

Digits & words exploration activities



1 Build a teen number from its parts

Give each student a stack of 1 cards and a set of unit digit cards 0 to 9. Students build each teen number by placing the 1 card and a unit digit beside it.

"To make thirteen — which two digit cards do you need? Where does each one go?"

"The 1 is always first — it stands for ten. The second digit tells us how many more than ten. Could you build a teen number without the 1?"

2 The unit word hides inside the teen word

Write the number words thirteen through nineteen in a column. Read each one slowly, separating the unit from the teen ending. Underline the hidden word as students name it.

"Can you hear a smaller number hiding inside each word? Four-teen has "four" in it. The word is telling us: ten, and some more."

"What would seventeen sound like — what unit do you expect to hear?"

3 Eleven and twelve are exceptions

Once the pattern is established, show eleven and twelve. Let students confirm no number word hides inside either.

"These two don't follow the pattern. We call them exceptions — special cases. We learn their names by using them."

4 The word says the unit first; the numeral writes the ten first

Write fourteen and 14 side by side. Say the word slowly, then point to the numeral. Repeat for sixteen and nineteen.

"When I say fourteen, which part do I say first? Four. When I write 14, which digit comes first? The 1 — the ten comes first in the written number."

"Every teen number has this reversal. It is confusing — knowing it's confusing helps."

5 Non-example: writing it the way it sounds

Say sixteen slowly while deliberately writing 61.

"I heard six first, so I wrote six first. Is this right? What does 61 actually say?"

Read 61 aloud as sixty-one, then write 16 beside it.

"This is sixteen — ten and six more. This is sixty-one — six tens and one more. The order of the digits changes what the number is."

Exploration resources — unit digit cards



Print on A4. Laminate and cut along the dashed lines.

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Exploration resources — extra 1 cards

Print on A4. Laminate and cut along the dashed lines.

