Explore together

Balance Both Sides

Find a hidden number that makes both sides equal.

Get ready: 24 identical blocks and two mats or bowls.

01 Make the groups equal

Put 7 blocks on the left and 12 on the right.
Add 5 blocks to the left. Now both sides have 12.
Write 7 + 5 = 12. The equal sign says both sides have the same value.

02 Check both sides

8 + ___ = 6 + 4. The right side is 10.
Put 2 in the blank. The left side is 8 + 2, also 10.

Ask as you play

“Can you show me how you know?” Let your child point, build, draw or tell.

Try it yourself

Balance Both Sides

Point, build, draw or tell. A grown-up can read each question.

1

What goes in the blank? 9 + ___ = 15

2

What goes in the blank? ___ − 5 = 8

3

What goes in the blank? 7 + 5 = ___ + 4

4

Two bags have the same number of blocks. There are 14 blocks in all. How many are in each bag?

5 • Try it if you want

15 + ___ = 18 + 2. Find the missing number and show how you checked it.

Parent answer key

Balance Both Sides

Keep this page with the grown-up.

1 6. Nine plus six makes fifteen.

2 13. Taking 5 away from 13 leaves 8.

3 8. Both sides equal 12.

4 7 in each bag. Accept sharing the blocks evenly or checking 7 + 7 = 14.

5 5. Both sides equal 20. A valid explanation can also compare the gap from 15 to 18 and then add 2.

What did you notice?

Tried alone, tried with help, or skipped? Pointing, building and explaining all count.

Next time

If the blank feels tricky, let your child build both sides. If it feels easy, ask them to make a new equation with equal sides.