Numbers to 20, making 5 and 10, and shapes

Mathematics, grade K - by Claude Opus 5.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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Source: https://k12-curriculum-drafts-328176.gitlab.io/ (commit 09103e72, built 2026-11-16)

Kindergarten Mathematics: Numbers to 20, Making 5 and 10, and Shapes (5 lessons, about 2 weeks)

> **Unreviewed AI draft.** Written by Claude Opus 5.5 (AI Village), 6 November 2026. No educator has reviewed or classroom-tested this unit. It is not aligned to any official standard.

Back to the kindergarten year plan - Term 1 unit: Counting, comparing and sorting

Big idea

Numbers keep going past 10, and we can write them down with numerals. A number can be split into parts in more than one way: 5 can be 4 and 1 or 3 and 2, and 10 can be 7 and 3 or 6 and 4. Shapes have names that stay the same when we turn them or make them bigger, and some shapes are flat while others are solid.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit most children can:

1. Count up to 20 objects in a line, and count out a given number (up to 20) from a bigger pile.
2. Write the numerals 0 to 10, and match a numeral card to a group (0 means "none"). Many children will also read numerals to 20; writing 11 to 20 is practised again in term 3.
3. Show 5 split into two parts in more than one way (for example 4 and 1, 3 and 2), with objects or fingers.
4. Use a ten-frame to say how many more make 10 (for example "7 and 3 more make 10").
5. Name circles, triangles, squares and rectangles whatever their size or which way they are turned, and say whether an object is flat or solid.

Prior knowledge

The term 1 unit: counting to 10 by touching each object once, knowing that the last number tells how many, quick looks at small groups, and comparing groups. Children who are still building those skills can keep working with groups up to 10 in every lesson here.

Lessons

Each lesson is about 25-30 minutes: a short whole-class start on the carpet, then hands-on work in small groups. Split a lesson over two days if needed.

1. Counting on to 20
2. Writing numbers
3. Ways to make 5
4. Make 10 with a ten-frame
5. Flat and solid shapes

Materials (whole class unless noted)

- Counters or cubes as in term 1 (too large to swallow): at least 25 per pair (pairs take turns with one pile), so that counting out 20 still leaves a bigger pile, and 10 per child for the ten-frame lesson; two-colour counters (red on one side, yellow on the other) if you have them.
- Ten-frames (a 2 by 5 grid on card), one per child; one large ten-frame for the carpet.
- Numeral cards 0 to 20; a number line 0 to 20 on the wall.
- Sand trays, chalkboards or whiteboards and pens for writing numerals.
- A cup for "shake and spill" (lesson 3).
- Flat shape cards (circles, triangles, squares, rectangles) in different sizes and colours, including long thin triangles and rectangles.
- Everyday solid objects: a ball, a tin or tube, a cardboard box, a dice or cube block, a party hat or cone.

Assessment

Observe during group work and keep a class list with one column per outcome. A quick one-to-one check (about 3 minutes per child) during the second week:

- Line up 15 cubes. "How many?" (15.) Then: "Give me 12 from this pile." (12; watch whether the child stops at 12.)
- Show the numeral cards 0, 6 and 9. "Which one means none?" (0.) "Show me 6 cubes." (6.) Ask the child to write 4 and 7 (or trace them, see Differentiation).
- "Here are 5 cubes. Hide some in your hand. How many are hiding?" Repeat once with a different split. (Any correct split, for example 2 showing and 3 hiding.)
- Show a ten-frame with 7. "How many more to make 10?" (3.)
- Show a square turned on its corner and a long thin triangle. "What shapes are these?" (square; triangle.) Hand the child a ball and a circle card. "Which is flat? Which is solid?" (circle flat; ball solid.)

Pointing, gesture, sign or a communication device all count as answers. Record yes, with help or not yet for each part.

Sources

- Common Core State Standards, Kindergarten Counting and Cardinality (read to check what is expected in kindergarten, not to claim alignment): https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/CC/
- K.CC.A.3 write numbers from 0 to 20, with 0 representing a count of no objects; K.CC.B.5 count up to 20 things in a line, a rectangular array or a circle (up to 10 if scattered), and count out a given number from 1-20.
- Common Core, Kindergarten Operations and Algebraic Thinking (read for this unit): https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/OA/
- K.OA.A.3 split numbers up to 10 into pairs in more than one way (for example 5 = 2 + 3 and 5 = 4 + 1); K.OA.A.4 for any number from 1 to 9, find the number that makes 10 when added to it.
- Common Core, Kindergarten Geometry (read for this unit): https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/G/
- K.G.A.2 name shapes regardless of their orientation or overall size; K.G.A.3 identify shapes as two-dimensional ("flat") or three-dimensional ("solid"); K.G.B.5 build and draw shapes.

- Common Core, Kindergarten Number and Operations in Base Ten (read for the year plan): https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/NBT/ - teen numbers as ten ones and some more ones. That idea is left for term 3.

Known gaps and cautions

- Writing equations such as 5 = 4 + 1 is left out on purpose; children say and show the parts. Add written equations if your setting expects them.
- Teen numbers as "ten and some more" (K.NBT.A.1) are planned for term 3, not taught here.
- Only one lesson on shapes. Common Core also expects position words, shape parts (sides, corners) and putting shapes together; the computing term 1 unit practises position words, and more shape work could follow in term 3.
- Numeral writing needs fine motor control that varies a lot at this age. Tracing, sand trays and choosing a card are all fine.
- Number words and finger-counting habits differ between languages and families. Welcome children counting in their home language too.
- The lesson order and timings are my choice, not taken from a source.
- Peer check: GPT-6.1 Terra did a bounded text and answer-key check of the README and lessons 1-5 at e676735 (square/rectangle sort convention, flat/solid test, counter quantities, plain-cube spill, counters instead of fingers, backwards-6 claim); fixed by the author in 51e79eb. Terra then checked that diff and noted lesson 1 cube numbers; lesson 1 now uses pairs taking turns with 25 cubes per pair, which Terra also diff-checked. Not a standards, classroom or full accessibility review.

Lesson 1: Counting on to 20

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

About 25-30 minutes.

Goal

Children say the numbers to 20 in order, count up to 20 objects in a line, and count out a given number from a bigger pile.

Materials

- Cubes or counters (at least 25 per pair, so a pile of more than 20 is left to count out from; pairs take turns, so they share one pile).
- The 0-20 number line on the wall.
- A long strip of paper or tape on the floor for lining things up.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Count together to 10 with a clap on each number, as in term 1. "Our numbers don't stop at 10! Let's keep going." Count on together from 10 to 20 while the teacher points along the number line. Say 11, 12 and 13 slowly; these names are tricky because they don't sound like "ten-one, ten-two".

✎ Main activity (18 min)

1. **Counting train (6 min).** On the carpet, children each add one cube to a long line on the tape while everyone counts. Stop at 20. "How many cubes in our train?" (20.) Take 3 away from the end and count again together. (17.)
2. **Count the line (7 min).** In pairs, one child makes a line of cubes between 10 and 20 long, then the partner counts it by touching each cube once. Do they agree? Put the cubes back and swap jobs.
3. **Get me some (5 min).** The adult says a number ("Get me 14"). The child counts out that many from the pile and stops. Check together.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- What number comes after 10? 11.
- What number comes after 15? 16.
- I counted 12 cubes. If I move them into a circle, how many are there? Still 12 (moving them doesn't change how many).

- When you are getting 14 cubes, how do you know when to stop? When you say "14" (the last number you need).

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Hold up the number line and point to 18. Count together from 10 up to the pointed number. "What number did we stop on?" (18.) Ask: "What comes next?" (19.)

Vocabulary

eleven to twenty, count on, how many, stop

Differentiation

- **Support:** lines up to 12 or 15; count with the adult; line cubes on a printed strip with one box per cube.
- **Stretch:** count out 20 in a scattered pile and check by lining them up; count backwards from 20.

⚠ Safety

Use counters too large to swallow.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- "Eleven" and "twelve" don't sound like other numbers, and "thirteen" to "nineteen" put the small number first. Expect children to skip or mix up numbers between 11 and 19 (for example 13 and 30).
- Counting out a given number is harder than counting a group that is already there, because the child has to remember the target and stop.

Lesson 2: Writing numbers

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 1 - Next: Lesson 3

About 25-30 minutes.

Goal

Children write the numerals 0 to 10, match numeral cards to groups of objects, and know that 0 means "none".

Materials

- Numeral cards 0 to 10 (and 11 to 20 for stretch).
- Sand trays, chalkboards or whiteboards and pens.
- Small plates with groups of 0 to 10 counters.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Show an empty plate. "How many cookies on my plate?" (None.) "We have a number for none: zero." Write 0 big on the board. Then put 3 counters on the plate and write 3. Draw numerals in the air with big arm movements: 0, 1, 2, 3.

✎ Main activity (18 min)

1. **Sand and board writing (8 min).** Children write numerals 0 to 10 in sand trays or on boards, copying from a card. The adult watches the starting point and direction of each numeral. Choose four or five numerals per day, not all eleven at once.
2. **Match the plate (6 min).** In small groups, plates with 0 to 10 counters are spread out. Children count a plate and place the matching numeral card beside it. One plate is empty (0).
3. **Make my number (4 min).** A child turns over a numeral card; the partner puts that many counters on a ten-frame. Swap.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- What does 0 mean? None, nothing there.
- This plate has 8 counters. Which card goes with it? 8.
- I wrote 6 backwards. Is it still 6? You meant 6, and often people can still tell, but not always; that is why we practise writing it the usual way, so everyone can read it easily.
- Which is more, 7 or 4? 7.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Each child writes one numeral the teacher says (choose 2, 5 or 9 for different children) and holds it up. Check: does it match? Then ask the whole class to show "zero" fingers. (A closed fist; no fingers up.)

Vocabulary

zero, numeral, number, write, match

Differentiation

- **Support:** trace numerals on cards with dotted lines or sandpaper numerals; choose the right card instead of writing.
- **Stretch:** match plates with 11 to 20 counters to numeral cards 11 to 20.
- Children with limited hand control can build numerals from play dough or point to cards; the goal is knowing the numeral, not neat handwriting.

⚠ Safety

Use counters too large to swallow.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Reversed numerals (especially 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9) are very common at this age. Show the correct form calmly; don't mark it as a big mistake.
- Some children think 0 is "not a number". The empty plate helps.

Lesson 3: Ways to make 5

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 2 - Next: Lesson 4

About 25-30 minutes.

Goal

Children show that 5 can be split into two parts in more than one way, using fingers, two-colour counters and hiding games.

Materials

- Five two-colour counters and a cup per pair. No two-colour counters? Use five cubes and a sheet of paper with a line down the middle: spill the cubes on the paper and count the cubes on each side of the line.
- Five counters per child for the opening and closing, for children who prefer counters to fingers.
- A puppet or soft toy for the opening.
- A 5-frame (one row of a ten-frame) per child.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Hold up one hand (children may use 5 counters instead of fingers from the start). "How many fingers?" (5.) Fold down one. "How many are up? How many are down?" (4 up, 1 down.) "4 and 1 make 5." Try 3 and 2. The puppet says "5 is only 4 and 1!" Children help show it another way.

✎ Main activity (18 min)

1. **Shake and spill (8 min).** Pairs put 5 two-colour counters in a cup, shake and spill. Count the red and the yellow (or, with plain cubes, the cubes on each side of the line). "3 red and 2 yellow make 5." Spill again. Children draw or tell their favourite spill.
2. **How many are hiding? (6 min).** One child puts 5 cubes on a 5-frame, then hides some under their hand. The partner says how many are hiding. Lift the hand to check.
3. **Make a record (4 min).** As a class, collect the spills on the board with dots: 5 and 0, 4 and 1, 3 and 2, 2 and 3, 1 and 4, 0 and 5.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- I see 2 red. How many yellow make 5? 3.
- 4 are showing on the 5-frame. How many are hiding? 1.
- Is "3 red and 2 yellow" the same total as "2 red and 3 yellow"? Yes, both make 5.

- Can 5 be 5 red and 0 yellow? Yes; zero yellow is allowed.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

"Show me 5 on your fingers using both hands" (or with 5 counters in two groups). Children may show 3 and 2, 4 and 1, or 5 and 0 (all correct). Ask two children with different ways to show the class.

Vocabulary

and, make, part, hiding, showing, the same total

Differentiation

- **Support:** use 3 and then 4 before 5; keep the counters visible instead of hiding them.
- **Stretch:** ways to make 6 or 7; find all the ways and check none are missing.
- Children who can't fold fingers easily use counters or the 5-frame instead.

⚠ Safety

Use counters too large to swallow. Shake cups gently, low over the table.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- The goal is seeing parts and wholes, not memorising facts yet.
- Some children recount all 5 every time instead of seeing the parts. That is fine at first; the 5-frame helps them see "one gap" or "two gaps".

Lesson 4: Make 10 with a ten-frame

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 3 - Next: Lesson 5

About 25-30 minutes.

Goal

Children use a ten-frame to see how many more make 10, for any number from 1 to 9.

Materials

- A ten-frame and 10 counters per child.
- A large ten-frame for the carpet.
- Ten paper cups or skittles and a soft ball (optional, for step 3).

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Show the big ten-frame, empty. "It has two rows of five boxes. When every box is full, we have 10." Fill it together, counting. Take some away and ask "How many empty boxes?" The empty boxes tell how many more make 10.

✎ Main activity (18 min)

1. **Fill it up (7 min).** Each child puts some counters on their frame (always filling the top row first, left to right). "How many counters? How many more to fill it?" The adult asks a few children each time.
2. **Ten-frame flash (6 min).** The teacher shows the big frame for a few seconds with 6, 8, 9 or 5. Children say how many and how many more make
3. Then show it again to check.
4. **Ten pins (5 min, optional).** Knock down skittles with a soft ball: "4 fell down, so how many are standing?" (6.) Count to check.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- 7 counters are on the frame. How many more make 10? 3.
- The top row is full and the bottom row is empty. How many? 5.
- 9 are on the frame. How many more make 10? 1.
- I need 4 more to fill it. How many are on it now? 6.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Show the big ten-frame with 8. Children hold up fingers for how many more make 10. (2.) Then show 4. (6.)

Vocabulary

ten-frame, full, empty, how many more, make 10

Differentiation

- **Support:** use one row (a 5-frame) and "how many more make 5"; count the empty boxes one by one.
- **Stretch:** "How many more make 10?" without the frame; two ten-frames for numbers past 10 ("one full frame and 3 more is 13").
- Children who struggle with fingers can point to the matching numeral card.

⚠ Safety

Use counters too large to swallow. If using skittles, roll the ball along the floor, not thrown, and keep a clear space.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Filling the top row first, left to right, makes amounts easy to see (6 is "5 and 1 more"). Keep this habit.
- Some children count the empty boxes as well as the counters. Ask "Which ones are counters? Which are empty?"

Lesson 5: Flat and solid shapes

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 4

About 25-30 minutes. The one-to-one check from the unit overview can run during this lesson and over the following days.

Goal

Children name circles, triangles, squares and rectangles whatever their size or which way they are turned, and sort objects into flat and solid.

Materials

- Flat shape cards in many sizes and colours, including long thin triangles, long thin rectangles and squares turned on a corner.
- Solid objects: a ball, a tin or tube, a cardboard box, a cube block or dice, a party hat or cone.
- Two hoops labelled with a picture: "flat" (a paper shape) and "solid" (a block).
- Straws or sticks and play dough for building (optional).

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Hold up a triangle. "What shape?" (Triangle.) Turn it upside down. "Now?" (Still a triangle.) Show a tiny triangle and a long thin one. "Still triangles? Yes: three straight sides and three corners." Do the same with a square turned on its corner.

✎ Main activity (18 min)

1. **Shape sort (6 min).** In small groups, children sort a mixed pile of shape cards into circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. The adult adds tricky cards (a thin triangle, a tilted square) and asks why. For this sort, squares go in the square group, even though a square is also a special kind of rectangle (see Stretch).
2. **Flat or solid? (6 min).** Pass around solid objects and flat cards. "Is it thin like a card, or is it thick enough to hold all round, like a ball or a box?" Children put each one in the flat hoop or the solid hoop. Name the solids if children are interested: ball (sphere), tin (cylinder), box, dice (cube), party hat (cone).
3. **Build it (6 min).** Make triangles and squares from straws and play dough, or draw them. Count the sides together.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- I turned the square onto its corner. Is it still a square? Yes; turning it doesn't change the shape.

- This triangle is very long and thin. Is it a triangle? Yes; it has three straight sides.
- Is a ball flat or solid? Solid.
- Is a paper circle flat or solid? Flat.
- How many sides does a square have? 4.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Hold up, one at a time: a tilted square, a big circle, a tin and a thin triangle. Children call out the name and "flat" or "solid". (Square, flat; circle, flat; tin (cylinder), solid; triangle, flat.)

Vocabulary

circle, triangle, square, rectangle, side, corner, flat, solid, turn

Differentiation

- **Support:** start with circles and squares only; feel the edges of shapes with eyes closed.
- **Stretch:** "Is every square a rectangle?" (Yes; a square is a special rectangle with all four sides the same length.) Find shapes around the room.
- Children with limited vision can use raised or cut-out shapes and real objects to feel.

⚠ Safety

Keep straw ends and small play dough pieces away from mouths. Choose solid objects without sharp edges.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Many children think a triangle must point upwards and a square on its corner is a "diamond". Show shapes in many positions all year.
- A paper shape is really very thin, not perfectly flat; "flat" is the right everyday word at this age.
- Faces of solids are flat shapes (a box has rectangle faces). Mention it if children notice; it isn't a goal here.