

Can I tell someone how to order two-digit numbers?

Teaching guidance

Key vocabulary

compare, order, size, bigger, smaller, biggest, smallest, before, after, between, count on/back, number line, position, digit, two-digit number, one-digit number, ones/units, tens

Models and images, resources and equipment

100-square

Help children understand the structure of a 100-square and see it as a rearranged number track. Use a range of different grids, including those that do not have all the numbers represented.

Bead strings and number lines

Help children use labelled number lines and bead strings to help them order numbers before progressing to partly labelled number lines.

Teaching tips

- Provide plenty of opportunities for children to continue to gain confidence with the number system and the order of numbers by counting forwards and backwards to and from different numbers. Look out for children who may not know, for example, what comes after 29 or before 61, and for children who have to count from 1 to find the number before or after a given number as they are insecure when counting from other starting numbers.
- Check that children can read, write and partition the numbers you want them to order. Look out for children who may not, for example, distinguish 13 from 30 when spoken and distinguish between 17 and 71 when written.
- Help children gain confidence using the vocabulary of comparison, such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'biggest', 'smallest' and 'in between' to help them describe how they are ordering a set of three or more numbers. Challenge children to provide instructions for a partner to order a set of two-digit numbers. Support EAL pupils with the time connectives they may need to use to sequence their explanation, such as 'first', 'next', 'after that' and 'finally'.
- Provide plenty of opportunities for children to order from largest to smallest. They are likely to be more confident ordering from smallest to largest.
- Initially, children may be more confident ordering sets of consecutive numbers. However, they also need to appreciate that sets made up of more widely dispersed numbers such as 73, 9, 38, 16 can also be ordered.
- Use a wide range of questioning that encourages ordering numbers, for example:
 - Give me a number between 15 and 21. Is it closer to 15 or 21? Show me why on a number line.
 - What number is halfway between 15 and 21? How did you work it out?
 - Tell me four numbers which are bigger than 50 but less than 100.
- When ordering numbers on a number line, help children appreciate that the spaces between the numbers on the number line are less important than the order of the numbers.