






Topic: Number and place value

Counting backwards from five

Lesson concepts

-  **Representations** — Symbolic
-  **Number** — Names and symbols
-  **Number** — Quantity
-  **Number** — Counting
-  **Equivalence** — Conservation

Today students will:

- ▶ count backwards in ones from five.

Resources

Sheet

Sheet — Numbers 0 to 9 (cut out in previous lesson)

Find and prepare

Bag (paper or cloth)

Range of small items to count (for example: counters, beads, marbles, dried beans)

Number track from one to five, large enough for students to stand on (for example: a track drawn in chalk)

Paper balls (to represent eggs)

Basket (to represent a nest)

Digital camera (optional)

Key terms

arrangement, backwards, count, materials, number, pattern, quantity, recount, representation, same

Lesson

Introduce the lesson

Explain that students will explore counting backwards.

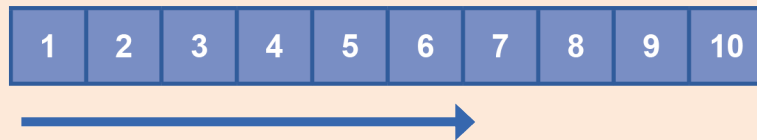
Provide students with cards cut from **Sheet — [Numbers 0 to 9](#)** and ask them to sequence them in numerical order.

Ask students to count forwards using the cards.

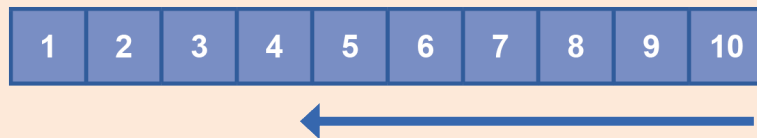
Identify numbers before and after

Emphasise to students that:

When you count forwards, the numbers get bigger. You count from left to right.



When you count backwards, the numbers get smaller. You count from right to left.



In the bag

Place a small collection of items (up to five) in a bag.

Collect all the items in your hand and bring them out of the bag.

Ask students to identify the quantity at a glance (subitise).

Empty the bag.

Ask students to:

- place a number of objects in the bag
- recount to check the total is constant
- remove one item from the bag.

Discuss how the total in the bag will change.

Ask students to:

- count backwards as further objects are removed
- record the new totals each time in numbers, words or pictures.

Focus questions

- Q: *What happens to the total as you count backwards?*
- Q: *Why is counting backwards faster than recounting?*
- Q: *What number comes after 4 (3, 2, 1)?*
- Q: *What number comes before 2 (3, 4, 5)?*
- Q: *When might we need to count backwards instead of forwards?*

Provide a number track (from one to five) on the ground that is large enough for students to stand on.



Ask students to say the numbers as they move forwards and backwards on the track.

Use the number track to give instructions to students. For example:

- Move to the number that comes before five.
- Move to the number that comes before four.
- Move to the number that is one before three.

Create time challenges that require counting backwards such as:

- How many [blocks] can you pack away while we count back from five?
- How many [times can you jump like a frog] while we count back from five?
- How many [shovels full of sand can you put in the bucket] while we count back from five?

Note

While counting backwards, ask students to stop at random intervals, and question them as to how they are completing the task, then continue counting backwards from the last number counted.

Focus questions

- Q: *What must you think about when counting backwards?*
- Q: *What happens to the time left to do the task as you are counting backwards?*

Count backwards from different starting points

Display a basket in which there are a small quantity of paper balls and explain that it represents eggs in a nest.

Discuss what might happen to the total of eggs if:

- a snake eats one egg
- one egg falls out
- a bird hatches from an egg and flies away.

Ask students for other suggestions about what could happen to the eggs.

Act out these situations using the basket and different amounts of paper balls.

Note

Ensure students count backwards rather than recounting the total.

Ask students to draw or write the story using words, numbers or pictures to represent a counting backwards story. Students may use digital photos in their story.



Focus questions

Q: *How could you quickly count how many are left?*

Q: *How many will you end up with if you continue to count backwards?*