



Issue  
**ONE**

# Summer's Here!

**Discussion Topics >**

Recharge

Reflect

Reorganize

© [Making Math Magic](#), LLC

## First Attempt at **Monthly Prompts for Conversations About The K-12 Math Classroom**

At Making Math Magic, we have frequently been asked to do a newsletter and have had that objective on our To Do list for a few years. Our initial attempt is just that – an attempt! The newsletter will be very informal and will be more math-related in future issues, providing topics of interest for you to discuss with your cohorts. But for now, we want our math friends and family to take a break. Step away from the heavy duty thinking and, as our dear departed colleague, Ann Booth, would say, “Just ponder a bit...”

**Recharge:** One of the biggest challenges teachers face at the end of the school year is being able to “turn off” school and unwind. We all have a happy place, or an activity that helps us escape... Once you crash and burn for a bit (some teachers report sleeping several days), here are some considerations for personally recharging:

- Read the Book(s) you shelved, mentally escape
- Catch Up on TV Shows, binge-watch if needed
- Do Something Physical, even if that means cleaning and/or redecorating (in addition to exercising)
- Do Nothing, it's ok to be a slug
- Reconnect with Friends & Family, intentionally schedule activities
- Don't Always Be In Charge when you are with/around kids
- Take a Technology Break, literally unplug
- Really Vacate if/when you go on a Vacation – don't take your school baggage with you!

**Reflect:** Think about the classroom/school experiences of the past year...

- What gave you joy and reminded you why you teach? What experiences provided the most positive impact on your students? How can those experiences be replicated for the coming school term?
- What are three things you want to do differently next year? Don't get overwhelmed with changing everything you do (curriculum, instructional strategies, classroom set up, classroom management, etc.), just pick three!

**Reorganize:** Some teachers cannot relax and recharge until they have been proactive about the coming school term. Whatever your mindset, when you are ready to move forward mentally, think about reorganizing your first days of math class. We have a tendency to hit the ground running (‘got to cover the content), and we often start with some of the Numeracy-related learning targets (usually in a review format) that students have struggled with for years. Low-achieving students are immediately turned off: “I have never been able to do this – here we go again!” Even high achieving students are not enthused about the new school year because they see math as just “more of the same stuff” they can already do. Instead, choose an engaging, hands-on topic (connected to your grade-level content), and start with a mini-unit there. The first few days/weeks are mainly about establishing classroom norms anyway. Use this introductory unit to model class guidelines so students are aware of expectations for using manipulatives, working in groups, turning in assignments, participating in classroom discussions, sharing strategies and work, etc. Emphasize the conceptual process, “What would you do first?”, instead of finding the final answer to math problems. You will be encouraging student engagement (from all ability levels) without losing instructional time for grade-level content - you are just reorganizing to kick off your year in a positive way!

Visit our store site at <https://www.makingmathmagic.net/store.html> and see some of the materials we have created to enhance classroom instruction. ‘More to come!’