Activities compiled Chris Bussanich, Karen Clegg, Dabney Dowe, Kathy Williams and Mary Helman

David Schwartz

(from Juliahouse)
David M. Schwartz has always been fascinated by both the largest and the smallest things in the universe. As a child, he took many mental journeys into space, prompted by his imagination and the heavenly bodies he saw through his telescope. When he peered into his microscope, he was transported to the wonderful worlds of hidden life. David studied biology and became an elementary school teacher, but the wonder and excitement of his imaginary travel remained with him.

In 1985, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard published *How Much Is a Million?*—a concept book about large numbers—that received starred reviews in *Booklist* and *School Library Journal*. It was designated a "Children's Choice" book by the International Reading Association. Now a full-time writer, David has published other books, including the *Hidden Life* series, books of which were named Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children. He is a frequent contributor to *Smithsonian* magazine and other journals.

Suggested Activities for Books by David Schwartz

How Much Is a Million?

1. Direct students to brainstorm ideas of what comes to mind when asked, "What Makes a Million?" Ask students to record their answers on a huge sheet of butcher paper and to decorate their answers with paint or crayon illustrations.
2. Use a Venn diagram to compare two books. *How Much Is a Million?* and *Super Grandpa* are good books to compare.
3. Ask students to write to the following prompts:
   What makes a million?
   What would you like a million of? Why?
4. Direct students to draw posters describing David Schwartz's books.
5. Arrange students in groups of four and give each group a newspaper. Ask each group to find numbers throughout the paper to add up to make a million. For example, students can look in the Real Estate section for real estate prices. They should cut out the numbers and glue them on paper. Each group will share its product with the class.
6. Ask students to determine how many 100 dollar bills are in a million. Work as a class. Divide students into groups. Ask each group to determine how many 50- dollar bills are in a million dollars; how many 20-dollar bills; 10-dollar bills; 5-dollar bills; 1- dollar bills; and pennies. Students may make a chart or graph the results.
7. Discuss the "Author's Note" in the book. Ask "How did David Schwartz come up with crazy estimates such as goldfish in a stadium and children's bodies to the moon?" Brainstorm ideas and discuss. Review how David Schwartz did find the answer.

8. Direct each student to draw a scene from the book, which will be put on display, showing how much a million is.
9. Direct everyone in the school to walk toward one million. Ask all the children in the school to trace one of their feet and to either punch 100 holes in each cutout or cut out 100 squares of grid paper and paste the squares on each footprint (squares can be colored). Line the footprints up heel to toe, and see how many holes or squares there are all together. Ask students, "How many more do we need to get 1,000,000? What is our plan to do this?"

If You Made a Million

1. Show the cover of the book. Discuss the following questions in groups: If you made a million dollars, what would you do with it? Where would you go, what would you buy, etc.? As a class, discuss how you would make a million dollars.
2. Discuss people who have made a million dollars. Ask students to conduct short research projects about them and to share their research with the class. Suggested questions—Where are they from? When were they born? Did they go to college? Where? What are their interests? Do their interests have anything to do with how they made their million dollars? How did they make a million dollars? Would you like to make a million dollars? What would you do to obtain a million dollars?
3. Do research on Michael Jordan or another millionaire. Figure out how much that person makes in an hour, in a week, and in a day. Discuss what the students found.
4. Direct students to devise a barter system using class materials. Explain supply and demand. Discuss, "What would we do without money?" 5. Invite a bank representative to talk to the class about how money moves through the system. Direct the students to practice using debits and credits. Award credits for good behavior and debits for behavior that needs improvement. Set goals for the amounts in students' checkbooks. Recognize students who meet their checkbook goals.
5. Measure a stack of pennies with the class. Direct them to estimate how tall the stack would be if there were a million pennies in it. Then, direct them to compute the answers.
6. Direct students to simulate investing in the stock market by following particular stocks. Discuss.
7. Ask students to bring in a million pennies for charity. Tell them to collect, count, and tally the pennies.
8. This lesson works best with a small guided reading group and multiple copies of the book, but it can also be used as a read-aloud to the whole class.
   Procedure:
   a. Look at the cover of the book. Ask the following questions. What does the title mean? What characters do you see that you recognize on the cover? (Marvelisissimo the Mathematical Magician from *How Much Is a Million?*) Who is the author? Who is the illustrator? What can you predict about the book from this information?
   b. After reading the first page, ask, "How did the girl get one penny?" (She fed the fish.) This sets up the pattern for the book: do a chore and earn money. What can she buy for a penny? Can you think of anything you could sell for a penny? c. On each page ask: What did the child do to earn the money? Also ask students if they earned—for example—25 cents, in what form would they take it: one quarter, five nickels, etc.? Why? What other combinations that are not shown would also equal that amount of money? (As the numbers get higher, students especially enjoy this.) What would you choose to buy from the choices for the money earned? For example, $1.00 could be used to buy 100 pieces of penny candy, 20 five-cent balloons, or 10 stickers for 10 cents each, etc. If you chose four rubber balls at 25 cents each, what is the opportunity cost? Would you put your money in the bank to earn interest as described in the story or spend it right away? Would you take the job of ogre-taming to earn a million dollars? Why or why not?
   c. Follow-up: Write an essay on "What I Would Do With a Million Dollars"