

1

End to end along the table

Lay a row of blocks along the edge of the reading table, pushing each one hard against the last so there is nothing between them, and count out loud as the row grows. Write the count on the board with the unit named, nine blocks rather than nine.

"Watch how I put each block down. What am I doing every time?"

"The table is nine blocks long. Nine what?"

2

The same table, measured with gaps

Take the blocks off and lay them again along the same edge, this time leaving a small space between each one, and count again. The number comes out smaller.

"The table is the same table. Why is the number smaller this time?"

"Point to a part of the table that no block is covering."

The gaps are parts of the table that no block covered, so they were never counted. A row with gaps always gives a number that is too small.

3

Starting in the wrong place

Lay the blocks along the table again with no gaps at all, but start the first block a full block in from the end, and announce the count as though it were the answer.

"My blocks are all touching. Is my measurement right?"

"Point to the part of the table I have not measured."

The first unit has to start where the object starts. A row that is laid perfectly from the wrong place still measures the wrong thing.