Mastering maths

Count backwards to include negative numbers

Starting at 0 we can count up in units like this:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ...

But what happens before zero?

We have the negative numbers, like this:

-7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0

If we count **up**, we move from the **left to the right** and the numbers **increase.**
So, -7 to -6 is moving from the left to the right and the numbers have increased because -6 is bigger than -7.

If we count **back**, we move from the **right to the left** and the numbers **decrease**.
So, -3 to -4 is moving from the right to the left and the numbers have decreased because -4 is smaller than -3.

Here is part of a number line going from 7 down to -7:

-7 - 6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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Example

Count back to work out the missing number.

$-4 \quad -3 \quad \square \quad -1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3$

What is the missing number?

Answer

Counting back from 0 means the numbers decrease.

$-3 \quad -2 \quad -1 \quad 0$

So the missing number is **-2**.

Does that make sense?

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Mastering maths

Count backwards to include negative numbers

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

This means moving from the right to the left.

-3 -2 ☐ 0 1 2

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

-3 -2 -1 ☐ 1 2 3

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

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Mastering maths

Count backwards to include negative numbers

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

-3 ☐ -1 0 1 2

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

-4 ☐ -2 -1 0 1

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

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Mastering maths

Count backwards to include negative numbers

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

$-7 \quad -6 \quad -5 \quad \square$

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

$\square \quad -6 \quad -5 \quad -4 \quad -3$

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

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Mastering maths

Count backwards to include negative numbers

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

$\square$ -7 -6 -5 -4

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

-3 -2 -1 $\square$

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

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Count **back** to work out the missing number.

$\square$ -8 -7 -6

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

Count **back** to work out the missing number.

-13 -12 -11 $\square$

What is the missing number?

Answer: _____

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