

Straight TALK



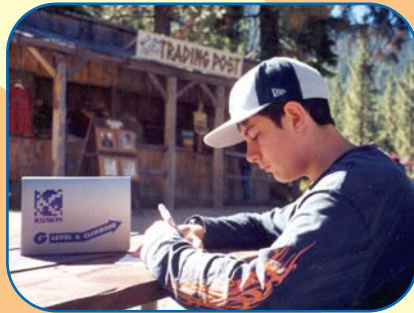
July | August 2003

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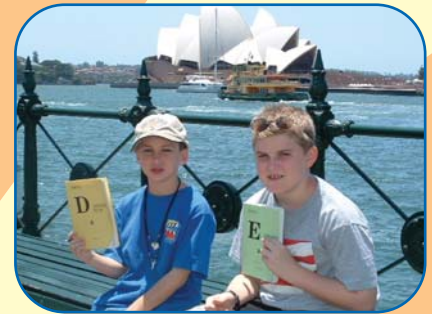
Malaysia



Lake Tahoe, NV



Sydney, Australia



Summer Study Around the World

Join us as we travel with a handful of North American Kumon students who explored the world last summer and sent us pictures from some of the most exotic places where they have ever done their Kumon homework. We hope that these pictures will inspire students everywhere to keep up with their Kumon studies this summer. You're in great company.



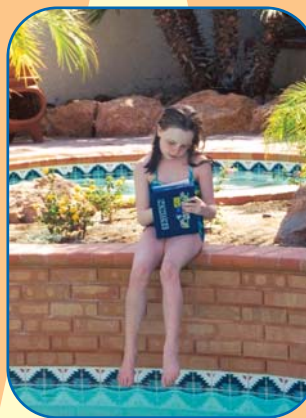
Disney World, FL



Beijing, China



Peninsula State Park, WI



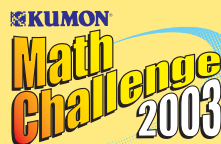
Southern California



Cockpit, North America

Inside this issue:

- 2 Level 7A/6A Revisions
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participated in making

On Sunday July 13th, close to 10,000 students from Kumon and the general public converged on 29 university campuses all over North America to take Kumon's Math Challenge 2003. A great big "Thanks" to everyone who participated in making this event a success. Look for the results in your mail.

THOUGHTS BY TORU KUMON

"The biggest feature of the Kumon material is that we give children pleasure to venture into an unknown field."

Levels 7A/6A Revisions

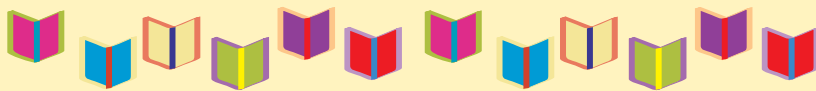
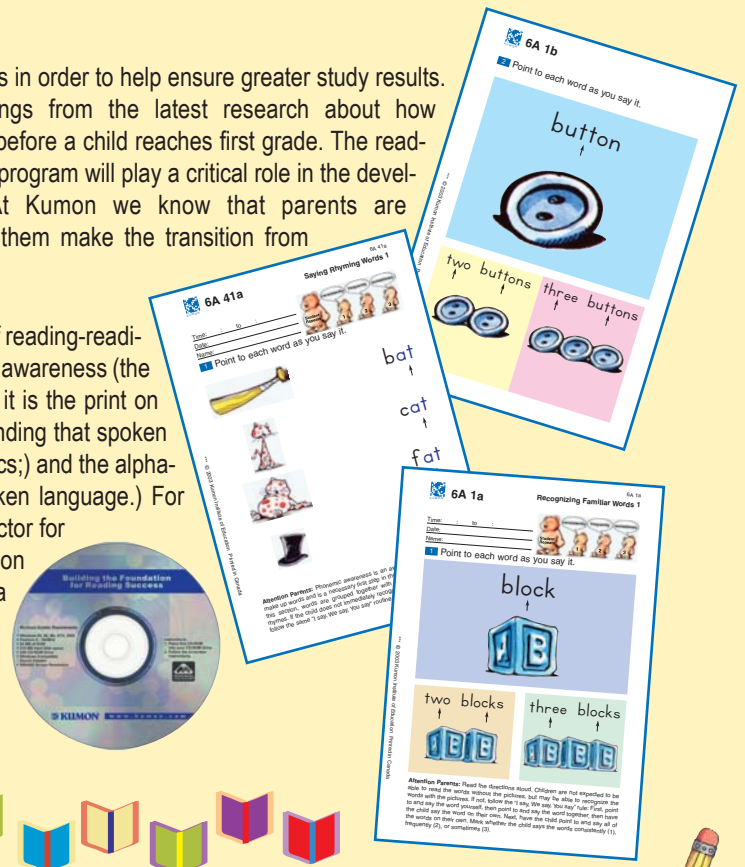
New Reading Worksheets for Preschoolers

Beginning as early as August 2003, parents of preschoolers will notice that their children will be bringing home new and improved reading worksheets for Levels 7A and 6A (Kumon's first two reading levels). This fall, we will also be rolling out Levels 5A, 4A, 3A, the remainder of our new reading worksheets for preschoolers.

At Kumon, we have the policy of revising our worksheets on a regular basis in order to help ensure greater study results. In this case, in particular, we are incorporating many of the findings from the latest research about how children learn to read. The foundation for reading success is formed long before a child reaches first grade. The reading readiness skills that your preschoolers will acquire in our early reading program will play a critical role in the development of their ability to learn how to read in later levels. At Kumon we know that parents are anxious and willing to start their preschoolers on a path that will help them make the transition from a pre-reader to a successful reader.

The key to success is reading and the key to reading is a solid foundation of reading-readiness skills. In order to read, among other things, children must acquire print awareness (the familiarity with print basics i.e. directionality, spacing, and knowledge that it is the print on the page that is read, not the picture;) phonemic awareness (the understanding that spoken words are made up of sounds called phonemes; it is the precursor to phonics;) and the alphabetic principle (the understanding that letters represent sounds in a spoken language.) For more information about this topic, be sure to ask your child's Kumon Instructor for a copy of the CD/Video entitled "Reading Readiness - Building the Foundation for Reading Success." The development of these important skills is a primary aim of our new brightly colored and beautifully illustrated 7A & 6A reading worksheets.

Finally, don't forget to attempt to read to your young child nightly.



Attention U.S. Parents

The "NEW" SAT

(US College Entrance Exam)



Did you know that the SAT is getting a facelift! It will be the 10th change to the SAT in its 77 year history. Presently, 80 to 90% of four-year institutions in the U.S. require admission test scores as part of a student's application package, and college-bound students take the SAT more than any other admission test.

Several changes will be made to both the Verbal and Math sections of the SAT. First of all, it will be longer: 3 hours and 35 minutes versus the current 3 hours. The former Verbal Reasoning Test will be called the Critical Reading Test. Verbal Analogies will no longer be included, but will be replaced by short reading passages to be added to the existing long reading passages. A new Writing Test, which will replace the SAT II Writing Test, will be added to the Critical Reading portion. The new 50 minute Writing Test will have two parts: 1) a short written essay (25 minutes) in which students will be expected to present and defend their position of an idea; and 2) multiple choice questions (25 minutes) that measure improving sentences and paragraphs, identifying errors in grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, and proper word usage.

The Math Reasoning Test, which previously included arithmetic, algebra I, and geometry - representing 2 years of high school math - will now also include some algebra II and some trigonometry - representing three years of high school math. The subtest, Quantitative Comparisons, will be eliminated.

These changes, which will be aligned to classroom practices more closely than the current SAT, will be administered for the first time in March 2005.



Read, Read, Read

Dr. Andi Addresses Today's Parenting Issues



While visiting Mrs. Christine Chang's Kumon Center in San Francisco, Alice, a 9th grader, asked me the following question: "What can someone do to obtain high scores on the reading section of the SAT?" Her question came as no surprise because hers is a concern of the majority of U.S. high school students who want to go to a four year college or university.

In order for Alice to do well on the reading portions of this test, she and



Dr. Andi, Alice Chan and her Instructor Christine Chang

all other students must have strong vocabulary skills and good reading comprehension. To increase vocabulary and strengthen reading comprehension, they must simply read, read, read. Whether you live in Toronto, Ontario or Toronto, Ohio,

Kumon students can begin improving their vocabulary and comprehension by starting with the RRL and reading a wide variety of books and completing the requisite worksheets along the way.

Of course, the time a child begins test preparation is the day he/she enrolls in Kumon Reading. Vocabulary building and reading comprehension are NOT (like Rome) built in a day, but rather acquired seamlessly over a period of time. Certainly, one can make a push as standardized test time arrives to review vocabulary and concentrate on reading comprehension; however, the student who reads on his own daily from Level 2A on, has the best chance of scoring well on the reading portion of any standardized test. The earlier one becomes a reader, the sooner the answer to Alice's question becomes evident.

Here are 3 suggestions for building vocabulary and developing strong reading comprehension skills that I gave to Alice to share with her friends and classmates.

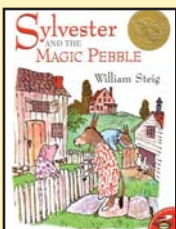
1. Start with books on Kumon's Recommended Reading List (RRL) about a favorite topic.

For example, read books on your favorite topic. Here are several topics and reading levels as examples:



Horses - *The Girl who Loved Wild Horses* - (D); *Black Beauty* - (E); *The Red Pony* - (F); *The White Stag* - (I).

Pioneer Life - *Strawberry Girl* - (F); *Thimble Summer* - (F); *Caddie Woodlawn* - (G); *Little House in the Big Woods* (series) - (G).

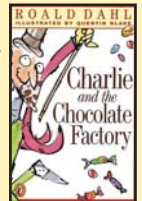


Magic - *Sylvester & the Magic Pebble* - (3A); *The Magic School Bus* - (All); *Liang and the Magic Paintbrush* - (CII); *Ella Enchanted* - (D); *The Lion, the Witch, & the Wardrobe* - (E).

2. Read a complete series of books. If a student enjoyed one book in a series, e.g. *Ramona Forever* - (E) by Beverly Cleary; or *Little House in the Big Woods* - (G) by Laura Ingalls Wilder; or

A Wrinkle in Time - (G) by Madeleine L'Engle, read the entire series by these authors. After reading Laura Ingalls Wilder books, watch a rerun of the TV show, "Little House on the Prairie"; or write a story about the main character of the series or about what might happen if there were a new book in the series; or discuss the book with someone else who read it; or retell the story from the first book to the last to a family member, friend, and even your Kumon Instructor.

3. Read multiple books by a favorite author. If a student enjoyed *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* - (E) by Dahl, read other Dahl books on the reading list: *Fantastic Mr. Fox* - (BII) or *James and the Giant Peach* - (E). After reading Dahl's books rent the movies based on these books and observe how closely they did or did not follow the storyline in the book.



To be able to succeed on the verbal (reading) portions of standardized tests, memorizing long lists of words and their definitions is not enough. Seeing these words in context by reading books and Kumon worksheets, and by using them properly in written and oral language will provide the knowledge one needs to perform well on these tests.

Older students, who are in need of improving their reading comprehension, should read easy texts and revisit easy Kumon Levels to build their fluency in word recognition. Rereading passages will also help to develop fluency in passage reading. Older poor readers and younger poor readers share the same problem and need to learn the same skills. Older students, however, have the complication of years of failure and frustration, and may also have difficulty with spelling, writing, learning a foreign language, and understanding many math word problems. Since struggling readers read many fewer books than do good readers, this results in less exposure to vocabulary, sentence structure, and text organization. For these reasons, it is very important to address the issues that occur with struggling readers as early as possible.

Kumon offers all readers the opportunity

- 1) to demonstrate their reading comprehension skills throughout our reading worksheets;
 - 2) to read hundreds of carefully selected books;
 - 3) to learn grammar, punctuation, and correct sentence structure from the language arts component of our reading program; and
 - 4) to fill in any gaps in their early reading skills.
- Remember, reading preparation for the SAT or any standardized reading test is ongoing starting the moment a student walks into a Kumon Center, and the earlier students begin to work on the critical skill of reading, the better their vocabulary and comprehension will be when it comes time to take a standardized test.

Hitting A Home Run



with Reading!

Why is Mrs. Chang wearing a SF Giants T-Shirt in the above picture?

Kumon SF has teamed up with the "SF Giants and Lou Seal" campaign to promote literacy. Between 6/1 - 8/10, students who pledge to and complete their Kumon all summer are eligible for one of 20 invitations (4 per family) to watch the Giants play the FL Marlins on 8/24. Before the game, these students will read with Lou Seal (Giants Mascot). Good luck everyone!

Mrs. Chang, the shirt looks good on you!

LOOK
for the next
issue of
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arriving in
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Questions? Comments?
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Correction



Last issue it was reported that Qaasim Mian of Edmonton, AB, placed third in the 2002 Math Challenge. Qaasim placed second. We apologize for this oversight.



Clare
Prior to enrolling in Kumon, Clare struggled with her basic math skills. Since then, she has gone on to win a local math competition and is now attending advanced math classes at her school.



Ryan
This 12-year-old joined Kumon while in first grade to learn basic math skills. He soon started to climb Kumon's ladder of success. He is currently studying Level G Math and is a top student at his school.



Andrew
Ryan's younger brother, Andrew, begged their mother to let him join Kumon too! Since enrollment, he has quickly advanced to Level D Math and continues to work very hard for his success.



Prashanth
This energetic nine-year-old is an A.S.H.R.* Student and a Mathelete, who joined Kumon less than two years ago. He is now studying Level H Math and is a two-time spelling bee champion.



Michelle
When this 14-year-old first enrolled in Kumon five years ago, it was to improve her math skills. She is now studying math two years above grade level and has also raised her reading comprehension skills.



Taylor
Before Taylor started kindergarten, his parents enrolled him in Kumon to make sure that he was well prepared for school. After two years in Kumon, he has improved both his math and reading skills along with his attention span and ability to focus.



Rene
After witnessing her brother excel in Kumon, Rene, then three years old, requested that she attend Kumon. Since then, she has been at the top of her first-grade class and has set her goal to be a G by 5 student.



Tyler
This seven-year-old joined Kumon because he wanted to be challenged and he wanted to gain more self-confidence in his math and reading skills. Tyler is now studying Level B Math and Level C1 Reading.



Simrun
Enrolled since she was in kindergarten, 12-year-old Simrun, is in the G.A.T.E.* program at school and is studying Level H Math in Kumon. She enjoys music, dancing and sports while receiving straight A's.



Makayla
At three years old, this bright little girl is already reading and writing sentences. She is currently studying Level 4A Reading and is looking forward to her first day of public school.



Indranil
This G by 5 student is currently nine years old and in fourth grade. Since enrolling in Kumon Math and Reading two years ago, he has gained self-confidence in both subjects and excels at school.



Rubini
After seeing her older sister excel at Kumon, four-year-old Rubini asked to join. In the five years since, she has advanced to Level F Math and Level E1 Reading. She is well on her way to reaching her goal of G by 5.

* A.S.H.R.: Advanced Student Honor Roll
* G.A.T.E.: Gifted and Talented Education Program

Interested in having your child featured?

All Photos **MUST** be accompanied by a completed and signed **Student Profile Form**. Photos sent without a completed form will not be considered. To request a form please ask your Instructor or email us at straighttalk@kumon.com

Faces of Kumon information is based on information at time of photo submission.

