

Counting back activities



1 Echo backwards — chunks from 10 to 0

Say small overlapping chunks of the backward sequence and have students echo them — “ten, nine, eight”, then “nine, eight, seven”, then “eight, seven, six” — continuing down through the junction at five to zero.

“Say it back exactly. Ready — ten, nine, eight.”

“Now count back from ten all the way to zero without stopping.”

“Which chunks felt newest — where the numbers were least familiar going backwards?”

2 Around the circle — backwards from 10

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

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

“Which numbers caused the most hesitation — the new ones from ten to six, or the ones we knew below five?”

3 Stop and continue — through the junction at five

Count back from ten and stop at different points; students continue. Then start from the middle — “six...” — so students carry on straight through five without slowing.

“I will start — you continue when I stop. Ten, nine, eight, seven... what comes next?”

“This time: six... keep going. Did you hesitate at five? Why is five a tricky spot?”

4 Non-example: the count turns around

“Count backwards” from ten but turn around at the bottom — “ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, six, seven...” Ask whether that was the backward count and what went wrong.

“I was counting backwards from ten. Did I do it right? What went wrong?”

“I went backwards then started going forwards. What should come after six when we count back? Why must it always get smaller?”

Count-back track — 10 to 0

Print on A4. Laminate and cut into strips. Read right to left as you count back.



10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0
off-track

cut here

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0
off-track

cut here

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0
off-track

cut here

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0
off-track

cut here

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0
off-track

cut here