



**MATH
WHISPERER**
Where math makes sense

Research Edition
The Operations Series

Subtraction

Math Whisperer is a program created and designed for math to make sense, so all students can learn math. For more information, please go to www.mathwhisperer.com

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DEDICATION

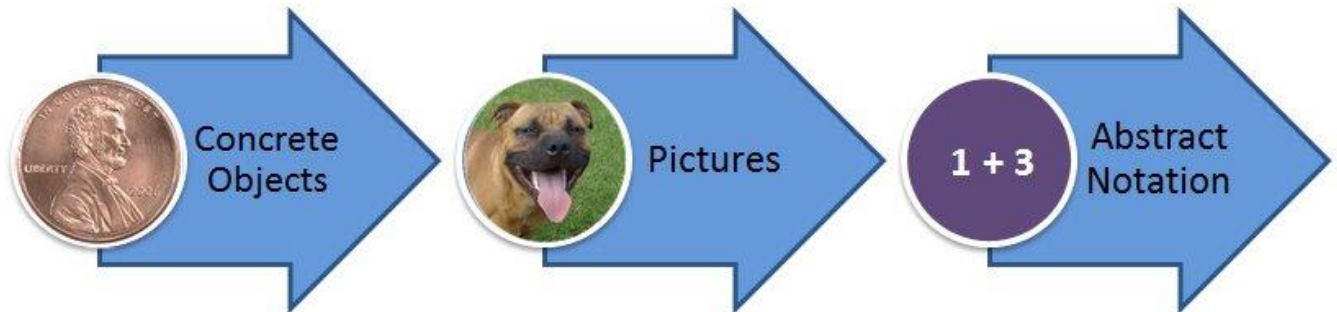
Math Whisperer materials are dedicated to each person who wants to be successful in math, including those who have struggled in the past. Our goal for our students is that they know the math they need to lead the lives they want.

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1. Introduction

Math Whisperer lessons are based on scientific research about how people learn math. Math is actually supposed to make sense. When you start with hands-on objects, math can make sense.



You are probably used to starting with the third step of abstract notation, which means using symbols and maybe a formula. Some people are able to start at this third step, using a formula. Maybe they even understand why the formula works. Maybe they don't, but they get the right answers. These people will benefit from the hands-on objects, also, as they will understand the math at a deeper level. This three step progression works for everybody.

It may feel silly to you to use hands-on objects. My advice to you is: Try it, please. You will see for yourself how well the three step progression works. You are much more likely to remember the formulas this way. And if you forget them, you can reinvent them for yourself. Won't it feel great to never have to learn this again? The math will stick with you with the three step progression.



Hello. I'm Bernice, founder of Math Whisperer. I've worked with lots of students just like you, and they were all able to learn the math they wanted and needed to learn. So can you.

What is Subtraction?



Congratulations you have conquered addition!
Now you can build on that and learn to subtract.

There are several different types of subtraction situations. We will start with the most basic: $a - b$ means a “take away” b .

$5 - 3$ means 5 take away 3. Note you are reading from left to right.



Start with 5



Take away 3



Practice 1 – Subtraction as “take away”

Write the words

$7 - 3$ means _____

$7 - 2$ means _____

$7 - 5$ means _____

$7 - x$ means _____

$6 - 2$ means _____

$6 - 3$ means _____

$6 - x$ means _____

$x - 6$ means _____

$4 - 3$ means _____

$4 - 1$ means _____

$5 - 2$ means _____

$w - g$ means _____

$10 - 3$ means _____

$3 - 10$ means _____

$8 - 2$ means _____

$2 - 8$ means _____

$5 - 9$ means _____

Practice 2 – A story for Subtraction

Here is a story for $5 - 3 = 2$

5 puppies were playing



3 puppies went inside the dog house



2 puppies stayed in the yard

Your turn:

Make up a story for the equation $7 - 3 = 4$

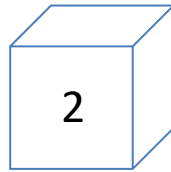
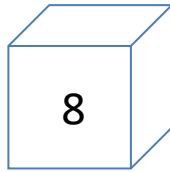
Activity 1 – Subtraction facts

You will need:

- The 2 number cubes

Roll the number cubes and perform the subtractions. Always subtract the smaller number from the larger number.

Example:



Record the first 10

1	$8 - 2 = 6$
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Do this until you get quickly get the answer.

Activity 2: Addition and Subtraction number families



Subtraction and addition are related, like brothers and sisters are related. Brothers and sisters are a family, and so are addition and subtraction.

You will need

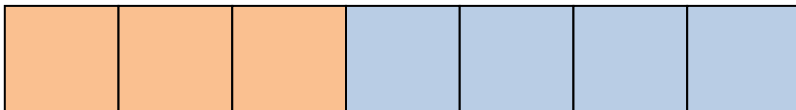
7 linkercubes, 3 of one color and 4 of another (Cut outs on page 13). Use your linkercubes to show the same situation on the drawing.

Here is one addition/subtraction number family: 4, 3 and 7. This is how they are related:

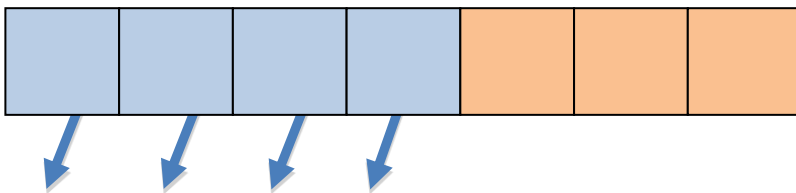
$$4 + 3 = 7$$



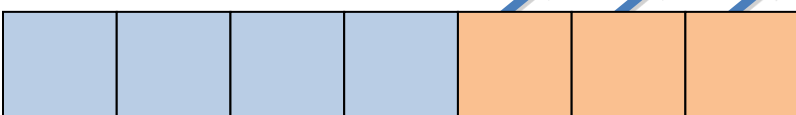
$$3 + 4 = 7$$

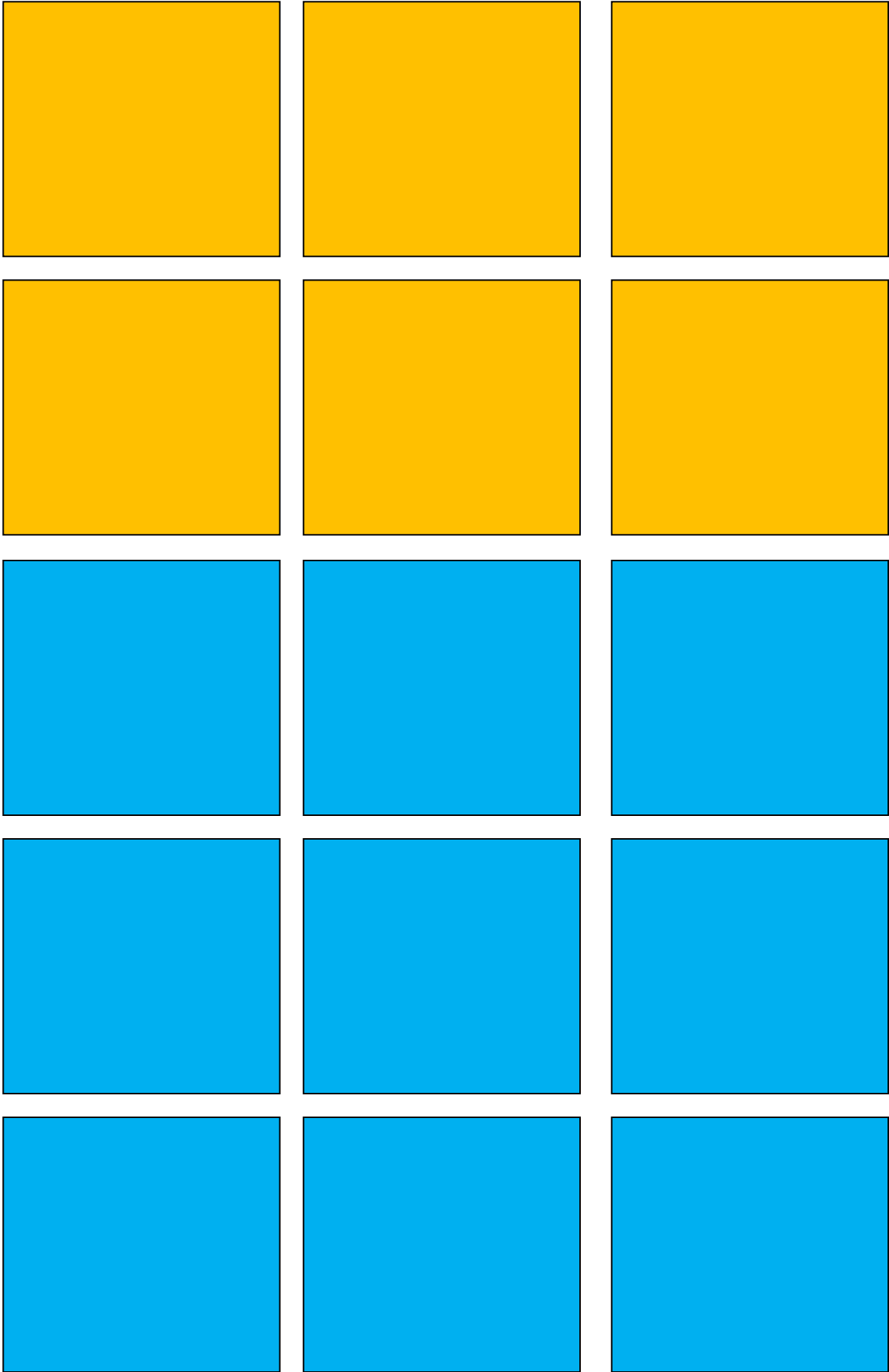


$$7 - 4 = 3$$



$$7 - 3 = 4$$





Activity 3 – Linker cubes

Use your linker-cubes to show the 2 addition and 2 subtraction number family statements for this picture: If you don't have linker cubes you can use page 13.



$$\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

Activity 4 – Linker cubes to model Addition /Subtraction number families

1. Use your linker cubes to show the addition and subtraction number family for $5 + 3 = 8$. Shade in the drawing.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Use your linker cubes to show the rest of the number family for $2 + 6 = 8$. Shade in the drawing.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

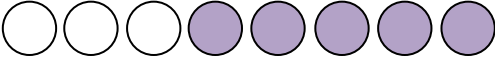


--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3. Find the four equations for number family $6 - x = ?$ You will need to choose your own "x."

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Practice 3 – Fact families

Fact Families – write all the number facts that go with each picture and expression.

	
	$4 + 5 =$
$3 + 3 =$	$8 - 5 =$
<p>(This problem is more difficult.)</p> $N + J =$	<p>(So is this one. Just do your best! That is all anyone can ask.)</p> $13 - w =$

$3 + \underline{\quad} = 5$

Explain how you know.

Practice 4 – Subtraction facts practice

a. $7 - 5 =$

n. $7 - 7 =$

b. $9 - 3 =$

o. $5 - 4 =$

c. $8 - 2 =$

p. $9 - 9 =$

d. $5 - 1 =$

q. $7 - 4 =$

e. $8 - 7 =$

r. $6 - 3 =$

f. $3 - 1 =$

s. $8 - 3 =$

g. $4 - 3 =$

t. $9 - 1 =$

h. $5 - 3 =$

u. $4 - 2 =$

i. $7 - 2 =$

v. $7 - 6 =$

j. $9 - 4 =$

w. $8 - 1 =$

k. $8 - 6 =$

x. $9 - 3 =$

l. $6 - 2 =$

y. $5 - 2 =$

m. $9 - 5 =$

z. $8 - 5 =$

Modeling the Subtraction algorithm



Sometimes you will need to subtract bigger numbers, like $12 - 3$ or $42 - 9$. It is still “take away.”

You will need:

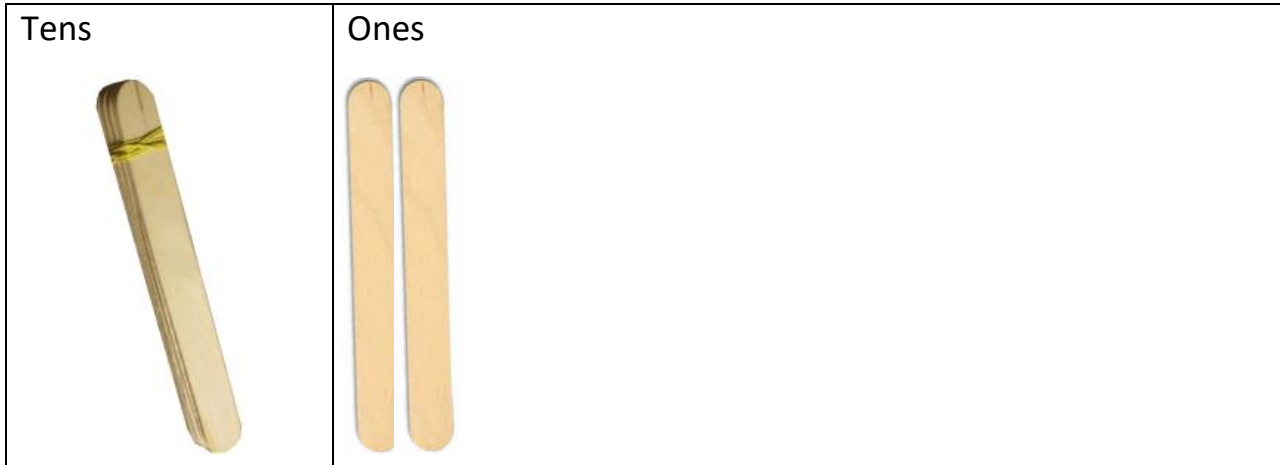
- About 50 popsicle sticks
- several rubber bands
- a sheet of paper



Use the Popsicle sticks to represent numbers. Use ten Popsicle sticks rubber-banded together to represent 10. Then on an $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11” piece of paper, divide it in half, labeling the left half “tens” and the right half “ones” as shown:

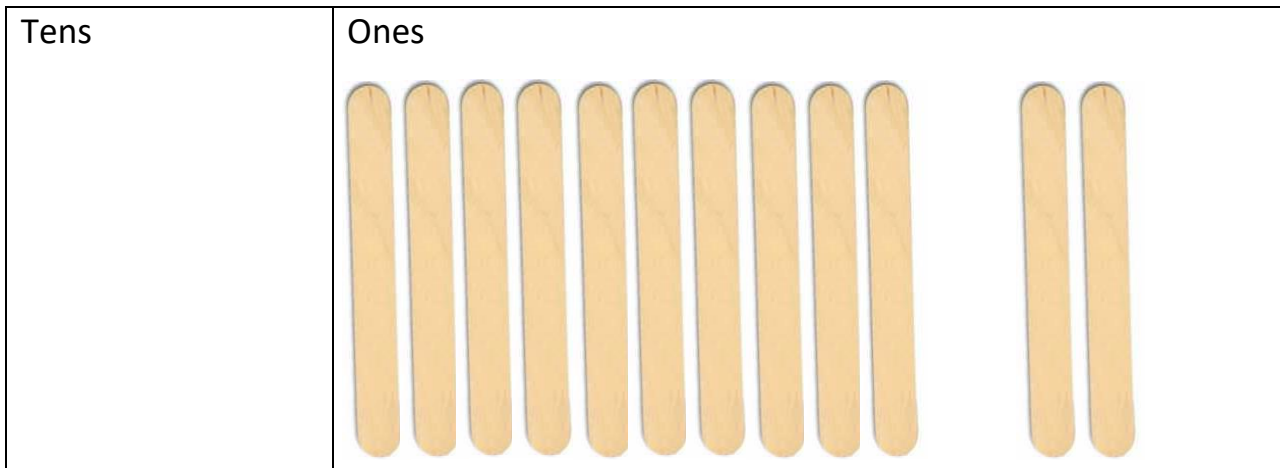
Tens	Ones

To represent the number 12, with one group of “ten”, and two “ones”.

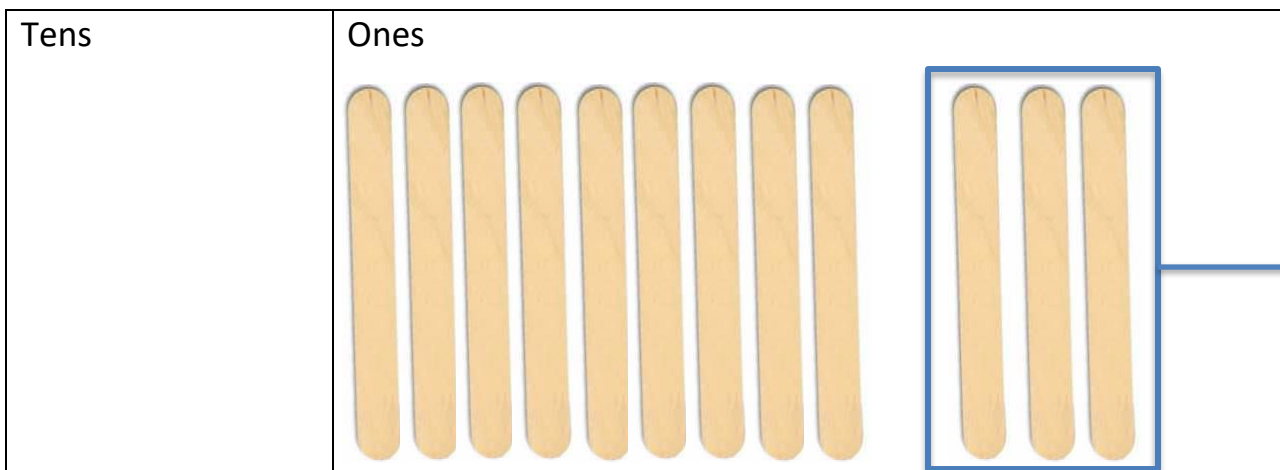


We can easily take 2 away, but taking 3 away is one more step.

Take the rubber band off and move all 10 popsicle sticks into the ones place:



Now we can take away 3:



Leaving 9 popsicle sticks. So $12 - 3 = 9$. Written a different way

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ - 3 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$$

Now let's look at $32 - 3$.

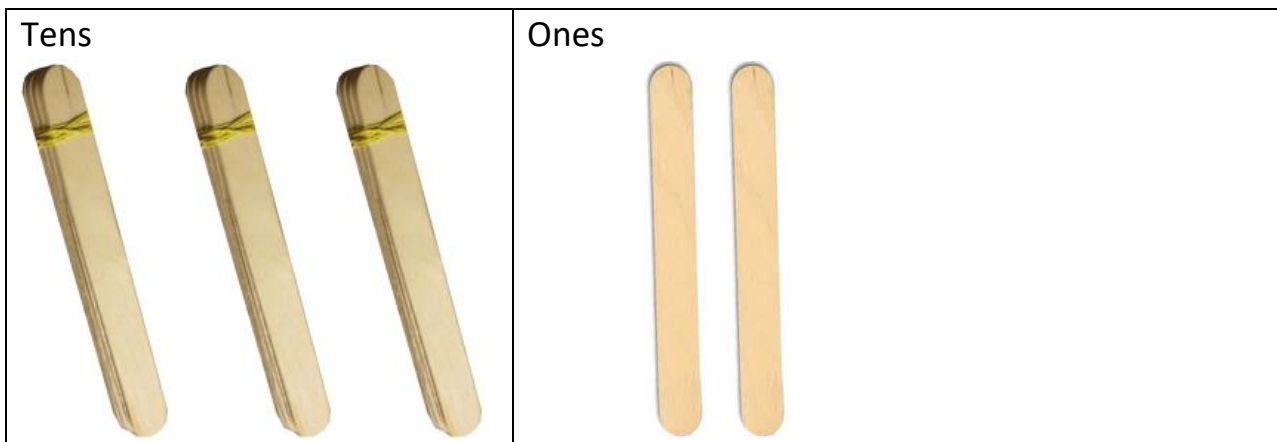


Is this you? Some students have never understood "borrowing," and avoid the issue in this way:

$$\begin{array}{r} 32 \\ - 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

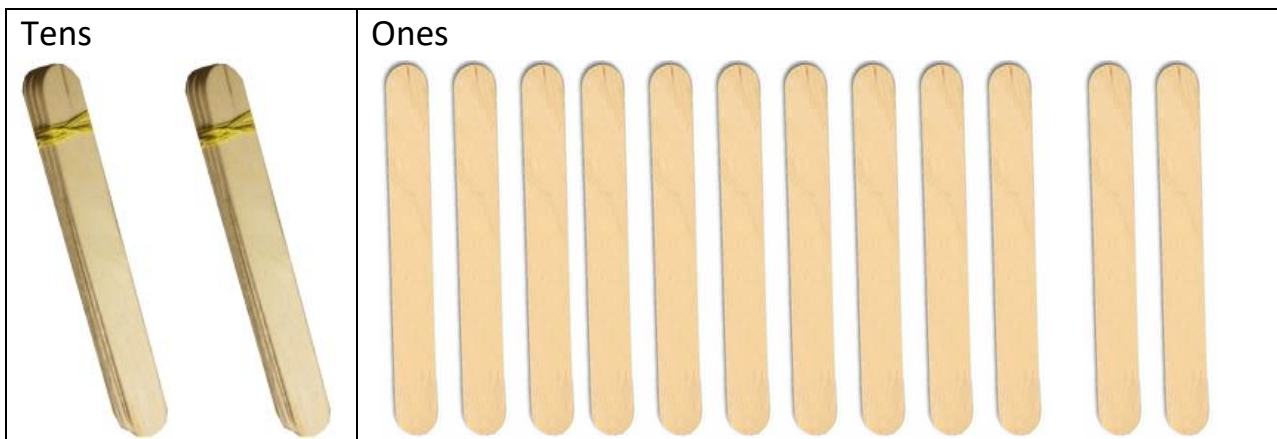
They reverse the order, and subtract 2 from 3, and get 31 for the answer. This is incorrect $32 - 3$ is actually 29.

Here is $32 - 3$ using popsicle sticks

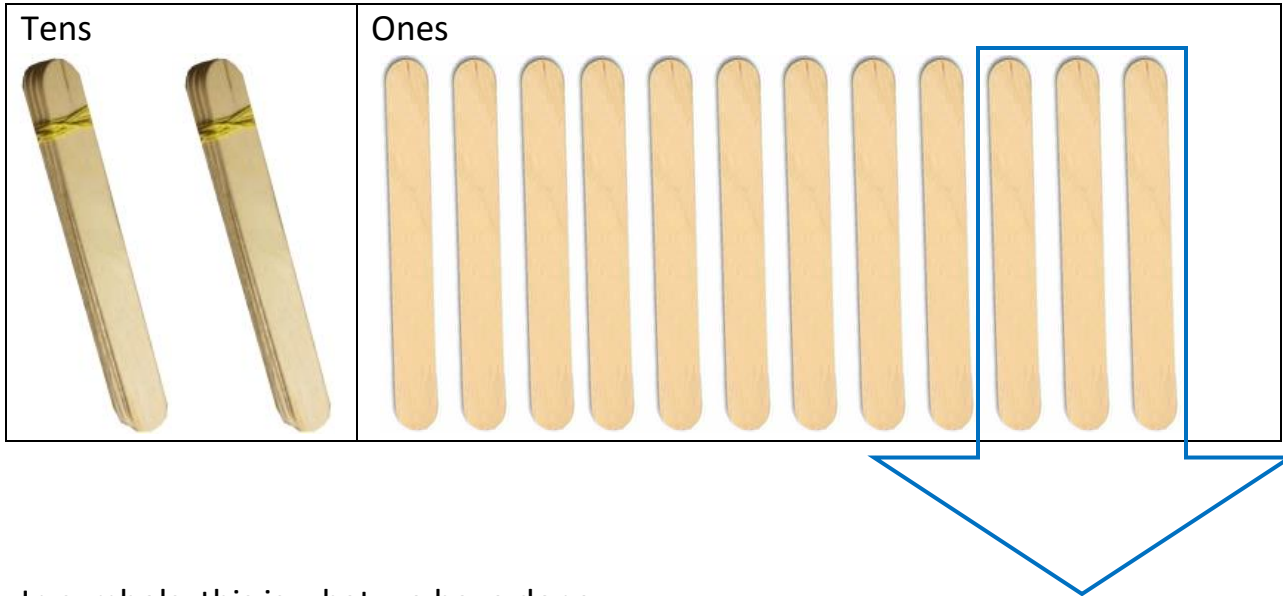


Just like with $12 - 3$, we can easily take away 2 from the ones. Taking away 3 requires a bit more work. But we're prepared!!

Just like with $12 - 3$, we can move a group of ten popsicle sticks into the ones place.



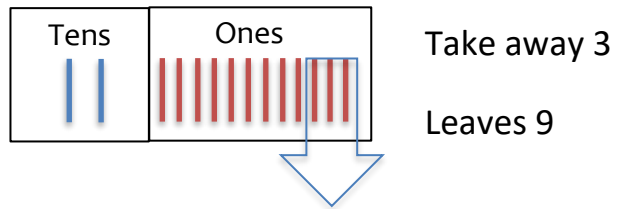
Now we can take away 3



In symbols, this is what we have done:

$32 \longrightarrow$	$\begin{array}{r} 2 \ 12 \\ 32 \\ - 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Tens</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Ones</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"> </td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"> </td> </tr> </table>	Tens	Ones			<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Tens</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Ones</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"> </td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"> </td> </tr> </table>	Tens	Ones		
Tens	Ones										
Tens	Ones										
$- \underline{3}$	$- \underline{3}$	where the "30" in 32 is broken into 20 and 10 .									

$32 \longrightarrow$	$\begin{array}{r} 2 \ 12 \\ 32 \\ - 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$
$- \underline{3}$	$- \underline{3}$



So, $32 - 3 = 29$

Activity 5 – Modeling the Subtraction algorithm

Use your popsicle sticks to model each problem. Then draw what you have. Third, find the difference.

$35 - 8 =$

Tens	Ones

$34 - 6 =$

Tens	Ones

$23 - 13 =$

Tens	Ones

23 - 8 =

Tens	Ones
------	------

25 - 4 =

Tens	Ones
------	------

25 - 9 =

Tens	Ones
------	------

31 - 7 =

Tens	Ones

31 - 8 =

Tens	Ones

38 - 9 =

Tens	Ones

38 – 10 =

Tens	Ones

24 – 11 =

Tens	Ones

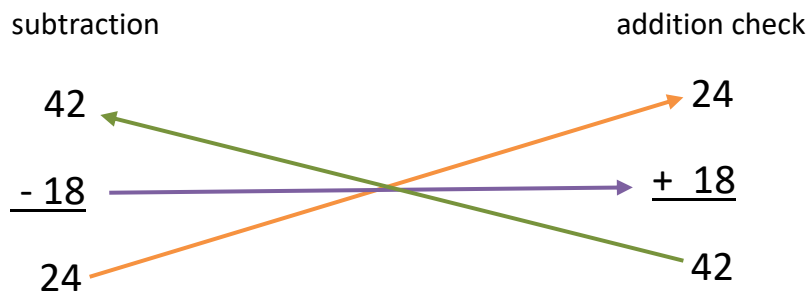
21 – 14 =

Tens	Ones

Practice 5 – Checking Subtraction with Addition



Addition and subtraction are a number family, so you can use one to check the other.”



subtraction	addition check
38	
<u>- 13</u>	+ _____

subtraction	addition check
142	
<u>- 13</u>	+ _____

subtraction	addition check
64	
<u>- 26</u>	+ _____

subtraction	addition check
51	
<u>- 8</u>	+ _____

subtraction	addition check
57	
<u>- 23</u>	+ _____

subtraction	addition check
238	
<u>- 139</u>	+ _____

Practice 6 – Checking Subtraction with Addition

	Subtraction	Answer	Check with addition
a	$7 - 3 =$	4	$3 + 4 = 7$
b	$5 - 2 =$		
c	$8 - 3 =$		
d	$4 - 3 =$		
e	$10 - 4 =$		
f	$9 - 1 =$		
g	$7 - 5 =$		
h	$4 - 3 =$		
i	$5 - 1 =$		
j	$6 - 5 =$		
k	$6 - 6 =$		
l	$9 - 4 =$		
m	$11 - 5 =$		
n	$12 - 7 =$		
o	$12 - 0 =$		
p	$10 - 6 =$		
q	$8 - 7 =$		
r	$487 - 487 =$		
s	$9 - 1 =$		

Practice 7 – More practice

Fill in the blanks

	1	2		3	4	
5		6	7		8	9
10	11		12	13		
	14	15		16	17	
18		19	20		21	22
23	24		25	26		
	27			28		

Down

2. $78 - 47$

4. $48 + 4$

5. $16 + 8$

7. $21 - 9$

9. $18 + 43$

11. $96 - 7$

13. $23 - 10$

15. $50 - 9$

17. $50 - 28$

18. $71 + 15$

20. $51 - 9$

22. $73 - 43$

24. $30 + 13$

26. $79 - 28$

Across

1. $78 - 15$

3. $91 - 56$

6. $21 - 10$

8. $13 + 13$

10. $25 + 23$

12. $47 - 26$

14. $87 + 7$

16. $79 - 47$

19. $26 - 12$

21. $52 - 29$

23. $42 + 22$

25. $7 + 18$

27. $82 - 49$

28. $30 - 20$

The meaning of Subtraction

There are different situations that require subtraction. Real-life situations and word problems show the different situations. These are the situations, and then there are word problems to show the differences.

Comparison: finding the **difference** *between what you have and I have*

Example: You have 9 cookies. I have 3 cookies. How many more

Cookies do you have than I do?



Take-away: finding the **difference** *between what I used to have and what I have now*

Example: I had \$9 and I spent \$3. How much money do I have now?



Completion: finding the **difference** *between what you have now and what you hope to get*

Example: I have \$3. I need \$9 to buy a CD. How much more money do I need?



The following problems use the different meanings of subtraction.

Practice 8 – How many?

Draw a picture if you have time.



Kashi has 32 comic books.

He read 10 of them.

How many does he have left to read?



Lelu sold 18 tickets to the class play.

Sami sold 7 tickets.

How many more tickets did Lelu sell?



Barney has 15 more dollars than Fred. Fred has 6 dollars. How many dollars does Barney have?

Jake has 7 fewer dollars than Jen. Jen has \$10. How many dollars does Jake have?

Brad has 90 more dollars than Shawn. Brad has 120 dollars. How many dollars does Shawn have?



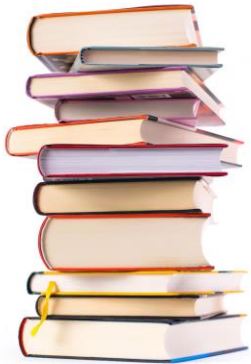
Tiger has 23 pieces of gum. Michelle has 14 pieces. How many fewer pieces of gum does Michelle have?



14 penguins were on the shore. 5 penguins jumped into the ocean. How many penguins were still on the shore?



Juliet is painting the fence. She has finished painting 3 sections of the fence. There are 11 sections in all. How many sections does she have left to paint?



Wilma has 9 books. Georgette has 8 books. How many books do they have altogether?

Practice 9 – Beginning word problems

Lisa has \$18. Bart has \$27. They want to buy a present for their father, Homer.
How much money do they have together?

- **Who: Lisa and Bart**
- **What: want to buy a present**
- **Draw a unit bar:** Sometimes there is more than one unit bar, but in this case there is only one.

Possible unit bar 1: Total money

--

- **Read the problem again, pausing at commas, and draw as you go:**

Lisa has \$18	Bart has \$27
---------------	---------------

- **Show what you need to find with a “?”**

Lisa has \$18. Bart has \$27. They want to buy a present for their father, Homer.
How much money do they have together?

- **Do the math.** $18 + 27 = 45$

With referents (i.e. labels) 18 dollars + 27 dollars = 45 dollars

- **Write a sentence with your answer in it**

Lisa and Bart have \$45 together.

Example 1, Possible unit bar 2:

Lisa has \$18

Bart has \$27

- **Read the problem again, pausing at commas, and draw as you go:**

Lisa has \$18	Bart has \$27
---------------	---------------

- **Show what you need to find with a “?”**

Lisa has \$18. Bart has \$27. They want to buy a present for their father, Homer.
How much money do they have together?

- **Do the math.** $18 + 27 = 45$

With referents (i.e. labels) 18 dollars + 27 dollars = 45 dollars

- **Write a sentence with your answer in it**

Lisa and Bart have \$45 together.

Example 2.

Lisa has \$18. Bart has \$27. How much more money does Bart have than Lisa?

Who: Lisa and Bart

What: have money

Draw a unit bar: These are the most obvious unit bars.

Lisa has \$18

Bart has \$27

Read the problem again, pausing at commas, and draw as you go:

Lisa has \$18

Bart has \$27

Show what you need to find with a “?”

Lisa has \$18. Bart has \$27. How much more money does Bart have than Lisa?

Do the math. $27 - 18 = 9$

With referents (i.e. labels) 27 dollars - 18 dollars = 9 dollars

Write a sentence with your answer in it

Bart has \$9 more than Lisa.



**MATH
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Practice 1 – Subtraction as “take away”

Write the words

$7 - 3$ means 7 take away 3

$7 - 2$ means 7 take away 2

$7 - 5$ means 7 take away 5

$7 - x$ means 7 take away x

$6 - 2$ means 6 take away 2

$6 - 3$ means 6 take away 3

$6 - x$ means 6 take away x

$x - 6$ means x take away 6

$4 - 3$ means 4 take away 3

$4 - 1$ means 4 take away 1

$5 - 2$ means 5 take away 2

$w - g$ means w take away g

$10 - 3$ means 10 take away 3

$3 - 10$ means 3 take away 10




$8 - 2$ means 8 take away 2

$2 - 8$ means 2 take away 8

$5 - 9$ means 5 take away 9

Practice 3 – Fact families

Fact Families – write all the number facts that go with each picture and expression.

 <p> $3 + 5 = 8$ $5 + 3 = 8$ $8 - 5 = 3$ $8 - 3 = 5$ </p>	 <p> $5 + 7 = 12$ $7 + 5 = 12$ $12 - 7 = 5$ $12 - 5 = 7$ </p>
 <p> $4 + 1 = 5$ $1 + 4 = 5$ $5 - 1 = 4$ $5 - 4 = 1$ </p>	<p> $4 + 5 =$ </p> <p> $4 + 5 = 9$ $5 + 4 = 9$ $9 - 5 = 4$ $9 - 4 = 5$ </p>
<p> $3 + 3 =$ </p> <p> $6 + 3 = 6$ $6 - 3 = 3$ </p> <p>Got off easy here!</p>	<p> $8 - 5 =$ </p> <p> $8 - 5 = 3$ $8 - 3 = 5$ $3 + 5 = 8$ $5 + 3 = 8$ </p>
<p>(This problem is more difficult.)</p> <p> $N + J =$ </p> <p> $N + J = x$ (or $J + N = x$ whatever $x - J = N$ variable $x - N = J$ you want) </p>	<p>(So is this one. Just do your best! That is all anyone can ask.)</p> <p> $13 - w =$ </p> <p> $w + x = 13$ $x + w = 13$ $13 - w = x$ $13 - x = w$ </p>

$3 + \underline{\quad} = 5$ Explain how you know. = 2 I know because $5 - 3 = 2$

Practice 4 – Subtraction facts practice

a. $7 - 5 = 2$

b. $9 - 3 = 6$

c. $8 - 2 = 6$

d. $5 - 1 = 4$

e. $8 - 7 = 1$

f. $3 - 1 = 2$

g. $4 - 3 = 1$

h. $5 - 3 = 2$

i. $7 - 2 = 5$

j. $9 - 4 = 5$

k. $8 - 6 = 1$

l. $6 - 2 = 4$

m. $9 - 5 = 4$

n. $7 - 7 = 0$

o. $5 - 4 = 1$

p. $9 - 9 = 0$

q. $7 - 4 = 3$

r. $6 - 3 = 3$

s. $8 - 3 = 5$

t. $9 - 1 = 8$

u. $4 - 2 = 2$

v. $7 - 6 = 1$

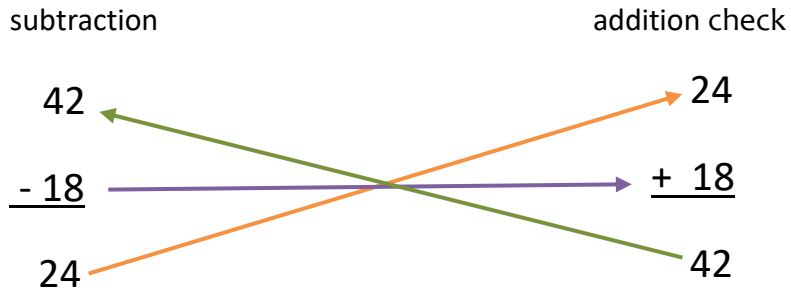
w. $8 - 1 = 7$

x. $9 - 3 = 6$

y. $5 - 2 = 3$

z. $8 - 5 = 3$

Practice 5 – Checking Subtraction with Addition



subtraction	addition check
38	25
<u>- 13</u>	<u>+ 13</u>
25	38

subtraction	addition check
142	129
<u>- 13</u>	<u>+ 13</u>
129	142

subtraction	addition check
64	38
<u>- 26</u>	<u>+ 26</u>
38	64

subtraction	addition check
51	43
<u>- 8</u>	<u>+ 8</u>
43	51

subtraction	addition check
57	34
<u>- 23</u>	<u>+ 23</u>
34	57

subtraction	addition check
238	99
<u>- 139</u>	<u>+ 139</u>
99	238

Practice 6 – Checking Subtraction with Addition

	Subtraction	Answer	Check with addition (note: order does not matter)
a	$7 - 3 =$	4	$3 + 4 = 7$
b	$5 - 2 =$	3	$3 + 2 = 5$
c	$8 - 3 =$	5	$5 + 3 = 8$
d	$4 - 3 =$	1	$3 + 1 = 4$
e	$10 - 4 =$	6	$4 + 6 = 10$
f	$9 - 1 =$	8	$8 + 1 = 9$
g	$7 - 5 =$	2	$5 + 2 = 7$
h	$4 - 3 =$	1	$1 + 3 = 4$
i	$5 - 1 =$	4	$1 + 4 = 5$
j	$6 - 5 =$	1	$5 + 1 = 6$
k	$6 - 6 =$	0	$6 + 0 = 6$
l	$9 - 4 =$	5	$4 + 5 = 9$
m	$11 - 5 =$	6	$5 + 6 = 11$
n	$12 - 7 =$	5	$7 + 5 = 12$
o	$12 - 0 =$	12	$12 + 0 = 12$
p	$10 - 6 =$	4	$4 + 6 = 10$
q	$8 - 7 =$	1	$1 + 7 = 8$
r	$487 - 487 =$	0	$0 + 487 = 487$
s	$9 - 1 =$	8	$8 + 1 = 9$

Practice 7 – More practice

	1 6	2 3		3 3	4 5	
5 2		6 1	7 1		8 2	9 6
10 4	11 8		12 2	13 1		1 1
	14 9	15 4		16 3	17 2	
18 8		19 1	20 4		21 2	22 3
23 6	24 4		25 2	26 5		0
	27 3	3		28 1	0	

Down

2. $78 - 47$

4. $48 + 4$

5. $16 + 8$

7. $21 - 9$

9. $18 + 43$

11. $96 - 7$

13. $23 - 10$

15. $50 - 9$

17. $50 - 28$

18. $71 + 15$

20. $51 - 9$

22. $73 - 43$

24. $30 + 13$

26. $79 - 28$

Across

1. $78 - 15$

3. $91 - 56$

6. $21 - 10$

8. $13 + 13$

10. $25 + 23$

12. $47 - 26$

14. $87 + 7$

16. $79 - 47$

19. $26 - 12$

21. $52 - 29$

23. $42 + 22$

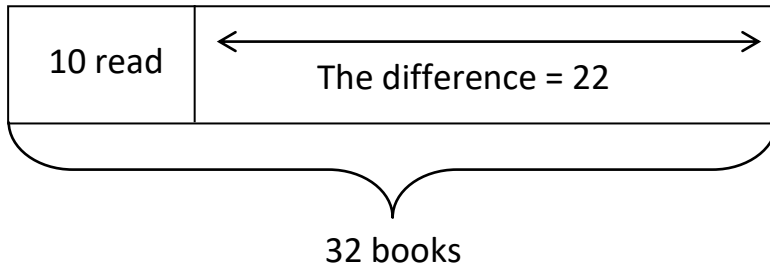
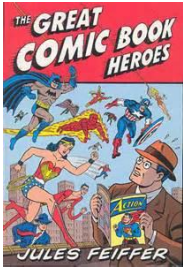
25. $7 + 18$

27. $82 - 49$

28. $30 - 20$

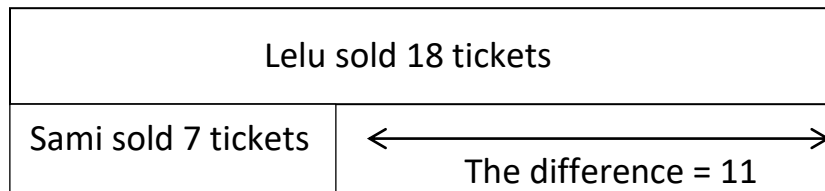
Practice 8 – How many?

Kashi has 32 comic books. He read 10 of them. How many does he have left to read?



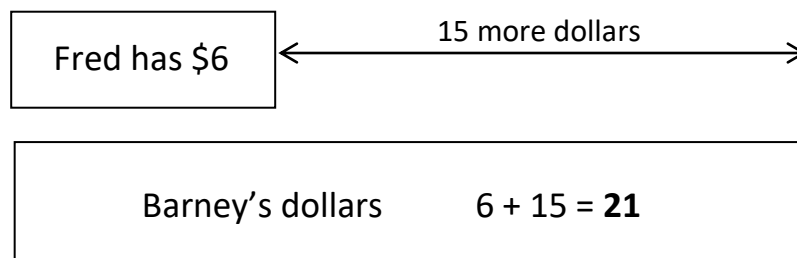
Kashi has 22 more comic books to read.

Lelu sold 18 tickets to the class play. Sami sold 7 tickets. How many more tickets did Lelu sell than Sami?



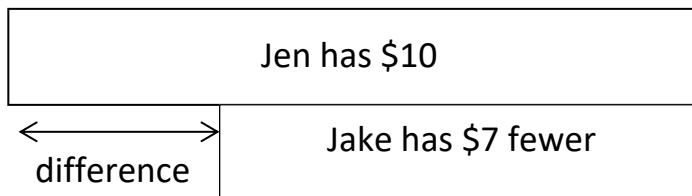
Lelu sold 11 more tickets than Sami.

Barney has 15 more dollars than Fred. Fred has 6 dollars. How many dollars does Barney have?



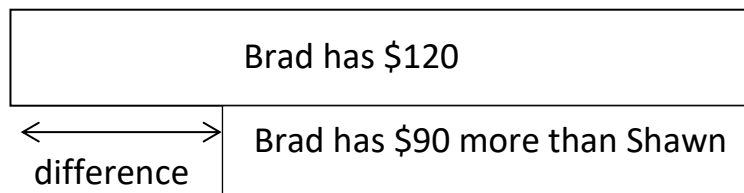
Barney has \$21.00

Jake has 7 fewer dollars than Jen. Jen has \$10. How many dollars does Jake have?



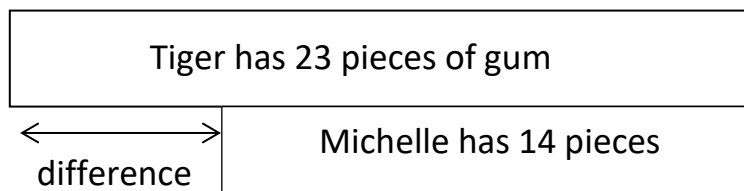
Jake has \$3.

Brad has 90 more dollars than Shawn. Brad has 120 dollars. How many dollars does Shawn have?



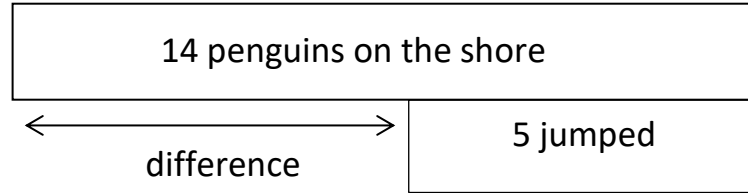
Shawn has \$30.

Tiger has 23 pieces of gum. Michelle has 14 pieces. How many fewer pieces of gum does Michelle have?



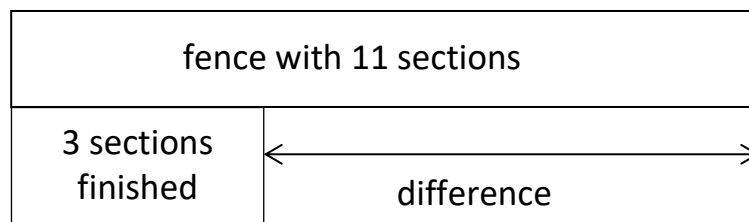
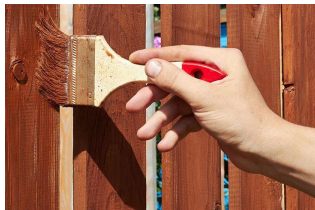
Michelle has $23 - 14 = 9$ more pieces of gum than Tiger.

14 penguins were on the shore. 5 penguins jumped into the ocean. How many penguins were still on the shore?



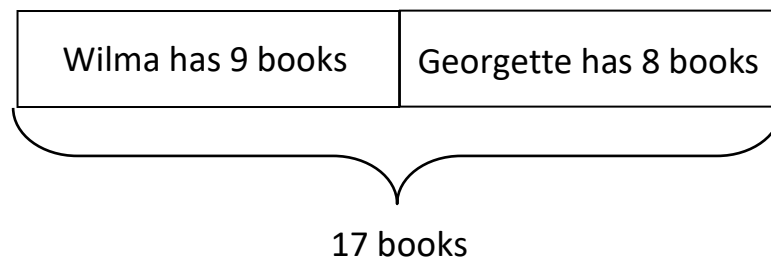
9 penguins remain on shore.

Juliet is painting the fence. She has finished painting 3 sections of the fence. There are 11 sections in all. How many sections does she have left to paint?



$11 - 3 = 8$ sections left to paint

Wilma has 9 books. Georgette has 8 books. How many books do they have all together?



$9 + 8 = 17$ total books

Help for Helpers



I know how much teachers and parents want to help their students be successful at math. It can be upsetting to us as adults to see a student for whom we care being upset. However, the very very best way to help your student is to offer encouragement, such as “I know you can do this. I believe in you.” And then leave the student alone to do the work.

As a metaphor, if you yourself want to become physically fit and choose to run a mile, having someone drive you in a car isn’t going to really help you long term. Yes, you will cover the distance. But there is no substitute for the physical exertion, the sweating and huffing and puffing. Learning to be successful in math requires mental exertion, self-soothing during the frustrating times, and mental stamina.

The time of being a student is largely to prepare for adulthood. As an adult needing math in real life or on the job, there is no great answer book that falls from the sky. We don’t generally want to ask our boss or friend: “Am I right? Am I right?” As an adult, we have to know the answer is right ourselves. The time of being a student is the appropriate time to learn these skills. So, difficult as it may be for you, and it can be very difficult, I respectfully urge you to do nothing except offer encouraging words. These materials are carefully scaffolded and I guarantee you that your student is capable of doing the work himself or herself. The right answer is only half the goal—your student needs to know the answer is right independently.

My heartfelt wishes to you, the parent, teacher, or important grownup in your student’s life. You will gain confidence in your students as you watch them be successful on their own.

The goals for this lesson collection is for students to:

1. Understand the operation of subtraction.
2. Be able to subtraction single digits quickly and reliably.
3. Be able to use an algorithm for double digit addition.