

Counting back introduction



1 Start at the first number, count back a small amount

Show the two numbers with number cards. For nine take away three, the nine goes first — you can only take from what you have. Put out nine counters.

“Nine take away three — which number goes first? The nine, the one we have. Put out nine counters.”

Count back — remove the counters one at a time, counting back: nine... eight, seven, six. Count the steps, not the number you start on.

“Start at nine — eight, seven, six, taking one each time. Three steps back. Nine is where we start, not a count.”

Use the finger strategy — say the first number, put up the small number of fingers (one, two or three), and lower one for each count back.

“Eight take away three: start at eight, three fingers up, lower one each count — seven, six, five. Five.”

Notice it suits small amounts — counting back is quick for taking one, two or three. Taking a large amount like nine take away seven is a long count.

“Counting back is quick for one, two or three. Nine take away seven would be seven counts — a lot. We count back the small ones.”

Connect to adding — the numbers six, three and nine make a fact family: six plus three, three plus six, nine take three, nine take six. Adding counts up; taking away counts back.

“Six, three, nine. Adding gives six plus three; taking back gives nine minus three. Same three numbers, opposite ways.”

Counting back — demonstration cards

Print on A4 (enlarge to A3). Hold up a take-away and count back with counters or fingers. Show a fact-family trio and build all four facts.



Count-back facts (take one, two or three)

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

Fact-family trios

$6 \ 3 \ 9$	$5 \ 2 \ 7$
$8 \ 1 \ 9$	$7 \ 3 \ 10$
$4 \ 2 \ 6$	$0 \ 8 \ 8$