Counting 136 objects? Help them make groups of ten

Parent sheet · ages 7–8 · goes with the video "Understand the concept"

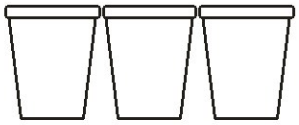
Why they lose track

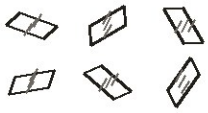
Your child recounts a big pile and gets three different numbers? Counting one by one works well with only a few objects. With lots of them, they have to remember the number they've reached and what's already been counted. It isn't necessarily carelessness: the method has reached its limit.

The key idea



1 bag of 100


3 cups of 10


6 single pieces

hundreds	tens	ones
1	3	6

We make groups of ten. Ten groups of ten make one hundred. In 136, the 1 counts the hundreds, the 3 counts the tens, the 6 counts the ones: each digit counts groups of a certain size.

Place changes the value

The 3 in 136 is worth thirty; the 3 in 613 is worth three. A common trap: reading 136 as "one, three, six" without seeing what each digit is worth. And the zero counts: 206 is 2 hundreds, no tens outside the hundreds, 6 ones.

The activities

You'll need at least 260 pieces of short pasta (like penne), 10 small cups, 2 freezer bags, scissors, and tape. Keep the pasta out of reach of toddlers. The big collection: a pile of well over 100 pieces but fewer than 200, then page 2; keep the rest nearby. Playing store: show 2 bags of 100, 4 cups of 10, and 3 single pieces; ask for the total, then have them get 206 ready.

Questions instead of corrections

- "How many groups of ten?"
- "What does the 3 in 136 mean?"
- "How can you tell what's already been counted?"

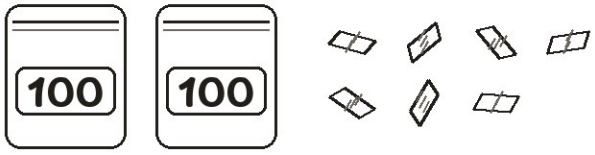
Then: "Explain how you know."

To read after your child has checked

- The pile: read the bags, then the cups, then the single pieces. Example: 1 bag, 4 cups, 7 pieces = 147.
- Playing store: 243 = 2 bags, 4 cups, 3 single pieces.
- 206 = 2 bags, no cups, 6 single pieces. 2 bags and 6 cups make 260.
- Family challenge: 2 bags and 1 cup make 210.
- Clipping: 207; the 0 says there are no cups of ten outside the bags.
- Going further: 136 holds 13 groups of ten in all, plus 6 ones.

A good sign: they explain a digit with groups ("3 cups of ten"), not just its name. If the zero trips them up, play store again with other numbers (205, 150): it often takes several tries.

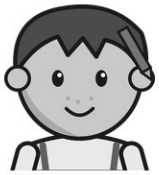
A few days later, casually (cut out)



How many pieces of pasta? Write the number. What does the 0 mean?

_____

How many pieces of pasta are in your pile?



...46, 47... Um, where was I?

How would you keep track?

I predict

Look at your pile. Don't count yet.

My guess: _____ pieces

I sort

1. Make groups of 10. Put each group in a cup.
2. 10 full cups? Pour their pasta into a bag.
3. Seal the bag. Stick on a 100 label.
4. Reuse the empty cups. Keep making groups of 10.
5. At the end, fewer than 10 pieces are left loose.

I count

Write how many bags, full cups, and single pieces. Then write your number.

bags of 100	cups of 10	single pieces

My number: ☐ ☐ ☐

h t o

I check

My guess was:

☐ too small ☐ close ☐ too big

I explain

What does each digit in your number mean? Explain it to an adult.

What about 206?

Get 206 pieces ready. Write each count in the table.

bags	cups	single pieces

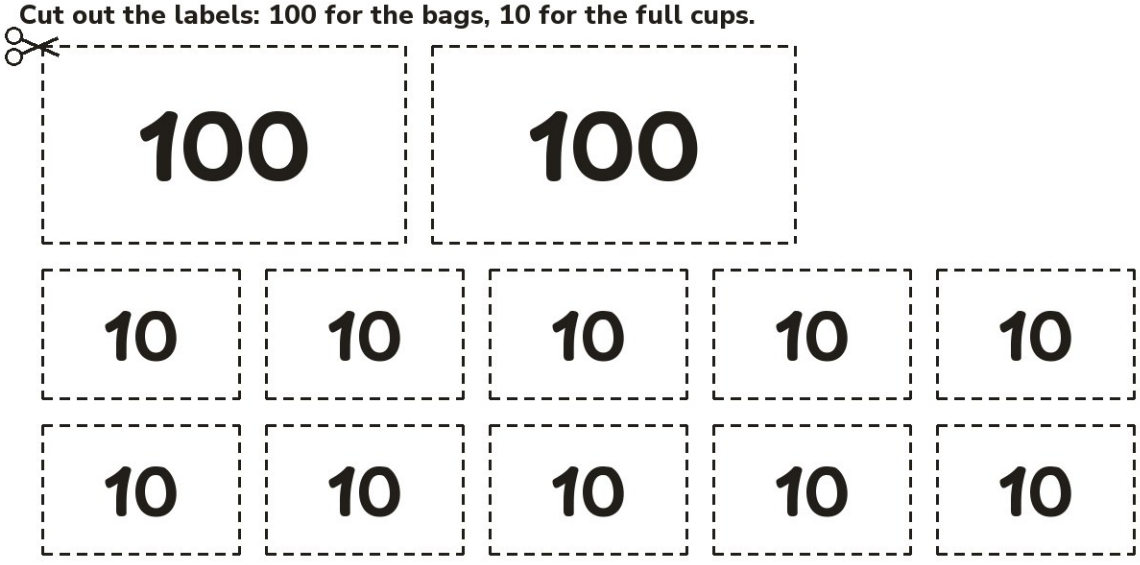
The 0 means: _____

Family challenge

2 bags of 100, 1 cup of 10, no single pieces. How many pieces in all? Predict, then check.

In all: _____ pieces

Cut out the labels: 100 for the bags, 10 for the full cups.



Print at 100%, single-sided.