

Quick and Easy K-6 Office Activities

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to chase away students' winter blahs with six quick and easy Office activities.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial applies to any PC or Mac with a newer version of the Microsoft Office suite, including Word, PowerPoint, and Excel

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIIa in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to NETS for Teachers.

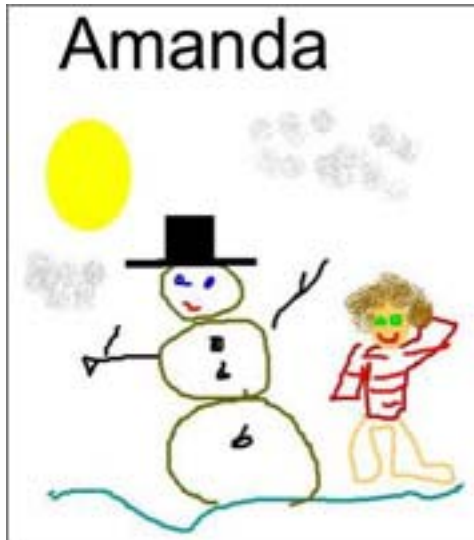
STUDENTS' SNOWY SHOW

The temperature outside is an unbearable brrrrr and the natives are getting restless. You're running out of ideas and ready for a break yourself. This probably is a good time to spice up your K-6 classes with some simple and fun activities using Microsoft Office.

Begin with this snowy wonderland activity for K-2 students:

Have students draw a snowy scene using Microsoft Paint, AppleWorks, KidPix, or another drawing program.

Insert each drawing or picture into a PowerPoint slide. Type each child's first name on her or his slide. (An older student might do this for you.)



Record each student's voice as he or she fills in the blank in this sentence, "I like winter because _____." Note: How you record sounds varies from computer to computer. Some have built-in mics; for others you'll need to buy a mic -- usually for less than \$12. Many PCs come with Sound Recorder (Start>All Programs>Entertainment>Sound Recorder), which is very easy to use.

Save any sound files you record in the same folder as your PowerPoint slide (very important!).

Insert each student's narration onto his or her slide.

Make a title slide with the class name and the project name ("We Love Winter," for example).

Show the resulting PowerPoint presentation to your class, other classes, parents, and fellow teachers, if possible.

If you e-mail this PowerPoint presentation to others, be sure to send each sound file as well. Sounds, unlike pictures, don't automatically become "embedded" in PowerPoint; you need to send them separately.

A SILLY STORY

In this activity, students write and illustrate a winter story.

To write a story with K-2 students:

Sit at a computer and explain to students that they are going to work together to write a silly winter story. If possible, display your screen on a projector or TV, so

students can watch as you type; otherwise, read the story aloud as students compose it.

Ask students to help write the story by making up phrases to add to the story. Provide students with frequent prompts, such as "Once upon a time...," "Then, he turned and saw...," "All of a sudden...," and so on. (Students love to write about one another or about teachers, so be sure the story remains positive and school-appropriate.)

Provide time after each page or section for students to draw pictures illustrating the story, either with markers or crayons or with a Paint program.

If possible, print a copy of the story for each child and attach their pictures to it.

Students in grades 3-6 can type their own silly winter stories while having some formatting fun (and learning some formatting skills).

Encourage students to type an original story in Word; the story should include at least five color words, several words that should be emphasized, and several size-related words.

When the stories are done, have students go back and appropriately format their stories: Change each color word to the appropriate color. Use bold or italics for emphasis. Change the font size of size-related words. A paragraph might read, for example:

All of a sudden, the small cloud burst. The rain poured down onto the green grass and a huge puddle formed. Molly's new blue shoes were ruined.

CHART THE TEMPS

The following activity can be done with K-6 students:

Ask students to watch the weather on the news each night to find out what each day's high temperature is (average the numbers if different stations give different temps!)

Show students how to record each day's temperatures in an Excel or AppleWorks spreadsheet.

At the end of a week or two, have students graph their data by following the steps in the Create a Chart or Graph in Excel techtorial.

Or, record the data on paper, and then have students create bar graphs using the online Create a Graph tool by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

Note: In grades K-2, graph the numbers on a teacher computer with TV monitor and display the results to students. Students in grades 3-6 should be able to complete the assignment on their own.

QUIZ 'EM WITH INTERACTIVE POWERPOINT

In grades 3-6, PowerPoint can be used to create multiple-choice review activities in which right answers and wrong answers take students to different slides. Students love making -- and taking -- these interactive PowerPoint quizzes, and the presentations provide an additional challenge for students who think they already know everything about PowerPoint!

To create an interactive PowerPoint quiz, follow the steps in the Quiz Students with PowerPoint techtorial.

FLAGS - EXCEL STYLE

Students in grades 2-5 will enjoy this colorful Excel activity.

Explain to students that they are going to create flags using geometric shapes. Some students might be familiar with the house flags used in the Harry Potter series. Tell them these will be their own house flags. Tell students that to make their flags, they will:

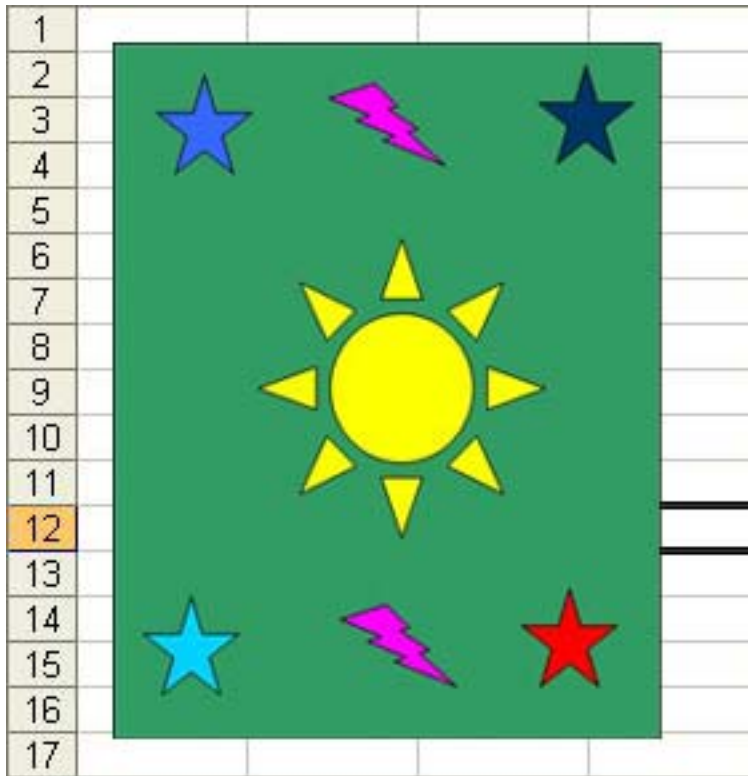
Go to Start>Programs and click Microsoft Excel.

Click AutoShapes>Basic Shapes in the drawing toolbar at the bottom of the screen. Note: If students don't see the AutoShapes menu, have them go to View>Toolbars and click Drawing to display the drawing toolbar. They'll find the AutoShapes menu to the right of the word Draw.

Click a shape in the menu.

Click the open Excel document.

Drag the mouse around the page to create the shape.



Use the paint can or paint brush in the drawing toolbar to add color to their pictures. Note: They also can use those tools to add gradient colors, textures, patterns, and so on.

Use WordArt to create a title for their drawings. To access WordArt, click the angled A in the drawing toolbar.

To print a drawing, highlight it (Be sure to highlight the entire drawing), and then click File>Print Area>Set Print Area>OK.

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I find more information?

Check out the Office techtorials on Education World's [What's a Techtorial?](#) page for more activities you can do with Office.