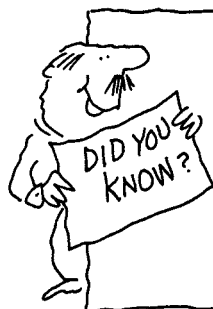




Happy Birthday word skills for upper grades

Everyone loves a birthday! Select from among these birthday word-skill activities of various difficulties to enrich your word work. For many of these activities, students can use their *My Spell Check*® Cards as spelling references.

- 🍎 Post a class chart for each month of the year. Ask children to write their name and birthday on the chart for the month of their birthday. Then, students may—
 - 🍎 construct a bar graph to show the number of student birthdays in each month. Which month has the most birthdays? Students can research which month among the total population has the most birthdays (October). Which month has the least? Students can research which month among the total population has the least birthdays (February).
 - 🍎 research more birthdays—authors, U.S. presidents, favorite movie stars, athletes—to add to the birthday charts. research states' birthdays. Next, they add them to the chart and note which states have birthdays that coincide with students' birthdays.
 - 🍎 list the state birthdays and student birthdays in order of birth.
 - 🍎 learn to list the months of the year in order, spelled accurately. To practice, students work in pairs to write and proofread together. Then, they test each other for mastery.
 - 🍎 choose two months of the year and write what is alike about the two months and what is different (ie., the months' words, weather, holidays).



For students who participated in the Presidential games in the September, 2008, *Appleseed*, do they recall presidents who were born in January?

They are Millard Fillmore (January 7), Richard Nixon (January 9), William McKinley (January 29), and Franklin Roosevelt (January 30).

- 🍎 Birthday is a compound word. How many more compound words can students find and write? Then, students may—
 - 🍎 sort the compound words. They put compounds with a meaning comprised of the meaning of its word parts in one set (i.e., birthday, playground, classroom). They put compounds with a meaning that is not comprised of the meaning of its word parts in another set (i.e., understand, butterfly, strawberry).
 - 🍎 sort the compounds in other ways (i.e., part of speech, vowel sounds, number of syllables).
 - 🍎 alphabetize the compound words. Are there letters for which no compound word is discovered...yet? Which beginning letter claims the most compound words? (Good guesses—b or s!)
 - 🍎 play a game with compound words. A student says or writes the first part of a compound word, another student responds with the second part of the word.

birth + day = birthday

continued »

- write definitions of compounds without using the words that comprise the compounds. Then students make a crossword puzzle using their definitions as word clues.
- use compound words (i.e., therefore, however, furthermore) to coordinate two related sentences to make one, more interesting sentence.
- add suffixes to appropriate compound words. Which compound words have the most word forms?
- list compound words with double letters. Are any of these double letters created by the formation of the compound (i.e., hitchhike, bookkeeper)? Can students find and write another word with the same double letters of the double-letter compounds they discovered?
- list compound words that contain a homophone (i.e., sailboat, sunset, chalkboard). They underline the homophone in the compound. Next, they write its homophone partner.

The word birthday has two syllables. Clap the syllables. Then, students may—

- list more two syllable words. Next, they use this list of two-syllable words to select appropriate words for adding the ed or ing suffix. Next, they analyze the spellings of the words to which suffixes were added (i.e., permit/permitted, believe/believing, suggest/suggested). Then, for each suffix addition, they write the rule for its addition.
- find and write words that have more than two syllables and sort them by their number of syllables. Which word can students find with the most syllables?

The first syllable in birthday, birth, has an r-controlled vowel spelled ir. Students find and write more one-syllable words with this vowel sound in the first syllable. Then students may—

- sort their words by the r-controlled vowel spelling (ir, er, ur). Which spelling was most common?

Traditions often accompany birthdays. Discuss the meaning of the word, tradition. List birthday traditions, including the diversity reflected by various cultures. Then, students may—

- attempt to identify the contents of a wrapped birthday box with a removable lid tied with birthday ribbon. Inside is a mystery object(s). Students write their answer and tell why they think their guess reflects the contents of the birthday box. Then the contents is revealed! Play continues with something different inside the birthday box.
- describe in writing the “best-tasting” birthday cake, their favorite!
- create an advertisement for a bakery specializing in birthday cakes.
- create a birthday card appropriate to give to a friend or family member.

Birthday, like the days of the week, ends in “day.” Then, students may—

- test each other in pairs to assess mastery of the spellings of the days of the week.
- fold writing paper into eight boxes, four on each side (two folds). In the first box (upper left), they write their name. At the top of each of the other boxes, they write a day of the week and something they do on that day (i.e., school schedule, family activity).
- choose two days of the week and write what is alike about the two days and what is different.

