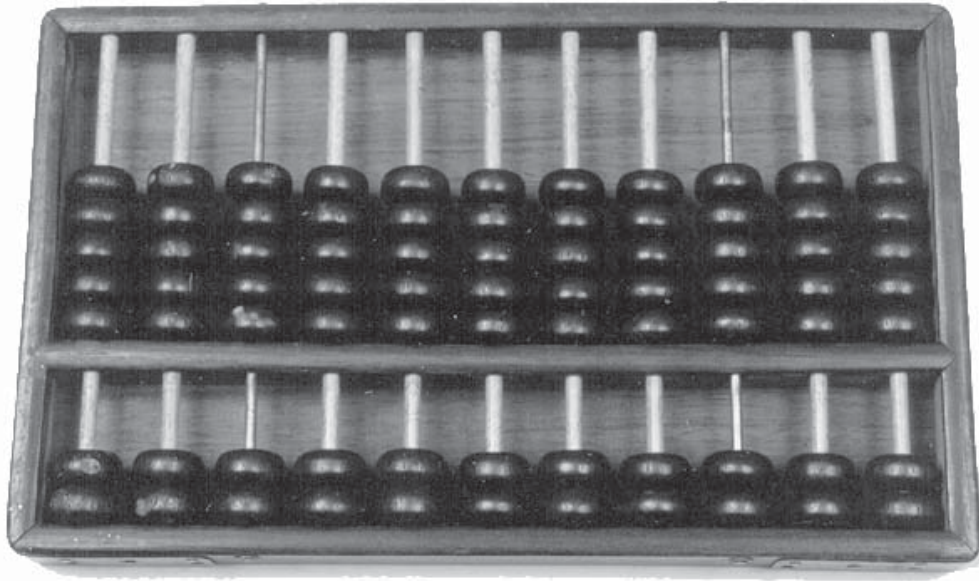


### Abacus

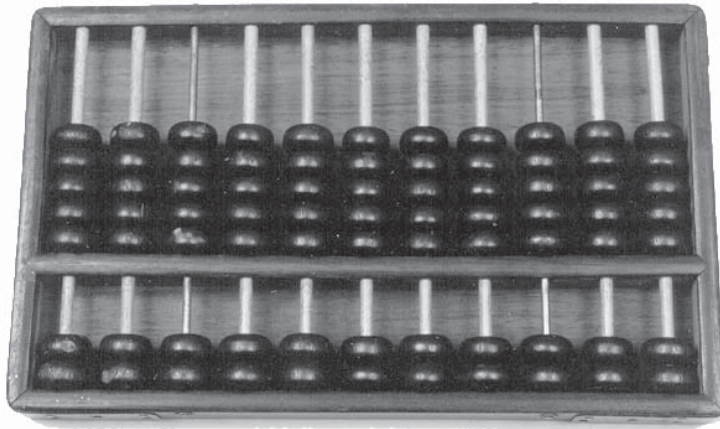


Each month The California Museum will introduce a new artifact with accompanying information and questions, which will consist of three different difficulty levels to choose from. To be used as a sponge or opening activity, you can use the artifact of the month for your students to study, question and form ideas. You can also print the image and place it on each student's desk, have them work in teams or project the image for a class activity.

Use the provided questions to help your students learn more about the artifact and its importance to California -- or make up your own questions. Most importantly, have fun!

Be sure to check out our web site, [CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://CaliforniaMuseum.org), for other interesting and unique activities for your students.

### Abacus



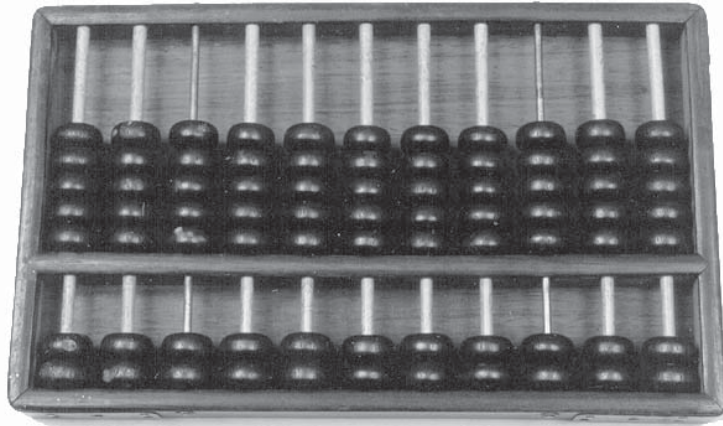
Used as a tool for counting, the abacus was essential for some immigrants heading to California during the Gold Rush. This abacus is on display in the exhibit, *Dr. Yee's Herbal Shop*. Most likely, Dr. Yee brought an abacus with him when he came to California in 1849 to start an herbal shop. He would have used it to calculate the price of herbs and other goods.

The abacus is a tool for counting and performing basic arithmetic. It can be used to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. The abacus consists of a frame containing columns of beads. The beads, which represent numbers, are strung on wires or narrow wooden rods attached to the frame.

The abacus was used by the ancient Greeks, Romans and Chinese. The Chinese abacus is called *suanpan*, which means counting board. A typical Chinese abacus has columns of beads separated by a crossbar. Each column has two beads below the crossbar and five above it. Each lower bead represents five units, and each upper bead equals one unit.

The abacus was in use centuries before the adoption of the written modern numeral system and is still widely used by merchants, traders and clerks in Asia, Africa and elsewhere. The user of an abacus is called an abacist.

## Abacus



### Elementary

- 1) What is the abacus used for?
- 2) What is the Chinese abacus called?

### Middle

- 1) What do the beads on the abacus stand for?
- 2) Why would a shopkeeper in the days of the Gold Rush use an abacus?

### High School

- 1) What types of calculators are used in high school math classes today?
- 2) If you were a first grade teacher, how would you use an abacus to teach your students place value? How would you teach addition?

# Word Search!

M W J D K P Y I C Y O S K A Z  
S U B T R A C T L H E Y P B X  
C L Z F W W D P L N I S W A W  
W K E C E C I D O T R N P C M  
U E I Q I T Q E V S B V E U N  
F S W U L S G C D D U E C S G  
M M I U J D B D I E W H O A E  
G D M S N A M O R R D V G G P  
D N L T D E K Y H D Q I Z N Z  
R R I E A B V T E N S R V G Z  
M X L T B N L C O U U P R I X  
J Z S D N A S U O H T E J Y D  
R V O H A U E V B I E I B F P  
X U A I K J O H Q K N O V X I  
P V V B E Y B C S T D I O P O

ABACUS  
CHINESE  
GREEKS  
ONES  
TENS

ADD  
COUNTING  
HUNDREDS  
ROMANS  
THOUSANDS

BEADS  
DIVIDE  
MULTIPLY  
SUBTRACT

