

# JR S A E A S I D E A S

THE  
NEWSLETTER  
OF  
THE  
ONTARIO  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
JUNIOR  
EDUCATORS

APRIL  
2010



## Essentially Science & Tech

Engaging students in science and technology doesn't necessarily take fancy equipment or complex investigations. Observation is critically important in the development of inquiry skills.

We reused some plastic sandwich bags that the kids had brought to school. A little rinsing out and drying on the ledge made them perfect for us to use to grow some seeds. We measured the plastic sandwich bags and used some scissors to cut a piece of good paper toweling to fit exactly into the bag. Using a stapler, we made a line of staples across the bag approximately 1 cm from the bottom.

We dropped some bean seeds into our plastic bags so that we could watch them as they grew. When we added water it flowed to the bottom of the bag, and then wicked up the paper toweling, keeping our seeds moist enough, but not too wet. Excess water filled the space at the bottom of the bag, and any extra leaked out of the holes created by the staples.

We used plastic tacks to mount our seed chambers to a bulletin board. Don't ever tape these plastic growing bags to a window, the sun will cook the poor seeds.

We left the tops of the plastic lunch bags open so that it didn't become too humid for our plants, and were able to observe and measure the progress of each of our little bean plants as they grew.

At the point where our plants were poking out of the tops of our lunch bag growth chambers, we transplanted our plants to cups filled with soil.



## Picking Up On Litter - Some Thoughts



I recently visited a school where there was a major campaign in progress to make people aware of the effects of climate change on our planet. The kids had made posters and written letters to government officials challenging them to take action on this important issue of our time. I was struck, however, as I walked around the playground with the Principal of the school, at the sheer amount of litter that could be seen along the fences and grassy areas in front of the school. As we walked through the hallways of the school I noticed the innumerable small wrappers, discarded scraps of paper and other litter that could be seen in almost every nook and cranny. At the end of the school day I wandered into empty classrooms and noticed the bits of paper and even food scraps that were all over the floor. As I was walking out of one classroom I passed by the afternoon custodian as she made her way into the classroom - I could hear her sigh as she started to lift chairs onto desks to start her clean up.

If we want kids to take responsibility for the future stewardship of our planet, we need to help them start taking action on those things that they can affect - immediately. A ten-year-old is likely not able to reduce the clear cutting of the world's rainforests, but she can pick up after herself and others around her classroom and school. RESPECT for our own personal space, and the space we share with others - and RESPECT for custodians and others who are left to pick up after us when we fail to do so is the FOUNDATION of becoming more responsive and responsible adults.



## Classroom-ready Ideas for Teachers of Grades Four Through Six

The Ontario Association of Junior Educators (OAJE) provides a network for education professionals to share ideas and resources, to assist and support teachers and to advocate on behalf of students and teachers in the Junior grades.

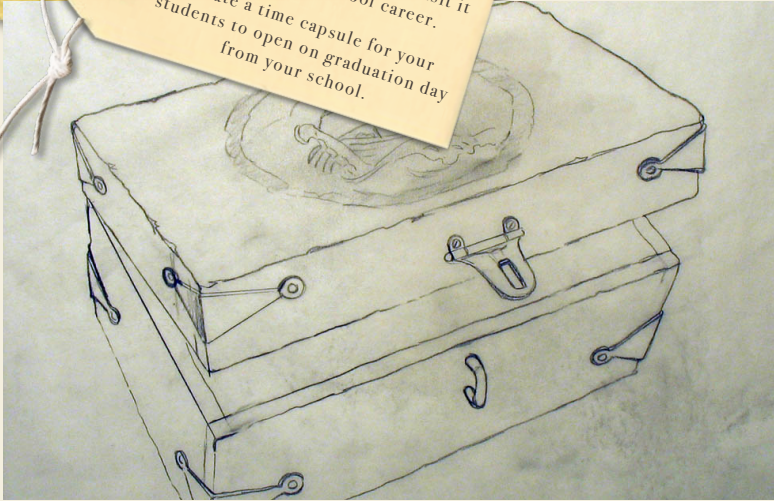
Members of OAJE receive a newsletter outlining news, events, conferences and teaching tips. They are also invited to provide input, information and opinions for the Ministry of Education about issues of importance to Junior Division teachers. And, by joining, you will be sure to receive all future editions of this newsletter, along with lots of other valuable teaching ideas.

To become a member of OAJE, simply register online at <http://oajemembership.eventbrite.com>

JOIN OAJE  
FOR  
FREE!

# TIME CAPSULE

Set up a time capsule for your students this spring and revisit it later in their school career.  
Create a time capsule for your students to open on graduation day from your school.



## INTRODUCING TIME CAPSULES

Bring an artifact from the past to your class. It can be a household tool, an old toy or a photograph. You could bring a small collection of such objects and place them in plastic lunch bags for small groups of students to carefully observe and pass around.

Challenge the students to identify each object and comment on what it tells them about the past. Explain that examining things from the past is an important activity for historians.

Ask the students to share stories about special artifacts that they might have in their homes.

Discourage students from bringing treasured heirlooms to school.

## THE STORY OF AN OBJECT

Many individual objects have stories. While there are millions and millions of one-dollar Loonies in circulation in Canada, the one that was hidden at centre ice during the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, is now on display at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.

The story of an ordinary object can become 'extra-ordinary' when it has been a part of an important or historical event - or when it has been owned or used by a famous person.

Challenge your students to consider . . .

- what are some other examples of ordinary objects that are now in museums or cherished by people because of who used them or where they once were?
- what do you believe is the most famous and/or important object in the world? Why?
- what do people do to protect valuable objects? How do people share or display objects that are important to them?



## Rethink the Time Capsule

We think of time capsules as being those concrete or steel boxes that are sometimes hidden away in the cornerstone of a new building.

But a time capsule can be any object or collection of objects that we can use to better understand a past time or place - in the distant past or in the not-so-distant times.

Recently, when renovating the kitchen in our house, we discovered a small cache of objects that some child of an earlier owner had hidden away behind a piece of baseboard. The house was constructed in 1920 and the objects seemed to be reflective of a child's world in the early 1950's. Small toys, a few photographs, some cut out images from a catalogue, all provided us with some insight into this child's world.

At the beginning of the school year have your students collect a number of small objects which they feel say something about their interests and who they are as a person. Have each child write a short description of each of the objects and place them into a large freezer bag. Hide the collection of bags away for a future date. When the kids look at their collection sometime into the future - have them consider how they have changed and how a new collection of special objects might now differ for them.

I have done this activity during a year, but it is really interesting if you have your Junior level students create a mini time capsule and have them ready to open around the time that these students graduate from your school in grade eight. The greater the passage of time between putting the objects away and when they are 'rediscovered', the more interesting the changes that have taken place over that period of time.


# MAKING A PERSONAL TIME CAPSULE AT HOME

1. Brainstorm a list of items that you are considering putting into the time capsule. Then, in the second column of the chart, indicate why the item would or would not be good to include.

Items	Reason for including or not including each item

2. What container will you use to place your objects in?
3. Why is it a suitable container?
4. Use a notebook that you can use as a journal, or just use loose paper. Use pictures and words to describe and explain each item that you are putting into the container.
5. Think of a good place to store your container. Where will you put it and why did you choose that place?
6. What will you do to make sure that someone finds your time capsule? How will you label it?

Adapted from the teacher notes for the student book "Trapped in Time" from the guided reading series **Reading for Real** published by Nelson Education



*I was doing this activity with a group of grade four students recently, when I received a note from the grandfather of a child in the class. He offered to put together a small collection of objects from his life that the students could examine as a 'mystery' to solve. He provided us with a box containing twelve very interesting objects, which we carefully examined. The challenge was to determine all of the information we could about the owner just from examining the objects. We brainstormed our ideas, and the evidence we had for them. We wrote up what we felt we knew about the owner of the objects and the reasons why.*

*Early the following week we had a surprise visitor to our classroom - the grandfather who had provided us with the clues to his life's story, and we were able to confirm the things that we got right and those we did not.*



# Word Play

We understand how the English language works by using it - and by carefully examining how it communicates meaning. We recognize how words can be used as we read - and then we utilize those techniques in our own writing.

It's this reading/writing connection that helps us build our own vocabularies and become better at interpreting and understanding what we read and more effective in our own writing.

## Puns

Share some puns with your students. Have them create their own collection of puns from the books they have been reading. Challenge the students to collect puns from family members and keep a PUN wall in the classroom.

*A talking dog is smarter than a spelling bee.  
I used to have a fear of hurdles, and then I got over it.  
I decided that becoming a vegetarian was a missed steak.  
Writing with a broken pencil is pointless.  
Baby teeth are drop outs.*

## Soap on a Rope?

Create some word play challenges with rhyming words that go together.

*Don't shake a rake at a snake.  
I bought some soap on a rope for my shower.  
Where would you mail a male whale?  
I carried my goat across the moat.*

## Tom Swifties

A series of books published between 1910 and 1933 featured a young scientist hero by the name of Tom Swift. Along with solving mysteries, Tom also was known by his use of language - specifically, adverbs, to add humour to what he was saying. ("We must hurry," said Tom Swiftly.) Have your students examine a few examples of Tom Swifties and then create their own. Some of these are tricky to figure out.

*"We just struck oil!" Tom gushed. "I might as well be dead," Tom croaked.  
"Fire!" Tom yelled alarmingly. "Pass me that bottle of water", Tom said dryly.  
"A thousand thank you's", Tom said mercifully. "The robber is coming down the stairs", Tom said condescendingly.  
"Pass me the shellfish," Tom said crabbily. "They had to amputate them both at the ankles", Tom said defeatedly.  
"That's the very last time that I am going to stick my arm in a lion's mouth", Tom said off-handedly.*

## Word Pictures

Have each group of students brainstorm a list of fifteen words that they really, really like the sound of.

snooze	aqua	cinnamon	sunset	polka-dotted
scratching	buttery	explodes	squirting	icicle
shadows	applesauce	silvery	giraffe	abracadabra

Challenge them to combine any three of the words into a phrase that makes sense.

*a buttery, cinnamon sunset  
cinnamon applesauce explodes  
shadows snooze at sunset*

## Palindromes

Palindromes are words that can be read either forwards or backwards. Build a collection of them on your word wall.

pop	mom
rotor	radar
refer	noon
kayak	pup

Some phrases can be palindromes as well.

Madam, I'm Adam.	a toyota
wet stew	evil olive

