

# Subtraction to 100: a math method to master



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Subtraction to 100: A Math Method to Master Due to increasing technological requirements, the twenty-first century marketplace has even more demands for literates in mathematics and science. It is the job of today's teachers to adequately prepare their students for such a marketplace. But before higher mathematics is learned, we must first strengthen our foundation. The basics must yet be mastered; and thus the need for math fact accuracy and fluency.

The basics include addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. What follows is a program designed to develop students' accuracy and automation in subtraction math facts to 100.

A method by Ben-Avie, Ensign, & Haynes called Active-participant Learning is suited for learning subtraction (2003). In this method, the class operates in a way that learning is active; and is propelled by adult guidance and by social influences of group interaction and teamwork (Ben-Avie, Ensign, & Haynes, 2003). Active-participant Learning allows the thinking process to be made visible so teachers can intervene to improve faulty or ineffective patterns in a meaningful way:

Employ the active participant model in the classroom and engage students in intellectual discourse. Divide your class into groups. Have one group answer the questions on subtraction thrown by the other group. Reverse roles after one round of questioning. Be attentive to their answers and questions.

Intervene in a respectful way when mistakes occur.

Dialogue with them. You can ask bonus questions. The group that can answer your question gets the extra point.

Ask probing questions. You can ask your students, "What is the easy way to subtract 9?" This can be an assignment they can ponder at home. (Answer:

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Subtract 10 and add (give back.) 1).

Give positive feedback.

Value students' responses and questioning.

Bill Handley, in his book *Speed Math for Kids*, details techniques for easy subtraction (2005). He said that since most of us find addition easier than subtraction, we can subtract multiples of ten and give back the extras. For example, to subtract 7 you subtract 10 and add (give back) 3. Another technique of his is for subtracting numbers near the same tens value. You can draw a circle below the number you are subtracting and write in the amount you need to make that certain tens value. Then add the number in the circle to the amount the first number is above the said tens value. For example, let us subtract 37 from 46. The common tens value would be 40. Thus to get the answer, just add 3 and 6 for an easy answer of 9. This turns subtraction into addition.

It has been said that geniuses don't have better brains than the rest of us; rather they just have better methods. It is not that the child is lazy that he fails mathematics; it is that he wants to learn but he doesn't know how.

Teach your students subtraction using the right methods and everyday would be a day to look forward to math.

#### Works Cited

Ben-Avie, Michael, Ensign, Jacque & Haynes, Norris (Eds.). (2003). *How social and emotional development add up: Getting results in math and science education*. New York and London: Teachers College Columbia University.

Handley, Bill (2005). *Speed math for kids: The fast, fun way to do basic*

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