



# NVTutoring Quarterly

Going beyond tutoring to help our clients.

nvtutoring.com

Fall 2006

## Practicing Mental Math

*Professional, Courteous,*

*In-Home Service*

*Since 1995*

*Elementary - College*

The ability to perform mental math is important for everyone. Practicing mental math can be easy and fun. Depending on the age of the student, practicing mental math in the car can be as simple as reading the speedometer and comparing it to the speed limit sign, subtracting (or adding) the value of the previous speed limit sign to the current one, or as difficult as figuring out the distance, rate or time traveled when provided with only minimal information. In the store, students and parents can practice mental math by adding several items in their head, by comparing the price of sale items to other items, and by figuring out which item is the best deal depending upon the price and the size of the container. At home, practicing mental math can be as simple as the addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tables up to 12, and as difficult as attempting to complete computations required to complete their homework in their head. The ability to perform mental math accurately and quickly will improve a child's self confidence, which will ultimately improve performance in all aspects of math to include test and quizzes in the classroom and standardized tests. Another benefit is that these real-life examples of mental math may also help students understand that math really does have a practical use outside of the classroom.

### On the back:

#### Focus on Math!

- **Math on the Internet**
- **Book Review: Math Magic**

*By Colleen Wallace*

*See back for math websites and a review of Math Magic.*

## NVTS News:

- NVTS will be launching our **renovated website** by October 1st. On the new site you will still find all the current features: College Corner, copies of the newsletter, links to helpful web pages, articles that Dr. Perrino has published, etc. However, these features will be easier to find, and will be updated with greater frequency. The address will still be <http://www.nvtutoring.com>.
- Danielle Smallwood, the Monday-Thursday voice of NVTS, will be leaving in September. She has a baby boy on the way, and has decided to leave the work-world for a time. Fred will still be your Friday contact. We are actively working to find a suitable replacement for Danielle.
- Dr. Perrino has published a new article in *Washington Family Magazine*, entitled: "Key Points to Consider When Hiring a Tutor". We featured a subsection of this article in last quarter's *NVTutoring Quarterly*. Pick up a free copy of the magazine at newsstands, or visit our website to read the full article.

### Fall Test Dates:

#### SAT and Subject Tests:

- **October 14, 2006**
- **November 4, 2006**
- **December 2, 2006**

#### ACT:

- **September 16, 2006**
- **October 28, 2006**
- **December 9, 2006**



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the Kids!"

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## Helpful Hints: Math on the Internet

Because math is a cumulative subject, it's critical to have a strong base in arithmetic and lower level math. The following websites will help build that base—and even make it fun!:

**General math:** <http://www.edhelper.com>

From pre-school math through geometry. Links to create your own Kakuro puzzles, as well as many other types of puzzles. Also features links for other subjects, from social studies and reading comprehension, to test prep.

**A Plus Math:** <http://www.aplusmath.com>

Includes games, flashcards, and worksheets. Also features "step-by-step video instructions from actual teachers."

**AAA Math:** <http://www.aaamath.com>

Creates random practice problems. Practice by topic, from addition to ratios to statistics.

**Math Forum:** <http://www.mathforum.com>

From their site: "...the leading online resource for improving math learning, teaching, and communication since 1992." This site includes information through Calculus.

-Websites courtesy of Melissa Dreisbach, Middle School Math Teacher

## Book Review: Math Magic: How to Master Everyday Math Problems

Math Magic: How To Master Everyday Math Problems, written by Scott Flansburg, features suggestions for practical skills, like estimating quickly, and trivia, like calculating the day of the week someone was born based on their birth date. The goal of the book is to get people away from calculator-dependence, and toward a wider-spread use of mental math. It's also easy to read, if not really easy to apply.

Math Magic may not, as many reviewers have suggested at Amazon.com, be a book for teaching kids math. However, I have found Math Magic to be particularly useful with two kinds of kids. First, because the book is full of math "tricks" and ways to "show off", I've found it to appeal to kids (or adolescents or adults!) who just plain like math,

and sometimes even kids who didn't know they liked math. Whether the alternative approaches to everyday problems may not appeal to everyone, and in some cases may seem to take you longer than the traditional approach, the suggestions encourage creative and critical thinking skills sometimes ignored in standard math classes. Second, I've found that the alternative approaches to everyday math sometimes help students who have been struggling to follow the textbook approach, if only by reminding them that, even though math may have only one right answer, there is not only one right way to solve a problem.

by Danielle Smallwood

