

FAMILY MATH

Find an Unknown Part in *Change Unknown* Problems

Dear Family,

Students are practicing word problems where they solve to find an unknown change, or action. They use the Read–Draw–Write process to determine how many were added or taken away. Students also figure out unknown parts in equations such as $2 + \square = 7$. A number sentence with an equal sign can always be called an equation. An equation cannot be called a number sentence when it has a symbol for an unknown, such as a gray box.

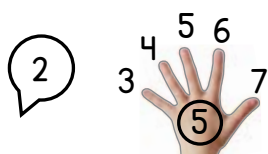
Key Term
equation

There are 7 frogs on a log. Some frogs hop off.
Now there are 2 frogs on the log.
How many frogs hopped off the log?



$$7 - \boxed{5} = 2$$

5 frogs hopped off the log.



$$2 + \square = 7$$

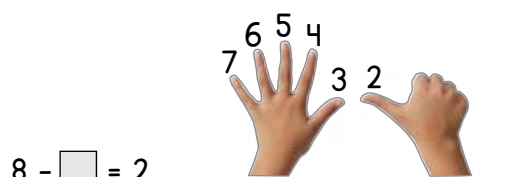
I can count on by starting with the known part, 2, until I get to the total, 7. I counted 5, so the unknown part is 5.

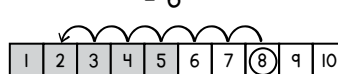
There are 5 frogs on a log. Some frogs hop on.
Now there are 9 frogs on the log.
How many frogs hopped on the log?



$$5 + \boxed{4} = 9$$

4 frogs hopped on the log.



$$8 - \square = 2$$


I can count back by starting with the total, 8, until I get to the known part, 2. I counted back 6, so the unknown part is 6.

At-Home Activities

I Have, I Need

Your student can practice an I Have, I Need scenario by using objects found in the home, such as pennies, crayons, or snacks. Begin by placing a number of objects, such as 4 pennies, on a table. Ask your student how many more is needed to get a number less than 10. They may use their fingers to count. Ask questions such as the following to guide them to count on to find the answer.

- “How many pennies do I have?” (4)
- “How many more do I need to have 9?” (5)

Consider switching roles to allow your student an opportunity to determine the start and total.

What Changed?

Begin by placing a number of objects, such as 4 crayons, on a table. Have your student close their eyes while you add or remove crayons. Ask questions such as the following to help your student decide what happened to the group of crayons and to count on to find the answer.

- “How many crayons did we start with?”
- “How many crayons are there now?”
- “How many crayons were added or taken away?”