

THINKING WITH NUMBERS

Lesson Descriptions

Using Tens To Subtract

Subtraction problems, with the whole greater than ten, are difficult for children. It is often much easier to use ten as a stepping stone. There are three different ways to do this.

First, you can start with the whole, then subtract to ten, then subtract the rest of the part being subtracting. For example, to solve $13 - 8$, you can start with 13 and subtract 3 to get 10. Then you can subtract the rest of the 8, five less is 5.

Second, you can start with the whole and subtract 3 to get ten, then subtract enough to get to 8. By keeping track of how many you subtracted, you have the answer. For example, to solve $13 - 8$, you can start with 13 and subtract 3 to get 10. Then you can subtract enough to get to 8. Two less is 8. You subtracted 3, then 2, so you subtracted 5.

Third, you can start at 8 and add up to ten, then add enough to get 13. By keeping track of how many you added, you know the answer. For example, to solve $13 - 8$, you can start at 8. Two more is ten, then 3 more is 13. That's 5 more.

This is especially efficient when the number you are subtracting is close to ten. It is just as efficient with larger numbers when the number you are subtracting is close to a multiple of ten. For example, using ten enables you to solve $64 - 58$ is almost as easily as $14 - 8$.

Expected content outcomes include helping children learn:

- to make sense of using ten to subtract,
- to recognize that using ten is strategically efficient when the number you are subtracting is close to ten or a multiple of ten, and
- to become proficient in using ten to subtract.

