

Goal: Make cleaning up more fun with predictions and counting

Grades: K–4

Minimum number of participants: 1

Suggested grouping: individual

Time: 10 minutes or less

Math: estimating and counting

Materials:

ordinary clutter

Prerequisites: counting a few objects

Books about counting and cleaning:

Ten Rowdy Ravens. Ewing, Susan.
(Alaska Northwest, 2005).

Countdown to Clean Up! Wallace,
Nancy. (Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

1 Predict: is ten enough?

About how many things do you think are scattered on the table and floor?

If each person puts away ten things, do you think we'll get them all put away?

Talk About...

2 Take ten

Each child counts and puts away ten items (or fewer if there aren't enough).

3 Are we done?

Children continue taking ten (or fewer) until everything is picked up.



4 How many in all?

Children count by 10's (or by how many everyone picked up) to find the total.

Talk About...

How does the total compare with our estimates? Was anyone close?

Variations

Take five (easier). Children take five objects at a time.

How long does it take? (harder) Before cleaning up, ask children to estimate how long they think it would take to get everything put away. Can they do it in 2 minutes? 5 minutes? Time them to see.

 **Spotlight**

Counting

Many young children can recite the counting numbers to 50, 100, or higher, but they can only count 10 to 20 objects accurately. Counting objects is more challenging because it requires keeping several things in mind. Children need to remember which objects have already been counted, which are left to count, and what number in the counting sequence is next.

Likewise, some children can recite 10, 20, 30... out loud, but are not able to count out that many objects correctly. This activity provides them with a way to count meaningfully by grouping objects in tens.



 **EVERYDAY Connections**

Thinking in tens

It will take about 10 minutes. It costs about 50 dollars. I've got at least 20 cookbooks in my kitchen.

Adults rely on tens in daily life. They often round numbers to the nearest ten when working with time, money, and amounts.

Historians believe our number system is based on tens because we have ten fingers. When children first learn to count, add, and subtract, they often rely on their fingers. They may find problems involving numbers up to 10 easiest. With numbers in the teens, you run out of fingers, so there is more to keep track of in your head.