

Ordinal Numbers

Companion Text: If You See the Moon, by Zia Wells

Subject Area & Grade Level: Mathematics, 1st Grade

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Order elements of a set according to a given attribute
- Demonstrate understanding of ordinal numbers as relative to physical position
- Use ordinal numbers as descriptive language

Activity

Read the story once through without stopping. Then, open up to page 35 and reread it. If Cirra slid down “first,” then what would we call Nimbu’s slide? (Second). Split the room into two equal or nearly equal groups of students. Tell the groups that you are going to give them a way to organize themselves into a line, and that they should try to move as quickly as they can to order themselves by the attribute you give them. Whichever group finishes first, wins. The other group will name each member of winning line in turn, using his or her ordinal place-name and the attribute given for that round. For example, you could tell the two groups of students to line up according to height. The losing team would then recite, for example, “First in line is Johnny, the tallest person in the group. The second-tallest person is Jane. The third-tallest person is Steve, etc.”

Repeat this game many times until both groups have an easy time of naming all the necessary ordinal numbers, or as long as students enjoy it. The team naming the ordinal numbers could do so in unison, or each member of the group could name one of the numbers. Some attributes you could use are: name length, birthday, or alphabetical order. You could also play it throughout the day every time students line up for some reason, having the students in the last half of the line name the positions of students in the first half.

Reflection

Write the ordinal numbers on the board from first to twelfth, and ask students to recite them in unison. Have each student write a sentence using an ordinal number, spelled correctly, and then draw a picture to illustrate his or her sentence. Then, have students share their pictures with a small group, or present them to the class as a whole.

