

Counting back activities



1 Teacher counts back — join when ready

Count back from five slowly, several times; students join in when they know what is coming. Then say short overlapping chunks — “five, four, three” — for students to echo.

“Listen first. Join in wherever you feel ready.”

“Say it back exactly — five, four, three. Now count back from five to zero without stopping.”

2 Around the circle — backwards

Students sit in a circle. Begin with “five” and each student says the next number going backwards. When zero is reached, start again from five. Loop several times.

“Each person says one number — we are going backwards from five.”

“What came just before your number in the backwards count?”

3 Stop and continue — start from anywhere

Count back and stop mid-sequence; students continue. Then start from the middle — “three...” — and students carry on back.

“I will stop — what comes next? Now start from three — keep going back.”

“Did you go back to five in your head first, or did you just know?”

4 Non-example: the forward count in disguise

“Count backwards” but slip into forwards — “five, four, three, two, one, zero, one, two...” — or swap a pair. Students catch what went wrong.

“I was counting backwards from five. Did I do it right? Where did I go wrong?”

“Why can’t we have two before three in the backwards count?”

Number track — 1 to 5



Print on A4 landscape. Laminate and cut into strips. Place a counter on any position, then move it back one space at a time as you count. At zero the counter comes off the track.

off the track

1	2	3	4	5
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cut here

off the track

1	2	3	4	5
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cut here

off the track

1	2	3	4	5
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cut here