

EduTrend Contents

G4C · STRATEGY GAMES · PRIMARY

Take the Last Counter

Take 1, 2 or 3 counters in turn and discover the winning strategy

Ages 6–10	Level: Developing	15 minutes	Pairs · up to 30	Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

Take the Last Counter

Players take turns to remove 1, 2 or 3 counters from a pile of 15. Whoever takes the last counter wins. After a few rounds, ask whether going first or second matters, and whether there is a number of counters they want to leave for their opponent. Pairs share discoveries with the class.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- count and subtract;
- predict an opponent;
- look for patterns;
- explain a strategy.

KEY WORDS

counter · take · last · pattern · predict · strategy

CURRICULUM LINKS

Maths: subtraction and patterns.
PSHE: fair play.

1	2	3	4	5	6
WARM UP	**EXPLAIN**	**PLAN**	**PLAY**	**REPLAY**	**CLOSE**
Minds ready	One game, clear rules	Think ahead	Predict your opponent	What else could you try?	Shake hands

Materials (per pair)

- 15 counters or dried beans per pair
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Count counters.
- Model a round.
- Plan pairs.
- Prepare a discovery chart.

SAFETY

Keep small counters away from children who mouth things.

ACTIVITY 02 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Choose games where decisions, not dice, decide the result.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–2 min **Warm up**	Count back in ones, twos, threes.	*"What is 15 take 3?"*
2–3 min **Explain**	Rules.	*"Who wins?"*
3–12 min **Play**	Rounds; look for patterns.	*"What number do you want to leave?"*
12–15 min **Share**	Discoveries.	*"Does going first matter?"*

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Find a number of counters you want to leave your opponent and explain why.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The strategy game know-how in brief

Prediction means imagining what the opponent will do next.

Searching for a winning pattern builds mathematical reasoning.

Common ideas to listen for

- “It’s just luck.” There is a pattern.
- “Taking more is always better.” Not always.
- “Going first always wins.” It depends on the start.

Adapting the activity

Support

Start with 10 counters and allow taking 1 or 2.

Stretch

The player who takes the last counter loses; find the new strategy.

WORKSHEET 1

Game record

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Record each move.

Moves

Move	Took	Left
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

WORKSHEET 2

Pattern hunt

Which numbers do you want to leave?

Numbers to leave

WORKSHEET 3

Reflection

Draw or write.

My strategy is...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	Counts accurately	Predicts	Explains a strategy

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Take the Last Counter is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents G4C Strategy Games programme (primary, level: developing). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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