

Counting collections with tens activities



1 Your way, then in tens

Students count a big collection however they like, then count it again by pushing the objects into groups of ten. They compare which was easier and which answer they trust.

"Count your pile your way. Now group it into tens and count again. Which was easier?"

"Which answer do you trust more — and why?"

2 Group any collection

With any objects, students push the collection into groups of ten and read the total — count the groups by tens, then count on the loose ones.

"Make groups of ten. How many groups? How many loose? How many altogether?"

"Did you have to count from one, or did the tens do the work for you?"

3 Partner check

One student groups their collection in tens and says the total. Their partner spreads it all out and counts it by ones. They compare.

"You group and say the total; your partner spreads them out and counts by ones. Same number?"

"Why should it be the same, even when you counted in completely different ways?"

4 Non-example: a group counted as one

Make groups of ten, then count the groups "one, two, three." Ask whether a group is worth one or ten.

"I made groups of ten, then counted the groups one, two, three — is a group worth one, or ten?"

"Three groups is thirty — so what is the real total?"