ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HOW TO SUBTRACT

This short booklet will outline the formal method we use at St Patrick's for teaching subtraction. It will allow you to practise this method with your child at home in the full confidence that your input will compliment and reinforce the work we already do.

How to Subtract

1. Place your numbers above one another ensuring that they are all in the correct columns. Remember the large number needs to be first and at the top.

Example

65 - 23

$\longrightarrow$

$$\begin{array}{r} 65 \\ -23 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

2. Start at the Units column and take the numbers, writing the answer underneath.

Example

$$\begin{array}{r} 65 \\ -23 \\ \hline 2 \end{array}$$

3. Move onto the Tens column and do the same. If there are other columns, like hundreds and thousands do the same again.

Example

$$\begin{array}{r} 65 \\ -23 \\ \hline 42 \end{array}$$

How to Subtract

4. In this sum there is a problem.

Example

62 - 23

$$
\begin{array}{r} 62 \\ -\ 23 \\ \hline \end{array}
\qquad
\begin{array}{r} 62 \\ -\ 23 \\ \hline \end{array}
\begin{array}{l} {\scriptstyle 2} \\ {\scriptstyle -} \\ {\scriptstyle 3} \end{array}
$$

I can't do 2 – 3! I need to make the top number bigger so I can subtract.

5. To do this I try and borrow 1 from the next column – which contains the number 6.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 1} \\ 62 \\ -\ 23 \\ \hline \end{array}
\qquad \longrightarrow \qquad
\begin{array}{r} 6{}^{1}\!2 \\ -\ 23 \\ \hline \end{array}
$$

Notice how the 1 comes over and I put it in front of the 2. This gives me the number 12 (a mistake children tend to make is to add the 1 + 2 to give 3).

How to Subtract

6. Now the number has gone from 2 to 12. It is big enough to do the subtraction now. However, I have borrowed 1 from the 6. That must mean that the 6 changes to a 5. So cross out the 6 and place a 5 above it

Example

$$\begin{array}{r} 5^{}_{1} \\ \cancel{6}2 \\ \underline{23} \end{array}$$

7. Finally, your sum is ready to do. Begin with 12 – 3.

Example

$$\begin{array}{r} 5^{}_{1} \\ \cancel{6}2 \\ \underline{23} \\ 9 \end{array}$$

12
-
3

8. Then move onto the tens' column to do the final take away.

How to Subtract

8. Then move onto the tens' column to do the final take away.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
5 \\
- \\
2
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{r}
5\,_{1} \\
\cancel{6}2 \\
23 \\
\hline
39
\end{array}
$$

9. If the large number is in the hundreds, make sure the columns are lined up correctly.

Example

123 - 65 ⟶
$$
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
-65 \\
\hline
\end{array}
$$
⊗

This is wrong, because you have the hundred (1) above the ten (6).

How to Subtract

This one below is correct.

$$
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
\end{array}
$$

How to Subtract

10. The sum means I have to borrow straight away because 3 – 5 doesn't work.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
- \ 65 \\
\end{array}
\quad \longrightarrow \quad
\begin{array}{r}
1 \\
123 \\
- \ 65 \\
\end{array}
\quad \longrightarrow \quad
\begin{array}{r}
1 \\
123 \\
- \ 65 \\
\end{array}
$$

This has made 13. However, don't forget that you took 1 from the 2 and you need to cross this off and make it 1.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
1 \quad 1 \\
123 \\
- \ 65 \\
\end{array}
$$

You are now ready to do the sum. 13 -5 is the first part.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
1 \quad 1 \\
123 \\
- \ 65 \\
\hline
8 \\
\end{array}
$$

How to Subtract

11. When you move onto the tens' column. You have the sum 1 – 6 which you can't do, so have to borrow again from the next column - the hundreds.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
1\!\!\!\!3 \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
8
\end{array}
\quad \longrightarrow \quad
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
8
\end{array}
\quad \longrightarrow \quad
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
8
\end{array}
$$

Remember that you borrowed from the hundreds (from 1). So 1 – 1 leaves 0 in the hundreds' column.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
123 \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
8
\end{array}
$$

How to Subtract

12. Now finish the sum, starting with the tens' column and 11 – 6.

Example

$$
\begin{array}{r}
0\overset{\overset{11}{\cancel{1}}}{1}\cancel{2}3^{1} \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
8
\end{array}
$$

→

$$
\begin{array}{r}
0\overset{\overset{11}{\cancel{1}}}{1}\cancel{2}3^{1} \\
-\ 65 \\
\hline
58
\end{array}
$$

The sum looks finished. However, you have to still look at the hundreds' column. There is a 0 at the top and a blank at the bottom. So that means 0 – 0, which gives 0. So you can leave that blank and the answer remains 58.

N.B. You can see how messy it can get, so it is important you space your work out.

Think you've mastered it? Then try The Big 10.

THE BIG 10

Can you get The Big 10?
1. 34 - 21
2. 65 - 34
3. 44 – 25
4. 53 - 27
5. 244 – 123
6. 85 - 39
7. 154 - 36
8. 254 - 139
9. 654 - 288
10. 984 - 476