their brains as well. For learning to take place, the learning environment must feel emotionally safe. Children who begin their lifelong career of learning in this safe and loving way will be better prepared for the education they will receive in the school environment because the seeds for loving to learn will have been planted, taken root, and begun to grow.

On pages 103-104 in his new book, Education for a Bright Future, Hiroshi Kumon writes, " I would like to see parents give warm encouragement to the children who work hard in their study. ...The younger the children are, the more they will be fond of the praise, encouragement and the warm embrace they receive from their parents. These positive reinforcements will become the source of further motivation...it's my sincere hope that you, as parents, will join your child in the joy of hard work, praise his or her efforts, give words of encouragement..."



Regardless of culture, parents throughout the world want the best for their children. They want them to have the skills that will make schoolwork easy. No parents want to see their children struggle. Parents can be coaches or mentors to their children by providing them with a family life that nourishes their neurodevelopmental well-being. They can do this by showing a keen interest in what their child is learning at school and at Kumon; by limiting TV and video viewing; by modeling intellectual pursuits through reading and discussing ideas; and by being good Kumon parents who provide their children with a designated place and time to do their worksheets as well as their homework. Driving time back and forth to Kumon twice a week for months and even years provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to discuss their child's school and Kumon progress, to set Kumon goals, to talk about other problems that their children may be having, to play word and number games, etc. And most important of all, parents should reward their children for trying and doing their best irrespective of the actual grade/mark they receive.

Every child has strengths and weaknesses. By focusing on the positive, children will be able to have a vision of their future that will sustain motivation to reach an attainable goal. Parents provide the home education that is the cornerstone upon which their children's future learning, and attitude toward learning, will be built. It is nice to see that the leader of Kumon endorses positive parenting and recognizes the importance of the parents' role in the home education of their children.

We've Got Mail



You asked. Dr. Andi answered.

Dear Dr. Andi,

"My son is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. He has been taking Kumon Math for over a year. We started it because he has so much math anxiety whenever he has to take a math test and whenever he has to solve math word problems. Can you give me some suggestions that might help him?"

Mr. C.

Dear Mr. C.,

There's no quick fix to this situation; however mastering the basic foundational skills of mathematics will be key to his conquering his math anxiety and to his overall improvement in math. Growing his math vocabulary and improving his reading comprehension will be instrumental in his being able to tackle math word problems successfully. I believe that long term Kumon study is the solution for many, many children who suffer from such anxiety. As your son masters the materials - first below grade level and then above it - I believe that his confidence will grow and his anxiety will lessen, both of which should generalize to other math situations.

Here are some other tips that textbooks suggest for solving word problems:

- 1) Retelling. Have your son retell the problem in his own words before solving it.
- 2) Five-Step Technique. Have your son
 - restate the problem
 - determine what information is needed to solve it
 - plan the steps or calculations to be performed
 - carry out the plan, and
 - evaluate the reasonableness of his solution.
- 3) A Concept Map. Create a map by placing the concept in a box in the middle of a page (e.g. percent), draw a box above it, below it, to the right and to the left of it. In the box above the concept, define it; in the box below, place examples; in the box to the right, list its properties and in the one to the left make comparisons.
- 4) Graphic Organizers. Have your son create a worksheet with four columns labeled K-N-W-S where K stands for the facts that I KNOW from the information in the problem; N is the information I do NOT need to solve the problem; W stands for WHAT the problem asks me to find; S is the STRATEGY, operation or tools that will be used to solve the problem.
- 5) Math Vocabulary Cards. Have your son create a set of cards with math definitions, formulas, etc. and use them for drill as he would vocabulary cards.



Some of the above are more complicated than others, so have your son try one at a time. However, I encourage sticking with Kumon. Over time, I am sure that he will become much more competent and confident in his math skills.

My best to you and your son,

Dr. Andi

If you have a question or comment for Dr. Andrea Pastorok please contact her at: askdrandi@kumon.com

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Athrey
9 year old Athrey is a G 5 student and a recipient of the Mathlete & Readelite awards. His parents believe Kumon is an asset for his future success.



Shana & Michael
Siblings Shana and Michael both play soccer, piano and attend Kumon. Shana understands the importance of repetition and practice. She credits Kumon for helping her develop speed. Michael loves the challenge offered by Kumon and has advanced to a gifted program at his school this year.



Amanda
12 year old Amanda has achieved honor roll status since enrolling in Kumon and has received the President's Award for Educational Excellence.



Dylan
Following his sister, Amanda, Dylan has also advanced with the help of Kumon. This year he received straight A's while improving his ability to quickly understand math concepts.



Nitya
6 year old Nitya credits her improved music abilities to the speed and focus she has earned through Kumon math. Within 8 months she has moved from Level 3A to Level C.



Eva
At 12, Eva enjoys the advanced study Kumon offers and has already completed Level J in reading while studying Level H math. She is looking forward to high school.



Melissa
10 year old Melissa has always enjoyed advanced study and found Kumon to be an excellent source of constant challenge. She completes her daily Kumon along with her piano studies with a smile.



Stephanie
Stephanie enjoys studying Kumon. While in first grade Stephanie completed Level E math while improving her already excellent concentration skills.



Rajiv
Attending Kumon since 12, Rajiv, now 17, is looking forward to bringing everything he learned at Kumon to Stanford or Harvard next year after scoring 1580 on the SATs.



Ben
"Sky's the limit for Ben", says his mom. Kumon has improved not only his scores in school but has helped develop his self-esteem. This has contributed to his receiving numerous academic awards.



Austin
At 12, Austin knows first-hand the benefits of becoming an advanced learner with Kumon. He believes Kumon "teaches you things before you even learn it."



*Interested in having your child featured?
Please talk to your Kumon Instructor.*