Ten More, Ten Less: A Year 2 Maths Shortcut

Key points

- In Year 2, children learn that adding or subtracting 10 from a two-digit number is quick once they spot the pattern: only the tens digit changes.
- For example, 34 + 10 = 44 and 34 − 10 = 24, because you're only jumping in tens, not ones.
- This builds on place value work from earlier—understanding that numbers are made of tens and ones.
- The visual trick is imagining a number line and jumping along it in 10-sized hops, which children can also do with blocks or a hundred square.
- This is a mental maths skill that appears in the Year 2 SATs test.
- It's about spotting a pattern, not counting in ones each time—a real time-saver for children.

Things to try at home

- Draw a simple number line and take turns jumping along it by tens, saying the numbers aloud—make it playful, not a lesson.
- Use objects (blocks, counters, coins) arranged in groups of ten, and move them up or down to show ten more or ten less.
- In everyday life, ask casual questions like 'If you had 23 stickers and someone gave you 10 more, how many would you have?' without pressure to answer instantly.
- Play 'guess the number' games: 'I'm thinking of a number. It's 10 more than 15. What is it?' Let your child take turns thinking of numbers too.
- Notice patterns together: point out that 10, 20, 30, 40 and so on only change their tens digit, so 25 + 10 must be 35.

Find out more

- Ask your child's teacher to show you the method they're using in class.
- The National Curriculum for maths (www.gov.uk) sets out what Year 2 children are expected to learn.
- Education Makes Sense has simple guides and resources for Year 2 maths at home.