

The Market Count



Figure 1: A colourful outdoor market stall with baskets of apples, oranges, and bread, a cheerful child counting coins on the wooden counter

Mika counted her apples. Ten in one basket, ten in another, ten more in a box. Thirty apples, she said. Her friend Sam added his own ten. Now we have forty, said Mika, and we didn't even need to count one by one.

A customer bought twelve apples. Mika thought for a second. Forty take away ten is thirty, then take away two more is twenty eight, she said, still smiling.

Later, a boy handed over exact coins for oranges, then changed his mind and wanted his money back. Sam gave it right back. See, he said, subtraction undoes addition.

At closing time, they had seventy eight apples and oranges left in all, ten and ten and ten and more, grouped neatly into piles of ten so counting to one hundred felt easy and fun.

Words to know

- **sum:** the answer you get when you add numbers together
- **difference:** the answer you get when you subtract one number from another
- **inverse operation:** an operation that undoes another, like subtraction undoing addition
- **compose:** to put parts together to make a whole number

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