

## Teachers and Students Answer: How Big is a Billion?

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### H&R Block Dollars & Sense Awards \$19,000 in Classroom Grants

KANSAS CITY, MO -- (Marketwired) -- 04/08/14 -- Americans leave more than \$1 billion on the table every year by doing their own taxes -- a fact demonstrated in H&R Block's "Get Your Billion Back, America" national advertising campaign by placing \$500 on seats in a professional football stadium. After hearing from students interested in the math, H&R Block asked teachers to turn the idea of \$1 billion into a math assignment by submitting real-life examples to illustrate the concept. Classroom grants of \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 were awarded across three grade tiers: grades 4th-6th, 7th-9th and 10th-12th.

Thanks to the ingenuity of teachers and students nationwide participating in the "How Big is a Billion? Challenge, we know \$1 billion would be enough to purchase \$20 in school supplies for every public school student in the country, from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, among other things.

"We're always looking for ways to bring fun, engaging personal finance lessons to students and wanted to celebrate teachers for doing the same in their classrooms. The originality, creativity and math skills students and teachers shared demonstrating how big a billion is were really impressive," said Kathy Collins, chief marketing officer at H&R Block.

Emily McDonnell's class earned the \$3,000 first prize for grades 4-6 by equating one billion to a whopping 15,432 years worth of lunch trays at Bonner Springs (Kan.) Elementary School.

"In my class, we have been focusing on divergent thinking skills -- seeing things in a different way and thinking of different uses for common objects," said McDonnell. "So, coming up with various ideas to represent the concept of one billion dovetailed perfectly. The kids absolutely loved the process."

The winning entry for grades 7-9 was submitted by the students of Billie Watson's class at Annoor Academy in Knoxville, Tenn., who concluded that \$1 billion equals an hourly salary of \$114,115.25 -- for every hour of every day for an entire year.

"We had just been learning about simple interest and applying that math to real life examples, so it was perfect timing to explore what it would look like to make a billion dollars in a year," said Watson. "My students all worked together, including setting up different proportions to find the correct answers. It was a great learning experience -- we were able to branch out our normal everyday lessons and apply basic math skills to a real life application, all while having fun!"

Sports and history buffs will appreciate the winning entry for grades 10-12, as Amanda Bowles' students at East Coweta High School in Sharpsburg, Ga., determined that a billion pitches would be thrown over the course of 1,906 Major League Baseball seasons -- or, enough to take our national pastime back to the Roman Empire of the second century.

Other winning representations, by grade level:

#### **Grades 4-6**

- If a back handspring covers 58 inches; a gymnast doing one billion back handsprings would travel around the world 36 times. (*Second prize - Kim Gonzalez' class at Brentwood Elementary School in Austin, TX*)
- Building an indoor igloo takes 207 empty milk jugs collected over three months; in one million years, you could collect one billion milk jugs to build five million igloos. (*Third prize - Sharon Mannix' class at Broome-Tioga BOCES Reclaim at West Learning Center in Windsor, N.Y.*)

#### **Grades 7-9**

- One billion, \$1 bills stacked on top of each other would reach the equivalent height of 286.6 Empire State Buildings; 1,706 Duke Chapels; 337.1 Eiffel Towers; 131.9 Burj Khalifa Towers or 1,720,000 pizza boxes. (*Second prize - Liz Moffitt's class at Lakewood Montessori Middle School in Durham, N.C.*)
- One billion dollars is enough to purchase \$20 in school supplies for every public school student in the country, from pre-

kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. (Third prize - Kelley Taylor's class at Arnold Magnet Academy & Richards Middle School in Columbus, Ga.)

### **Grades 10-12**

- One billion dollars would purchase 752 million packs of sticky notes, enough to cover 10.6 million square miles -- or roughly 92 percent of the land area on the continent of Africa. (Second prize - Austin Warner's class at Peak to Peak Charter School in Lafayette, Col.)
- Placed end-to-end, one billion, \$1 bills would stretch from Los Angeles to New York, 39 times over. (Third prize, tie - Shanna Evans' class at Olathe East High School in Olathe, Kan.)
- One billion dollars would purchase 10,067,114,093 sandwich cookies, which would require 209,731,544 gallons of milk - enough to fill 318 Olympic-size swimming pools. (Third prize, tie - Giulia Scoma's class at Peak to Peak Charter School in Lafayette, Col.)

H&R Block partnered with WeAreTeachers, an online resource for lesson plans, professional development resources, grants and contests for teachers, to select the finalists. Entries were evaluated on accuracy and creativity, with H&R Block selecting the prize winners.

H&R Block Dollars & Sense provides educators and students with personal finance curriculum and resources to increase financial literacy among teens. Since 2009, H&R Block Dollars & Sense has awarded teens and educators with more than \$4 million in grants and scholarships. For more information, visit [hrblockdollarsandsense.org](http://hrblockdollarsandsense.org).

#### **About H&R Block Dollars & Sense**

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#### **About H&R Block**

H&R Block, Inc. (NYSE: HRB) is the world's largest consumer tax services provider. More than 625 million tax returns have been prepared worldwide by and through H&R Block since 1955. In fiscal 2013, H&R Block had annual revenues of \$2.9 billion with 24.8 million tax returns prepared worldwide. Tax return preparation services are provided in over 11,000 [company-owned](#) and [franchise](#) retail tax offices worldwide by professional tax preparers, and through H&R Block [digital products](#). H&R Block Bank provides affordable banking products and services. For more information, visit the [H&R Block Newsroom](#).

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