MATHEMATICS · KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

Mental math strategies

Difficulty level: Easy

Mathematics: Kindergarten to Grade 3

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Overview of the concept

This is how you work out sums in your head quickly, like adding up prices as you shop, by breaking numbers apart or rounding and adjusting. Nobody wants to reach for a calculator for every small sum, and a few good strategies make most everyday maths fast enough to do in your head. You use them at the till, in a restaurant when you split a bill, or on the job when you need a quick total before you commit to a price.



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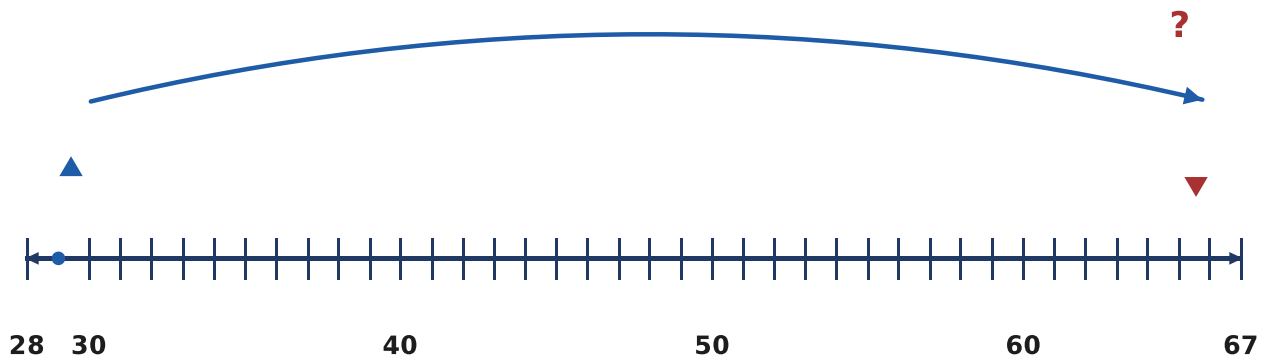
Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Work out 29 + 36 in your head



SOLUTION

Round 29 up to 30: 29 + 1 = 30

30 + 36 = 66

Take back the extra 1: 66 - 1 = 65

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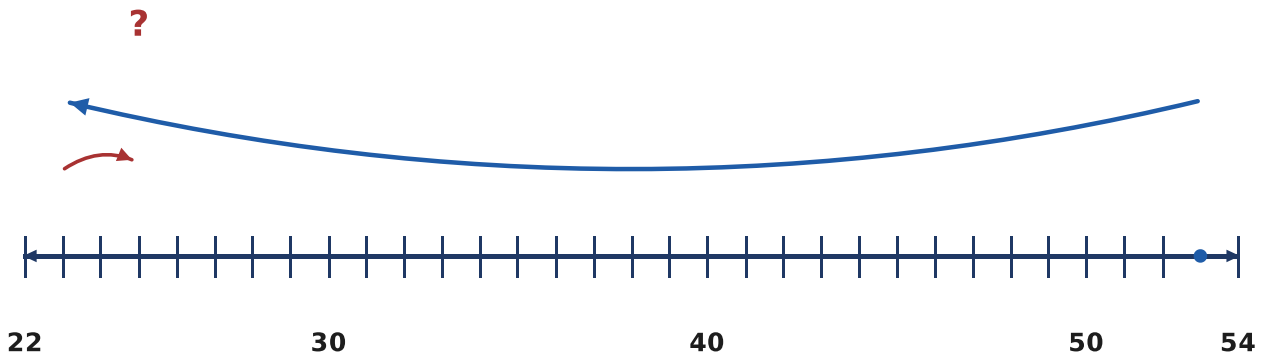
EXAMPLE 2

Q Work out 53 - 28 in your head



SOLUTION

Take away 30 instead of 28: 30 − 28 = 2, so 2 too many.

53 - 30 = 23

Add back the 2: 23 + 2 = 25

Practice questions

1 **You buy a snack for 19 dollars and a drink for 24 dollars. Work it out in your head using rounding. Round 19 up to 20, add 20 + 24, then take back the extra 1. What is the total?**

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2 **31 children are on one bus and 29 on another. Work it out in your head using rounding. Round 31 down to 30, add 30 + 29, then add back the 1 you took away. How many children are there in all?**

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3 **You have read 47 pages of a book and 13 pages are left. Round 47 up to 50, add 50 + 13, then take back the extra 3. How many pages are in the book?**

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4 **You have 62 dollars and spend 19 dollars. Work it out in your head. Take away 20 instead of 19, which is 1 too many, then add back the 1. How much money is left?**

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5 A jar holds 100 marbles and 37 are taken out. Take away 40 instead of 37, which is 3 too many, then add back the 3. How many marbles are left?

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6 90 chairs are set out and 44 are taken away. Take away 40 instead of 44, which is 4 too few, then take away the extra 4. How many chairs are left?

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7 Two friends each score 28 points in a game. Work it out in your head using doubles. 28 + 28 is double 28. How many points is that in all?

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8 **81 stickers are on a sheet and 33 are used. Take away 30 instead of 33, which is 3 too few, then take away the extra 3. How many stickers are left?**

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9 **36 red beads and 24 blue beads are on a string. Round 36 up to 40, add 40 + 24, then take back the extra 4. How many beads are on the string?**

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10 **You score 15 points, then 15 more, then 10 more. Work it out in your head. Add 15 + 15 first, then add 10. What is your total score?**

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ANSWER KEY

1. 43

2. 60

3. 60

4. 43

5. 63

6. 46

7. 56

8. 48

9. 60

10. 40

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