Grade 1 – Unit 5
Subtraction Strategies

Parent Letter

Dear First Grade Families,

In Unit 5, students will work on the following first grade Common Core standards in the Operations and Algebraic Thinking (OA) domain.

| 1.OA.4	Understand subtraction as an unknown-added problem. For example, subtract 10-8 by finding the number that makes 10 when added to 8.
1.OA.5	Relate counting on to addition and subtraction (e.g., by counting on 2 to add 2).
1.OA.6	Add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10. Use strategies such as counting on; making ten, decomposing (breaking apart) leading to a ten; using the relationship between addition and subtraction; and creating equivalent but easier or known totals.

Unit 5 Concepts:
- Understand subtraction as an unknown-partner problem
- Count on as a strategy for subtraction
- Subtract within 20

Unit 5 Vocabulary:
- subtract
- partner
- difference
- count back
- count on, count up
- related facts
- number line

Ask questions like these to help your child become a productive mathematical thinker:

- How do you find $10 - 2$ using the count back strategy? Can you show me on a number line?
- How do you find $10 - 9$ by counting up? Can you show me on a number line? By drawing pictures?
- How does the number bond help you subtract?
- Which way do you move on the number line when subtracting?
- $6 + 3 = 9$. What are three related facts?
- What will you subtract from 17 to get to 10?
- How do you break apart a number leading to a 10 to subtract?

$$15 - 7 = 8$$

starting number   —   number taken away   =   difference
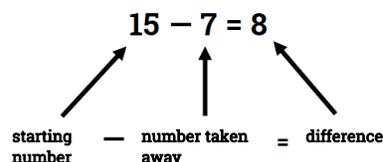
We encourage you to talk with your child daily about what was learned in math class.
Thank you for your support!

Need a review?
Have your student login to Swun Math to access lesson support videos.

Our focus in this unit is to help students understand what is happening with subtraction. Before we work with the traditional algorithm, students will first build their conceptual understanding of subtraction with several different strategies and models.

It is very important that first graders learn to manipulate numbers in these ways, and to make sense of subtraction. They are building a strong foundation for future math success.

When helping with homework at home, ask your child to show you how they're using these strategies and models to show how they understand what they're subtracting.

Subtraction as an Unknown Partner

$11 - 9$

$9 + \square = 11$

$9 + 2 = 11$

total: 11
part: 9, part: 2
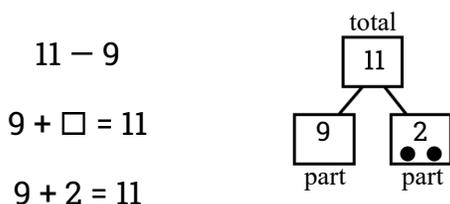
1. Place the partner in your head.
2. Count up to find the value of the other partner.

Count Back using a Number Line

$12 - 4$

$12 - 4 = 8$
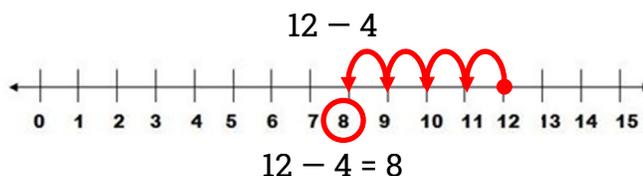
1. Find the starting number on the number line.
2. Jump backward the value of the number being taken away.

Relationship between Addition and Subtraction

$2 + 9 = 11$
$9 + 2 = 11$
$11 - 9 = 2$
$11 - 2 = 9$

total: 11
part: 9, part: 2
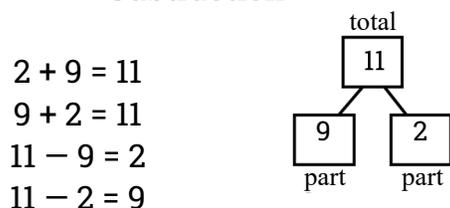
Use fact families to add and subtract.


Get to 10 on a Number Line

Get to 10 from 12

$12 - 2 = 10$
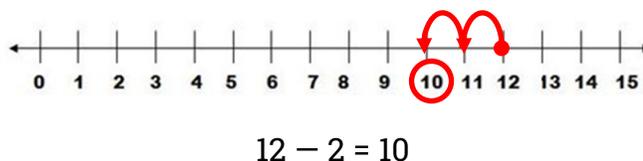
1. Find the starting number on the number line.
2. Count backward until you get to ten.

Breaking Apart a Number Leading to a 10

1. Find the starting number on the number line.
2. Get to 10. How many jumps? Write that part.
3. Count on until you get to the number being taken away.
4. Circle the number you landed on. This is the difference.

$14 - 6 = 8$
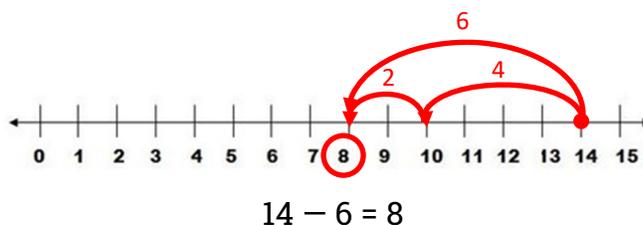
There's no one "right way" to solve math problems. Sometimes one strategy is more efficient than another. Ask your child why they chose a particular strategy, and encourage multiple ways to solve. Most importantly, ask your child to explain why their answer makes sense.