

## Teacher notes: Composition of numbers to 5

Over three weeks children learn that numbers to 5 are made of smaller parts. They start by recognising small groups without counting (subitising), use five frames to see how many and how many more, then use part-whole models to find every way to make 3, 4 and 5, including with zero. Everything is practical first: real objects, then pictures, then numerals.

**eyfs.ma.number.1** Have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of each number.

**eyfs.ma.number.2** Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.

**eyfs.ma.number.3** Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

### Prior knowledge

- Saying number names to 5 in order
- Counting a small group of objects one by one, touching each once
- Knowing the last number counted tells you how many (cardinality)
- Matching small quantities to the same amount

### Key vocabulary

how many, altogether, part, whole, the same, more, fewer, zero, none

### Common misconceptions

**Counting every object again each time instead of seeing the group at a glance.**

Flash a dot pattern for two seconds and ask what they saw, not what they counted. Praise 'I saw 2 and 2' answers.

**Thinking a group that is spread out has more than the same group bunched together.**

Count both groups together, then move the objects and ask again. Keep returning to the question: did we add any?

**Believing 5 can only be split one way.**

Keep a class record of every way found. Ask: is there another way? How will we know when we have them all?

**Not seeing zero as a part.**

Show 5 counters in one part and none in the other. Say together: 5 and 0 make 5.

### Assessing through observation

Assess through observation in adult-led sessions and in provision. Listen for children who name parts without counting, who explain how they know, and who find more than one way to make the same number. Use the observation prompts in this pack to note what you see against each Early Learning Goal.

### What comes next

Next, the composition of 6 to 10 using ten frames, and doubles to 10.