

Teen numbers exploration activities



1 Ten and one more, then two more, then three

Keep the first frame full. Place one counter into the first cell of the second frame, then continue one at a time, slowly, through 11, 12 and 13. Students mirror on their own frames. Do not rush to twenty.

"The first frame is full – ten. Now there's one in the second frame. Ten and one more – how many altogether?"

"Ten and two more. How many altogether? Ten and three more. How many altogether?"

2 Read without counting from one

Set up two-frame arrangements with the first frame always full: full and 3, full and 7, full and 1, full and 9. Students give each total.

"Don't count from one. Start from ten. The first frame tells you ten – the second frame tells you how many more."

3 Cover the first frame – what's hiding?

Show a complete two-frame display, for example sixteen, then cover the first frame with the cover card.

"I've covered the first frame. How many are hiding under the card?"

Reverse the cover: hide the second frame, state the total, and ask for the hidden part.

"You can see ten. How many must be hiding? If the whole is sixteen and ten are showing – how many are under the cover?"

4 Twenty – both frames full

Build deliberately toward twenty from seventeen or eighteen, adding one counter at a time into the second frame. When both frames are completely full, pause.

"The second frame is full now too. Both frames are completely full. How many altogether?"

"What would happen if we needed to show twenty-one? Where would the next counter go? We've run out of frame – what does that tell us about twenty?"

5 Non-example – spread across both frames

Build fourteen but break the convention: six counters in the first frame and eight in the second.

"I've put fourteen counters across these two frames. Can you tell me how many without counting?"

Let students struggle, then build the correct version beside it: first frame full, four in the second.

"Both arrangements show fourteen. But only one of them shows the structure clearly. Which one tells you ten-and-some-more straight away – without counting?"

Exploration resources — two tens frames



Exploration resources — cover card

Print and laminate. The card covers one tens frame exactly.

