Stages in Subtraction

Subtraction - Early Stages (EYFS)

Children will engage in a variety of counting songs and rhymes and practical activities.
In practical activities and through discussion they will begin to use the vocabulary associated with subtraction.
They will find one less than a given number.
They will begin to relate subtraction to 'taking away' using objects to count 'how many are left' after some have been taken away.

6 – 2 = 4

'Take two apples away. How many are left?'
Children will begin to count back from a given number.

Subtraction – Stage One

- Given a number, identify **one less**
- Read, write and interpret **mathematical statements** involving subtraction (-) and the equals (=) sign
- **Subtract one- digit and two-digit numbers** within 20, including zero
- Solve **missing number problems** eg 20 **-** ? = 15

Ensure that children are confident with the methods outlined in the previous stage's guidance before moving on.
Children will continue to practise counting back from a given number.
Initially use a number line to count back for subtraction:

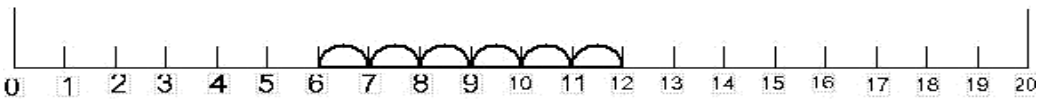
9 – 5 = 4

'Put your finger on number nine. Count back five.'

Use **objects** and **practical contexts** at this stage

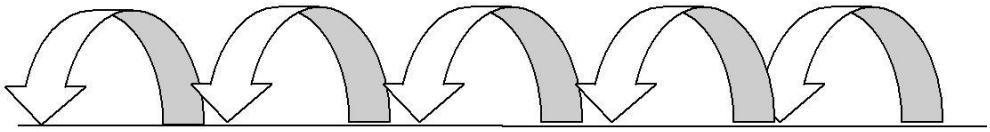
Once children are secure using the number track, progress to using a marked number line:

12 - 6 = 6



'Put your finger on number twelve and count back six.'

14 – 5 = 9



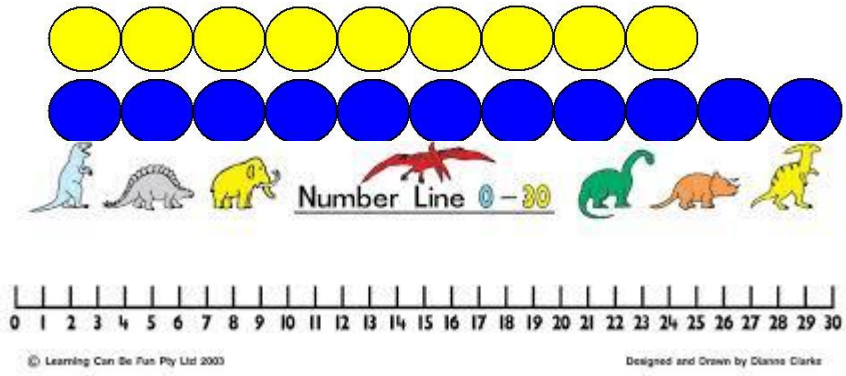
9 10 11 12 13 14

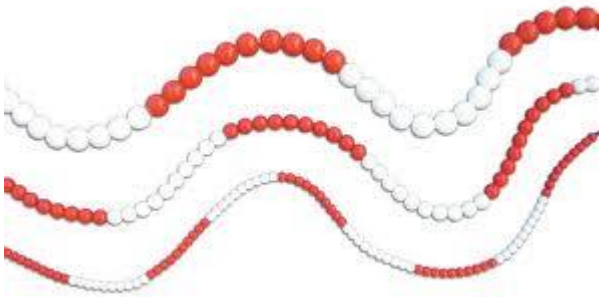
‘Put your finger on number 14 and count back five.’

Ensure children are confident with using a **marked number line** before moving on to an **empty number line** (see stage two guidance).
Continue to practise counting back for subtraction with numbers within 20.

Counting on to find a small difference:

Introduce complementary addition to find differences (only use for small differences). The use of models is extremely important here to understand the idea of **“difference”.**
Count up from the **smallest number** to the largest to find the difference using resources, e.g. cubes, beads, number tracks/lines:
11 – 9 = 2





The **difference between** nine and eleven is two.

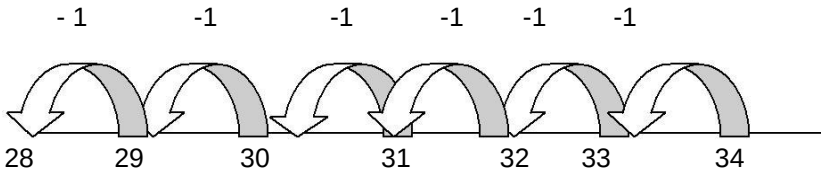
If, at any time, children are making significant errors, return to the previous stage in calculation

Subtraction – Stage Two

- Subtract numbers using concrete objects, pictorial representations, and mentally, including:
  - A two digit number and ones
  - A two digit number and tens
  - Two two-digit numbers

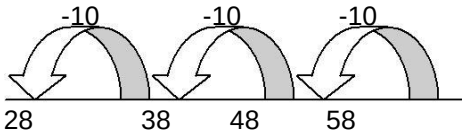
Ensure that children are confident with the methods outlined in the previous stage’s guidance before moving on.
Counting back using an empty number line within 100,
in ones…

34 - 6 = 28



…and in tens:

58 - 30 = 28



Use in conjunction with a 100 square to show jumps of tens.