

Partitioning Two-Digit Numbers: What Your Year 2 Child Is Learning About Tens and Ones

Key points

- In Year 2, children learn that a number like 47 is made of 4 tens and 7 ones – not just four and seven separate things.
- Teachers use visual tools like base-10 blocks, arrow cards and place value counters to help children see what each digit means in a number.
- Understanding place value is a stepping stone to column addition and subtraction, so getting it solid now really helps later on.
- Children learn this at different speeds – some grasp it straightaway, others need more time to see the pattern.
- Place value is everywhere: in prices, dates, ages and sports scores – helping your child spot it in everyday life builds understanding without any pressure.

Things to try at home

- Use objects at home – pasta, buttons, coins – to make groups of ten and count them aloud together ('ten, twenty, thirty...'), then count the extras.
- Draw or make two columns on paper labelled 'Tens' and 'Ones', and let your child put marks or drawings in each column to show a number – it's very visual and satisfying.
- Play with money: sort coins or notes and talk about what a 10p and a 1p make together, or how many 1ps make a 10p.
- During everyday moments – cooking, shopping, getting dressed – casually point out groups of ten: 'That's ten cherry tomatoes and three extra' or 'I've got two socks in pairs and one extra'.
- Ask your child to show you a number with their hands: fingers on one hand to show the tens and fingers on the other to show the ones.

Find out more

- Ask the child's teacher how they are teaching place value and what materials they're using – teachers often have suggestions for activities at home.
- National Curriculum for mathematics (Year 2): GOV.UK publishes what children must learn at each key stage.
- Your school's website or learning platform often has guides for parents or links to place-value activities.