

Understanding Teen Numbers: Helping Your Year 1 Child See 'Ten and a Bit More'

Key points

- In Year 1 maths, children learn that teen numbers are made of one whole ten and some extra ones, rather than just two separate digits.
- A common confusion happens when children mix up numbers like 14 and 41 because they see the digits as individual items instead of a group of ten.
- Using a 'ten frame' (a grid of ten boxes) helps children visually see that a full frame equals ten, making the concept of place value clearer.
- This approach supports the autumn term focus on grouping objects into tens, which is a key step in the National Curriculum for England.
- Seeing a full ten frame next to loose counters helps children understand that 14 is 'ten and four more', not just a 'one' and a 'four'.

Things to try at home

- Draw two rows of five boxes on paper or use a printed ten frame, and fill one row completely with ten buttons or coins to show a 'full ten'.
- Place a few extra buttons next to the full frame and ask your child to say the number as 'ten and three' before saying 'thirteen'.
- Play a quick game where you hide the 'ten' part of a number and ask your child to guess how many are hidden based on the visible ones.
- Use everyday objects like pasta shapes or sweets to build numbers, always grouping ten together first before adding the extras.

Find out more

- Ask your child's Year 1 teacher for their specific approach to place value, as methods can vary slightly between schools.
- Visit the Department for Education's guidance on the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 maths to see the expected learning goals.
- Check the Education Makes Sense website for clear video demonstrations and worksheets on using ten frames for teen numbers.