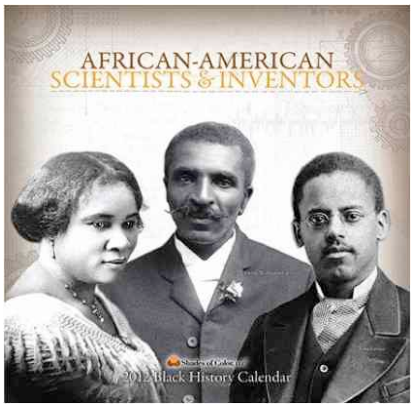
Calendars to Books: Quick & Easy!

WHAT AND WHY: We know that typically developing children have access to thousands of books from which to choose. For older students who are beginning readers, it is difficult to find sufficient books that are:
• Age-Respectful: Neither childish not at too high a level
• Text-Appropriate: Using text that meets the needs of the individual students

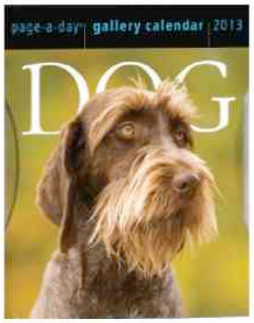
We often create books to support students in their interests or current topics of study. Calendars can support students because calendars:
A) Typically have excellent graphics
B) Are cheap (especially if you get them at the end of the year!)
C) Can be connected to student interests such as wrestling or butterflies
D) Can support classroom topics of studies, such as battles World War II.



WHO IS THIS FOR: While calendar books may support any student, they are especially useful for students who are beginning readers, but are 10 or older. Calendar books can be created for a variety of purposes such as:
• Building background knowledge on a topic of study, such as African-American inventors
• Providing early conventional text on a topic of interest to the student, such as creating a very simple text about basketball players, dogs, or Nascar racing.
• Offering stories for enjoyment on a favorite topic.

LOGISTICS:
Writing A Calendar Book FOR Students:
When writing a book for students, teachers or parents might create a book with very easy vocabulary, focusing on Word Wall words, and on onsets / rimes that the student has been studying. For example:

Jacob is beginning to read independently. His SLP made this book about dogs, which he loves. She used words from his word wall + high frequency endings /ad/ and /un/.



This one looks sad.

He is so fun.

Calendars to Books

Writing a Calendar Book WITH Students: Shared - Independent Writing
Shared writing is a great way to start writing projects for students who are emergent writers. Steps include:

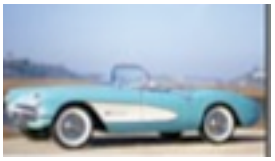
• **Model and Talk Aloud:** The teacher should model writing for the first page, using Talk-Alouds. For example, Ms. Perry's students have chosen to write about cars, because it is a topic that all of her high-school students love.

Ms. Perry uses modeled writing *(Tip from December, 2011, www.aacintervention.com)* to write: This is way cool. She makes connection to students lives and to the classroom Word Wall. After modeling, all students share in reading her page.

Shared Writing: The teacher now shows another page of the calendar. She helps students to brainstorm ideas about that image. They use communication devices, speech, writing, and alternative pencils to share ideas, including: white, old, fun, no top. She guides them into combining some ideas, and writes: 'This old white car is fun. It has no top!' She shows students words on the word wall that will help them write their story.

Paired or Independent Writing: Students now vote on which car they want to write about. The work in pairs or independently, with peers or support staff to create text for their pages. Students use a range of strategies. For example:

• Ari uses words, and a peer helps him to spell them using the AlphaBoard, giving as little help as possible
• Velma uses words then uses a labeler to type her words
• Marcus chooses letters using *Magnetic ABCs* app, then a friend writes possible choices using *StikyNotes.*
• Jessica uses her communication device, then the alphabet page on her device to write the words.
• Juan uses the *Print 'n Communicate* symbol dictionary from Meyer-Johnson to pick words, then uses the AlphaFlip chart to write it.



Finishing Your Calendar Book
It is important to have the book be legible for everyone. So think about whether to have students physically WRITE the text, or whether to have it PRINTED. Remember, at this point, you are publishing your book, so make it clear, and make sure that text is large enough for everyone to read!

Calendars to Books

RE-READING THE CALENDAR STORY WITH VOICE OUTPUT

Putting the Calendar Book on Your Communication Device:
The photos on the back of a calendar are often the perfect size for using with a communcation device! Small photos can be cut out, affixed to a paper template, with language recorded for levels-based devices such as Tech Talk 8 (shown in photo).

Putting the Calendar Book on Your iPad:
It is very quick to take a photo of the calendar pages, crop it (I love the *Crop* app!), then putting these in books on your favorite bookmaking app. For example, one student chose Alaska to share for a social studies unit. She got an Alaska calendar and her friend took pictures of 8 pages, using the iPad. They used *Book Creator* to make their story, eventually saving the story to *iBooks* so they could e-mail it home and put it on her home iPad.

Book Creator app