

Understanding Ordinal Numbers in Year 1

Key points

- Ordinal numbers are words like 'first', 'second', and 'third' that tell us the position of something in a sequence.
- These are different from counting numbers, such as 'one', 'two', and 'three', which tell us how many things there are in total.
- Children in Year 1 (the first year of Key Stage 1) often mix these two types of numbers up as they learn the difference.
- Using ordinal numbers helps children describe the order of events, positions in a line, or dates on a calendar.
- Every school may teach these concepts in a slightly different order, so feel free to ask your child's teacher for more detail.

Things to try at home

- While lining up for the car or the door, playfully ask who is first, second, or third in line.
- When reading a story together, ask which character appears first or which page is the second page.
- During a game or a race, use words like 'first' and 'second' to describe where the toys or people finished.
- Look at a calendar together and point out the first day of the month.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher
- The GOV.UK website for National Curriculum guidance
- The school's official website or parent handbook