

Rearrange activities



1 Spread and squash — the same objects

Students count a small cluster of counters, then slowly spread them into a long line while watching every one move. Ask how many now, and why.

“Watch every counter. Did any appear or disappear? So how many now?”

“Why does it look like more? Is looking the same as counting?”

2 Two sets — one rearranged

Count two identical sets of four. Spread one out into a long row and leave the other clustered. Ask which has more, or whether they are the same.

“Both had four. I moved one set around — now which has more?”

“Did I add to the spread-out set? Take from the clustered one? Are length and number the same thing?”

3 Can you make it look like more?

Give students four counters and ask them to arrange them so it looks like more than four. Then ask whether it really has more, or just looks like it.

“Make your four look like more than four. Can you do it?”

“It looks like a lot — but how many are there? What is the difference between looking like more and being more?”

4 Non-example: something was actually added

Count four together. While rearranging, secretly add one more from a hidden supply. Ask how many now — students may say four from the principle. Count to reveal five.

“We said it was still four because I just rearranged. But it is five. What happened?”

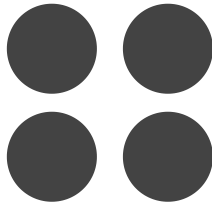
“When is it safe to say the number has not changed without counting? When is it not?”

Same number, different arrangement



Print on A4. Laminate and cut. Compare the cards — the spread-out ones look like more, but each pair holds the same number.

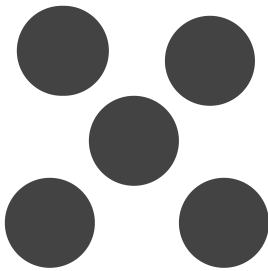
Card A



Card B



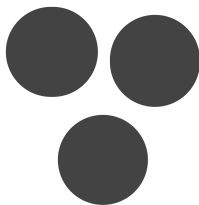
Card C



Card D



Card E



Card F



Each pair is the **same number arranged differently** — compare them and reason whether they match without recounting. **A and B are both four, C and D are both five, E and F are both three.** The spread-out cards look like more, but nothing was added or taken away.