

# Number link challenges



Take students on a scavenger hunt in the school or classroom, or on the playground—or have them do it at home—and help them find numbers in real life. They can take photos or draw the number links they see, such as shape (triangles for three), name (classroom 4), quantity (six windows), or order (first-place ribbon).

Challenge older students to find applications of larger numbers, like the twelve numbers on a clock, or a building with twenty windows in an arrangement of  $5 \times 4$ , a visual application of multiplication. What are the largest numbers they can find? Can they estimate these quantities and then count them?

Extra challenges make this activity appropriate for students in the upper grades:

- Suggest specific topics and challenge students to come up with relevant linkages for each number and explain their reasoning. For example, animals, musical instruments, and architectural features related to a number.
- Have a daily classroom “number link” question asking students to find the numerical connection between seemingly unrelated ideas, such as this: What do Mount Rushmore and a ukulele have in common? (Answer: Four presidents on Mt. Rushmore

and four strings on the ukulele.) Invite students to submit these questions, which can be pulled from other subjects (e.g., history, science, art) and can be increasingly difficult.

- Have students make a collage from number links found in newspapers or magazines (e.g., the picture of the two-hour parking sign illustrates the number link 2)

This activity is easily adaptable to a variety of environments and promotes the development of observation skills, number sense, and the ability to make interdisciplinary connections.

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A student assigned to the number 5 might think of a starfish (5 legs), a banjo (5 strings), and a pentagonal room.