Math, Logic and KenKen® , 2009

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Synopsis

The goal for this unit is to use an alternative teaching method to try to get students interested and excited about Math. Students often ask the question, "When am I going to use or need this in life?" I hear students ask this question mostly when they are bored or just don't have an interest in what is being taught that day. If I tell students that they are going to be using logic to solve questions, they start whining about how hard it is or how they just don't understand, without even trying. By using the puzzles described and the other activities included with this unit, hopefully students will be drawn into the activities so that they are learning and using logic without even realizing it. The end goal is for the student to see that when used in a practical situation, it is not as hard as they may have believed.

This unit introduces *KenKen*® puzzles, which were introduced in Japan and created by Tetsuya Miyamoto. These puzzles are similar to the *Sudoku* puzzles, but with a twist. They not only involve logic, but they also require that the student use arithmetic skills. The unit also discusses finding the greatest common factor for a set of numbers. The closing activity for this unit is for the student to create a "mine sweep" puzzle and to create their own *KenKen*® puzzle.