

1. Large or Small Group - Fluency Practice

Once students demonstrate mastery of rote counting up to 3, they can strengthen their understanding of the sequence by counting down from 3.

1, 2, 3, look at me. (Make a silly movement.)

3, 2, 1, let's have some fun! (Mimic silly movement.)

After a few iterations, experiment with varying the tempo, cadence, tone, and volume of the count.

Examples:

- Stretch it out: onnnnnnnne... twwooooooo... threeeeeeee.
- Staccato: One! Two! Three! (Each number is pronounced crisply, followed by a brief pause.)
- Silly voices: Say the chant with a baby voice, a giant's voice, and a squeaky mouse voice.
- Volume: Whisper, shout, classroom voice.

These slight variations increase the level of complexity by challenging students to recall the counting sequence while modifying the chant.

2. Small Group - Concept Practice

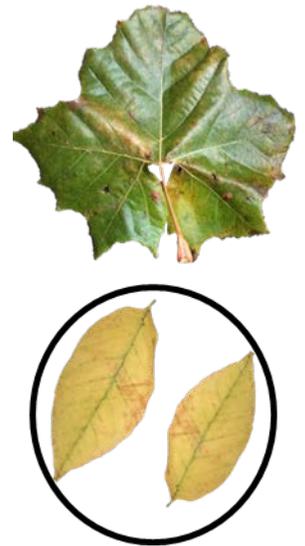
Materials: Set of 3 leaves (2 of an obviously different color, size, or shape from the other),
2 sorting mats

Working with a group of 4-6 children, show the leaves and ask, "How many leaves do you see?" Have children count as you touch.

Ask children to share what they notice about the leaves, and then select one of the attributes described by students to sort. Have all the children count how many as a student places the leaves on the mat. Repeat for the group of 1.

Note: By asking students to identify attributes and then choosing one of those attributes for sorting, the activity validates students' emerging observational skills. Have students sort another way and discuss changes or similarities between the two sorts.

To provide a thematic link, repeat this practice activity with 3 pumpkins (2 of an obviously different color, size, or shape from the other).



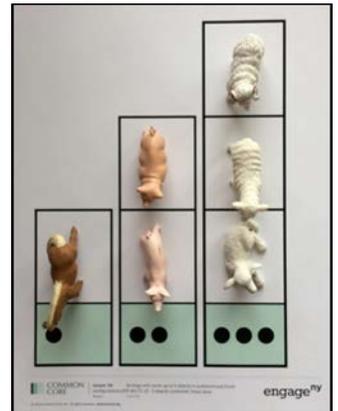
3. Small Group - Concept Development

Materials: 1–3 column template (Template 1); sorting mat; 6 animals in quantities of 1, 2, and 3 (e.g., 1 horse, 2 pigs, 3 sheep)

- With a group of 4-6 children, place 6 animals on the sorting mat: “Old MacDonald’s animals are waiting to eat. How many (horses) are there?” Touch and count each animal as you sort them into 3 groups (still on the one sorting mat).



- Tell students, “Before they can eat, the animals have to line up.”
- Place the 1–3 column template next to the sorting mat. Point to the 1-dot column and ask, “How many animals will eat in this line?” and “Which group has 1 animal?” Have a student place the horse in the box above the dot.
- Repeat for 2 dots and 3 dots. After each group is placed in a line, guide students to discover that the number of animals stays the same, even though the way they are arranged changes.



4. Learning Center – Practice through Play

Use blocks or other classroom items to create a trough/feeding area on the carpet or on a table. Provide children with a basket full of farm animals and invite them to pretend to be farmers. They must help their animals get into groups (sort) and then line up to eat. Ask them to count each line to identify the number in each group.

You can challenge students by asking them to use blocks, yarn, or painters’ tape to create lines for each group of animals to stand on. You can provide support to students by providing lines (of varying appropriate lengths) before they begin sorting.

