

Story Mats

With these creatures, there are so many things to count and sort and examine – far more than on a standard cube or round counter. Best of all, these “creature counters” can move – and as the creatures crawl, slide, hop and gallop, they mirror the important action in a math problem.

Traditionally, we understand addition as the joining of sets, and subtraction as the separating of it. When children have manipulatives that are capable of movement, they can model these actions to tell addition and subtraction stories!

One way to promote this kind of thinking is to provide students with a “story mat” for their counters. Because I have dinosaurs and lizards, bugs and frogs in my “creature counter” collection, I print off lily pads and farm scenes, jungles and desert habitats for the creatures to explore. As the children play, horses joining others in a grassy field are transformed into addition stories; frogs hopping off of lily pads become subtraction stories – all we have to do is to name it for them, and for those who are ready, to introduce a structure for recording their thinking.



Math Puzzlers

- Look carefully at the picture in search on ___ number bonds (part-part-whole).
- Pictures include a variety of attributes to show many different combinations for a number.
- Provide a way of practicing number combinations.
- Children share combinations and write corresponding number sentences.
- Children can use counters to represent the number bonds.

