

Valentine's Day

Language following instructions, asking for clarification, explaining

Materials scissors, toothpicks (2 per student), a bunch of basil, a bottle of salad dressing, scissors; *Optional:* small slices of cheese (2 per student), slips of paper, calculators

Preparation Make copies of the Valentine's Day worksheet (1 per student). Ask students to bring in two slices of plain bread and a tomato cut in half with the seeds scooped out.

Warm-up

Make Heart Sandwiches

To begin, have students take out the materials they brought to class (see *Preparation*). Tell them that they will make heart sandwiches. Demonstrate how to cut triangles out of the slices of bread, and hearts out of the tomato, using their scissors. Put some salad dressing on each student's bread. Give each student some basil leaves and the toothpicks (see *Materials*) and (optionally) the pieces of cheese. Explain that the toothpick represents Cupid's arrow. Show students how to assemble the sandwiches. Finally, invite students to eat them.



1 Look and solve the secret code.

Hand out the Valentine's Day worksheet to students (see *Preparation*). Elicit how text messages are sent with a cell phone. (*By pressing keys a number of times to get the letters needed.*) Then draw students' attention to the message and encourage them to solve it: *Hello, pretty girl!* Have one or more students explain how the code works, using the board if necessary.

◆ Use the code to write a secret Valentine's message.

Have students think up their own message. Ask them to write it word by word in the left column of their worksheet and then write the corresponding code next to it. Encourage them to use as many lines and columns as needed.

Finally, invite them to give each other encoded messages on a piece of paper or, if possible, to send them by cell phone and use the dial pad of the phone as the coder/decoder.

Cross-Curricular Activity: Math

Valentine's Day Math

Ask who sends Valentine cards in your class. Ask who gives gifts. Explain the following: *It's very common for children in elementary schools in the US to give or send Valentine cards. To avoid making others feel bad, many children send or give all their classmates a card! (Many cards are bought, others are electronic and some are homemade.)*

Dictate the following calculation: *Let's suppose that all American kids send 10 Valentine cards each. There are 25 students on average in an American classroom. The average school has 17 classes. There are 64,000 elementary schools in the US. How many Valentine cards do elementary students in the US send every year?*

Allow students to use a calculator to do the multiplications needed. (*The answer is two hundred and seventy-two million!*)