

Inside writing Communities

Grades 3-5

Writing in Math

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Third Grade
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Background

Christine's third-graders are studying how to collect, analyze, and report survey data. The students have created reindeer as a visual way to record data about themselves. Each reindeer reflects characteristics of the student who made it: The number of prongs on the antlers represents the student's age, the color of the reindeer's nose identifies the student's gender, bells and ribbons added to the reindeer tell whether the student is going home for the holidays or staying on campus, the position of the tail indicates the student's favorite season of the year, the position of the legs signifies the student's birth order in the family, and the direction in which the reindeer's eyes are pointing indicates whether the student likes reading or math best. All the reindeer are posted together on the wall.

Instruction and Activities

After reviewing what the reindeer parts represent, Christine distributes a tally sheet that includes all the categories of data being collected. Together, Christine and the students tally the results in each category, then record the class totals at the bottom. Once all the categories have been tallied, Christine has the students write sentences to describe their findings, using words like *most*, *few*, *some*, *all*, etc. Christine and the students do the first one together: "Most of the students in the class are eight years old." The students write the sentences for the remaining categories on their own, although Christine continues to support them in analyzing the data and expressing their findings in writing. When they finish, Christine has the students read their sentences to a partner.