

Year 3 Negative Numbers: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to year 3 negative numbers can help you support your child's learning at home. The subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when learning about year 3 negative numbers, either to support your child's homework or if you decide to give your child some extra support. In this guide, you will find a step that matches your child's level of understanding and then suggested activities which can be used to support that step.

Within **this area of the website**, you will find a selection of resources intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

What Are Negative Numbers?

A negative number is a number that is less than zero. When counting backwards, we don't stop at zero, but we go into negative numbers. They are often used when taking the temperature but can be used in other contexts too such as subterranean floors in a building or car park. Negative numbers are written the same as positive numbers (numbers that are above 0) but they have a minus sign placed in front of them, for example -4, -5, -6, -7.

What Are Children Taught About Negative Numbers in Year 3?

Negative numbers are not introduced in the national curriculum until year 4. However, at home, you can begin to introduce your child to the concept of negative numbers in preparation for the work they will be doing in year 4. You can do this by:

- Introducing them to the term negative numbers and the concept that there are numbers lower than zero.
- Beginning to count backwards through zero.

Children are also expected to be able to apply all of the above to number problems and practical problems.

This guide will help you support the learning of year 3 negative numbers at home. Each step contains an explanation to that stage and a link to an appropriate resource which can be used at home to support your child's learning.

As well as using the resources in this category, and the keyword searches to help your child with negative numbers, below are a few ideas for games and activities to help your child practise becoming more familiar with negative numbers at home.

Counting Backwards

This is a simple activity that can be done anytime.

Simply practise counting backwards together (starting with 10) but when you get to zero, carry on counting through negative numbers. For example: -1, -2, -3, -4. This can help your child practise using negative numbers.

Say the Next Number

This simple activity builds on counting negative numbers together but in this instance, you take it in turns. Explain to your child that you are going to count backwards together. Then, say a number such as 2. Take it in turns at saying the next number in the sequence e.g. 2, 1, 0, -1, -2, -3. This can help your child think carefully about negative numbers in a sequence. You can also challenge your child by counting backwards in different steps, such as 2: 2, 0, -2, -4, -6.

Make a Negative Number Line

This involves making a large line of negative numbers in sequence which your child can practise counting backwards and forwards on by hopping along the line and saying each number in the sequence. There are several ways you could make this, such as: drawing it out in chalk on the driveway or garden; sticking lots of sheets of paper together in a line, each with the next number in the sequence and making foam tiles with the numbers in the sequence.

Reading a Thermometer

You can introduce negative numbers to your child using a thermometer. Have a look at the thermometer together and ask your child what they think the numbers below zero are. Explain to them that they show temperatures lower than zero. Use the thermometer to record the temperature of your freezer (or outside if in winter) to show the cold temperature on the thermometer.



Step 1

Recognise That There Are Numbers below Zero

A negative number is a number that is less than zero. When counting backwards, we don't stop at zero, but we go into negative numbers. They are written like positive numbers with a minus sign placed before each number. Positive numbers are those above zero and negative numbers are below zero:

Positive numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...

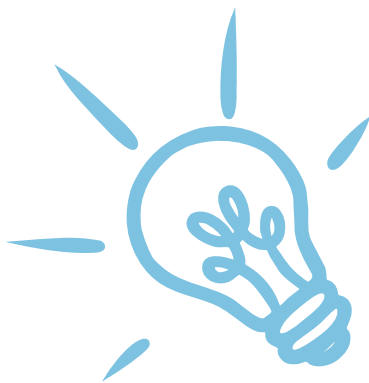
Negative: -1, -2, -3, -4, -5...

In school, diagrams and number lines are often used to introduce the concept of negative numbers. At home, you can use this [Negative Numbers Visual Aid poster](#) to help introduce these numbers. Discuss that some buildings have floors that go below the ground such as car parks and basements. Show the diagram and explain that the ground is zero. Discuss with your child what they notice happening for floors below zero and explain that these are negative numbers, numbers that are lower than zero.

Counting Backwards Through Zero

Once your child is familiar with the concept of negative numbers, you can start counting backwards together through zero. This is a simple activity that can be done when out walking, in the car, at the dinner table or any time you find appropriate. Simply practise counting backwards from 10 to -10. You could even take it in turns to say the next number in the sequence as you count backwards. This [Positive and Negative Number A4 Display Poster](#) can be used to support your child as they count backwards through zero.

Step 2



Explore and Discover More

Twinkl Go! is a digital platform, hosting interactive content such as videos, games, audiobooks and more. Twinkl Go! enables digital content to be streamed to your computer or mobile device.



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Book Club

Twinkl Book Club is our book subscription service. Enjoy our original works of fiction in beautiful printed form, delivered to you each half-term and yours to keep!



Twinkl Boost is a range of intervention resources, created to support and lift learning with children at every level. These include our easy-to-use SATs and Phonics Screening resources.

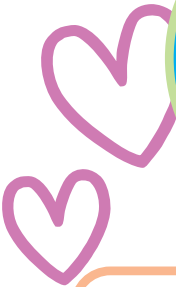


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Boost



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imagine

Imagine resources are designed to help your children to think creatively, question and imagine. Every week, a new topic consisting of five photos, each with related activities, is created.



Twinkl Originals are engaging stories written to inspire children from EYFS to KS2. Designed to encourage a love of reading and help curriculum-wide learning through accompanying resources.



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KIDS' TV

Twinkl Kids' TV is our wonderful YouTube channel dedicated to fun and informative video-style resources full of new and creative activities you can try at home!

