

December Project: The Dinner Party

Introduction

Plan a menu, shopping list, budget, guest list, and time-management plan for a dinner serving at least five people, including yourself. You may choose to plan a traditional turkey (Christmas or Thanksgiving) menu, or instead you may select a non-traditional menu of your own choice.

Guest List

Make a list of the people you wish to invite. Make note of the food allergies or preferences of each guest. List the age of each guest. You may choose to design a special invitation card as a bonus activity.

Menu

Plan your meal to comply with Canada Food Guidelines. List the appetizers, entrée items, dessert, and beverages in the order that they will be served. Create and decorate an attractive menu, similar to one you might find in a fine restaurant.

Shopping List

Make a list of all the items you will need to buy and note the exact quantity of each item required. Sometimes you will find it necessary to purchase more than is required. If you are using linen napkins or table decorations, include these items as part of your list. Organize your list into categories. For example, place all fruits and vegetables in one category and meats in a separate category.

Budget

Beside each item on your shopping list record the price you may expect to pay for that item. Determine prices by visiting the local grocery store or by examining flyers and advertisements. Calculate the total cost of your dinner party, including all taxes incurred for tableware and decorations.

Time Management Plan

Think about all the things you have to do in order to prepare for your dinner party, including the designing of the invitations and the time spent shopping. Plan a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute schedule, in order to ensure that you are well prepared for your guests.

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Gifts

Your dinner party is a celebratory affair. You plan to award gifts to your guests. Prepare three different gift lists based on the following scenarios:

- A. Lottery Winner: You recently won \$1000 in a lottery draw! This is fortunate, because you have much Christmas shopping to do. You must buy a gift for each guest invited to your dinner. Where your calculations show that some money remains after all gifts are purchased, indicate how you plan to spend this money. Create an accurate budget showing your choice of gifts, prices, taxes and the balance left over.

- B. Low Income: You are an average person living on a limited income and you have invited a number of people to a seasonal, celebratory meal. You have \$100 to spend on gifts. You wish to purchase a gift for each person invited to your dinner. Where your calculations show that some money remains after all gifts are purchased, indicate how you plan to spend this money. Create an accurate budget showing your choice of gifts, prices, taxes and the balance left over.

- C. Aunt Sally's Surprise Gift: You are planning a seasonal, celebratory meal and you have invited several people to spend the day with you. By luck you have received a gift of \$200 from your Aunt Sally, to whom you have always showed much kindness. Because it is late in the Christmas season, the stores are offering a 20% discount on all items. You wish to purchase a gift for each person invited to your dinner. Where your calculations show that some money remains after all gifts are purchased, indicate how you plan to spend this money. Create an accurate budget showing your choice of gifts, prices, taxes and the balance left over.

Teaching Suggestions for the December Project: The Dinner Party

1. The **December Project** was originally conceived and designed by *Heidi Rensing* of Victoria West Elementary School in Victoria, B.C.
2. This project is designed to take advantage of seasonal interest in shopping, eating, and socializing during the December festive season. This project also avoids possible conflicts that may occur where a significant number of students in your class do not follow a Christian tradition.
3. The project involves planning a seasonal meal and calculating food quantities, tableware needs, and gift purchases as part of the total cost.
4. Collect as many flyers as possible for use in the classroom.
5. Inform parents of this project, as many parents will wish to be involved in seasonal classroom activities and will even employ students' plans as the basis for family dinners.
6. This is an opportune time to introduce an understanding of percent, or to reinforce the meaning of percent in a real-world, everyday context. Review the ***Decimal Fractions and Percent*** chapter of this manual. Avoid providing students with calculators while expressing no expectation that students must show the thinking behind their calculator operations. Avoid also presenting students with rote rules. Instead, take this opportunity to **teach an understanding of percent within a meaningful context**. Begin work with your students from a point of established knowledge and build on the **50%, 25%, 10% and 5%** reference points. The daily quiz that follows provides a useful example.
7. **Always allow students sufficient thinking time.** You will find it effective to ask fast thinkers to "mouth" their responses silently, in order to allow other, slower students to gain additional thinking time.
8. When working with the daily quiz shown below, wait until approximately three-quarters of all students show raised hands in response to the question regarding **50% of 100** before you provide the correct answer. Where the majority of your students do not appear ready with an answer, continue posing or rewording questions related to an understanding of **50%**, until most students perceive the concept. Then move to an understanding of **25%, 10%**, and finally, **5%**. Note with your students that the pattern we see emerging when we move from **50% to 25%** (halving) is the same pattern we see emerging when we move from **10% to 5%**.

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A Short Daily Quiz

50% of 100 =
50% of 80 =
25% of 80 =
50% of 60 =
25% of 60 =
50% of 120 =
25% of 120 =
10% of 100 =
10% of 50 =

(use visual tools if necessary)

(use visual tools if necessary)

9. The mathematics involved in the December Project include:

- Addition.
- Subtraction.
- Multiplication of decimals to the hundredths place.
- Percentages.
- Time and measurement (related to the purchase and preparation of food).

10. Students of diverse abilities may participate with equal success in the December Project, as the use of calculators may be employed to aid less skilled students.