



## Selecting Counting Books

Selecting counting books is greatly dependent upon the intended use, and often the use is for teaching mathematical elements. Each of these uses have unique considerations. Conversely, a counting book may be selected without any preconceived agenda, but simply for the quality of the book, overall. Use the following questions as you consider the selection of a counting book.

### Criteria to Consider General Quality

For use in teaching math, determine first what mathematical element or counting concept the book represents; then determine the book's intended audience.

- *Will the book be used to teach a math concept? If so, is that easily understood by the reader?*
- *Is the counting book's topic one that will be of interest to both math enthusiasts and math anxious students?*
- *Is there humor or an element of surprise or even suspense, to engage the learner? Does the book encourage mathematical exploration and/or mathematical thinking?*
- *If the text is in rhyme, does it flow well or is it forced, requiring re-readings to achieve flow?*
- *What does the author do with zero? Does the zero complement the mathematical learning to be achieved?*

### Illustrations, Object Representation

- *Will the cover art grab readers' immediate attention by topic and/or illustration?*
- *Are the illustrations clear, familiar, identifiable, and uncluttered (unless intended)?*
- *For early counting skills does the illustrator make good use of white space?*
- *For very young learners does the book contain no abstractions?*
- *How does the illustrator highlight the number represented to stand out?*
- *Is the pictured object relevant and of interest to children?*
- *Do the images detract from or enhance the intent of the book?*
- *If the book is wordless, what techniques does the illustrator use to engage learners?*



## Counting Books for Beginning Math Instruction

- *Is there a clear link between numbers and the objects represented?*
- *Are the images of objects easily identifiable for the intended audience?*
- *Is the font familiar, large, and easily recognizable?*
- *Are there clear, countable objects pictured?*
- *Are numbers large? Do they stand on their own?*
- *How are the countable objects arranged?*
- *Does the book meet your need for specific numbering (e.g., 1-10, 1-20, 1-100, counting backward or by 2s)?*
- *How does the book encourage mathematical growth?*
- *Is there a single word, number, or math represented by an easily identifiable object or symbol?*
- *Is there ease in understanding any words represented or explaining number or counting terms?*
- *Can a young reader clearly understand what the illustration represents?*
- *Can this book be used to encourage students who are anxious about learning math?*
- *Does it provide a challenge for advanced mathematicians?*

## Counting Books for Older Students or English Learners

- *Is the mathematical concept one that is sophisticated enough to hold older readers' interest?*
- *Does each entry provide stimulating and new information or concept on the book's topic or theme?*
- *Will the book increase student vocabulary on the given topic?*
- *Does the text use sophisticated or complex language such as alliteration or wordplay to challenge readers' critical thinking?*
- *Do the illustrations provide challenging detail, style, or subject matter to stimulate critical thinking?*