

Math Moments that Matter

SECOND GRADE

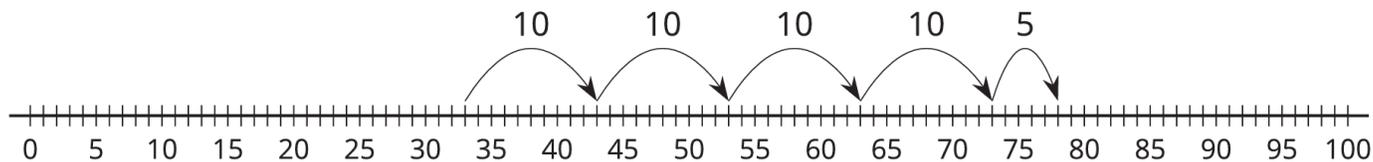


Represent and Solve Problems Involving Addition and Subtraction

In 2nd grade, students learn that addition and subtraction help them make sense of everyday situations. They use math to figure out what's missing, how much more, or how far apart two numbers are. Through stories, drawings, and hands-on tools, students begin to see that math is about thinking and reasoning—not just finding answers.

Students use tools like number lines, drawings, and base-ten blocks to show their thinking. In this image, a student solves a problem to figure out how many cubes Andre has. Andre started with 33 cubes and gained 45 more cubes. The student started at 33 on the number line and jumped along the number line in steps of 10, 10, 10, 10, and 5. The final jump landed on 78, showing how many cubes Andrea had altogether. Seeing each jump helps students understand the story and explain how they solved it.

EXAMPLE: A number line showing how to add 45 to 33 by making jumps of tens and five.



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Problem Solving in Math

When students solve addition and subtraction problems, they're learning to understand what the problem is asking and how to find a solution that makes sense. Real-life examples—like sharing supplies or comparing amounts—help them see how useful math can be. They learn to:

- Make sense of story problems and decide what they need to find
- Choose a strategy—drawing, counting on, or using tens and ones
- Check their thinking by explaining why their answer works
- Use math words to describe how addition and subtraction are connected

These habits help students grow as thinkers who can explain, question, and understand the math they use every day.

What You Might See in the Classroom

Students using drawings, number lines, or base-ten blocks to model their thinking.

Teachers asking:

- “What is the problem asking?”
- “Can you show that another way?”
- “How do you know your answer makes sense?”

Students solving the same problem in different ways and comparing strategies.

Students connecting their work to equations and explaining relationships between addition and subtraction.

Quick partner talks where students explain their thinking.

What You Can Do at Home

Use real-life examples: “You have 24 crayons, and I gave you 13 more. How many now?”

Ask: “How did you figure that out?” or “Could you show it another way?”

Play: “Start at 47 and count back by tens. Where do you land?”

Connect ideas: “If $25 + 8 = 33$, what subtraction problem matches it?”

Encourage your student to explain their thinking and describe what makes sense to them.

Make it a Math Moment!

Math helps us figure things out. When students explain how they solved a problem, they’re showing what the numbers mean and why their strategy works.

