

Counting back activities



1 Which number first, then count back

Number cards show the two numbers. Students put the number they have first, set out that many counters, then count back one, two or three by removing counters.

"Which number goes first — the one you have. Set out that many, then take away one, two or three."

"Count the steps, not the number you start on."

2 The finger strategy

Students start at the first number, put up the small number of fingers, and lower one for each count back, then say the answer.

"Start at the first number, put up the small number of fingers, lower one each count."

"How many fingers? Why that many?"

3 Take one, take two, take three

Students start from the same number and count back one, then two, then three, noticing the answer steps down each time. Before each, they predict how many counts they will make.

"Start at nine. Count back one — then two, then three. What happens to the answer each time?"

"How many counts will you make? Why that many?"

4 Non-example: counting the number you start on

For nine take away three, count "nine, eight, seven" and land on seven. Ask whether that was really three counts back.

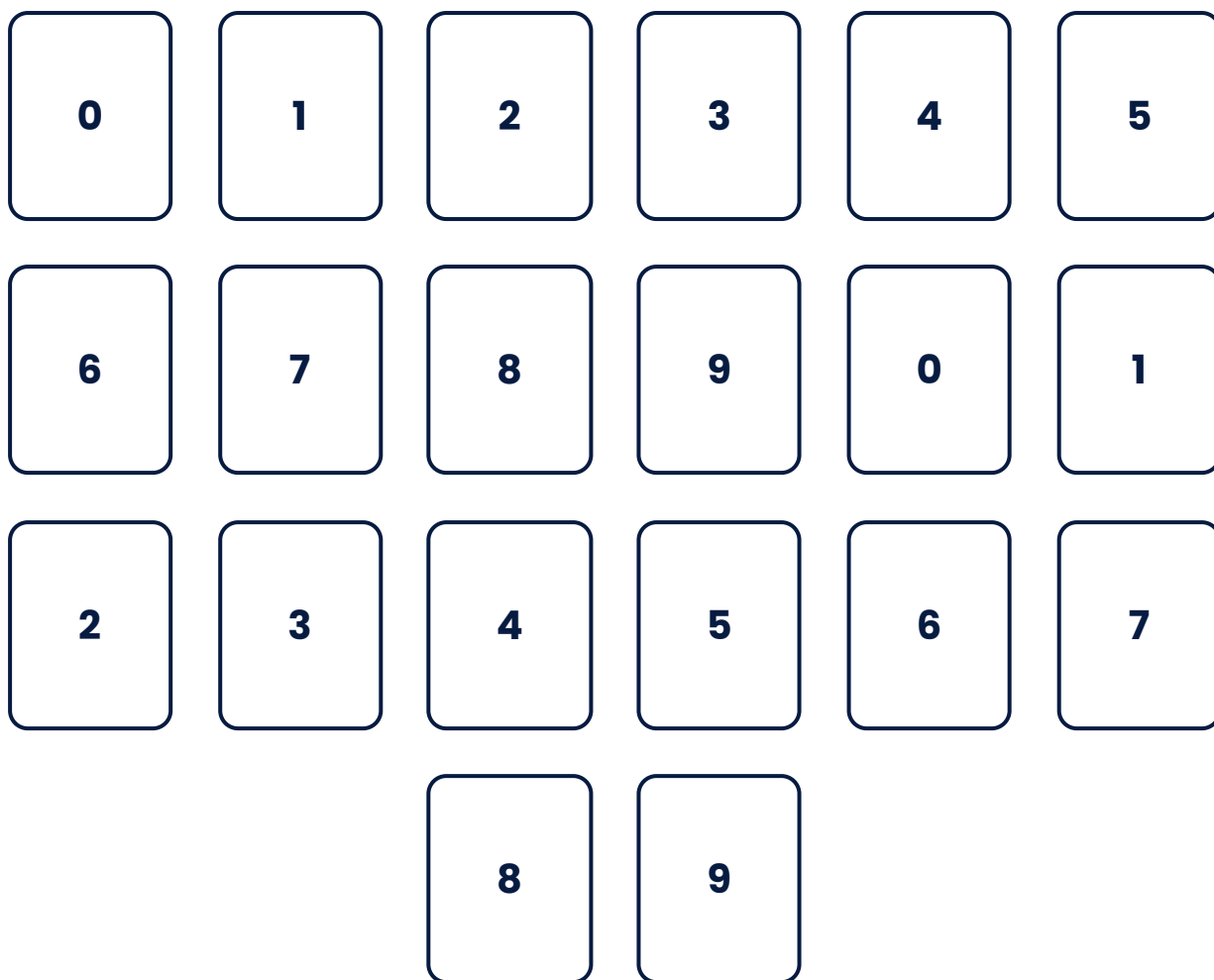
"I said nine, eight, seven — three numbers — and stopped at seven. Did I take three away?"

"Nine is where we start, not a count. Count back three — where should we really land?"

Counting back — number cards 0–9



Print on A4. Cut out. Put the number you have first, set out that many counters, then count back. (Two sets.)



Counting back — count-back fact cards

Print on A4. Cut out. Take a card, set out the first number in counters, and count back one, two or three — with counters or fingers.



$$9 - 3$$

$$8 - 2$$

$$7 - 1$$

$$10 - 2$$

$$6 - 3$$

$$5 - 1$$

$$9 - 2$$

$$8 - 3$$

$$7 - 2$$

$$10 - 1$$

$$6 - 2$$

$$4 - 3$$