Counting in 2s, 5s and 10s: Spotting the Pattern

Key points

- Counting in jumps of 2, 5 and 10 isn't just a rhyme to learn by heart - it's an early step towards multiplication and grouping.
- In Year 2, children are expected to count on in steps of 2, 3 and 5 from any number, building on the counting in 1s they learned in Year 1.
- The real skill is spotting the pattern - for example, noticing that the number 10 shows up in the counting sequences for 2s, 5s and 10s.
- Seeing the pattern laid out on a number line or a hundred square (a grid showing numbers 1 to 100 in rows of ten) makes the structure easier to spot than just reciting a list.
- A good sign of real understanding is being able to carry on the count from any point, not just from the start.
- Every child gets there at their own pace, and some may need a different approach - their teacher is the best person to ask about how this is going.

Things to try at home

- When sorting washing or putting away shoes, count the pairs out loud in 2s - '2, 4, 6, 8...'
- Use hands to count in 5s - each hand is a 5 - to work out how many fingers are in the room between you.
- Count fingers and toes together in 10s for a feel of the tens pattern.
- Look at a number line or hundred square together and see if your child can spot a number that turns up in more than one counting sequence.
- On a walk, take turns jumping or stepping in 2s or 5s along numbered paving stones or a chalked number line.

Find out more

- GOV.UK: National curriculum in England - mathematics programmes of study (for the official Year 2 requirements on counting in steps)
- Your child's class teacher - for how counting is being taught and practised in school, and any extra support available
- Education Makes Sense's numbers and place value pages - for related practice on this site