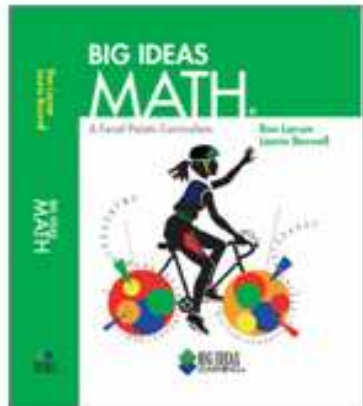


BIG IDEAS LEARNING™



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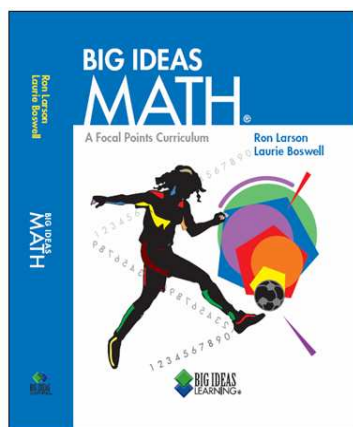
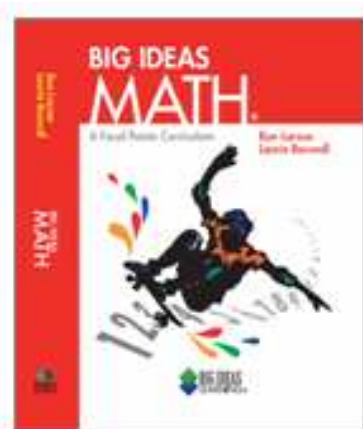
USING HUMOR PEDAGOGICALLY

by Ron Larson, Ph.D

When Laurie Boswell and I began work on our new Focal Points program for middle school, we started with one overriding idea... "let's think outside the box...let's not just do things a certain way because they have always been done that way."

One of the results of this approach has been the creation of two math cartoon figures... Newton (the dog) and Descartes (the cat). For the new series, I wrote over 1600 original cartoons. The cartoons were drawn by my nephew, Tyler Stout, who is a well-known artist.

As soon as we started to test the materials with students, we knew that the cartoons were a huge hit! Students were flipping through the pages, hunting for the next cartoon... and *reading* each cartoon. Because students want to "get" each joke, they not only read the cartoons, they read them carefully. Isn't that amazing!

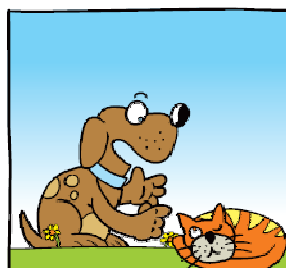


Order a poster of
Newton and Descartes at:

www.bigideaslearning.com



"I have a secret way for
finding 21% of 80."



"10% is 8 and 1% is 0.8."



"So 21% is $8 + 8 + 0.8 = 16.8$."



"On the count of 5, I'm going to give you
half of my dog biscuits."



"1, 2, 3, 4, $4\frac{1}{2}$, $4\frac{3}{4}$, $4\frac{7}{8}$..."

◆ Big Ideas
Game Closet ◆

Find a game from
Big Ideas Learning
Game Closet on
the following page.

BIG IDEAS GAME CLOSET



Review for You

Materials: A chapter test from the pupil's edition per group
Chalk or dry erase marker per group

Directions: Divide the class into four teams. Team members gather in groups at the board. One member of each team works the first problem from the chapter test. Coaching is allowed from the other team members. Check each student's work and award 2 points to the team if the work is correct. If the work needs to be corrected, award 1 point to the team after the student makes the corrections. Team members take turns working the problems. The process can be repeated until the test is finished, or until time runs out.

Who Wins? The team with the most points wins.

Variations: Have students write review problems on 3X5 cards. The teacher can then draw a card for the students to use.

Use the same process to have students go over selected homework problems.