



6 Steps to Subtract 2 Numbers: Common Core Homework in 1 Photo

Kelsey Lucas / October 02, 2014

Counting-Up Subtraction Method

You can subtract two numbers by counting up from the smaller number to the larger number. Subtracting this way is called the **counting-up method**.

1. Write the smaller number. Count up to the nearest multiple of 10.
2. Keep counting up by 10s and 100s.
3. Then count up to the larger number.

Example Subtract 38 from 325 by counting up. Write the smaller number, 38, and count up to 325. Circle each number that you count up.

$$\begin{array}{r} 38 \\ + \quad \textcircled{2} \\ \hline 40 \\ + \quad \textcircled{60} \\ \hline 100 \\ + \quad \textcircled{200} \\ \hline 300 \\ + \quad \textcircled{25} \\ \hline 325 \end{array}$$

Count up to the nearest 10.
Count up to the nearest 100.
Count up to the largest possible hundred.
Count up to the larger number.

Then, add the numbers you circled: $2 + 60 + 200 + 25 = 287$
You counted up by 287.

$$325 - 38 = 287$$

Check Your Understanding

Use the left-to-right or counting-up method to subtract.

1. $90 - 33$ 2. $242 - 70$ 3. $835 - 451$ 4. $520 - 148$

Check your answers on page 337.

Photo: Erick Erickson via ErickErickson.org

For third-graders learning Common Core math in Georgia, there are four ways to subtract—and only four ways allowed. The picture above is just one of the methods for subtraction under Common Core straight from RedState editor in chief Erick Erickson's third-grade daughter's math book.

Missing from the four methods: borrowing and carrying numbers. You know, the old-fashioned-taught-the-same-way-for-decades-granny-method-not-approved-by-bureaucrats subtraction.

According to this third-grade textbook, students must take about six steps (at minimum, depending how you count) to subtract just two numbers. And if you don't show your work, circle the right numbers and "count up" correctly, you haven't proven that you've mastered the "why" of the problem.

In a previous post where I highlighted two "Homework Helper" videos a local news station broadcast because parents were struggling with their children's Common Core homework, it's clear memorization is out—explaining the "why" is in.

I'd love to see some more techniques for problems formerly referred to as "simple" math. Please leave your own pictures of Common Core homework in the comments and share this absurdity with your friends.

>>> It Takes a Teacher 56 Seconds to Explain How to Add 9 Plus 6