

Learning Contracts

Learning Contracts are written agreements between students and teachers that grant the student certain freedoms and choices about completing tasks yet require the student to meet certain specifications. They outline what the students will learn, how they will learn it, how long they will have to learn it, and how they will be graded or evaluated.

Purposes of Learning Contracts

- Enrich or extend the essential curriculum
- Challenge the abilities of all students
- Provide alternative activities that address the differing abilities, interests, or learning styles of students
- Help students learn to make decisions about their learning
- Help students learn to manage their time
- May involve the student in curriculum planning
- Can be used to support all learners
- Help the teacher differentiate and manage group work, individual projects or investigations, learning centers, or curriculum compacting

Components of Learning Contracts

1. Outcome(s) - specify what is to be accomplished, the conditions under which learning will be demonstrated, and the level of proficiency required to meet the outcome.
2. Resources - including print, media, and human
3. Learning Alternatives - include reading, writing, viewing, creating, interviewing, and other activities the student experiences to accomplish the outcome.
4. Reporting Alternatives and Assessment - should provide evidence as to whether the outcomes have been accomplished and include a self-assessment. Conferences, tests, projects, presentations, real world products, portfolios of work are examples of reporting alternatives.

Advantages of Learning Contracts

- Can be written for any curriculum area
- Provide rigorous and challenging learning activities
- Can be used to target specific learning activities for individuals or groups
- Promote flexible grouping in the classroom
- Accommodate students' needs by blending skill-based and content-based learning
- Promote creative and critical thinking for students
- Develop students' time-management, planning, and decision-making skills
- Allow students to work at an appropriate pace
- Recognize students' prior knowledge
- Eliminate boredom by minimizing repetition for students
- Increase students' independence, motivation and class participation



"Think Abouts" for Creating Learning Contracts

- Essential curriculum standard(s) upon which the learning contract will be based
- Ways to incorporate student choice in the portions of the contract related to process or product
- Clear and challenging criteria for success (time lines, quality of work, etc.)
- Skills and content based on student readiness as well as interest and/or learning profile
- Criteria to be used in assessing and evaluating student work
- Expectations of positive work behaviors
- Clear directions and expectations

Management Tips for Learning Contracts

- Notify parents of learning contract implementation and expectations
- Require parent, student, and teacher signature on contract
- Set dates to meet with individual(s) or group(s) of students to monitor and discuss progress
- Allow time to accommodate student questions and/or concerns

Options for Assessing and Evaluating Student Work on Learning Contracts

- Select specific tasks to be evaluated; it is not necessary to evaluate every task.
- Provide a combination of teacher-selected tasks and student-selected tasks; see the “Product Idea” web available at the gifted and talented curriculum link at www.fcpsteach.org
- **Use rubrics** created by the teacher or the student that incorporate neatness, thoughtfulness, accuracy of information, originality (if appropriate)

Do's

- explain the role & function of contracts
- start small (1 or 2 day) contracts
- negotiate contracts with students whenever possible
- help set realistic deadlines
- renegotiate the contract if it isn't working
- solicit student feedback on process
- gradually involve students in contract development

Don't

- expect all students to use contracts effectively at the beginning
- expect all students to like contracts.
- assume contracts can take the place of regular instruction
- use contracts without a good management system



Examples

Student's Name: _____

Math Learning Contract

Date Due: _____



Content Area(s), Concept and/or Topic:

Knowledge of Geometry

- Identify and/or describe the parts of a circle (circumference, radii, or diameter)
- Identify and compare the relationship between the parts of a circle using radius, diameter, and circumference ($\pi = 3.14$)

Expectations

➤ Student Work

- Neat and legible
- Accurate information
- Thoughtful detailed explanations with evidence/support
- Original creative thinking

➤ Student Behavior:

- Stay on-task at all times
- Work quietly without disturbing my classmates
- Follow the directions of the teacher
- Ask for help if I need it
- Complete my work and turn it in by the due date

Learning Activities

Teacher required: 2 activities from Task 1- See “The Perfection of Pi!” on the next page.

Student chosen- 1 activity from Task 2- See "The Perfection of Pi!" on the next page.

Required Signatures:

➤ **Student:** _____ **Date:** _____

➤ **Teacher:** _____ **Date:** _____

➤ **Parent:** _____ **Date:** _____

Return Signed Contract By: _____



Geometry Contract
The Perfection of Pi!



Directions:

Complete **both** Task 1 activities and your choice of **one** of the Task 2 activities by the end of class on _____.

You may use the books, Internet sources, and materials that are provided.

➤ **Required by the Teacher:**

Task 1: Complete **both** of the following tasks:

- A. **Read** at least two of the resources provided. **Define** and **compare** *circle, circumference, diameter, radius, and pi (π)* using words, numbers and illustrations.
- B. **Verify** the accuracy of *pi (π)* by using at least five different sized circular objects. **Prove** the accuracy of *pi (π)* by using words, numbers, and illustrations.

➤ **Selected by the Student:**

Task 2: Choose **one** of the following tasks to complete and *highlight* your choice:

- A. **Create** a learning center to illustrate the concept of *pi (π)*. **Provide** at least two activities to **instruct** students about *pi (π)*. The activities should also allow them to **practice** working with the concept.
- B. **Plan** a class lesson to teach the concept of *pi (π)*. **Provide** activities to allow students to **practice** working with this concept. **Create** an assessment to follow the lesson.
- C. **Interview** or **read** about people who would use *circumference, diameter, radius, and pi (π)* in their professions. **Create** an authentic problem that a professional might encounter, using one or more of the above four geometry concepts.
- D. **Create** a Power Point presentation or web page to teach about *circumference, diameter, radius, and pi (π)*. Try to include one or more of the following to help **illustrate** your presentation: photographs, scanned pictures, or internet-provided images.
- E. **Write** an extension of the story *Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi* by Cindy Neuschwander.
- F. **Create** one or more of the following: a cartoon, poem (ex. Acrostic, Cinquain, Haiku), song or rap to teach all of the vocabulary words. (*circle, circumference, diameter, radius, and pi (π)*).
- G. **Create** a game using the concepts and/or computation of *circumference, diameter, radius, and pi (π)*.



Learning Contract
Week: March 25-28

Name: _____ Date: _____

Language arts: Due Date:

- ☐ ☐ The breadwinner writing assignment *March 28
☐ ☐ Second revision of autobiography April 8

Math:

- ☐ ☐ Graphing Project *March 28

Social Studies:

- ☐ ☐ Mapping Project *March 28

Science:

- ☐ ☐ Constellation Project April 12

Health

- ☐ ☐ I-movie rant on Peer Pressure April 12

Phys-Ed

- ☐ ☐ Web-page Project on fitness *March 28

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

****Contract Due no later than April 12****

Contract Evaluation

Self-Evaluation

1. Over the past week I worked at a level _____ ([Hellison's](#) levels).
2. On a scale fo 1-5, I used my time effectively at a level _____.
3. One area that I can improve on is _____.
4. One thing I found frustrating was _____.
5. One thing I really enjoyed was _____.

Teacher Evaluation

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Student used time effectively | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Student showed evidence of planning | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Student was respectful to teacher and students | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Student was organized and ready daily | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Student followed classroom procedures | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Total: /30

COMMENTS:



Learning Contracts can be created by students or teachers.



Learning Contract

To demonstrate what I have learned about _____ I want to

___ Write a report

___ Make a movie

___ Put on a demonstration

___ Create a graphic organizer or diagram

___ Set up an experiment

___ Other _____

___ Develop a computer presentation

- ___ Build a model
- ___ Design a mural
- ___ Write a song

This will be a good way to demonstrate understanding of this concept because _____

To do this project, I will need help with _____

My action plan is _____

The criteria/rubric which will be used to assess my final product is _____

My project will be completed by this date: _____

Student signature: _____ Date ____/____/____

Teacher signature: _____ Date ____/____/____

Learner: Jane Smith Course: AED 5220 Instructor: Hiemstra Contract Grade: A

What are you going to learn (objectives)	How are you going to learn it (resources/strategies)	Target date for completion	How are you going to know that you learned it (evidence)	How are you going to prove you learned (verification)
Improve my general understanding of distance educ.	1. Actively participate in the course (LA#2) 2. Complete a Learning Contract (LA #1)	1. End of the course 2. By June 12	Self perceptions about my contributions and during our CMC time make appropriate contracts with class mates	1. Ask Roger and learning partner for feedback 2. All contract tasks completed
Acquire more info. about dist. ed and its uses	1. Read the texts, at least 1 more book, and several related journal articles	End of course	Read log (see my term project description)	Ask Roger for feedback

Improve my ability to acquire knowledge about accessing info. electronically (LA3)	1. Participate in any related class discussions 2. Practice searching and downloading information that I find	By end of the term	A brief report that describes the listserves I join and my part in them plus some sample copies of downloaded materials	Ask both Roger and several work colleagues for feedback on my involvement and its potential for my work
Enhance my understanding of CMC and its potential for training employees at work (LA4a)	1. Read at least 4 books listed in the bibliography 2. Annotate ideas, reflections, and learnings in a reading log	By end of the term	1. Written report of my findings including implementation implications 2. Make 1-hr. presentation in-class on it	Ask both Roger and my supervisor for some fee



Learning Contract Form

Learner: _____ **Course:** _____ **Instructor:** _____ **Contract Grade:** _____

What are you going to learn (objectives)	How are you going to learn it (resources/strategies)	Target date for completion	How are you going to know that you learned it (evidence)	How are you going to prove you learned (verification)

[Online Template with Instructions and Examples of Each Step](#)



Learning Contract #2

To demonstrate what I have learned about _____, I want to

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a report | <input type="checkbox"/> Design a mural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a demonstration | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a song |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up an experiment | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a movie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a computer presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Create a graphic organizer or diagram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build a model | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

This will be a good way to demonstrate understanding of this concept because _____

To do this project, I will need help with _____

My Action Plan is _____

The criteria/rubric which will be used to assess my final product is _____

My project will be completed by this date _____

Student signature: _____ Date / /

Teacher signature: _____ Date / / 18

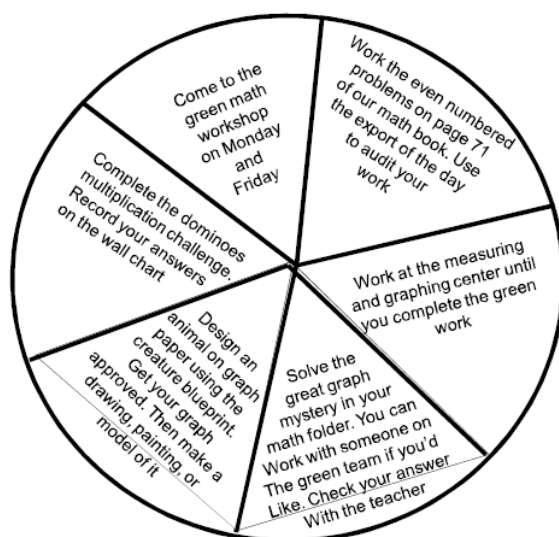
Contracts can be created for individual students or for interest, readiness, and/or learning profile groups.

The Green Contract

Key Skills: Graphing and Measuring

Key Concepts: Relative Sizes

Note to User: This is a Grade 3 math contract for students at or near grade level in these skills



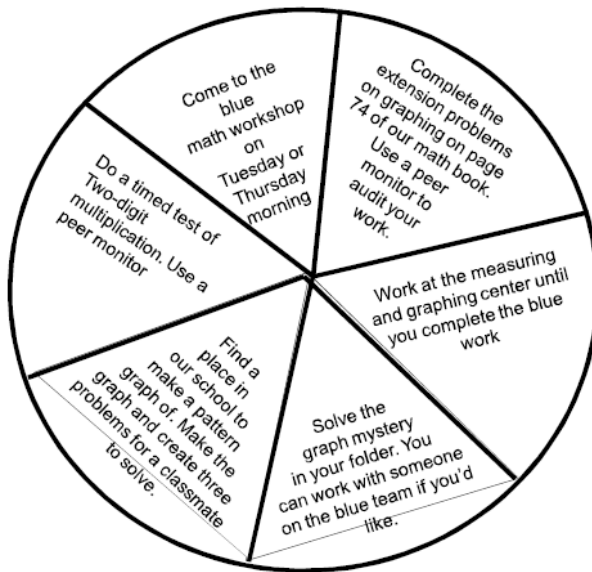
Read	Apply	Extend
<i>Alexander Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday or Ten Kids, No Pets</i>	Complete the math madness book that goes with the story you read.	Now, make a math madness book based on your story about kids and pets or money that comes and goes. Directions are at the author center

The Blue Contract

Key Skills: Graphing and Measuring

Key Concepts: Relative Sizes

Note to User: This is a Grade 3 math contract for students advanced in these skills

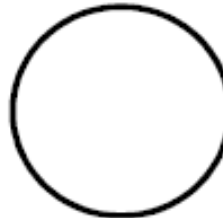
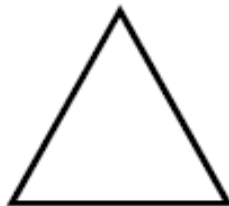


Read	Apply	Extend
<i>Dinosaur Before Dark or Airport Control</i>	Research a kind of dinosaur or airplane. Figure out how big it is. Graph its size on graph paper or on the blacktop outside our room. Label it by name and size.	Make a book in which you combine math and dinosaurs or airplanes, or something else big. It can be a number fact book, a counting book, or a problem book. Instructions are at the author center.

Reading Contract

Choose an activity from each shape group. Cut out your three choices and glue them below. You are responsible for finishing these activities by

Have fun!



This contract belongs to _____.

Make a poster advertising yourself as a good friend. Use words and pictures to help make people want to be your friend. Make sure your name is an important part of the poster.

Get with a friend and make a puppet show about a problem and the solution in your book.

Draw a picture of a problem in the story. Then use words to tell about the problem and how the characters solved their problem.

Make a two sided circle-rama. Use it to tell people what makes you a good friend. Use pictures and words and make sure your name is an important part of the display.

Get with a friend & act out a problem and its solution from your book.

Write a letter to one of the characters in your book. Tell them about a problem you have. Then have them write back with a possible solution to your problem.

Make a mobile that shows what makes you a good friend. Use pictures and words to hang on your mobile. Write your name on the top of the mobile in beautiful letters.

Meet with me & tell me about a problem and its solution from the story. Then tell me about a problem you have had and how you solved it.

Think about another problem one of the characters in your book might have. Write a new story for the book about the problem and tell how it was solved.

Resource book and Skill	Page	Assignment	Date Completed	Score	On Your Own	Partner/ Group	Calculator
Math Power Gr. 8							
Place Value and Ordering	9	1--40					
Rounding Numbers	11	1--28					
Estimation	15,23	odd#'s both pages					
Powers of Ten	21	1-64,66					
Order of Operations	31	1--30, 36					
Review	36-37	odd#'s					
Mental Math	Power Builder A Score /20	Power Builder B Score /20					
Tack on Trailing Zeros lesson 22							
Tack on Trailing Zeros lesson 23							
Tack on Trailing Zeros lesson 24							
Problem Solving	Rubric Level	/ 15					
#61							
#62							

Learning Contract Evaluation

Name: _____

Date: _____

/5 Self-Evaluation:

- Over the contract period I worked at Hellison's level (0-4)_____.
- On a scale of 1 – 5, I used my time effectively at a level _____.
- One area that I can improve on when using contracts are:
- One thing I found frustrating was:
- One thing I really enjoyed was:

/25 Teacher-evaluation:

1. Student used time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Student showed evidence of planning	1	2	3	4	5
3. Student was respectful to teacher and students	1	2	3	4	5
4. Student was organized and prepared each day.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Student directed questions to peers before me .	1	2	3	4	5

Total: /30 = %

Comments:



[Generate your own online here.](#)

Bibliography

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- Tomlinson, C.A. (1995). How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed- Ability Classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1-800-933-2723
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- Winebrenner, S. (1992). Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing. 1-800-735-7323

<http://www.fcpsteach.org/docs/directions-learning%20contracts.pdf>

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/enriched/giftedprograms/contracts.shtml>