Secondary Mathematics Activities

1. Check your local newspaper to learn the cost of a classified advertisement. Determine the cost of five ads that appear in that section. Write an ad that you would like to place in the newspaper and figure out how much it would cost.
2. Using a ruler, figure out the percentage of space on a given page for ads, pictures, stories and headlines.
3. On the front page of your newspaper circle all the numbers you can find and give the range. Determine the mean, median and mode.
4. Find a recipe you like in the newspaper and then go to the food advertisements and figure the approximate cost of the ingredients.
5. Look for examples in the newspaper of items that could illustrate the concept of congruence and explain your reasoning.
6. Determine the ratio of sales jobs to factory jobs in the classified ads.
7. Using the marriage announcements, calculate the average age of marriage for both men and women in your community. Do this for a period of at least six-weeks.
8. Newspaper photographs are not always the same size as the original photograph. Choose a photo in the newspaper that interests you. If the original was 4" X 6" what was the percentage of reduction or enlargement necessary to make it the size that appeared in the newspaper?
9. Read your newspapers birth announcements and obituaries. Determine the ratio of births to deaths. If the ratio remained constant and no one moved into or out of town for the next 10 years, what would the population be?
10. Using the classified ads find the average price of similar recreational vehicles such as boats, snowmobiles, motorcycles, camper trailers, etc.
11. Locate sentences of paragraphs in news stories which could be written as an "If ... then" formula.
12. Black out the actual cost of items in several display ads and have students estimate the costs of the products or services. Have them calculate the difference from the actual cost.
13. Scan the newspaper for examples of perpendicular, parallel and intersecting lines. Use a marker to highlight the lines.
14. In the classified ads find five cars for sale where mileage is given. Change the miles to kilometers. With those same five cars, figure the average price and the average model year.
15. In your newspaper find and circle words that illustrate the concepts of size, location, time, quantity, value and money.
16. Determine the square footage of your classroom for each of the following areas: floor, walls, ceiling, windows. Using the newspaper, locate advertisements for paint, carpet, tile or draperies and determine the amount of each you would need and how much it would cost.
17. Write an editorial stating why you believe the United States should or should not change to the metric system. Use facts you have found in news stories or advertisements.
18. Choose a recipe in your newspaper and convert the measurements into metric.
19. Research the monetary unit of a foreign country. Find the current value of that currency in the newspaper or on the Internet. Determine the cost of five items listed in display advertisements in your newspaper to the foreign currency.
20. Look for a grocery ad with a soft drink advertisement. Figure how many fluid ounces are contained in a carton or six-pack. What is the cost per ounce? Per quart? Per liter?
21. Collect newspaper advertisements that encourage savings. Answer the following questions:
    - What ads encourage savings?
    - How do the ads encourage savings?
    - Are there any ads that only appear to encourage saving?
    - What are some of the hidden costs in the ads?
22. Select three apartments or houses listed in the classified ads for rent. Do the following for each apartment you have chosen:
    - Compute the total rent for a year for each apartment.
    - Determine the average monthly rent based on the apartments you selected.
    - Determine the approximate size of each apartment.
    - Which of the three apartments you have chosen appears to be the better choice for the money? Why?
23. Your newspaper may publish school athletic league standing, showing games won and lost and percentages for each team. Are the percentages given accurate? Over a three-week period, which team experiences the greatest percentage gain?
24. Your newspaper may publish a summary of the previous week's weather. What was the average high temperature? What was the average low temperature? Convert each of the Fahrenheit temperatures to Celsius. Compute the average predicted high temperature for the coming week.
25. Create a chain calculation using numbers found in this week's newspaper. For example, multiply the number of pages by today's predicted high temperature; divide that number by the total score of a specific sporting event; then add the price of a specific used car found in the classified ads.
26. Use a grocery store flier to practice "rounding off." Round each of the numbers on the page to the nearest dollar; to the nearest multiple of 10 cents; etc.
27. Find an advertisement in the newspaper that lists a sale price and a regular price. Calculate the percentage of discount. In ads where the discount rate is given, calculate the selling price.
28. Create a graph using numbers found on the sports pages. Graphs might include win/loss ratios, number of points scored by each team, etc.
29. Determine the percentage of a specific page that is devoted to news, advertising, photos, etc. Can your students determine the percentage of the entire newspaper that is devoted to advertising?
30. Challenge your students to create math problems from this week's newspaper. Exchange those with another student and solve.