

Run sheet, Counting What We Have

Goal. Every girl counts, groups and compares real objects up to twenty.

Before you start

- Gather about twenty small objects per pair: palm-sized stones, large bottle tops, folded paper squares. None gathered? The first five minutes are gathering.
- **Nothing that fits inside a ring of your thumb and first finger. Count them all back in.**
- At each place: Sheet A, Sheet B, a pencil or one between two, and a flat surface. Sheet C only for 60.

The clock, 45 minutes

- 0 to 6 min: gather and guess
- 6 to 16 min: count by moving
- 16 to 26 min: group in fives
- 26 to 38 min: compare two sets
- 38 to 45 min: close

Run 45 if you can. Same five steps, shorter or longer. In 30 minutes: 0 to 4, 4 to 12, 12 to 18, 18 to 26, 26 to 30. In 60 minutes: 0 to 6, 6 to 18, 18 to 30, 30 to 44, 44 to 60, where the last stretch builds twenty on Sheet C. With mostly four-year-olds, shorten the middle, never the close.

What you do

1. Put the girls in pairs, a confident counter with a girl who finds it hard.
2. Give each pair a pile of twelve to twenty objects. Do not say how many.
3. Each girl guesses. Take three aloud: "A guess is not a mistake. We are about to find out."
4. Model it with your own pile: move one object as you say each number.
5. Say the rule: one move, one word. Nothing counted twice, nothing missed.
6. Each girl counts the pile while her partner watches. Then the partner counts it.
7. Ask straight away: "So how many are there?" She writes the count on Sheet A.
8. Make lines of five. Ask: "How many fives? How many left over? How many altogether?"
9. Push them into one heap. Ask: "How many now? Did we take any away?"
10. Say: "Moving them did not change how many there are." Cut anything but this.
11. Split into two sets, one each, and count. Line them up, one object across from one.
12. Ask: "Who has more? How do you know?" Count the leftovers onto Sheet B.
13. Close. Each girl says one true number sentence about her own set.

Watch for

1. A girl counts the same set twice in two arrangements and gets the same number.
2. A girl answers "how do you know" by pointing at the leftover objects, not the pile size.
3. A girl corrects her own count without being corrected, usually by starting again slowly.

What goes wrong most. Her number words run ahead of her hands. Shrink her pile to five and hold the rule: one move, one word.

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