

Counting back exploration activities



1 Remove and count back

Place twenty identical objects in a row. Count forward together to confirm twenty, then remove one object at a time, students calling each backward count word as it goes.

"Twenty. One went away — what are we at now? Don't count them — what number are we at?"

2 Thirteen back to seven, over and over

Set out only the cards from 7 to 13. Place a counter on 13 and count back one step at a time to 7. Restart from different positions in the range, at least four or five times, then remove cards one at a time until only the 10 remains.

"You said ten. Keep going — what comes before ten? Say it before you move the counter."

3 Count back from any number in the teens

On the full track, place a counter anywhere from 11 to 19. The student counts back to zero from that position, not from twenty. Use 15, 19, 11, 13, 17 in that order.

"You're on fifteen. Don't go back to twenty — start there. Keep counting; you're heading for zero."

4 Non-example: restarting from twenty

Set a counter on eight and begin counting back, then deliberately stumble around six and restart from twenty, counting all the way back down.

"I got there. But what did I do? Was that the fastest way? What information did I throw away when I went back to twenty?"

Model the correct version: the counter stays where it is, take a beat, pick the chain up from there.

"Restarting from twenty threw away the work I had already done. You knew where you were."

Exploration resources — crossing cards 7 to 13



Print on A4. Laminate and cut along the dashed lines.

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