

The Mystery of the Three Numbers



Figure 1: A clear, friendly illustration for a worksheet about Addition and subtraction within 100, showing the objects and situation the exercises

This brain teaser asks you to find three numbers that add up to a mystery total. You will use addition strategies and think about how a sum can be made in different ways ([Understanding](#)). The puzzle works with numbers up to 100 ([Outcome](#)) and helps you practise composing sums by choosing addends carefully ([Skills](#)).

The puzzle

Three numbers add up to 50.

The first number is 15.

The second number is 5 more than the first number.

What is the third number?

Hints

Hint 1: Start by finding the second number. It is 5 more than 15. What do you get?

Hint 2: Now add the first number and the second number together. What is $15 + 20$? Then think about what you need to add to reach 50.

Hint 3: You have $15 + 20 = 35$. How much more do you need to make 50? Try counting up from 35 to 50.

Answer key

The answer is 15.

The reasoning:

The first number is 15.

The second number is 5 more than 15, so it is 20.

Now add: $15 + 20 = 35$.

To reach 50, you need $50 - 35 = 15$.

The three numbers are 15, 20, and 15.

Check: $15 + 20 + 15 = 50$.