



Activity Ideas

Stuart J. Murphy
MathStart®

One...Two...Three...Sassafras!

Number Order

Level 1 Ages 3+

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Learning to arrange numbers in order helps develop counting skills and prepares children to understand our number system.

It's picture-taking at the Lumpkin family reunion and Uncle Howie wants all the cousins to line up by age, from one-year-old Jacob to 15 year-old Tanya. "Say Sassafras!" But when Uncle Howie clicks the shutter, something always seems to go wrong. "Great galloping gillywhoppers!" Illustrated by John Wallace

- There are several ways the children in the story could have been arranged by Uncle Howie -- for example, by height or alphabetically by name instead of by age. Together with your child / class, explore other ordering possibilities (hair color? hats versus hatless? Etc.)
- Ask your child / students to draw pictures of their family members. Cut out the pictures and arrange by age from youngest to oldest. Now try from oldest to youngest.
- Write the numbers 1 through 15 on separate index cards cards. Shuffle the cards and remove one card from the pile without letting anyone see which card you have taken. Can your child / students reorder the cards and figure out which one is missing?
- Find the jersey numbers of the favorite sports team members. These can be found in the newspaper, the team's website, or a program from a game. Ask your child / students to put the players in order based on their jersey numbers.
- Take a deck of cards and put aside the tens and face cards. Each player is dealt 2 cards, which will be used to create a two-digit number. For example, a player dealt an ace and a 9 can make the numbers "19" or "91". Together the players place all their numbers in order. The person with the smallest number collects all the cards. After all the cards have been played, the player with the most cards wins.

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