

A. D. D.

Question One: Twelve plus two.

That's T-W-O. Not T-O. Or T.O.O.

Why are there so many ways to spell two?

There are *three* ways to spell two.

There aren't even two ways to spell three. There's just one.

That's O-N-E. Not W-O-N.

There's two ways to spell one, but that kind of makes sense.

If you win something, it means you're number one.

Is that Mom? Who's she talking to?

She must be on the phone. There's nobody else home.

She's laughing. Probably not talking to Daddy.

He's late. He's usually home by now. We already had supper.

I wonder where he is.

Is that a car in the driveway? No. Just somebody driving by.

I think I hear the ice-cream van. It's going away, though.

Anyway, Mom already said no ice cream till I get my Math done.

Twelve plus two.

How many questions *are* there?

Twenty!?

I'm gonna be here all night. I won't get to watch TV.

Is she going to let me stay up late if I don't get it done?

Here she comes. Time to stare at the paper.

Tommy's riding by the front window on his bike.

Never mind. Look at the paper.

Focus, she says, stabbing at the math sheet.

Okay, okay.

Twelve plus two.

She's gone.

Still on the phone so she won't get mad at me. Not yet.

Okay. I'd better get this done.

What was that?

Oh, it's the fridge. Why does it keep stopping and starting like that?

Shouldn't it stay on?

I mean, wouldn't everything get warm inside when it shuts off?

There's a spot on the wall. It looks like gravy.

I think it's from last night's supper.

I bet Mom never saw it.

She's always cleaning so she would've got that spot if she'd seen it.

Here she comes again.

She didn't stop this time, just shook her head as she looked at me.

Should I tell her about the spot?

Not now. Not while she's on the phone.

Somebody's out there with Tommy. I can't tell who it is.

I wish I was out there. Didn't *they* have Math?

Maybe they did it right after school.

Who invented Math, anyway? I hate Math.

Gym is fun. You get to play sports, climb ropes, run and jump.

I wish we had gym all day.

How come the lines on this paper are blue? That's weird.

It's not blue like the kitchen wall. That's darker.

More like the sky on a nice day.

It's nice outside today. Except that it's going to get dark soon.

It did yesterday.

This shirt is itchy.

I should tell Mom. Maybe she needs to wash it.

Oh-oh. Mom's off the phone.

She's gonna come and check on me and I'm still on the first question.

She's gonna get mad.

Twelve plus two.

I know that. It's not hard.

Oh, good. Mom's going downstairs. Probably doing laundry or something.

She won't check on me for a few minutes.

This pencil says HB. What does that mean?

Maybe it used to belong to someone whose initials were H.B.

Maybe I should carve my initials in it.

Mom's coming back up the stairs.

Okay. I've gotta get this done.

Twelve plus two.

Two plus two is four, with a one in front of it. That makes fourteen.

That's what it is. That's right. I know that's right.

It's got to be fourteen.

Easy.

Question two.