Information for parents

Second class

Helping your child with subtraction: tens and units

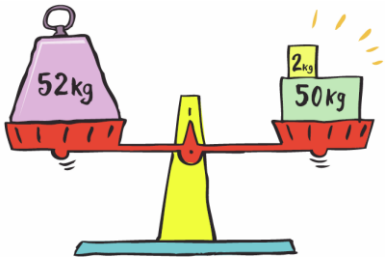
Helping your child with maths homework can sometimes seem tricky. For example, if you had to work out a subtraction problem such as

52 – 28 = ☐

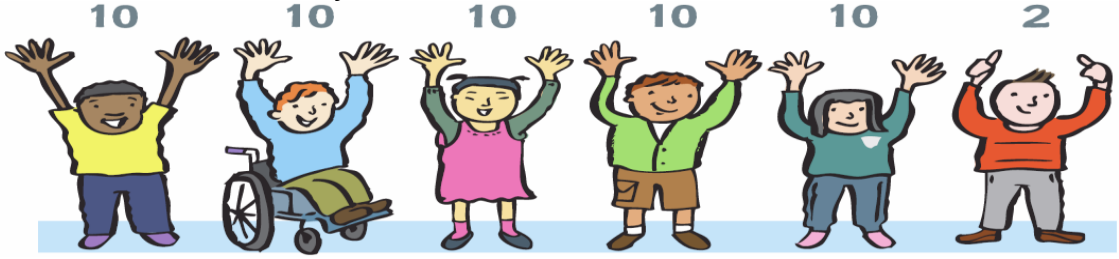
you may 'borrow' a one and then 'pay it back' when you notice that you cannot take 8 away from 2. This is how you may have been taught to do it at school, and the finished problem would look like this:

$$\begin{array}{r} 5\,{}^{1}2 \\ -\,2_{1}\,8 \\ \hline 2\;\;4 \end{array}$$

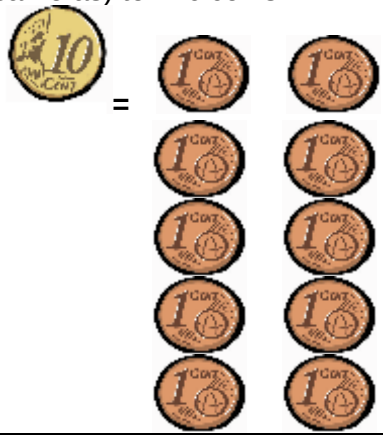
When the number on the bottom is too big to subtract from the number on the top, your child would probably use **renaming** if he or she had to work out the answer. This is because your child has been taught to think about numbers such as 52 as 50 and 2 and not as 5 and 2.



Using **renaming** to subtract big numbers helps your child to understand what he or she is doing and why, as opposed to simply following a rule of thumb. This tip sheet is a step-by-step guide in helping your child to use **renaming** to subtract numbers from each other using the example above, 52 – 28. It may help your child to understand and use renaming if he or she could use objects such as cubes, counters, buttons, or money.



Step one	Step two	Step three
Read the problem aloud. **Tens** | **Units** 5 | 2 - 2 | 8 52 **take away** 28 equals what? Can you **estimate** (approximate) what the answer will be?	Draw the problem or use objects, for example, **count out/up the number** 52 **in tens and units** using money: **Tens**: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 **Units**: 51, 52	**Circle** the **bigger number** in the **units column**: **Tens** | **Units** 5 | 2 - 2 | ⑧ Ask your child: *Can you take 8 cent away from 2 cent? No?* So, w*hat can you do?* Your child could say this little rhyme: *More on top?* *No need to stop!* *More on the floor?* *Go next door.* *Get one ten.* *That's ten units more.* Notice that one 10c coin **is equal to** (the same as) ten 1c coins:



Step four

Help your child to **exchange** (swop) one 10c coin for ten 1c coins. Show your child four 10c coins and twelve 1c coins.

Tens	Units
	

Ask your child: *How many 10c coins do you have now? How many 1c coins?*
Then ask: *Can you say 12 cent in another way?*
Record what you have done as follows.

Tens	Units
4 ~~5~~	$^{1}2$
- 2	8

Step five

Try working out the problem. Begin with the units' column.

Tens	Units
	

12 cent, **take away** 8 cent, **leaves** 4 cent.

Tens	Units
4 ~~5~~	$^{1}2$
- 2	8
	4

Step six

Next work on the tens' column.

Tens	Units
	

Four 10c coins, **take away** two 10c coins, **leaves** two 10c coins.

Tens	Units
4 ~~5~~	$^{1}2$
- 2	8
2	4

And the **answer** is: Fifty-two take away twenty-eight equals twenty-four.

52 – 28 = 24