

What is subitising?



At its simplest, subitising is being able to visually see a number of objects instantly without needing to count them out one at a time.

Subitising actually comes from the Latin word for suddenly; it may not be a word we hear very often but it's actually a crucial skill that many of us use on a daily basis without even realising it.

Types of subitising:

1. Perceptual subitising

This is the ability to recognise the number of objects in front of you without using any mathematical process - it's instinctual.

2. Conceptual subitising

This is where you are able to recognise a number by grouping in into small sets. For example, if you are shown a line of 6 black dots, it's likely that you will automatically group these into 2 groups of 3, and then know that there are 6 in total without actually counting each one.

Why is being able to subitise useful?

Simply, it can make working out maths problems a lot faster. If your brain is already able to recognise certain groups of numbers easily, then you'll have more time to focus on other aspects of the problem.

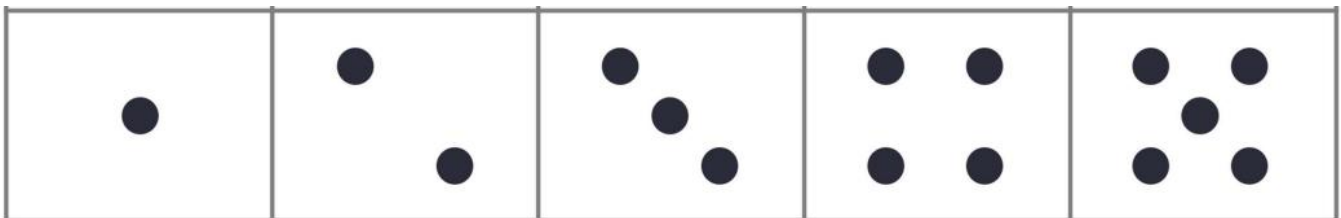
Subitising helps us to count larger numbers. Eg 7 can be arranged in a 'seven tree' – 4 add 3. This helps with factual fluency as they progress through school.



How can I help my child learn to subitise?

Using board games with dice is a fun way to develop children's subitising ability without them even realising. Remind children they don't need to count if the number is 5 or smaller.

Subitising is all about exposing children to the visual representations of numbers.



The White Rose 1 minute maths app (free) is brilliant for subitising practise!

