Math
Quickie Lessons

Here are some math quickie newspaper lessons from the Washington Times.

Palindromes: Search for numbers in the newspaper that are palindromes (a number that remains the same when written backwards, such as 656). If you can't find a palindromic number, compute the palindrome of any number by reversing the digits and adding the numbers together. For example, to find the palindrome of 369, add 963 to it. This gives 1,332, which is not a palindrome. Then add its reverse (2,331) to it, which equals 3663, a palindrome.

Computing Commissions: Determine the commission you would make if you sold a car listed in the classified section and made 13% commission. Find the car you would most like to sell and compute the commission you'd make.

Computing Car Finance Charges: Identify and cut several ads from the newspaper that offer credit terms. Determine the total amount paid for the product under the credit terms. For example, find your dream car in the classified ads. Pretend that you put $2,000 down payment and finance the balance for three years at 15%. How much will you pay the bank? What will your monthly payments be?

Miles Per Gallon: Use a car advertisement from the newspaper that gives the estimated miles per gallon. Determine the cost of driving from your city to another at the current price of gasoline per gallon.

Vital Statistics: Look through the obituaries in the newspaper and find the average age of death for one day. Keep a record of your findings for a week and graph your results. On one given day: Find the median age of death, the mode age of death, the average age of death for men and the average age of death for women.

Geometry — Lines and Angles: Clip pictures from the newspaper that illustrate different types of lines (parallel, perpendicular and askew). Or find pictures that illustrate different types of angles (right, acute, obtuse and straight.)

Math in the News: Select an article of interest in the newspaper concerning science, technology, business or home economics. Identify the role played by mathematics in the event described in the article.

Metric Measuring — Areas: Choose three pictures or ads from the newspaper. Using a metric rule, figure the area of each ad in square centimeters. Then convert each into square millimeters and square meters.