

The – sign: the taking-away sign

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

ALG.EXP.2 interpret the meaning of symbols or pictures in number sentences.

INTERACTIVES Ten Frame · challenge, display, explore

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

The – sign says take away. When some leave the group, we write it with this sign.

→ $5 - 2$ means start with 5 and take 2 away.

→ In $7 - 3$ we build 7 first, slide 3 away, and read seven take away three.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

PENCILS ROLL AWAY

- 1 Start with 5 pencils on the desk.
- 2 Watch 2 roll into the box.
- 3 Write the take-away as $5 - 2$.
- 4 Say five take away two and count what is left.

LESSON ARC

Open by rolling two pencils into a box beside a giant + and – card; take three guesses before naming – as take away. Model three classroom stories on the ten-frame interactive: build the start, slide counters off, write the minus expression beneath, and read it aloud. Pupils take turns at the board on $4 - 1$, $6 - 3$, $8 - 2$ and $9 - 5$. Copybook practice forms the – sign on two expressions, then Class Challenge runs four brisk builds with Check each time. Close on: start big, slide some away.

TEACHING MOVES

1. **Getting Started.** Hold a giant + card beside a giant – card while two pencils roll into the box. Take three hands-up ideas before naming the new sign: minus, take away. Don't accept 'put together' for –.
2. **Watch and Notice.** For each story, build the start on the ten-frame first, then slide the take-away counters off slowly. Write the expression beneath only after the slide. Class reads in unison — five take away two — before you move on. Same rhythm for $7 - 3$ and $9 - 4$.
3. **Try It Together.** Write each expression on the board before the pupil builds: $4 - 1$, then $6 - 3$, then $8 - 2$, then $9 - 5$. Watch they place the first number first, not the second. Revoice: we build the start, then take some away. Rotate four pupils; the class agrees or corrects aloud.
4. **Write the minus sign in your copy.** Walk the row glancing only at – sign formation on $5 - 2$ and $7 - 3$. This is whole-class copybook practice, not marking — a clean horizontal bar between the two numbers is the win.
5. **Class Challenge.** Keep the board work brisk. Each frame opens on the start number. Before the turn ask: which number do we take away, and why? Watch the slide-off, not only the final count. If a pupil clears the frame and rebuilds the remainder from empty, pause and revoice: start stays on, then we slide some off.

6. **What Did We Notice?** Take two hands-up answers. Listen for take away or the second number slides off. Praise one full sentence, then revoice: the – sign tells us to start with one number and take some away. Head off anyone still reading – as plus.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

⚠ Pupils place the second number on the ten-frame first — they build ‘how many leave’ instead of the start amount.

Freeze the board. Point at the expression and cover the – 3: ‘Which number do we build first?’ Rebuild with the start number fully on before any counter slides off. Revoice: start first, then take away.

⚠ Pupils clear the whole frame and rebuild the remainder from empty, so the take-away action never happens.

Stop and replay on the interactive: leave the start counters on, then slide only the take-away group off. ‘The start stays; some leave. We don’t wipe and start again.’

⚠ Pupils still read – as plus and want to put two groups together.

Hold the giant + and – cards up again beside the same pencil story. ‘+ brings groups together; – sends some away.’ Rebuild $5 - 2$ once more and insist on the words five take away two.

DIFFERENTIATION

EMERGING

- Pre-place the start counters on the ten-frame so the pupil only slides the take-away group off.
- Stay with starts of 5 or fewer (e.g. $5 - 2$, $4 - 1$) while the class works within 10.

DEVELOPING

- After each Class Challenge build, ask the pupil to say the full sentence — eight take away five — before tapping Check.
- Change one take-away to a larger slide (e.g. $8 - 6$) and ask: what looks different on the frame?

PROFICIENT

- Pose: build any take-away that leaves exactly 1 on the frame, then write the expression in your copy and read it aloud.
- Ask a fast finisher to narrate a new classroom story for $10 - 4$ before building it — start amount, who leaves, what is left.

✂ **Cross-curricular:** Link to classroom jobs: five monitors at the door, two sent to the office — write $5 - 2$ as that take-away story.

ANSWER KEY

Q1: 5

Q2: 3

Q3: 6

Q4: 4

Q5: 3

Q6: 7

a) **Always** : The lesson names the minus sign as the taking-away sign.

b) **Always** : That is exactly how we read and act on a take-away sum.

c) **Never** : Putting groups together is adding, not taking away.

d) **Never** : Taking away never makes the group bigger.

EXTENSION SHEET · STRETCH ANSWERS

S1: 3

S2: 1

S3: 5

S4: 2