

Spotlight 5: a learning check

Counts up unreliably; still counting the smaller number to get one too many in the answer

Opportunity for: discussing and explaining

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Space hops

Time 10–20 minutes

Resources

- Space hops (Resource sheet 11a)
- At least one other child
- Count on cards (Resource sheet 10)
- Rewards
- Counters or small world astronauts

Check: does the child use key vocabulary?

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|------------|--------------------|
| count on | one step forward |
| count up | same number |
| count back | one more |
| count down | how many steps? |
| next one | difference between |

Teaching activity

This could be a playground game if you paint or chalk a track.

How to play

1. With some Count on cards face down, let the child start with their counter on the first planet (you can call this 'zero' to introduce this idea to the children) and choose a card to count on, for example, Count on 6.
2. Each player, every turn, must say how many steps they are going to take: 'I'm going to take six steps.' Then everyone should watch them very carefully.
3. If the player takes six steps correctly and lands on the right number, they can stay there. If they count incorrectly, they should go back to the space they started on!
4. Encourage children to challenge each other. For example, 'You were on the planet and you counted on six but you landed on 5, so you were wrong, you should have landed on 6.'
5. Players take turns to take a Count on card like this until someone gets to the planet at the end. That person then wins a reward.

? You've had two turns now, add on four and add on three. So how do you know you have taken the right number of steps if you are now on 7?

Variations

- Play with a wide range of cards, for example: Add on 3, Count up 4, Count 3 more, Jump on 5 and so on (reminding children that 'count up' means counting up to higher numbers, not necessarily counting by moving up the page or up a number line).
- ↑ ● Play with a mixture of Count on and a few Count back cards (using just small numbers for these). If a child has to count back and gets beyond zero, you can ask the child where they think their counter should stand. Some children can surprise us with their understanding of negative numbers. If a child isn't ready for that, just ask them to sit in the first spaceship until their next turn.
- ↑ ● Play so that you have to predict the number which you are going to land on. 'I'm on 3 and I have to count up six, so I predict I will land on 9, because if I count three add six on my fingers I get to 9.' If a player predicts correctly, they move on one more step.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this set of activities, children should be able to:

- tackle related learning tasks with increased motivation and confidence;
- use and understand connected mathematical vocabulary;
- count on from a smaller number to a larger one accurately;
- identify any errors they are making and develop the confidence to check their own work.