

Number squares to 30: full and with gaps

These picture cards show a number square from 1 to 30, set out in rows of ten, with two versions that have some numbers hidden. They help children see and say the pattern of the counting system past 20, so they count on confidently from 20 to 30 without inventing 'twenty-ten' or 'twenty-eleven'.

How to use

- On the carpet, show card 1 (the full number square) and run a finger along each row while the whole group counts aloud from 1 to 30, pausing after 20 to notice that twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-three sound like one, two, three with 'twenty' in front.
- Point to any two numbers next to each other on card 1, such as 23 and 24, and ask 'what comes after 23?' so children practise using one more than a number to find the next one.
- In continuous provision, put out card 2 (with 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 hidden) alongside loose numeral tiles or counters and invite children to work out which number is missing from each hidden square, saying the number aloud as they place it.
- Pair card 2 and card 3 for a small-group game: one child covers their eyes while a practitioner points to a hidden square, then the child counts on from the nearest visible number to work out what is underneath before checking.
- Use card 3 (with 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 hidden) in an adult-led session focused on one less than a number: ask children to find the number one less than 30, then one less than 20, pointing to the squares on the number square as they answer.
- During carpet time, play 'missing number hunt': cover one square on card 1 with a sticky note each day and ask children to count on from the row start to work out what is hidden, linking directly to [eyfsmaths.com/patterns.1](https://www.eyfsmaths.com/patterns/1).
- Outdoors, chalk a large number square on the playground to match card 1 and have children physically step along it counting past 20, then use cards 2 and 3 indoors afterwards to check they can also find the pattern on paper.
- With a child learning English or needing extra support, work one-to-one with card 1, pointing to each numeral while counting slowly, then move to card 2 and ask them to find just one hidden number, such as 21, before trying more.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	22		24		26		28		30

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21		23		25		27		29	