

Learning to Subtract

Level: K-1

Vocabulary: take away, left, greater, less, greater __ smaller, remainder

Materials: pencil and paper, possibly beans or two colors of construction paper

1st Activity: Two-colored Subtraction

First, review an addition fact, like $3 + 4 = 7$. Then ask, "What is $7 - 4$?" and "What is $7 - 3$?" while modeling with two colors. For instance, if using two colors of beans, start with three beans of one color. Add four more beans of another color to get seven. Change all seven beans to one color and line them up. Then, beside the line, place 4 (or 3) beans of the other color and count the un-paired beans, the remainder. If using two-colored pieces, do the same, only flip the colors as you add or subtract.

2nd Activity: Subtraction with Dots and Crosses

Repeat the same activity as above, only use dots to add to other dots on a sheet of paper. For example, $3 + 4 = 7$ would look like ●●● ●●●● = ●●●●●●●, and $7 - 4 = 3$ would look like ●●●□□□□ = ●●●.