

Finding the Difference

What is it?

When we ask children to find the difference between 7 and 10 they will often say things like one is a single digit, or even one is rounder than the other. One way to explain finding the difference is 'what do you need to do to this number to make it the same as this number?' You can use counting on in your head, counting on using a number line or subtraction to work out the difference.

How do you use it?

To find the difference by **counting on** follow these steps:

What is the difference between 11 and 8?

Put the smaller number first. What's the difference can be done in any order.

What is the difference between 8 and 11?

Put the smallest number in your head Try touching your forehead to show it has gone in!

Count on. Each time you say a number hold up a finger. 8 in my head, 9,10,11...

Stop when you say the biggest number.

Check your fingers to see how many times you counted on. The difference is 3

You can also find the difference by **subtracting**. The children can use any of the subtraction strategies that they are familiar with. It is a good idea to practise solving 'find the difference' problems by counting on and by using subtraction so they can see the answer is the same.