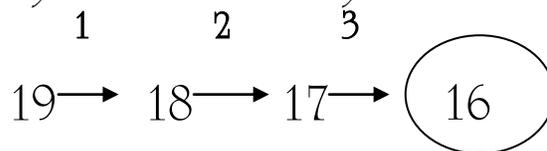# Basic Subtraction Facts

Subtracting Zero:

Students need to understand that a number subtracted by zero is that number. Using a method of exaggeration. (0 smarties subtracted from 1 million smarties is 1 million smarties) Have students create their own exaggerations.

Subtracting One:

A number minus one is the number preceding it. Have students create number lines. Practice counting up and then down. Once they are comfortable with the sequence of numbers have them create a large scale one to place on the board. Instead of working with addition, work your way backwards using appropriate terminology. (For example, start at 20, then say "20 - 1 = ?" Have the students respond, while the 19 sign gets posted.) Make sure you write your math sentence to aid visual learners as well.

Subtracting Two (then three, then four):

Once students are comfortable with subtracting one the next sequence is doing the same for two, then three, then four. Work on these in a sequential order, Move on to the next when students demonstrate a thorough understanding of this strategy. Look out for students who count the first number when working through this method. Correct students who do this immediately. A strategy that I find helpful is to have students work with a number line and then create arrows between each number they are subtracting, they continue this until they reach the amount they need to subtract. (19 -3 = 16)

$$1 \qquad 2 \qquad 3$$
$$19 \rightarrow 18 \rightarrow 17 \rightarrow \boxed{16}$$

Once students understand subtracting 2 they are ready to move on to 3, and then 4.

Basic Subtraction Facts

Subtracting Nine:

The Disappearing Nine! As I like to call it. When subtracting nine from a two digit number up to 19 have students add the digits in the top number. For example, 11 - 9 = 2 (1+1 = 2). Visually demonstrate this by placing a plus sign in between the top number. For numbers below 10, have students use the previous method of counting down.

Subtracting Ten:

The use of ten sometimes is very confusing for the young learner. Utilize a hundreds chart that has ten numbers per row. This will aid students in visualizing the numbers and their patterns. To begin, demonstrate to students that subtracting 10 from a two digit number up to 19 works by just writing down the value in the ones column. This will provide them with number familiarity, but have them also utilize the hundreds chart to visualize the numbers and their patterns.

In all these strategies always try to relate subtraction to addition. Have students think conversely to answer questions. Students will not master these basic subtraction facts without understanding the basic addition facts.

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