MATHEMATICS · KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

Grouping and repeated subtraction

Difficulty level: Easy

Mathematics: Kindergarten to Grade 3

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Overview of the concept

This is how you share things out fairly by taking away equal groups one at a time, like dealing out snacks or cards until everyone has the same amount. Taking away one equal group at a time is the most concrete way to see division working, and it is how young children first learn to share. You use the same idea when you deal cards around a table, hand out snacks to a class, or pack items into equal boxes.



Rule

Division by repeated subtraction: to divide, keep taking away the divisor (the number you are dividing by) until you reach zero.

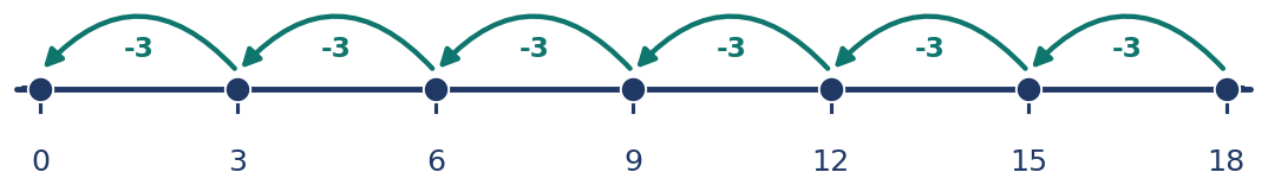
The number of times you take it away is the answer.

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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q What is 18 ÷ 3, worked out by repeated subtraction?



SOLUTION

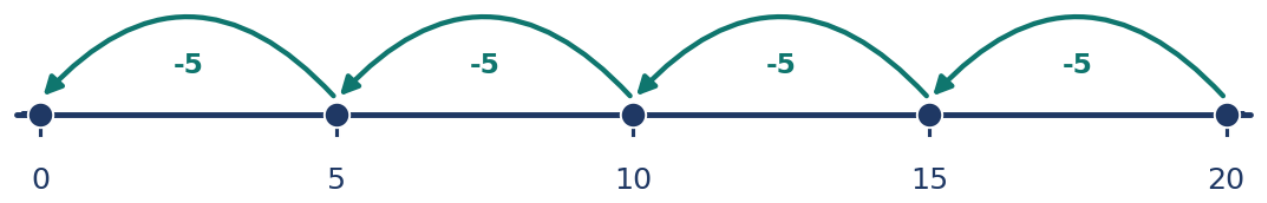
Start at 18. Take away 3: 15

Take away 3 again and again: 12, 9, 6, 3, 0

You took away 6 groups of 3, so 18 ÷ 3 = 6

EXAMPLE 2

Q What is 20 ÷ 5, worked out by repeated subtraction?



SOLUTION

Start at 20. Take away 5: 15

Take away 5 again and again: 10, 5, 0

You took away 4 groups of 5, so 20 ÷ 5 = 4

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Practice questions

1 You have 24 stickers. Take away 4 at a time until none are left. How many times do you take away 4?

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2 A baker packs 15 buns into 3 bags with the same number in each bag. How many buns are in each bag?

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3 12 apples are packed 3 at a time. Keep taking away 3 until the pile is gone. How many groups of 3 did you take?

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4 You count back by 10s three times and land on 0. What number did you start from?

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5 Start at 16 and jump back by 2s until you reach 0. How many jumps do you make?

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6 A teacher shares 21 pencils equally among 7 children. How many pencils does each child get?

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7 27 cookies are shared 9 at a time. Take away 9 again and again. How many times can you take away 9?

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8 You have 35 stickers. You take away 8 at a time. How many full groups of 8 can you take?

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9 A teacher takes 5 pencils at a time from a box of 25. How many times does she take pencils before the box is empty?

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10 A gardener plants 36 seeds in 9 rows with the same number in each row. How many seeds are in each row?

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ANSWER KEY

1. 6

2. 5

3. 4

4. 30

5. 8

6. 3

7. 3

8. 4

9. 5

10. 4

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