Can I round a two-digit number to the nearest ten?
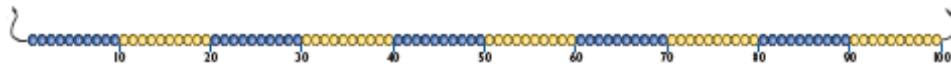
Teaching guidance

Key vocabulary

digit, ones/units, tens, one-digit number, two-digit number, round to the nearest ten, approximate, multiple of ten, before, after, between, explain

Models and images, resources and equipment

Bead strings

Use bead strings to help children identify the multiples of ten that a given number lies between and decide which multiple the number is closer to.

Number lines

Position numbers on number lines to help children see the multiple of ten they are closest to.

32

rounded to the nearest ten

32 ⟶ 30

Revert back to numbered number lines if children find using a partly numbered line challenging.

Vertical number lines

Presenting a number line vertically can help some children with the language of rounding 'up' and 'down'.

Teaching tips

- Use resources such as bead strings and number lines to help children:
    - identify the multiples of 10 that the number lies between;
    - decide which multiple the number is closer to.
- 100-squares are not the most appropriate resource to use when helping children round numbers to the nearest 10.
- Ask children to explain which digit they need to look at to decide whether to round a number up or down. If necessary, remind them that to round to the nearest 10, they should look at the units digit. If the units digit is below 5, round down. If it is 5 or above, round up.
- Make sure that children meet examples where numbers round to 0, for example ask them to round 2 to the nearest 10.
- Ask open questions such as:
    - A number rounded to the nearest 10 is 30. What could the number be?
    - I think of a number and round it to the nearest 10. The answer is 50. What could my number be?
- Discuss practical situations to help children understand that rounding is used when only approximate numbers or amounts are needed, for example a pot containing 27 pencils could be described as containing about 30 pencils.