

Observation prompts: eyfs.ma.patterns.1

eyfs.ma.patterns.1 Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.

Look for

- A child counts on past 20 while using the number square to 30, pointing to each numeral in turn.
- A child notices that the pattern on the number square repeats within each row, such as 21 to 29 looking similar to 1 to 9.
- A child counts a big group of objects by sorting into tens and ones, for example making groups of ten counters and then counting the leftover ones.
- A child self-corrects after saying a counting word wrongly, for example catching themselves between 29 and 30.
- A child counts back from a number such as 30, 20 or another number in this range during play, such as a rocket countdown.
- A child works out a missing number on the number square by using the pattern of the row above or below.
- A child joins in with counting beyond 20 during carpet time or outdoor games without an adult prompting every number.

Listen for

- 'After nineteen comes twenty, then twenty-one, twenty-two...'
- 'Twenty-ten' or 'twenty-eleven' instead of thirty and thirty-one.
- 'One more than twenty-nine is thirty.'
- 'I've got two tens and three ones, so that's twenty-three.'
- 'One less than thirty is twenty-nine.'
- 'Look, it goes twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, just like one, two, three.'
- 'What comes after twenty-six?' asked of a friend during a game.

Next steps

- Not there yet: count forwards from 1 to 20 every day in short bursts (lining up, tidying away) before stretching to 21 and beyond, so the familiar pattern is secure first.
- Not there yet: use a number square to 30 during continuous provision, tracking along the row with a finger and saying each number aloud with the practitioner.
- Not there yet: offer physical counting with movement, such as counting steps, claps or jumps to 20 and a little beyond, to build the rhythm of the counting words.
- Not there yet: model the twenty-one to twenty-nine pattern explicitly in play, pausing at 29 and 30 to listen for and gently correct 'twenty-ten'.
- There: give number squares with some numbers missing between 20 and 30 for children to work out during play, such as a shop till roll or a snakes and ladders style game.
- There: ask children to count big groups of objects beyond 20 by making tens and counting the ones left over, then say the total.
- There: challenge children to count back from 30 or from another number in this range during a game, such as a rocket launch or a countdown to hide-and-seek.
- There: invite children to spot and explain the pattern on the number square to a friend, for example why 23 and 13 both end the same way.