

Subtraction on a number line activities



1 Jump back to subtract at the class number line

A student marks the first number on the class number line and jumps back by the second while the class counts the jumps aloud; they read the answer where the jump lands.

"Start on the first number, jump back the second — count the jumps together. Where did we land?"

"Count the jumps, not the number we start on."

2 Write the equation

For each jump back, students write the matching equation — first number, minus, second number, equals, where they landed.

"Say it and write it — seven minus three equals four."

"Does your equation match the jumps back on the line?"

3 Which way do we jump?

Mix adding and taking away. Students decide whether to jump right (adding, bigger) or left (taking away, smaller) before they move.

"Is this one adding or taking away? Which way do we jump?"

"Jumping left makes the number smaller — why?"

4 Non-example: counting the number you start on

Start on eight to take away three, but count "eight, seven, six" and land on six. Ask whether that was really three jumps back.

"I started on eight and counted eight, seven, six — three numbers. Did I jump three times?"

"Do not count the eight you start on. Where should we really land?"

Subtraction on a number line — subtraction fact cards

Print on A4. Cut out. Draw a card, jump it back on the class number line, and write the equation for where the jump lands.



$$7 - 3$$

$$10 - 1$$

$$6 - 3$$

$$9 - 4$$

$$8 - 2$$

$$10 - 5$$

$$5 - 2$$

$$9 - 6$$

$$7 - 4$$

$$8 - 5$$

$$6 - 2$$

$$10 - 3$$