Contents

Introduction

As it is now a requirement that all children leaving primary school must have a sound grasp of the 2–12 times tables, teachers and others who work with them must look for stimulating and imaginative ways to teach these tables and try to make the learning process both effective and fun.

The first chapters in the book contain activities specifically for use with the 2, 5 and 10 times tables, first on their own, and then together.

The remainder of the games are appropriate for any of the times tables, from 2–12, and may be used to practise whichever tables are being learned by the children in the class or group at the time of playing.

Some of the games offer opportunities for children to learn the questions and answers for each table in sequence. Other games test their memories and thinking skills as they try to identify the table they are working on. There are also games to teach children the different factors that can make up each answer.

When games require children to take on different roles, you should choose the parts carefully to suit their individual abilities and confidence levels, ensuring that appropriate challenges are offered to each. The degree of stimulation and challenge may be increased gradually to suit each class or group, by moving from simpler tables to harder ones, swapping from sequences to random orders or working at a faster pace.

Children learn best when they are presented with information repeatedly and in a variety of ways. The games in this book help to teach times tables through a mixture of visual, aural and kinaesthetic activities: looking and sorting number cards, saying the numbers aloud and moving around to find the correct places and partners.

To prepare for the games, you will need to make sets of cards, each large and clear enough to be seen from a distance. These may be as simple as sheets of paper or, to make them last longer, squares of plain card/laminated sheets. The numerals can be written with a black marker pen, and must be large enough to be instantly recognisable and easy to distinguish from one another from a short distance away. Children may make the number cards for themselves, but you should check to ensure that the numerals are correctly formed, of an equal size and large enough.

To be able to play any or all of the games, it is necessary to create two sets of cards numbered 1–12 and thirteen sets of cards numbered 0–9 that will be reusable on several occasions. If making sets of cards for single use only, the numerals needed for each game are listed under Preparation. Some activities will also require 'x' and '=' cards.

The games will be most successfully played in a hall or other large clear space, or outside on a playground or grassy area. However, they may be adapted to fit within any available room or outdoor space, depending upon the number of players. Most of the games will ideally be played with a class of 20–30 pupils, but, for some games, a smaller number can encourage more active participation, while other games are more fun when played with a larger group.