Climb to the Answer

Think Addition Backward

The clock on the stove says 5:48. Lily has to be out the door by 6:30. So how much time does she have? She doesn't start at 6:30 and take anything away. She starts where she is and climbs.

Two minutes gets her to 5:50. Ten more gets her to 6:00, a nice, solid place to stand. From there, it's thirty more to 6:30. Two and ten and thirty. Forty-two minutes.

How to play

1. Pick a problem from the next page, like 53 − 36. Ask: "What gets you from thirty-six to fifty-three?"
2. Climb in friendly hops: four to forty, ten to fifty, three more to fifty-three. Draw each hop and write its size.
3. Add the hops together: four and ten and three. Seventeen. That's the answer.

Watch for

The most common slip comes at the end of the climb. A child reaches fifty-three and says "fifty-three," because that's where they landed. But fifty-three is only where the climb ended. The answer is how far they climbed to get there.

On the homework

This strategy often shows up as the subtraction rewritten as an addition with a blank in it: 36 + ____ = 53, sitting right beside 53 − 36.

Subtraction

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Climb to the Answer

53 − 36 = _____ 36 + _____ = 53



42 − 27 = _____ 27 + _____ = 42



61 − 48 = _____ 48 + _____ = 61



35 − 18 = _____ 18 + _____ = 35



72 − 56 = _____ 56 + _____ = 72



84 − 69 = _____ 69 + _____ = 84

