

Comparing two collections activities



1 Which has more? — you can see it

Give students two loose piles of counters, not lined up, one clearly bigger. They say which group has more, then count both to check.

“Which group has more? Can you see it?”

“Now count both to check — were you right?”

2 Too close to call — count both

Give students two piles that are close in size and larger — for example fourteen and sixteen, then seventeen and eighteen. They count one group and remember it, count the other, and compare the totals.

“These look close. Count this group — remember the total. Now count that one.”

“Which total is more? Say it — this group has more than that group.”

3 Count each, then say which — or the same

Give students several pairs to compare, including one equal pair. For each, they count both groups and compare the totals — they may line the groups up to match if they prefer, but they still count to check.

“Count both groups. Which has more, which has fewer — or are they the same?”

“Did you line them up or count each? Either way — count to check.”

4 Non-example: judging by the space it takes up

Spread a smaller group out so it covers more of the table, and bunch a larger group into a tight pile. Point to the spread-out group and say “this one takes up more room, so it has more.” Ask whether that is right.

“This group is spread out over more table — does that mean it has more?”

“How could we be sure? Count both — which total is really more?”

Count and compare mat

Print on A4 landscape. Laminate for repeated use. Tip each group into a workspace, count it and write the total, then compare the two totals.



This group

put this group here, then count

Total

That group

put that group here, then count

Total

Compare the totals:

more than

fewer than

the same as