

# Carefully Crafted Contexts

Throughout the series **engaging contexts**—realistic and fictional—set the stage for learning. The stories and pictures that launch investigations are carefully crafted to involve students in meaningful explorations into the big ideas, strategies, and models that shape mathematical thinking. The contexts, which typically include age-appropriate children using mathematics to solve real-world problems, are developed around landmark numbers or number relationships that are significant and telling. The models and metaphors in a context make relationships and strategies more tangible and explicit.

**In grades K–3, read-aloud books establish the contexts for learning.**

- ☀ Eight 16-page books
- ☀ Expansive 15" x 12" full-color format
- ☀ A range of topics and illustration styles

Images and texts are designed to intrigue children and ignite their imaginations. The story about the endearing but hopelessly disorganized Masloppy family's efforts to inventory their possessions engages students in exploring quantities, counting and grouping, and early place value.



Imaginable contexts enable children to reflect on what they are doing and apply mathematical thinking to their own world. While the contexts reflect diverse settings and cultures, they build on the familiar shared themes of family, friends, and communities.



*“Throughout this series we used contexts from children’s lives as starting points and crafted them to support learning. We built potentially realizable suggestions and constraints into the contexts and carefully chose numbers that would foster and support the development of specific strategies.”*

**In grades 3–5 and 4–6 posters, establish the contexts for learning.**

- ☀ 17 posters in grades 3–5
- ☀ 16 posters in grades 4–6
- ☀ Colorful 15" x 24" images

This is one of a series of posters where students on a field trip discuss equitable ways to share an uneven number of sandwiches. This real-world problem sets the stage for learning about fractions.



The careful arrangements of items in these posters invite repeated addition, skip-counting, and doubling strategies, as well as introduce the language of grouping. This lays the foundation for investigating fundamental multiplication strategies.

During the course of an investigation a seemingly simple box of chocolates introduces students to the open array as a model for multiplication and division. In a later unit the design and arrangement of boxes extends students' understanding of two-dimensional rectangular arrays to three-dimensional arrays with rectangular prisms.