

Tally marks introduction



1 Two closed groups — the new landmark

Count a collection of exactly ten objects in advance. Lay the tally with icy pole sticks as objects are removed one at a time, no commentary yet, just sticks. When the tenth stick lies across and closes the second group, pause.

"Two closed groups. Nothing extra. Two groups of five — how many altogether? I didn't count from one. I read the groups."

Place a row of ten ungrouped sticks beside the two closed groups.

"Both show ten. Which is easier to read — and why?"

Ten as two closed groups connects to the landmark students met in tens frames: ten as two structural units. The comparison surfaces what the convention buys. Closed groups can be read; loose sticks have to be counted.

2 Count on from a complete tally

Show a pre-made tally with two complete groups. Students have their own icy pole sticks ready. Add objects one at a time; students continue the tally with their sticks, starting after the second group.

"You already have ten. Start your new sticks after the second group. Keep going until you've closed your third group."

"Three complete groups — how many is that? How do you know without counting every stick?"