

Counting collections with tens introduction



1 Too many to count one by one

Tip out a big pile of objects — forty to seventy. Ask how many there are, and let students count however they like. Do not step in or suggest a method.

“How many do you think are here? Count them any way you like.”

Notice the trouble together — with this many, it is easy to lose your place, and counting again can give a different answer.

“Was that easy to keep track of? Count them again — did you get the same number? What made it tricky?”

Wonder aloud — is there something we could do to the pile so we do not lose count? Take students’ ideas; steer gently towards grouping if it does not come up.

“Could we move the objects around to make counting easier and safer? What might we try?”

Make groups of ten — slide ten objects together into a group, then start another, and another, until only a few loose ones are left. Just the objects — no mat, nothing to write.

“Let us push ten together, then another ten, then another — until only a few are left loose.”

Count the groups by tens, then the loose ones — ten, twenty, thirty, then count on. It is faster, and the groups hold your count so you do not lose your place.

“Count the groups — ten, twenty, thirty — then count on the loose ones. Faster, and you did not lose count. Why is that more reliable?”