



Guidelines for Using Bridges in a First/Second Grade Blended Classroom

Bridges is designed to meet the needs of a very wide range of learners at each grade level. Concepts are taught in the context of problem solving, instruction is multi-modal, students are grouped flexibly, and assessment is ongoing. As a result, Bridges can be used quite effectively with mixed age groups. Nevertheless, in this context it can be challenging to ensure that state and district expectations are adequately met for each grade level. There are several ways to approach this issue, bearing in mind that Bridges entails 75-80 minutes a day of instruction – one hour for Bridges sessions, and 15-20 minutes for Number Corner.

Alternative Approaches

1. If there is more than one first/second grade classroom in your school, group the students by grade level for Bridges instruction and conduct Number Corner with your own mixed group. That is, have one teacher work with all the first graders while another works with all the second graders in separate classrooms for one hour per day during Bridges sessions. Then have each teacher keep his or her own mixed age group for Number Corner, using Grade One Number Corner the first year and Grade Two Number Corner the second year to prevent repetition over a two-year span.

Or...

2. Keep all of your own students for Bridges and Number Corner. Select and teach one level of Bridges, probably Grade 2, unless the majority of your students are first graders. In order to support your younger learners and adequately cover the first grade expectations, teach the Grade One Number Corner in conjunction with Grade Two Bridges. The Grade One Number Corner features a sizeable collection of support games and activities, some of which might be used during Work Places to help students of either grade level who need extra support with basic skills. You will probably want to draw resources from both the first and second grade Home Connections books to provide individualized homework for your students.

Or...

3. If you have access to first and second grade teacher's guides, blacklines, Work Places, and manipulatives, you may want to select units from both grade levels, with a somewhat heavier emphasis on the upper grade, to craft a more nuanced flow of instruction for your mixed-age group. The selection can be changed somewhat from one year to the next (see chart below) so children who spend two years in a mixed-age setting don't do exactly the same thing both years. In both years outlined below, the Number Corner grade level has been selected to balance the choice of units, augmenting skills instruction at the needed level, and providing variation in instruction from one year to the next. You will probably want to draw resources from both the first and second grade Home Connections books to provide individualized homework for your students. See Table 1 below.

What about Reading Levels?

Bridges is not a workbook-based program. All print materials for first and second graders, including game and activity record sheets, assessments, overheads, and Home Connections are used in whole-group settings or with the support of an adult.

The closest thing to a student workbook at either grade level is the Number Corner Student Book. Because the written instructions in the Grade One Number Corner Student Book are intended to be read by an adult rather than students, this book was not assigned a Lexile measure.



The Grade Two Number Corner Student Book was assigned a Lexile measure of 640, which is high for second grade. (Typical Lexile measures for Grade Two texts range from 300L to 500L.) However, the teacher introduces each page in the book after several weeks of whole-group instruction during Number Corner. Most pages include 1-3 questions or instructions and are intended to be used by children in the classroom with support from an adult. Many pages are record sheets that are repeated several times or more in a single month or over several months.

Additional Support

For personalized advice about using Bridges to meet the needs of the students in your blended/multi-age situation, contact one of our curriculum specialists at MLCsupport@mathlearningcenter.org or 800-575-8130.

TABLE 1: Bridges Instruction for a First/Second Grade Blend over a Two-Year Period

YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO	
Grade 2 Number Corner		Grade 1 Number Corner	
Bridges Unit & Grade Level	Sessions	Bridges Unit & Grade Level	Sessions
Grade 1, Unit 1: Bugs Galore	20 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 1: Sorting, Patterning & Number	23 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 3: Addition, Subtraction & Probability	24 Sessions	Grade 1, Unit 2: From Land to Sea	25 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 2: Hungry Ants	13 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 3: Addition, Subtraction & Probability	24 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 4: Shapes, Symmetry, Area & Number	25 Sessions	Grade 1, Unit 5: Pattern Blocks, Polydrons & Paper Quilts	20 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 5: Branching into Larger Numbers	35 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 5: Branching into Larger Numbers	35 Sessions
Grade 1, Unit 4: Penguins	17 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 6: Get Those Marbles Rolling	13 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 7: Games, Graphing & Toys	29 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 7: Games, Graphing & Toys	29 Sessions
Session Total	163 Sessions	Session Total	169 Sessions