

Build and dismantle activities



1 Build, count, dismantle, count

Give students 3 to 5 blocks. They build a structure and count the blocks before taking it apart, then count the loose blocks after.

"Before you take it apart — how many blocks? Now count the loose blocks. Is it the same?"

"Did anything appear or disappear when you took it apart?"

2 Teacher dismantles — predict first

Build a structure of four blocks while students count. Take it apart, but before counting the loose blocks, ask students how many there will be.

"I built it with four. Now it is apart — before we count, how many loose blocks?"

"You knew before we counted. How did you know?"

3 Different structures, same pieces

Give students exactly five blocks. They build one thing, take it apart, and build something different with the same five. Repeat.

"Use all five. Build something, take it apart, build something different. Did you use all five again?"

"Every time you take it apart — how many do you get back?"

4 Non-example: something changed while taking it apart

Build four blocks while students count. Then, while taking it apart, secretly add one block (or remove one). Count the loose pieces.

"We counted four in the structure — now there are five loose. Should there be five? What happened?"

"Can you take something apart and end up with more than you started? What must have happened?"

Build and dismantle mat

Print on A4 landscape. Laminate for repeated use. Build a small structure on the left and count the pieces.
Take it apart onto the right and count again — the number is the same.



Built

build it here — then count the pieces

Taken apart

lay the loose pieces here — then count again

same number
of pieces?