

Sumdog Competition this Summer, Apple Donations, and Educational Website Recommendations

From Nathan Wieand, Technology Coordinator

Sumdog Summer Competition

This year, our school has been using the Sumdog.com website, which uses fun multiplayer games to encourage students to practice their mathematics. Now, Sumdog has launched a “Summer Mathematics Challenge,” to encourage children to keep practicing over the summer.

To complete the challenge, children must correctly answer 100 questions a day for a total of 20 days. As a reward, children are given 2000 bonus “Sumdog Coins” that they can use to customize their avatar in the virtual shop. Also, for every child that completes the challenge, the school will receive a free subscription to Sumdog for a student until the end of 2012. This allows teachers to use Sumdog’s premium features, such as reporting and analysis tools.

It doesn’t matter if you’re away during part of the summer break, as children can play any days to participate in the competition. Your child will be able to access the summer challenge from their homepage, but the competition is only open from June 15 – August 26 so they won’t be able to start yet. If for any reason your child loses or forgets their user name or password, please email me at nathan.wieand@dc.gov so I can send it to you. I hope you can take part!

Apple/Mac Donations

In DCPS, it is common protocol for schools to purchase Apple computers for use in their elementary schools and Windows based computers in their middle and high schools. Here at Lafayette we have been following this protocol and your children have had lots of opportunities to use Apple products. We currently have 50 MacBooks and 60 iMacs, and are awaiting a purchase order of some MacBook Airs and iPads for next school year. It may seem like we have a lot of computers, but we could always use some more.

A generous parent recently offered the school a few Apple computers as donations from the company where he works. We gratefully accepted his offer and will soon be getting those computers into the classrooms. We are asking that any parent, relative or friend with similar connections consider Lafayette as the place for your Apple product donations. Even if you think your equipment is out dated, there may be measures we can take to get it running faster and more reliably.

If you have any Apple desktops, laptops, iPads, or iPods and aren’t sure what to do with them, please contact me at nathan.wieand@dc.gov to discuss options for donating. Donating is tax deductible and you can be assured your old equipment will go to good use when it is in the hands of students and teachers at Lafayette. Thank you for your help!

Summer Suggestions of Educational Websites

Summertime is an awesome time of year for kids and I hope everyone is able to make the most of it. I would like to suggest some websites for your children to visit this summer in order to keep their brains active. The sites are great free resources and I hope that you have the opportunity to visit them.

First of all, if your child is in 1st through 5th grade please remember to have them compete in the *Summer Sumdog Competition* (<http://www.sumdog.com/>). The student response to the program has been very positive and I'm sure they won't complain about playing the online games with their friends. Remember to encourage your child to challenge themselves as they select skills to focus on.

<http://www.mrnussbaum.com/> Mr. Nussbaum is a great site with lots of innovative and unique educational games and activities. I would recommend allowing your child to browse the site to find content that engages and interests them. If there are specific skills you would like to find for your child, first locate the subject/category at the top of the homepage and then scroll through the activities to find the appropriate grade level. Many activities on Ms. Nussbaum are sorted according to color coded grade level tabs.

<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/> I would like to once again suggest the use of the site, *Internet 4 Classrooms*. If your child's teacher recently told you about some skills to work on with your child, then this is the site to find reinforcement. Activities and games on the site are organized by grade level, subject, and then skill so it is easy to find relevant material.

<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/> Sheppard Software is a site with a variety of content that spans across all grade levels. It is easy to navigate and has great science and geography content.

<http://www.khanacademy.org/> If you haven't heard yet, some schools are now using a, "Flipped Classroom," model. Basically a flipped classroom involves having students watch instructional videos at home (teaching) and then complete their homework at school (reinforcement). The Khan Academy is often accredited with this movement. The site offers lots of instructional videos with many follow up activities. The content is meant to be self-paced so that students move up as they master skills in a progressive fashion.

<http://www.arcademicskillbuilders.com/> Arcademic Skill Builders is a site where children mostly practice math skills. The content on the site is organized by skill and grade level and is very easy to navigate. The site is similar to Sumdog in that students are able to play against other people as opposed to playing exclusively against the computer. It is also a site where students can create accounts in order to track their progress.

Next school year, we will be using Arcademic Skills with many of the students so I ask that you refrain from creating an account, but instead let your child explore and

familiarize themselves with the site. We will be creating teacher and student accounts so that teachers can monitor student progress. If you still want to create an account please be aware that your child may end up with two accounts (one for home and one for school). Once students receive their login information at school they will be able to login and access their accounts from home.

Thanks for reading! I hope everyone has a wonderful summer and is able to visit some of the suggested websites!