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The Value of This Book

Move over Sudoku, here come *Balance Benders*™! You can use these books as quick, fun, logic problems or as stepping-stones to success in algebra. Students develop deductive thinking and pre-algebra skills as they solve balance puzzles that are more fun and addictive than Sudoku puzzles! Students must analyze each balance to identify the clues, and then synthesize the information to solve the puzzle. Try one—and then try to stop!

Teaching Suggestions

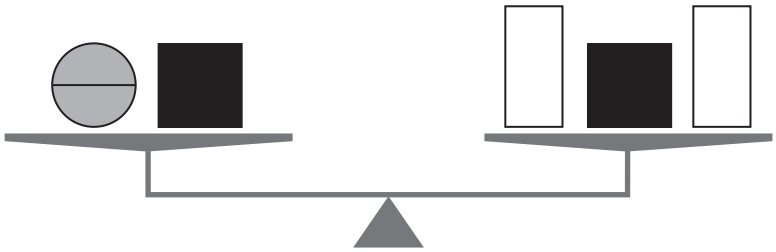
Before beginning the puzzles with your students, review the 10 Balance Tips (Algebra Concepts) listed on pages 41 and 42. Each puzzle's solution involves one or more of these basic concepts. Next, work the first puzzle with the students. After you work the puzzle and identify the correct answers, reread the 10 Balance Tips with the students to make sure they are familiar with all of them. Continue to work through the puzzles with the students until they demonstrate the ability to solve puzzles independently.

Once the students are working independently they might occasionally be stumped by a puzzle. If this happens, you can either ask them to return to the puzzle later after they take a break, or offer a clue using the Balance Tips found in the solutions on pages 43-46. It often helps to remind students that the joy of puzzles is being puzzled. Do your best to keep these puzzles fun and remember that it is just as important to praise perseverance as it is to praise the correct answer.

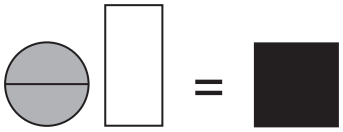
About the Author

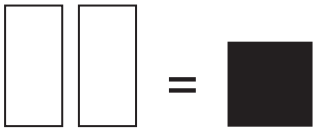
A longtime puzzle fan, Robert Femiano is a Seattle public school elementary educator and has been for most of his 34-year teaching career. For more than a decade of this time, he was also adjunct faculty at Seattle Pacific University conducting math methods courses. Publications include *Algebraic Problem Solving in the Primary Grades* in the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics peer-reviewed journal and *Quick Thinks Math* books and software by The Critical Thinking Co.™. In 2002, he won the highest honor in education, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

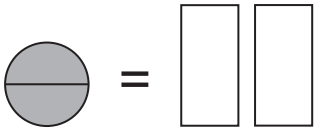
Balance Benders™



Circle the three answers that will always be true.

a. 

b. 

c. 

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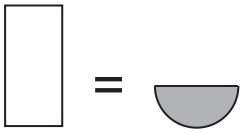
e. 

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