



LESSON PLAN

The Final Countdown

Topic: **Countdown to an event** | Grade Level: **Elementary (1st–2nd)** *Optional 3rd–4th*
Subject: **Math/Social Studies** | Time: **45 minutes**

OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will use the calendar and math skills to calculate the number of days until an event they are looking forward to and use a creative method to count down the number of days until the event occurs.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- “Colorful Countdown” video from the MilitaryKidsConnect.org website
- Materials for alternative calendar (See Tips)
- Worksheets (attached)
- Pencils and crayons
- Go to “Related Materials” in on-line version of this lesson plan to access all required links: www.militarykidsconnect.org/p/lp/elem

OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Computer with classroom display and Internet access

LESSON

Suggested Activity Set-up and Discussion (8 minutes)

Teacher sets up and cues the video:

- Provides context for the lesson: Some kids have a parent in the military. As part of military life, a parent might have to go away for a while for their job (called a deployment) while the family remains at home. For many kids, it’s hard when a parent is deployed. Kids with parents in the military miss their parents and can’t wait for them to come home. Sometimes they find clever ways to prepare for their parent’s return.
- Describes the video plot: The Colorful Countdown is about two boys whose father goes away for his job in the military, and they find a creative way to count down the days until he comes home.
- Cues “Colorful Countdown” video.

Teacher-Led Lesson (37 minutes)

- Introduces lesson: Have you ever had a time when you counted down to a birthday, a family vacation, or a visit from one of your favorite relatives?
- Class brainstorms about events that they are looking forward to and finds them on the calendar.
- Class chooses a big event to count down to—such as 100 days of school, a field trip, class play, etc.
- Prompts discussion of ways to count down to the event: What date is 1 week before your big event? How many days are there until the big event? How many weeks are there until the big event? What date is the Monday after the event? (Third and fourth grade see planning sheet for event planning discussion prompts.)
- Class brainstorms a creative way that they will count down the days until the event occurs. (See **Tips**)
 - 1st & 2nd: Once class decides on a creative countdown, students can write about the event, their plans for counting down, and draw a picture of what will happen at the event.
 - 3rd & 4th: Students plan the event. Students implement plan and complete final report.

Tips

- Brainstorm ideas with your class for the format of the calendar. Some examples include:
 - Link paper rings so that the number of links equals the number of countdown days. Each day, remove a link. Students can decorate the links.
 - Use egg cartons or cupcake pans with the right number of cupcake holes or cartons for each day of the countdown. Each day, put a paper clip in a hole as you count down to all the holes being filled.
 - Students can decorate and stick notes to the wall; one note to represent each day. Remove a note daily.
 - Collect pennies as a class and remove a penny daily until the jar is empty.
- **Extension activity for older students (3rd–4th grade):** Add to the complexity of the activity by helping them plan for the event using the optional **Final Countdown Planning Worksheet** (attached).

WORKSHEET

The Final Countdown Worksheet (1st–2nd Grade)

I am looking forward to:

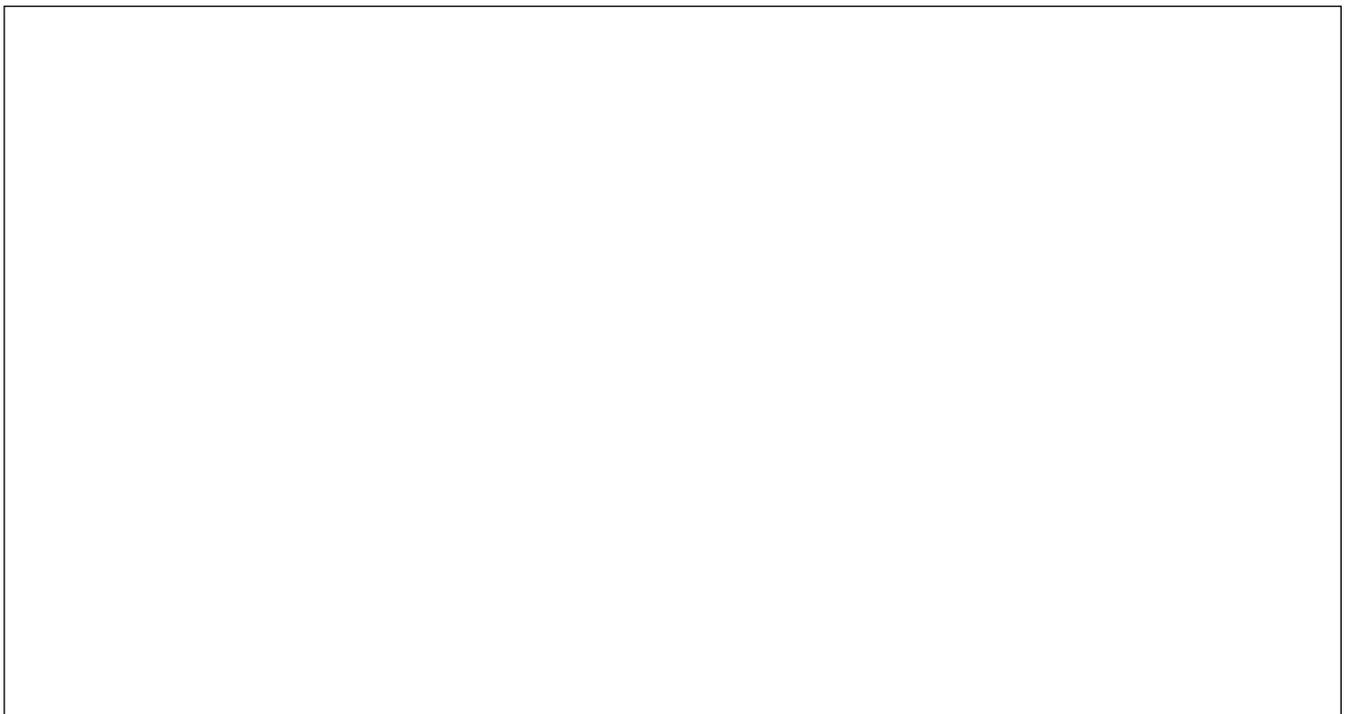
Today's date: _____

Date of event: _____

Number of days until the event occurs: _____

I am going to count the days until the event by:

Draw a picture in the box about what you will do when the event occurs.



WORKSHEET

The Final Countdown Planning Worksheet (3rd–4th Grade)

Use a blackboard or whiteboard to record the plan. Possible prompts include:

1. What is the event the class is planning?

2. How many days until the event?

3. What tasks need to be completed to prepare for this event?
 - a. What items need to be brought in?
 - b. What needs to be organized?
 - c. What needs to be set up?
 - d. Do people outside of the class need to be contacted/involved—such as a parent, guest presenter, or other teachers?

4. Assign a student “leader” to be in charge of each task and “helpers” as necessary.

5. Create a schedule for each task group to meet and also update the teacher on their progress.

6. Discuss with students how to lead a task group:
 - a. Leader needs to assign tasks to helpers.
 - b. Leader needs to hold meetings to check progress on assignments.
 - c. Someone writes down what happens at the task group meetings.
 - d. The group needs to plan what to report to the teacher.

WORKSHEET

The Final Countdown – Final Report (3rd–4th Grade)

1. Name and date of class event:

2. My class counted down to the event by:

3. My job was:

4. How did you think the planning of the event went? Why?

5. Things that worked well in planning this event were:

6. Things I would do differently next time are:
