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Getting Started

Materials for Hands-On Learning

Activities Section

Printable Card Types

HOW TO USE

Step 1: Print & Prepare

Print all cards on thick paper or cardstock for durability. For long-term use, you may also laminate the cards. Carefully cut each card separately so they can be easily handled by toddlers during activities.

Step 2: Explore the 100 Activities

Next, read through the 100 activities provided below. These activities show many fun and simple ways to teach and play using the cards.

They are thoughtfully designed to develop:

- Counting skills
- One-to-one correspondence
- Number recognition
- Comparing quantities
- Early addition & subtraction thinking
- Subitizing (recognizing quantities instantly)
- Basic number sense toddlers need

Feel free to follow the activities step-by-step, or pick the ones that match your child's interests and learning stage.

Step 3: Create Your Own Activities

You are encouraged to come up with your own unique ways to use these cards. Toddlers learn best through hands-on play, so combine the cards with real objects around you.

You can use items such as:

- Bottle caps / soft tops
- Pebbles
- Wooden blocks
- Lego pieces
- Crayons/colours
- Clay play-dough
- Ping pong balls
- Buttons
- Beads
- Coins (with supervision)
- Ice cream sticks
- Pom-poms
- Paper clips (for older toddlers)
- Erasers
- Shells
- Marbles (with supervision)
- Toy animals
- Toy cars
- Puzzle pieces

Use Natural Objects for Meaningful Learning

Learning becomes more powerful when connected to real life. Try using:

From Nature

- Leaves
- Flowers
- Twigs
- Seeds
- Stones
- Sand
- Grass pieces
- Pinecones
- Petals
- Small fruits

At the Park

- Collect 5 leaves for number 5
- Count swings
- Match stones to cards
- Jump based on the number cards

In the Kitchen

- Counting spoons
- Sorting beans/lentils
- Counting fruits
- Matching cups to numbers
- Measuring ingredients
- Arranging plates
- At the Grocery Store
- Count apples in a bag
- Compare quantities
- Match the number cards with the items
- Spot numbers on price tags

Everyday Household Items

- Socks
- Cups
- Plates
- Blocks
- Books
- Toys
- Buttons
- Towels

The more hands-on and real-world the learning is, the better toddlers understand numbers. Use these cards playfully, flexibly, and creatively. The goal is to make early math fun, meaningful, and interactive.

Activities

The Strawberry Count	Place a dot card face up and put that exact number of real berries (or grapes, raisins, crackers) on the table. Let the child notice the dots and the food match.
Touch and Count Aloud	Show a dot card. The child claps once for every dot they see ,no counting aloud, just clapping. Then show the matching number card.
Make a Tally for Your Snack	Give the child 4 crackers. Show the tally card with 4 marks. As they eat each cracker, point to one tally mark.
Clap the Count	Show a dot card. The child claps once for every dot they see ,no counting aloud, just clapping. Then show the matching number card.
How Many Steps to the Door?	Take big stomping steps across the room. Count together out loud with each stomp. Then lay out the dot card that matches.
Dot Card Peek	Flash a dot card quickly (2 seconds) then hide it. Ask "how many dots did you see?" The child must hold the quantity in their mind for a moment.
Count Your Fingers with the Card	Show a dot card. The child holds up the same number of fingers. They look at their fingers and the card side by side. Then count both.
Go Fetch That Many	Show a dot card (start with 2 or 3). Ask the child to go find that many blocks, toys, or shoes and bring them back. They must hold the number in their head, search, and return with the right amount.
Count the Birds Outside	Sit by a window. Every time you see a bird (or car, or person walking), tap one tally mark on the tally card. After a few minutes, count how many you tapped.
Drumbeat Counting	Show a dot card. The child beats a drum (or taps the table) once for every dot, counting aloud with each beat. The rhythm of counting becomes physical and musical.
Count and Cover	Use the purple dot card. Give the child small pebbles or buttons. They place one pebble on each dot, counting aloud as they go. When all dots are covered, that number is how many pebbles they used.

Whisper Count	Count the dots on a card by whispering very quietly together. Then count them again shouting. Then count silently, only mouthing the words.
Tally Your Jumps	The child jumps. You mark one tally mark per jump on a tally card. After 5 jumps, show them the card.
Count Backwards from the Card	Show a dot card with 5. Count together from 5 down to 1, removing one finger from the card each time. Countdown has a drama "3, 2, 1... zero!"
Counting in Two Languages	Count the dots on a card in two languages (English and any other the family speaks). Point to each dot and say both words
One More Dot Game	Show a dot card. Ask: "What if we added one more dot , how many would there be?" The child predicts, then you draw a dot on paper next to the card to show it.
Grocery Count	At snack prep, count the items going into a bowl together. Then find the number card that matches. Place the number card next to the bowl.
The Last Number Is the Total	Count the dots together, then pause and circle the last number said with your finger in the air.Repeat with different cards over many days. This teaches the cardinal principle: the final count is the total.
One Cup Per Friend	At snack time, the child's job is to place exactly one cup in front of each seated friend. Give them the dot card matching the number of friends.
Dot in Every Box	Give the child a ten frame card and small stickers (or stones). Their job: place exactly one sticker in each box that has a pink dot. No dot = no sticker.
One Book Per Child	Before story time, count the children. Show that dot card. The child distributes exactly one book per friend. If a book is left over , someone got two. If a child has none , there weren't enough books
Seed in Every Hole	Poke holes in a piece of dough or soil. Show a dot card. The child presses exactly one seed into each hole. When seeds run out before holes are filled, the child sees the mismatch and understands "not enough" before they ever hear the word.

Shoe Pairing	Mix up several pairs of shoes. The child must pair them — one left with one right. Show the corresponding dot card for the number of pairs. Each correct pair is a correspondence match
Placemat and Spoon	Set a table. Give the child placemats and spoons separately. Their task: one spoon on each placemat. Too many spoons? Something is wrong. Too few? Someone eats with their hands
Fill the Ten-Frame Row	Show a ten-frame card that has dots in the left column only. Give the child buttons. "Put one button in each empty box in the same row." When the row is full, count both the pink dots and the buttons
Sticker on Every Dot	Give the child a dot card and small round stickers. Their job is to press exactly one sticker on each dot. Count the stickers used. Count the dots.
Peg on Every Dot	Print or lay a dot card flat. Give the child clothespins or pegs. They clip one peg to the edge of the card for each dot they count. The physical resistance of the peg makes each count feel deliberate and real. great for children who need strong sensory input.
One Flower Per Vase	Set out small cups (vases) and stems (straws or sticks). Show a purple dot card. The child places exactly one flower stem in each cup. If a stem is left over, they find the "empty vase." Natural, beautiful, one-to-one in a caring context.
One Hat Per Teddy	Line up stuffed animals. Show a dot card. The child makes or places one "hat" (a piece of paper folded) on each bear's head. Teddy bears without hats look sad — the social motivation of the toys makes the child care deeply about getting it right
Nail on Every Hook	If you have a coat rack or hooks, this is natural. The child hangs exactly one item per hook. The dot card shows how many hooks. This is a daily routine activity
One Crayon Per Box	Use a ten-frame card as a "grid." Give one crayon per box shown on the card. The child places each crayon carefully in one frame cell. If there are 5 pink dots, there are 5 crayons to place
Egg Cup Correspondence	An egg carton works perfectly. Show a dot card. The child drops exactly one small ball or pom-pom in each cup. The hollow egg cells cry out to be filled — one per cup

Chair Count Before Circle Time	Before every circle time, ask the child: do we have enough chairs? Count the children, find that dot card, then count the chairs. Do they match? If not, what do we do?
Stamp Per Dot	Give the child a small stamp (even a thumb dipped in paint). Show a dot card. They stamp once for every dot — counting aloud as they go. The stamped paper becomes a self-made dot card
Pasta in Every Bowl	Set out small cups and dried pasta pieces. Show a dot card. Child places that many pieces in a cup — one by one, counting. This can be done while cooking is happening nearby.
Toy Car in Every Parking Space	Draw or tape "parking spaces" on paper — 3 spaces. Show the 3-dot card. The child parks exactly one toy car in each space. One car per space. If a car tries to share, "no, that space is taken!"
Cheerio in Every Frame	Show a ten-frame card with some dots filled. Give the child Cheerios (or any circular snack). They place one Cheerio on each pink dot — exactly one. Count how many Cheerios were placed. Then eat them while counting down
Puppet Gets One Gift	Line up 4 stuffed toys. Show the 4-dot card. The child gives each puppet exactly one "gift" (a block, a stone, a crumpled ball). Every puppet must get one , no puppet gets two.
The Unfair Snack	Give one child 3 crackers and another child 6. Say nothing. The child with 3 will notice within seconds. Only after the reaction do you name it: "You have less. They have more."
Which Card Has More Dots?	Lay two dot cards face up. Ask "which has more dots?" The child points. Then count both together to verify. Move from easy gaps (1 vs 5) to closer ones (3 vs 4).
Big Number, Small Number	Lay number cards 1 and 5 on the floor far apart. Call out "big number!" — the child jumps to 5. "Small number!" — they jump to 1. Later add 3 in the middle.
Tower Wars	Two children each pick a dot card secretly. They build a block tower with that many blocks. Reveal! Whose tower is taller? Count both towers. The card with more dots = taller tower.

Line Them Up and Compare	Take two dot cards. For each dot, place a block in a row. Compare the two rows side by side. The longer row has more. The shorter row has less. If they're the same length , “same!”
Number Card Ordering Race	Mix up number cards 1–5. Race to put them in order, smallest to biggest. Then flip each and confirm with dot cards placed underneath.
Which Weighs More?	Pick two dot cards. Collect that many stones/blocks for each. Place both groups on either side of a simple balance scale (or hold one group in each hand). Which is heavier?
Which Frame Is Fuller?	Show two ten-frame cards with different numbers of dots. Ask: "Which frame has more pink dots?" Then count both. The ten-frame makes visual comparison very clear.
Same Same Game	Shuffle dot cards and deal one to each player. Both reveal at the same time. If they match — shout "SAME!" If not — say who has more and who has less. No winner, no loser — just noticing.
Fill My Cup More Than Yours	Give two cups and some blocks. Each person picks a dot card. Fill your cup with that many blocks. Whose cup is more full? The child now experiences "more" as physical volume.
Hide a Number — Guess if It's More or Less	Show one number card. Hide another. Give clues: "It's more than 3." The child guesses. Reveal. Were they right? Repeat with "less than." This builds the logic of inequality.
Make Them Equal	Show two dot cards with different numbers. Give the child blocks. "Make them equal." They must add blocks to the smaller group. How many did they add? That number is the difference.
Dot Card Snap	Two players each hold a stack of dot cards face down. Both flip the top card at the same time. The player whose card has MORE dots wins both. Play until the deck is done.
Sort Cards into Piles: More Than 3 / Less Than 3	Place a 3-dot card in the center. Deal cards and the child sorts: more than 3 on the right, less than 3 on the left, same as 3 in the middle. A three-way sort.

Who Ate More?	After a snack, ask "who ate more pieces?" Count together what's left (if anything). If one person's plate is emptier, they probably ate more. Estimating and then verifying with counting.
Biggest Dot Card Wins the Pillow	Flip two dot cards. Whoever has the bigger number gets to sit on the special pillow for 30 seconds. Then new cards. The silly prize makes every comparison feel consequential and exciting .
Purple vs Green: Who Wins?	Randomly pick one purple and one green dot card. Compare the dots. The child decides which has more without counting — just looking. Then count to check.
Number Line Walk	Place number cards 1–5 on the floor in a line. Call "stand on 3!" The child stands on it. "Move to something bigger!" They step forward. "Now something smaller!" They step back.
Reunite the Pair	Scatter dot cards and number cards mixed up. The child's job: reunite each number with its dot card partner.
Number Hopscotch	Draw or tape numbers 1–5 on the ground. Call a number — the child hops to it. No order, just random calls. They must recognize the shape of the numeral and move their body to it.
Trace the Number in Salt	Pour a thin layer of salt (or sand) on a tray. Show a number card. The child traces the numeral shape with their finger in the salt.
Number Hide and Seek	Hide number cards around the room. Call out a number. The child finds that card. When found, they bring it back, place the matching dot card next to it, and count together.
What Number Am I Thinking Of?	Think of a number. Give clues using dot cards and quantities: "I'm thinking of a number. You can show it with these many dots." Lay out that many objects.
Three Ways to Show the Same Number	Pick a number. Show: the yellow number card, the matching dot card, and the matching tally card. All three show the same number differently. Say: "They're all 4 — same number, different faces."

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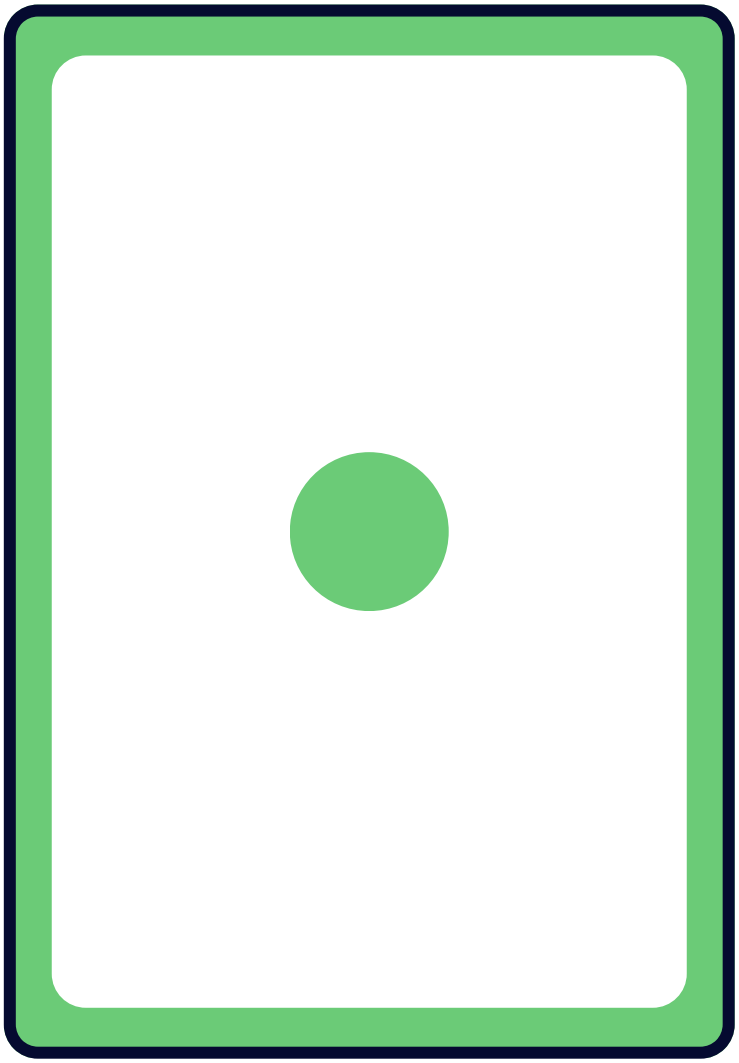
Number Card Fishing	Attach paper clips to number cards. Use a stick with a magnet on a string as a "fishing rod." Fish up a card — what number is it? Count out that many real objects to match.

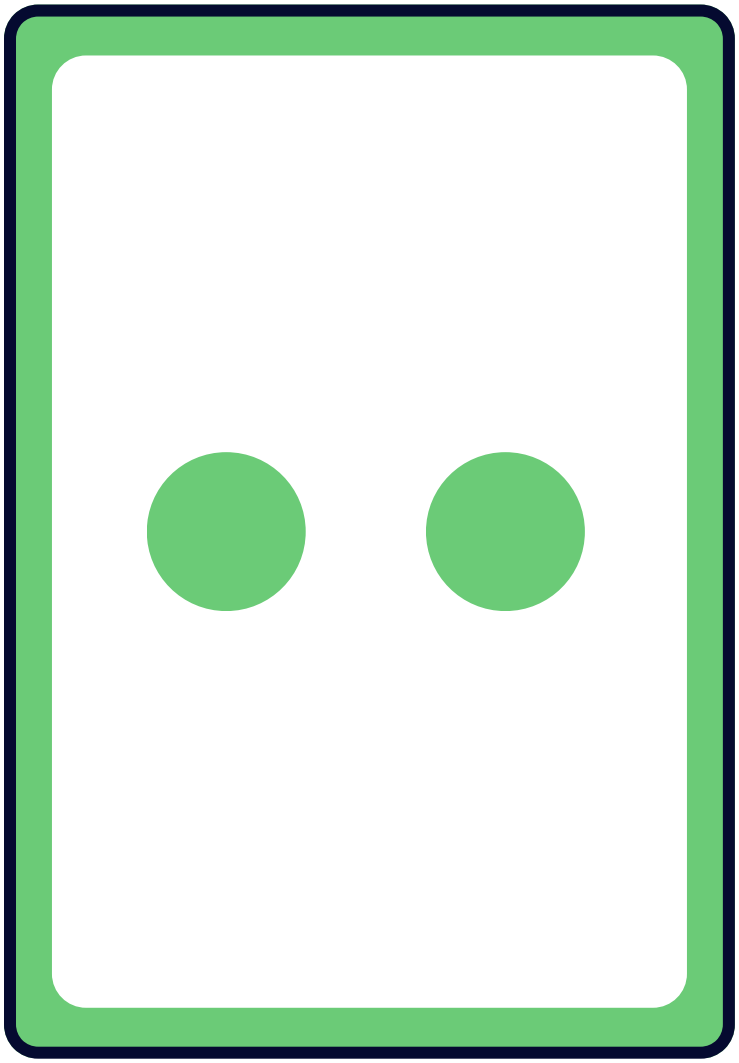
Blind Bag Number Guess	Put number cards in a bag. The child reaches in, feels one card, and tries to guess the number without looking — using only texture and shape. Then reveal.
Number Card Memory	Lay 6 cards face down: 3 number cards (1, 2, 3) and their 3 matching dot cards. Flip two at a time — find the pair. Each failed attempt requires holding the number and its dot-pair in memory.
The Number Has a Voice	Show a number card. Ask: "If this number could talk, what would it say?" Some children say "I am three!" Others make up stories. The personification of a number builds emotional memory .
Make the Number with Your Body	Show a number card. The child forms that numeral shape with their body — arms curved for 2, body straight for 1, bend for 3. Silliness is welcome.
Number Detective	Go on a walk. The child holds a number card (say, 3). Their mission: spot that number written anywhere in the real world — on a door, a mailbox, a sign. When found, they shout "I found my number!".
Flip and Feed	Flip a number card. Immediately "feed" a stuffed animal that many pieces of fake food (or real crackers). Say the number as you feed each piece. When done — show the dot card
Staircase of Number Cards	Arrange number cards 1–5 going up like stairs, each one propped slightly higher. Walk fingers up: "1 is small, 2 is a step up..." The visual staircase makes the increasing nature of numbers spatial and permanent.
Make Play-Doh Numbers	Show a number card. The child forms that numeral out of a rolled rope of play-doh placed on top of the card. They're tracing with dough. Then count out that many small dough balls to sit next to the number.
Number Card Day Labels	Every morning, place the day's number card on the breakfast table (day 1, day 2...). Count with the child how many days in a row they've done something — brushed teeth, eaten breakfast, come to school.
Flash Card — No Counting Allowed	Flash a dot card for 1 second. Ask "how many?" The child must answer from pattern recognition — no time to count. Only use 1–3 at first, then 4–5 later

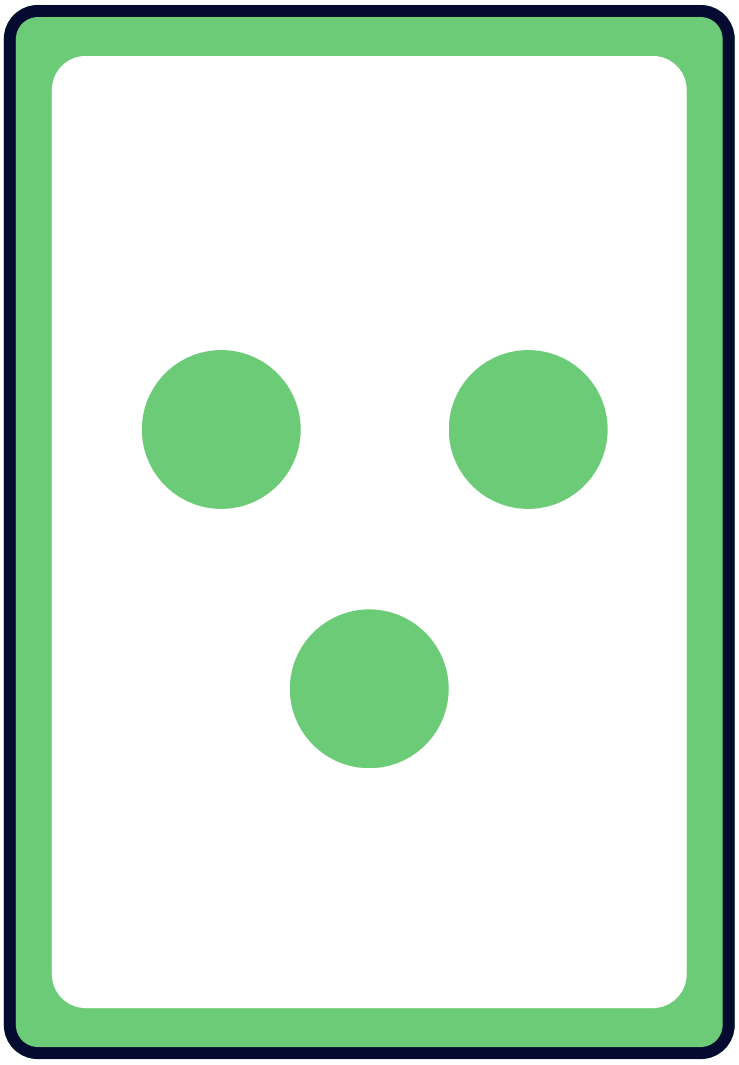
Same Dots, Different Arrangement	Show a green dot card with 4 dots in a square and a purple dot card with 4 dots in a diagonal. Both have the same number — but they look different. "Are they the same?" Count both.
How Full Is the Frame?	Show a ten-frame card with 3 dots filled. Ask: "How many are filled? How many are empty?" The child can see at a glance that it's almost empty — and count the dots.
Dots as a Pattern — Not a Count	Show dot cards and ask "does this remind you of anything?" 2 dots side by side = eyes. 3 in a triangle = a nose and eyes.
Tally Mark Subitize	Flash a tally card (1–4 marks). The child reads how many at a glance. At 5, the diagonal crossbar makes a bundle — suddenly "5" is a group shape, not just five lines.
Build the Dot Pattern with Stones	Look at a dot card. Recreate its exact dot pattern using pebbles or buttons on a flat surface. Match not just the quantity but the arrangement.
Odd One Out	Lay three dot cards: two with 3 dots, one with 4. Ask "which one doesn't belong?" The child identifies the different one. Now discuss why.
See It — Don't Say It	Flash a dot card. The child holds up fingers silently to show how many — no words allowed. Educator holds up fingers too. They compare silently.
Two Cards — One Total	Show a green card with 2 dots and a purple card with 3 dots. "How many dots altogether?" The child counts all dots across both cards. This is the very first addition.
I Spy the Pattern	Lay several ten-frame cards. Ask "which one has a dot in the middle?" or "which one has all dots in one column?"
Draw the Dots from Memory	Show a dot card for 5 seconds. Turn it over. The child draws what they remember — the number of dots AND the arrangement. Flip back to check.

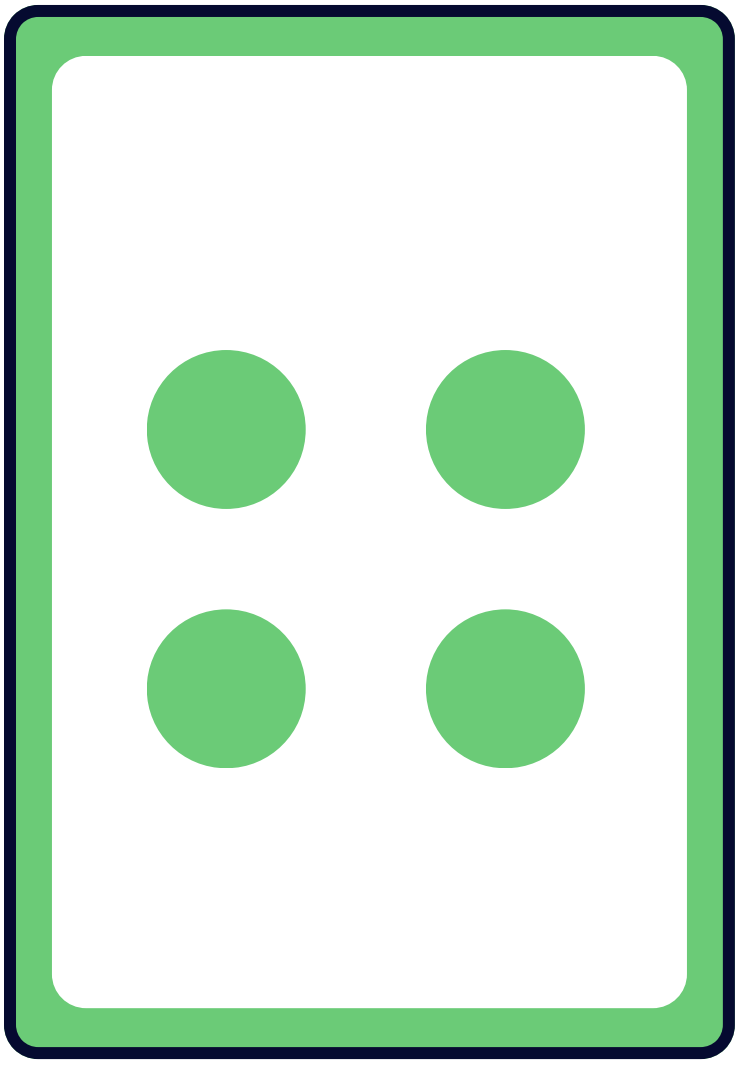
Which Is More — Without the Cards?	Don't use cards. Just say "3 or 5 — which is more?" The child answers based purely on their internal number sense. Then verify by collecting 3 and 5 real objects.
Group the Dots by 2s	Show a card with 6 dots. Ask: "Can you circle them in pairs?" The child draws imaginary circles around pairs of dots. 6 has 3 pairs — no leftover. 5 would have 2 pairs and one lonely dot.
The Number Between	Show two dot cards: 2 and 4. Ask "what number lives between these two?" The child must figure out 3. Then find the 3-dot card or the number card "3" to place in the middle.
Adding With Two Dot Cards	Place a 2-dot card, then the + operator card, then a 3-dot card. Count all dots: 1, 2... 3, 4, 5. Place the = card, then the 5-dot card. The child has built a real equation from physical cards.
The Eating Game (Subtraction)	Show a 5-dot card. Place the - card. Place a 2-dot card. "The bear ate 2 of the 5 raisins — how many are left?" Count the remaining dots on the 5-card while covering 2. Then place = and the 3-dot card.
What's the Same? The = Game	Place two dot cards with the same number — say, two cards both showing 3. Put the = card between them. "They're equal — the same!" Walk around the room finding pairs of things that are equal in quantity.
What Do I Need to Make 5?	Show a 3-dot card and a + card and a ? (blank). "We have 3 — how many more to make 5?" Child counts up from 3 on fingers: 4, 5 — two more! Place a 2-dot card. Then the = card. Then the 5-card.
Story Problem with Cards	Tell a story: "Two ducks were swimming. Three more ducks arrived. How many ducks now?" Child picks the 2-dot card, the + card, the 3-dot card, and counts all dots. Then picks the = and the 5-dot card.
The Leaving Party	Five toys are at a party (5-dot card). One leaves (remove it). Show - card and 1-dot card. How many at the party now? The child counts remaining toys — 4. Place = and 4-dot card.
Can You Make 4 Two Different Ways?	Challenge: use dot cards and a + card to make 4 in two different ways. 1+3 = 4. 2+2 = 4. Both are correct. The child discovers that the same total can come from different combinations

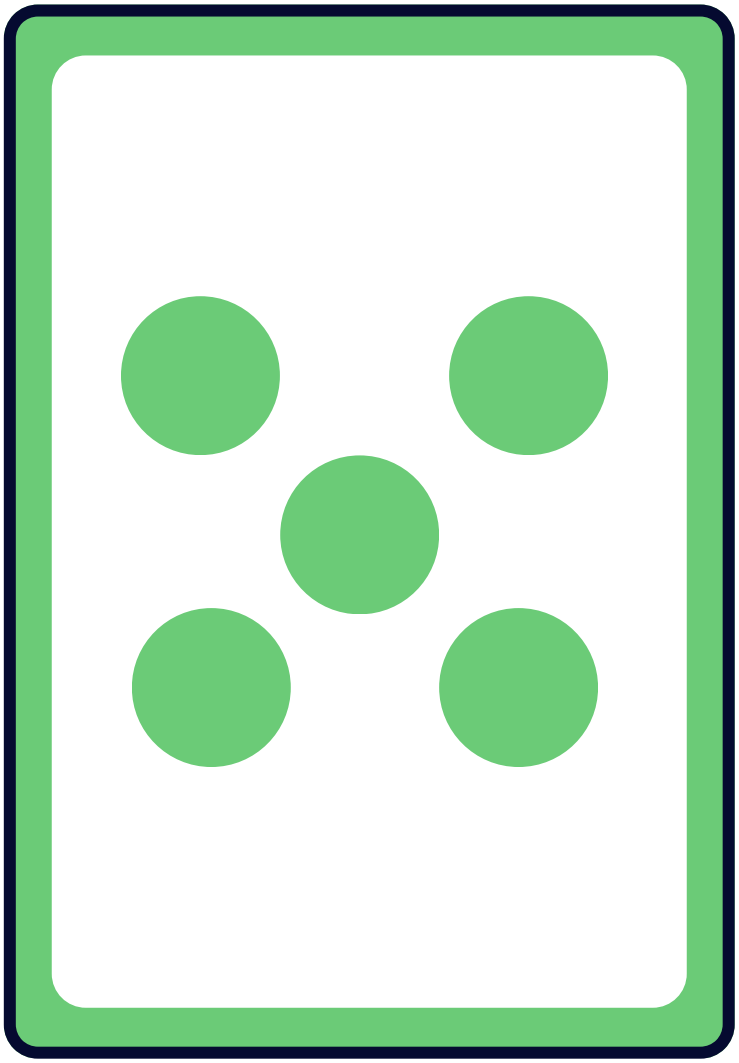
Fill the Frame — How Many More?	Show a ten-frame with 3 dots filled. "The frame wants to be full — how many more dots does it need?" The child counts empty spaces: 7 more. This is the complement concept.
Eat Away the Dots	Show a dot card with 4 dots. Eat a real cracker for each dot you "remove." Place the minus card. Eat 2. "We ate 2. How many are left?" Count remaining dots.
Full Equation Layout	For the first time, lay out a full equation using all card types: [dot card] + [dot card] = [number card]. "2 dots plus 3 dots equals 5." All three card types working together.
Choose Your Operator	Tell a story. Give the child a + card and a - card. They choose which operator fits: "The dog found 2 bones. Then found 3 more." (+ card.) "The dog had 5 bones. Lost 2." (- card.)

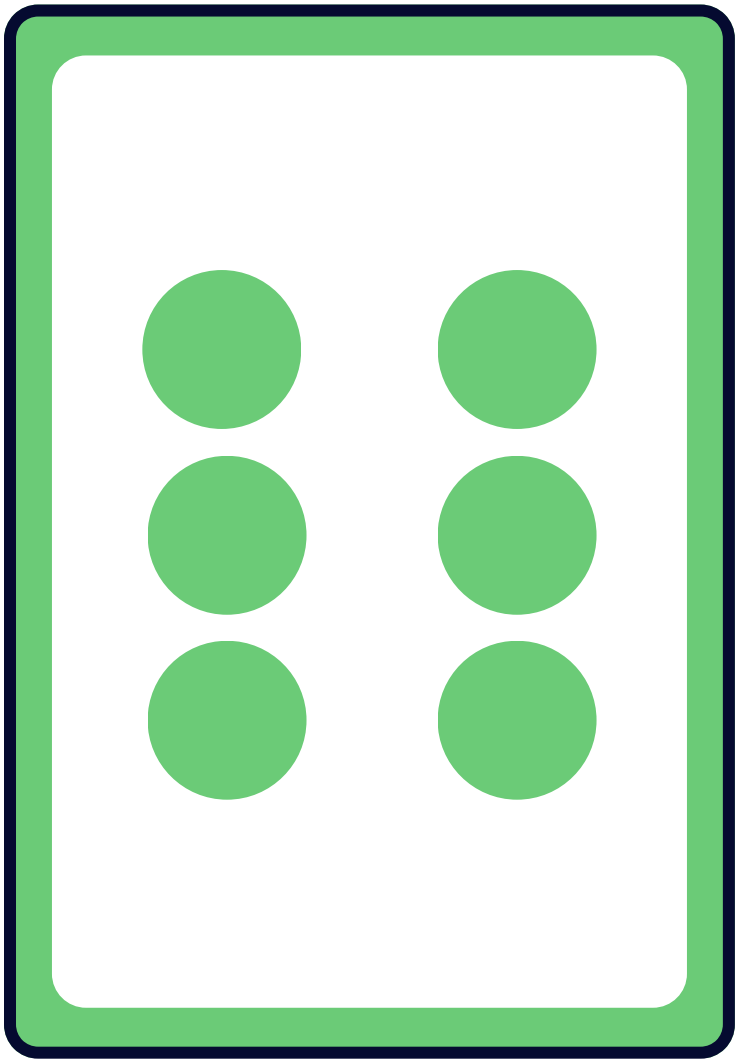


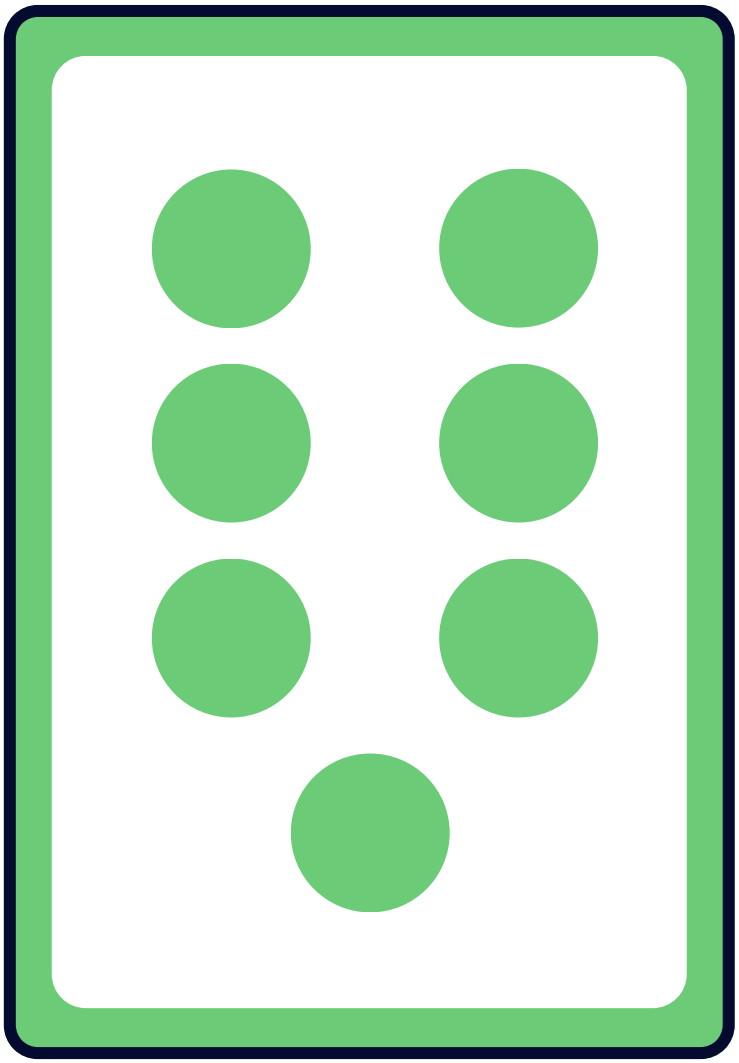


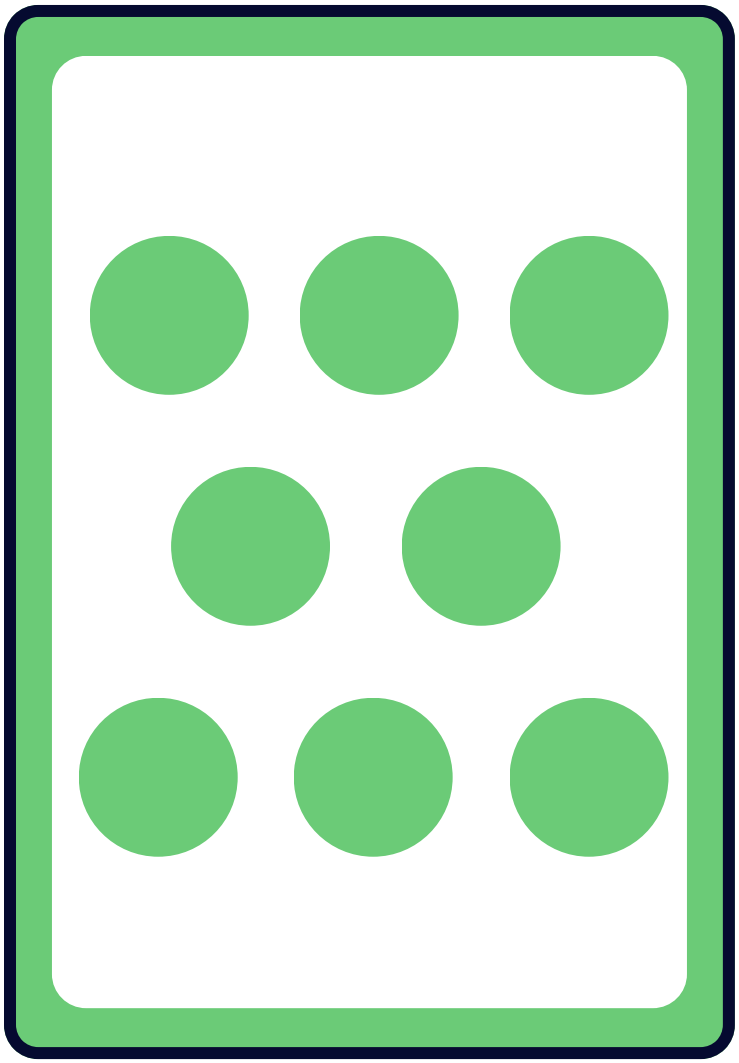


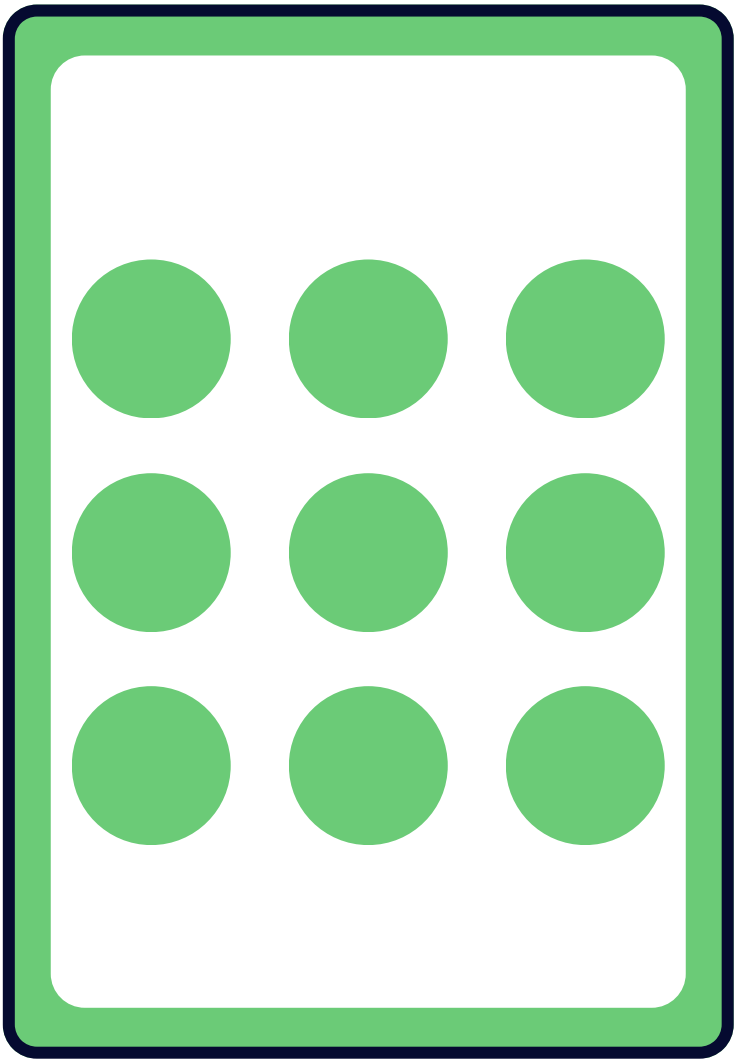


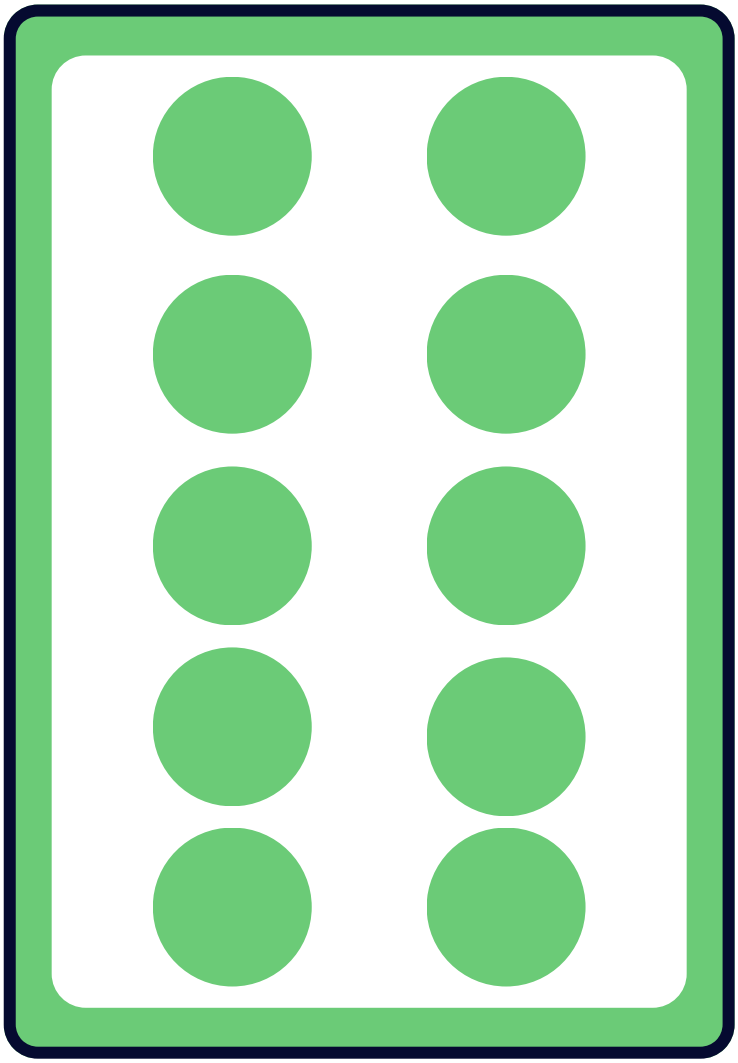


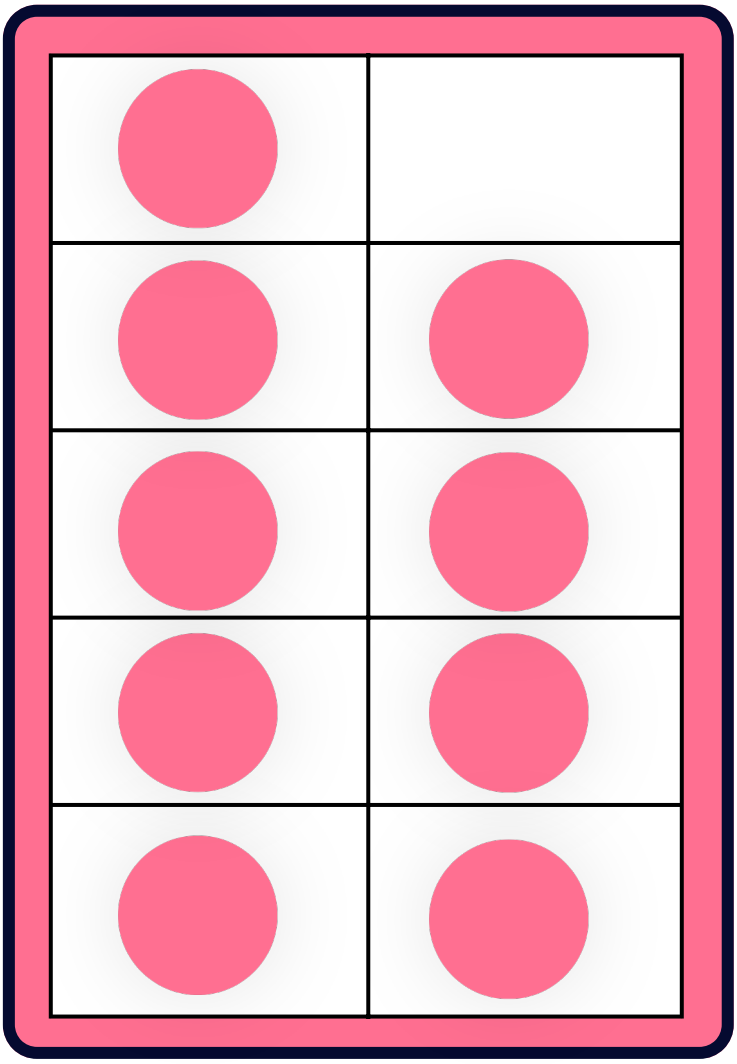


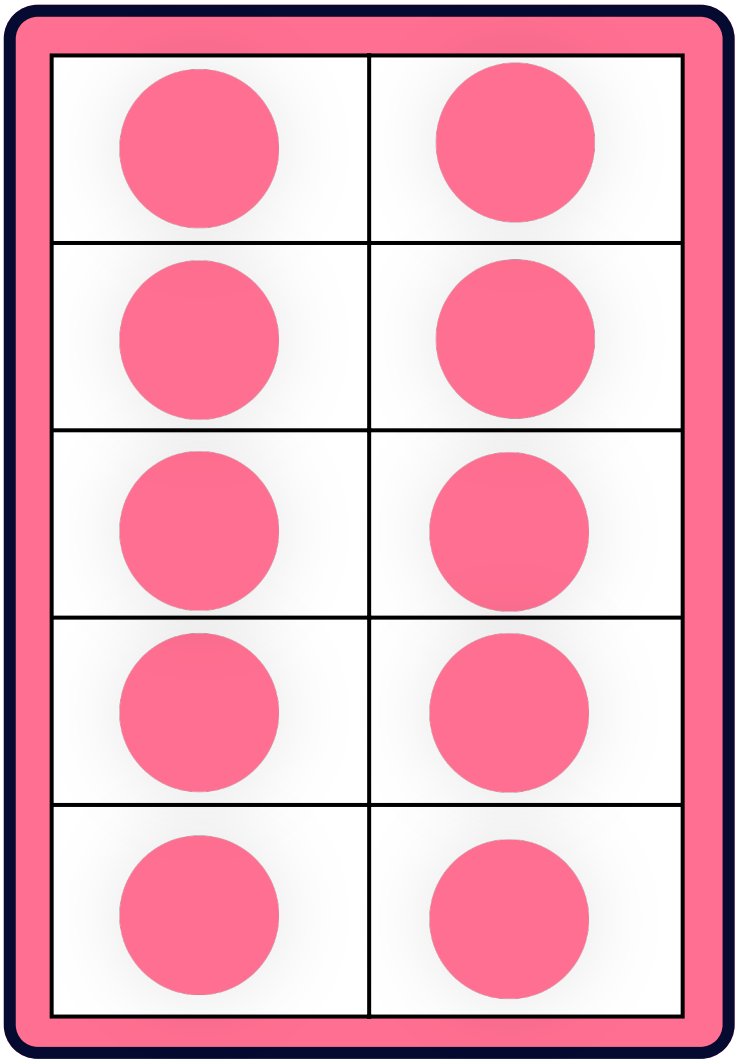


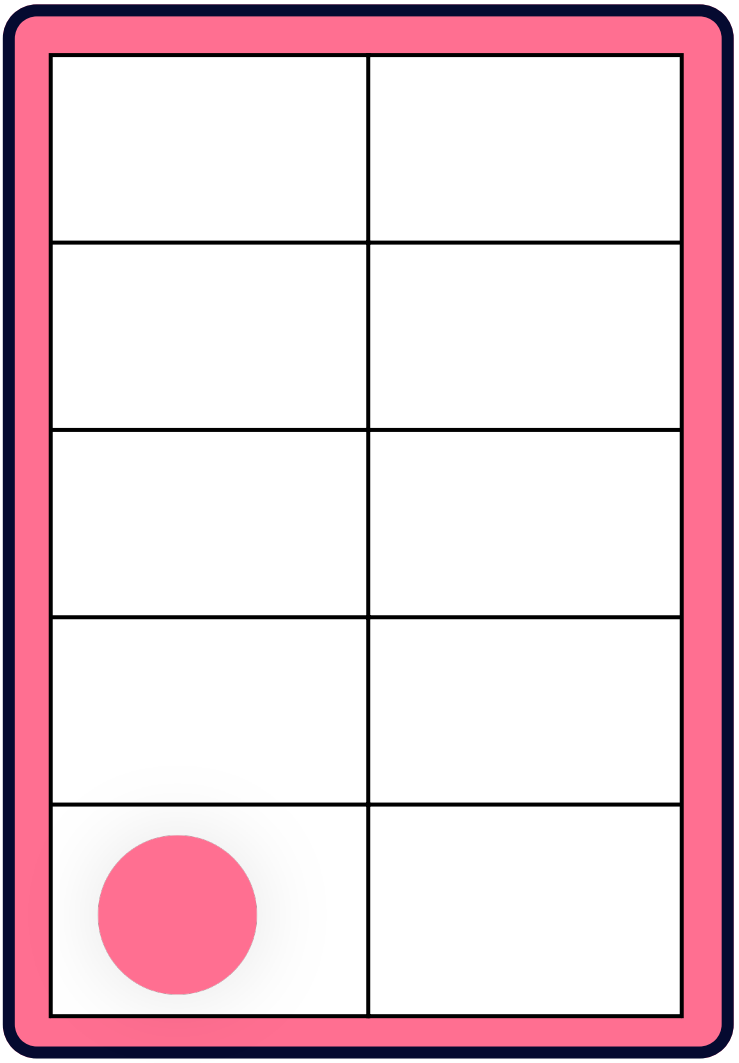


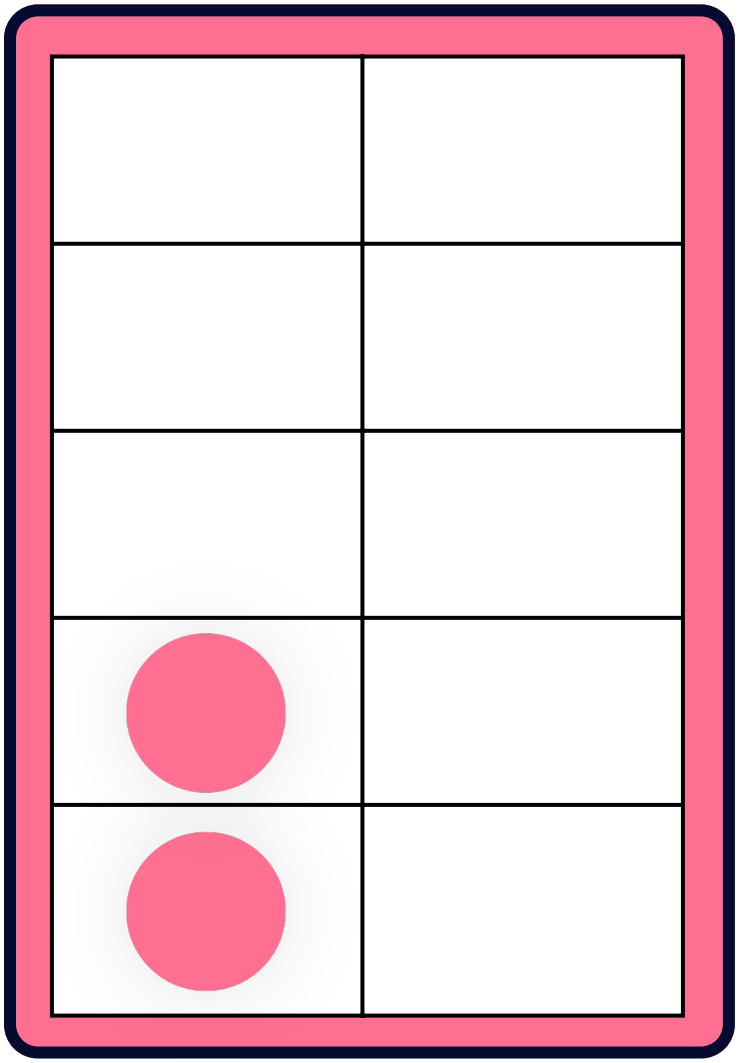


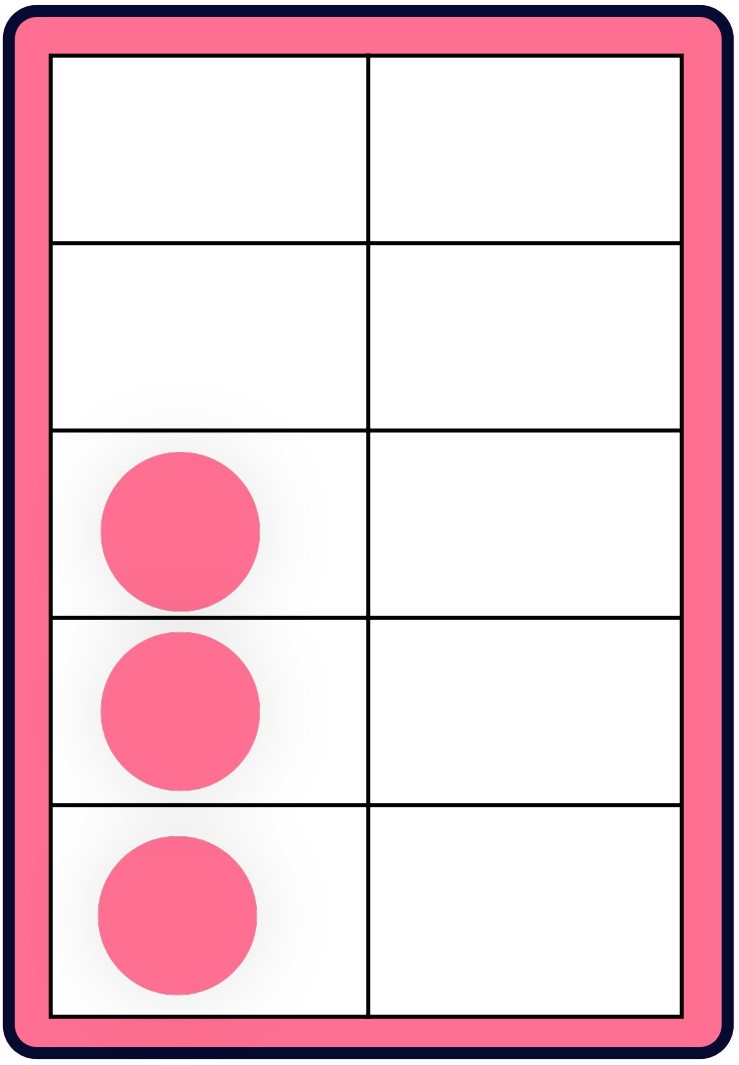


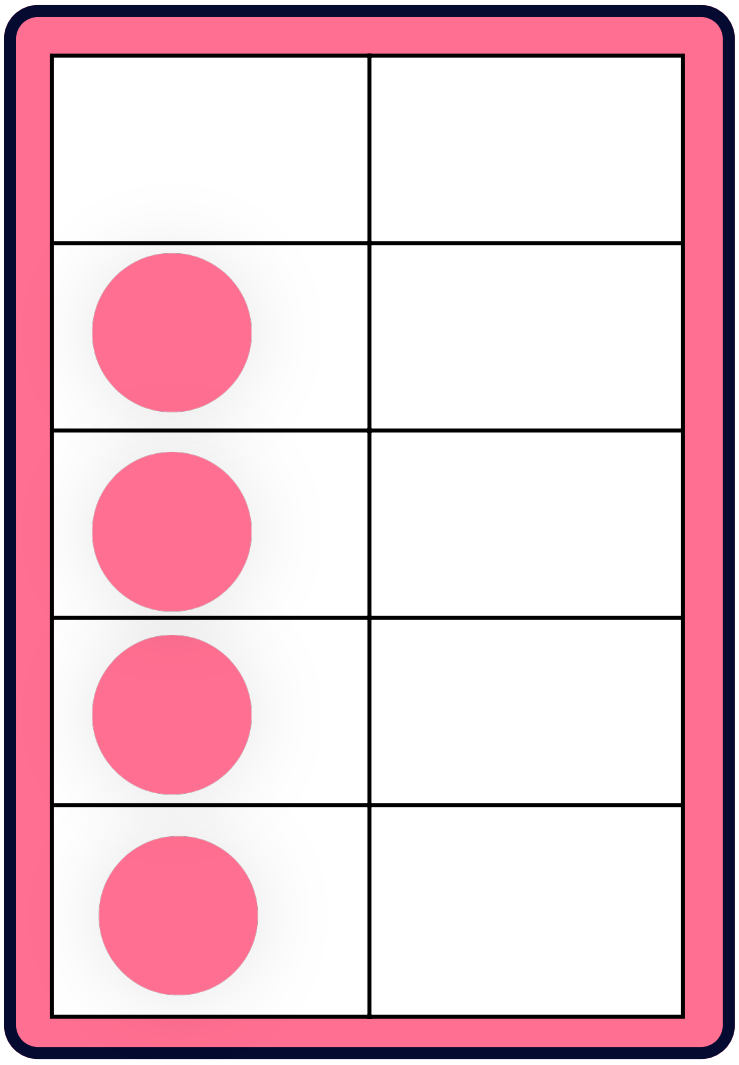


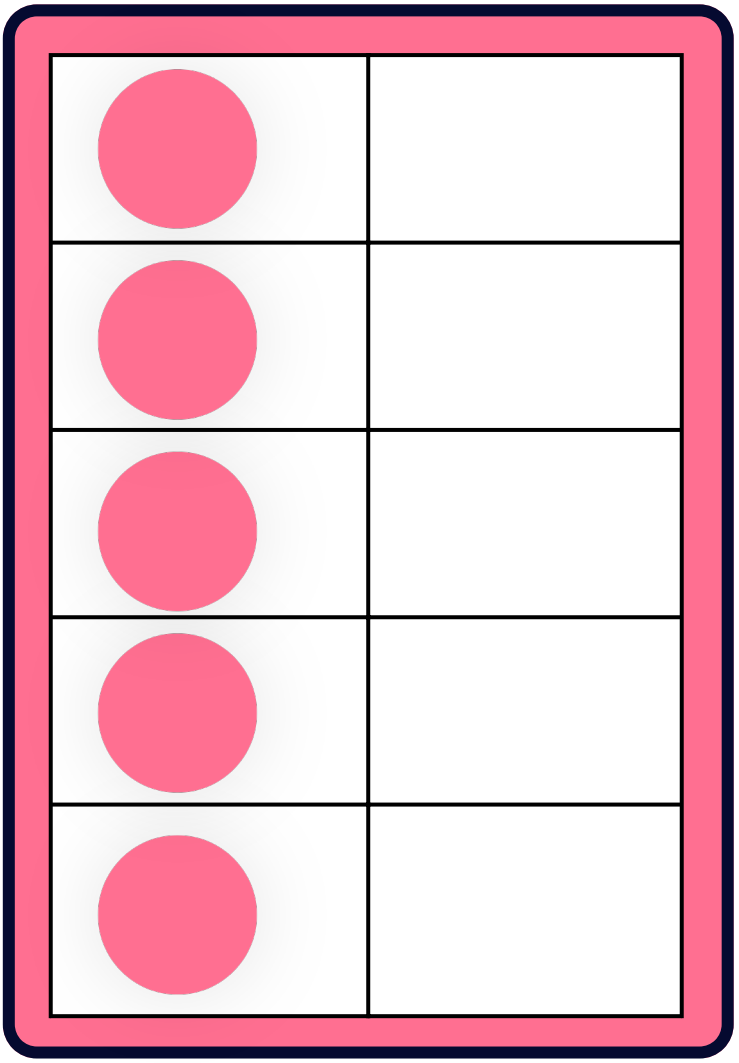


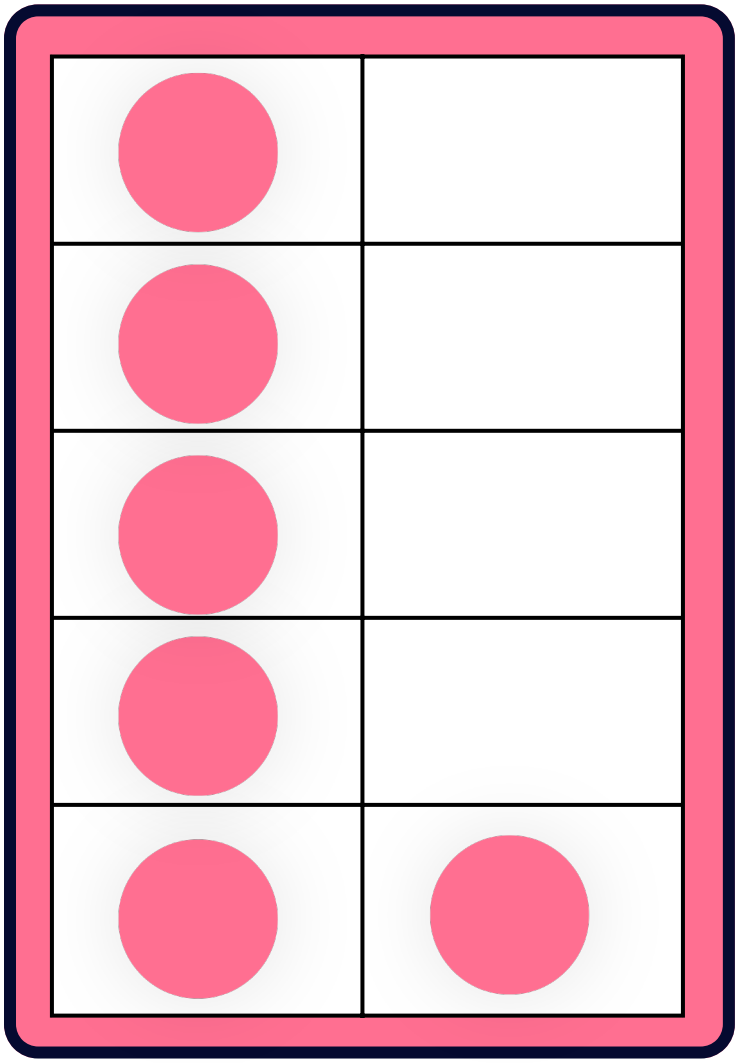


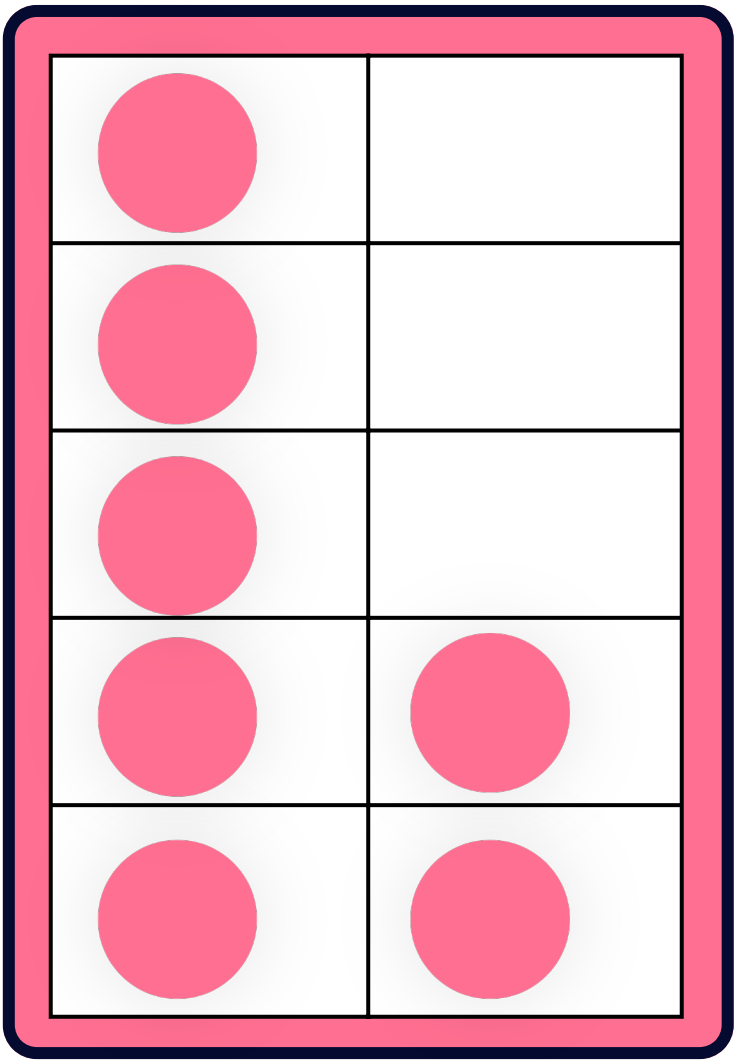


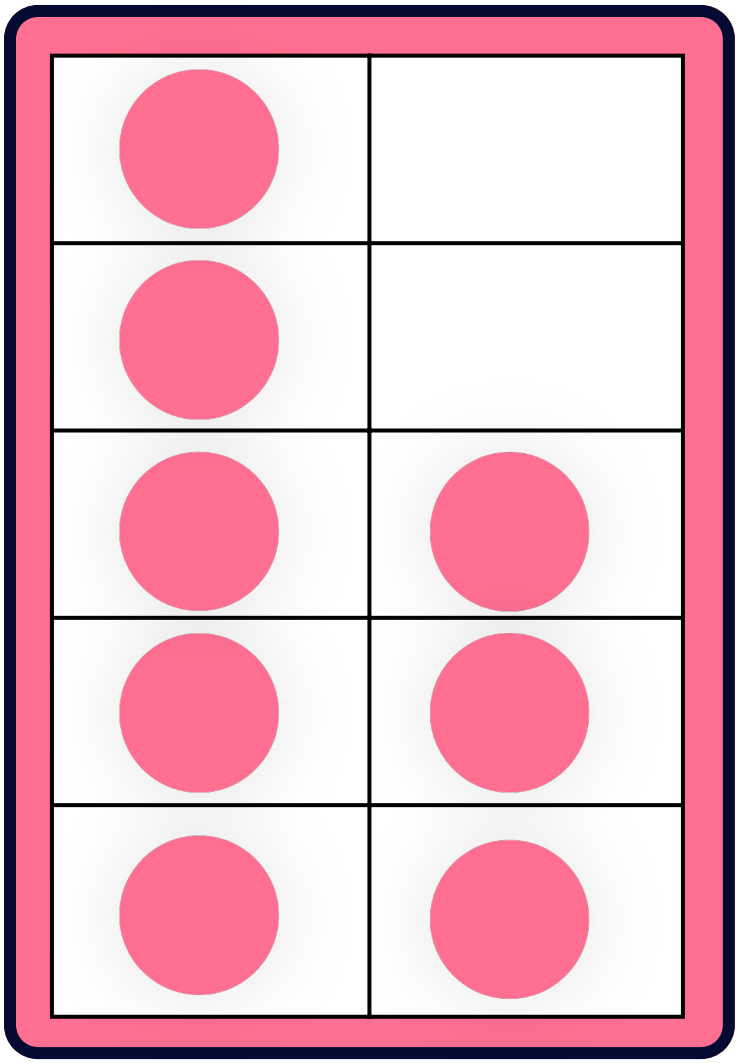


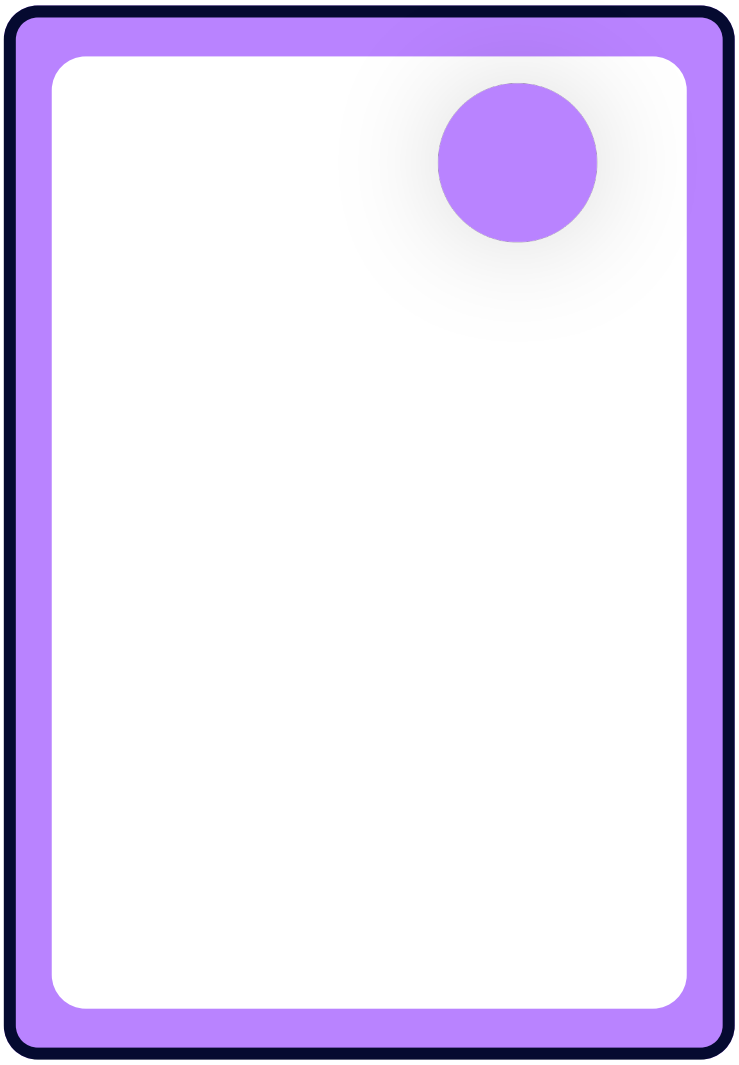


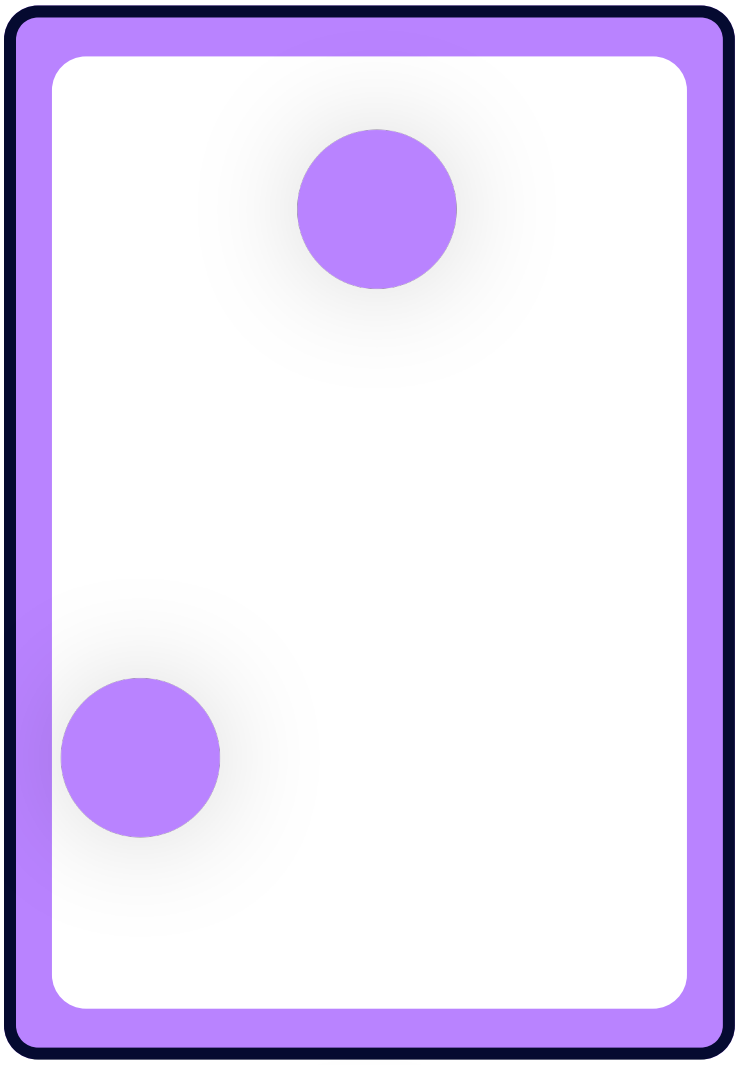


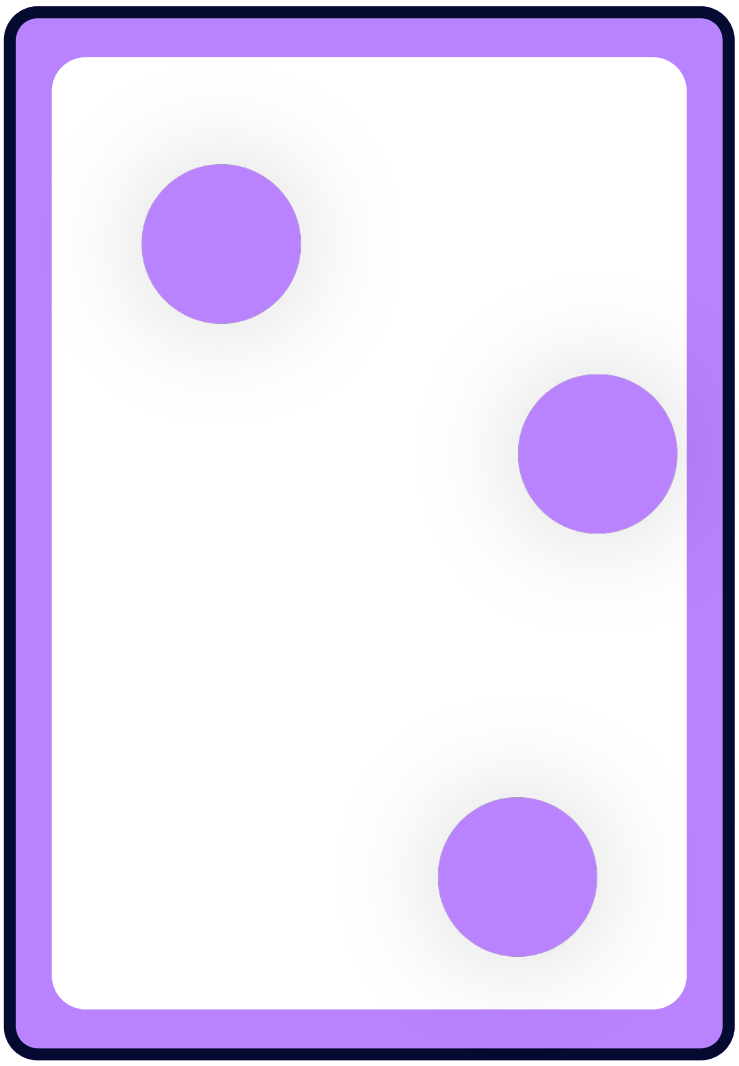


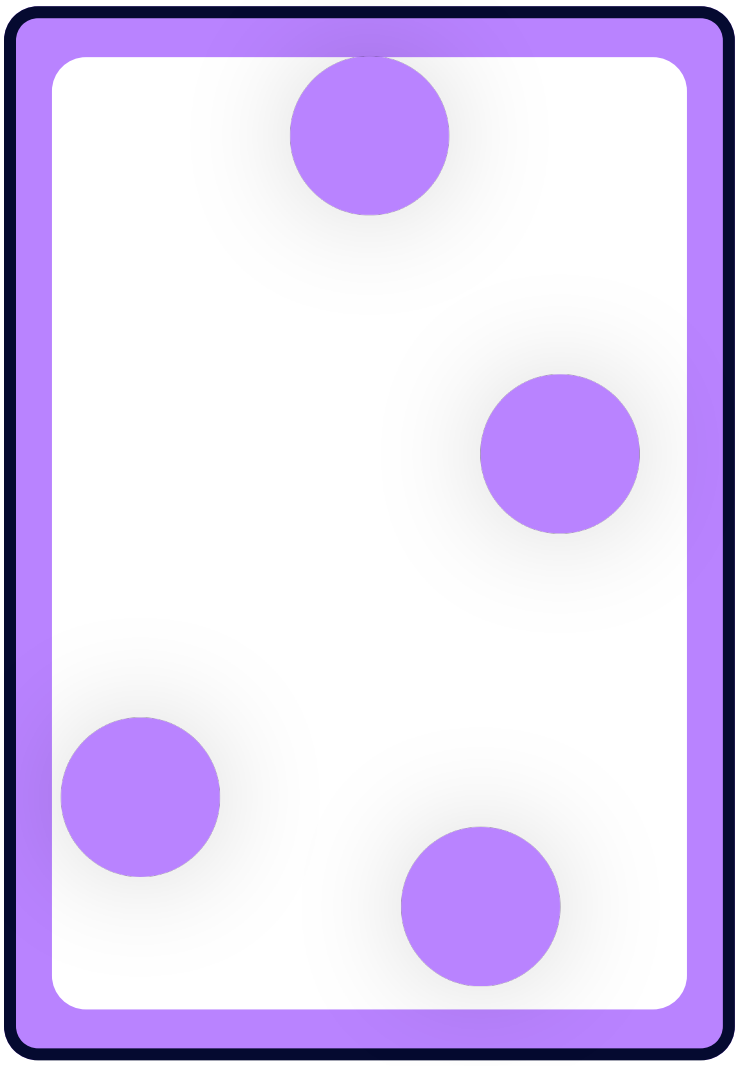


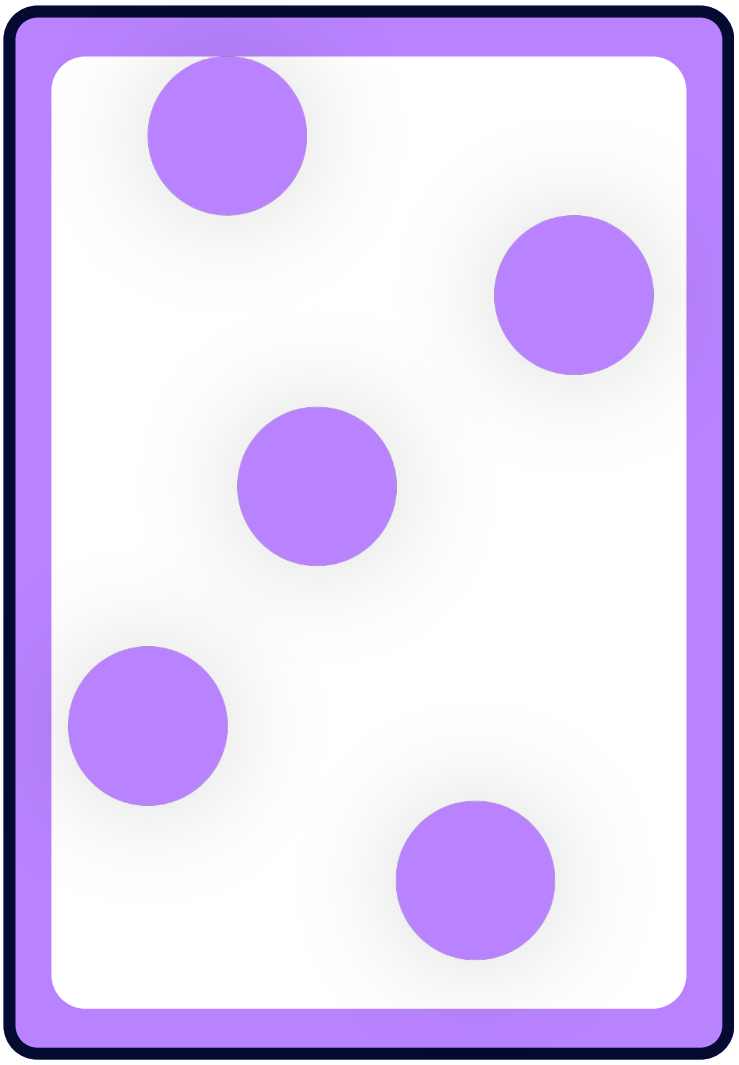


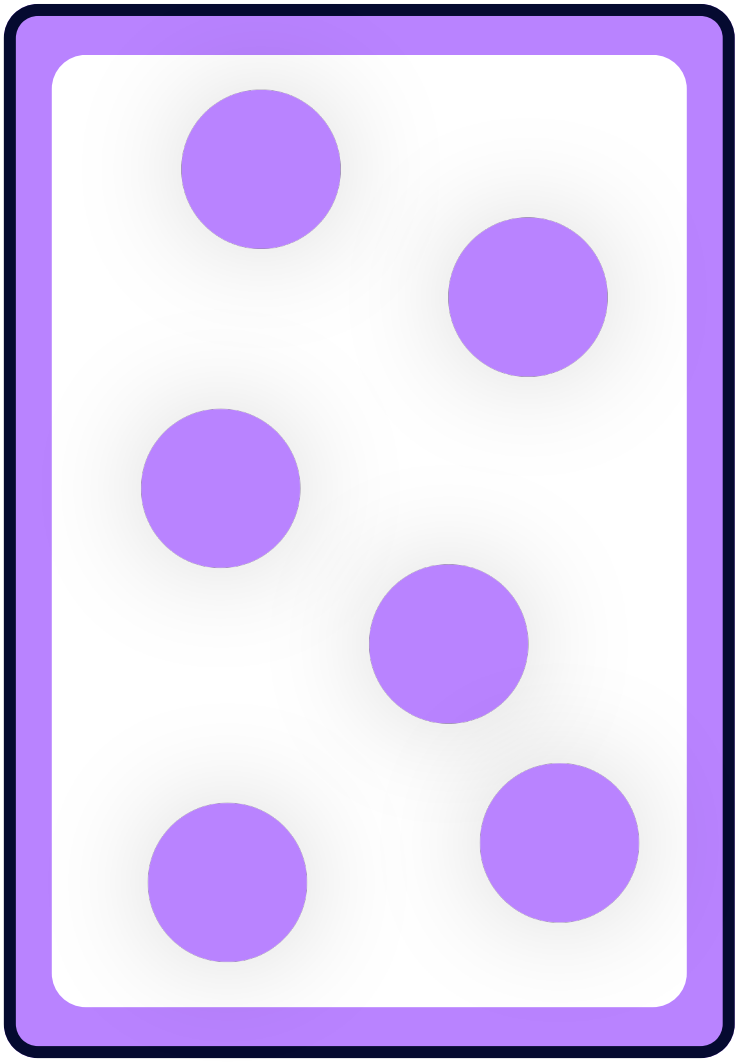


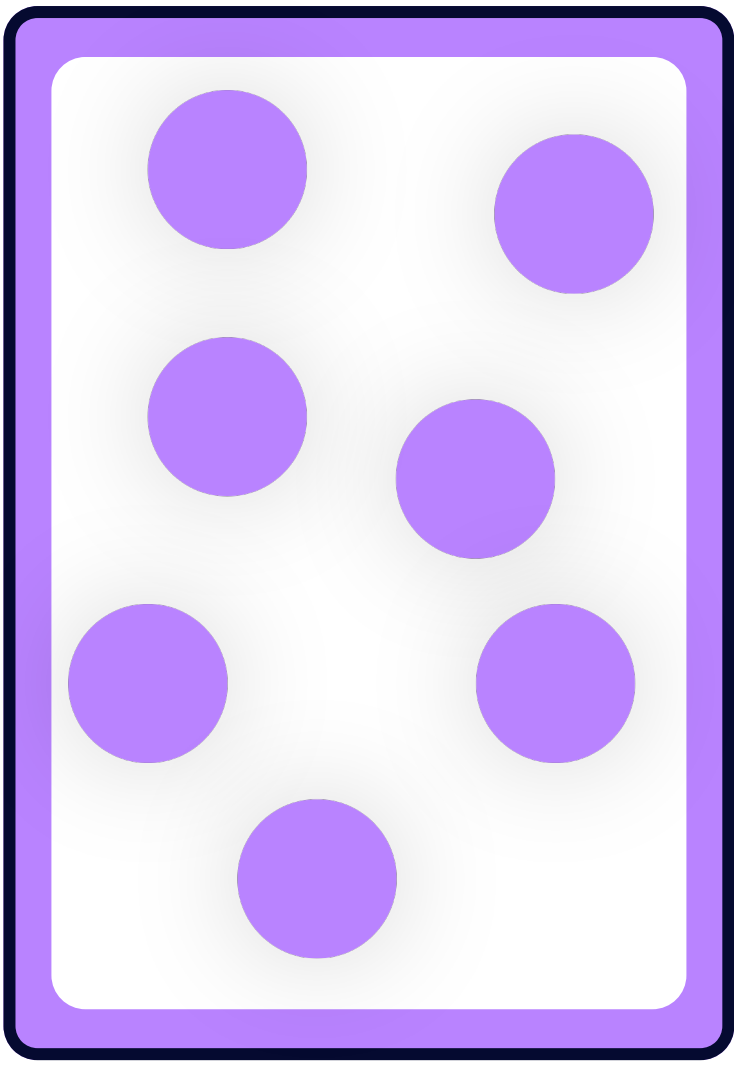


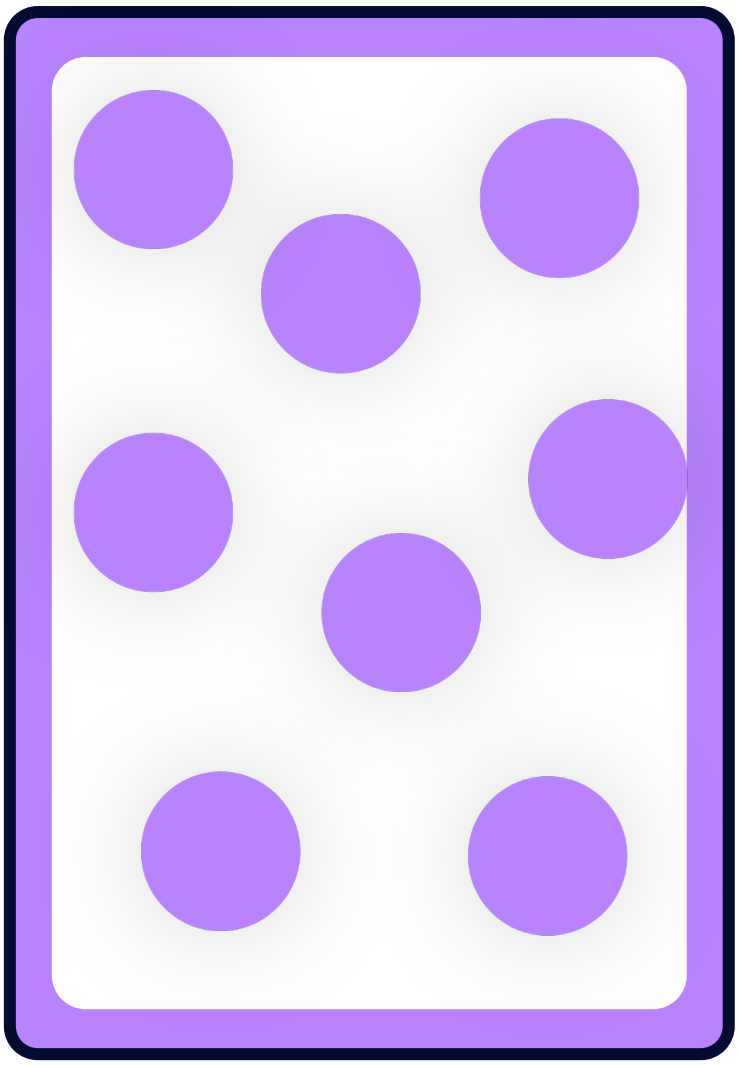


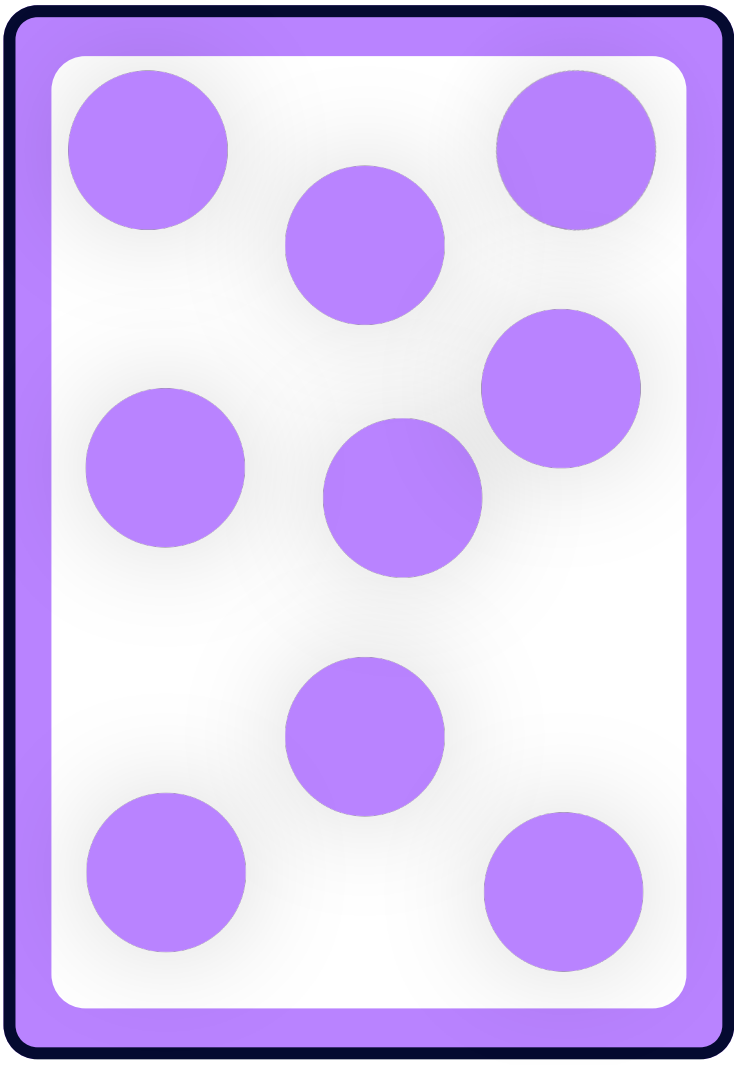


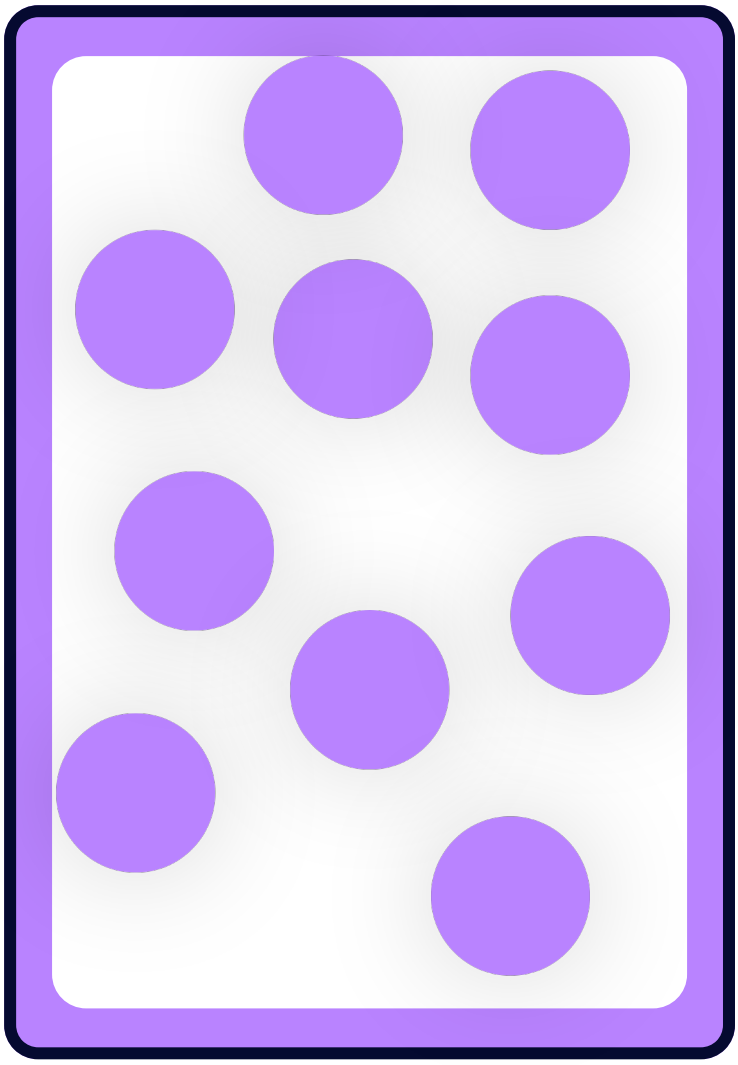












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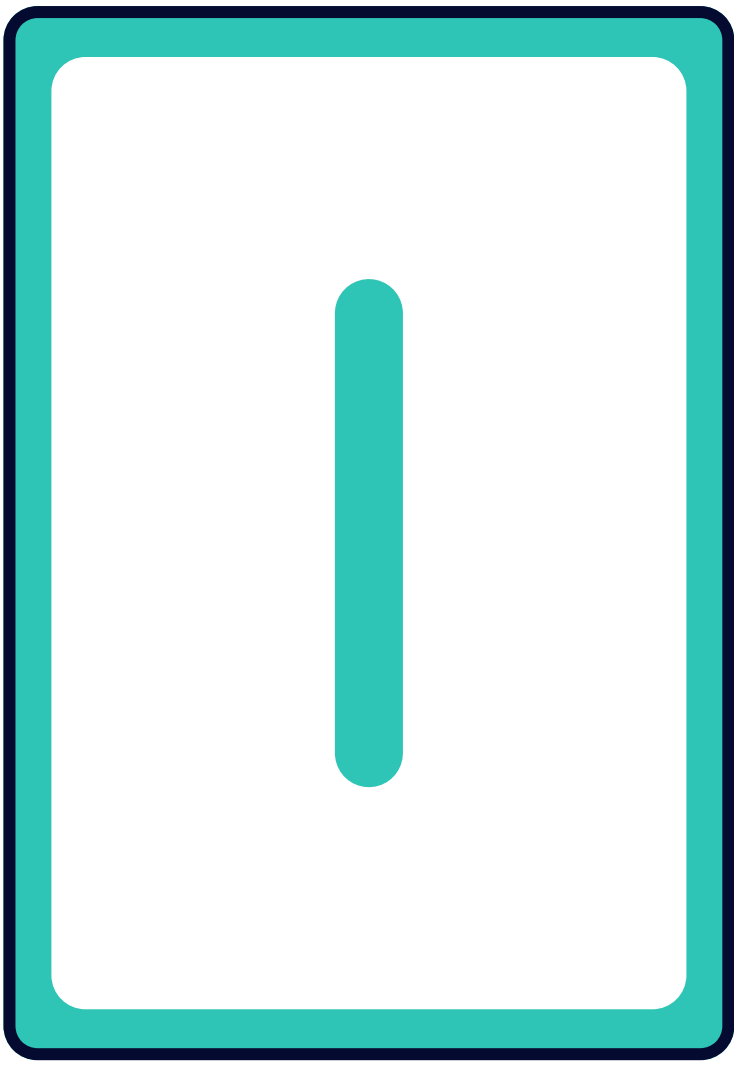
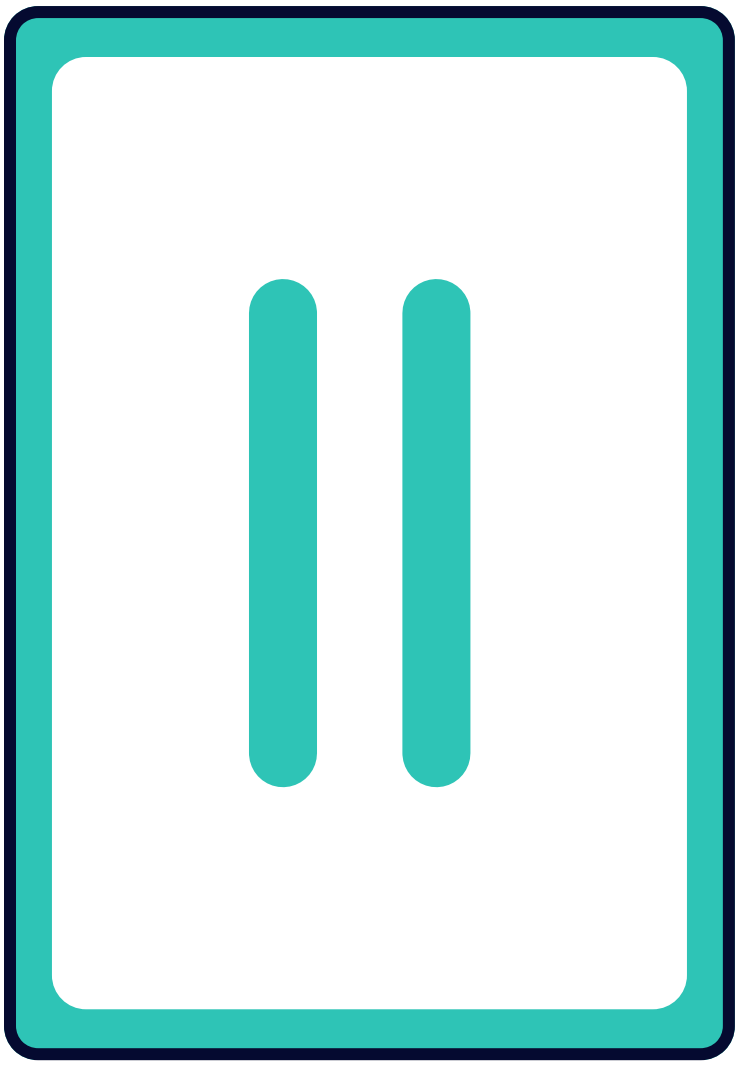
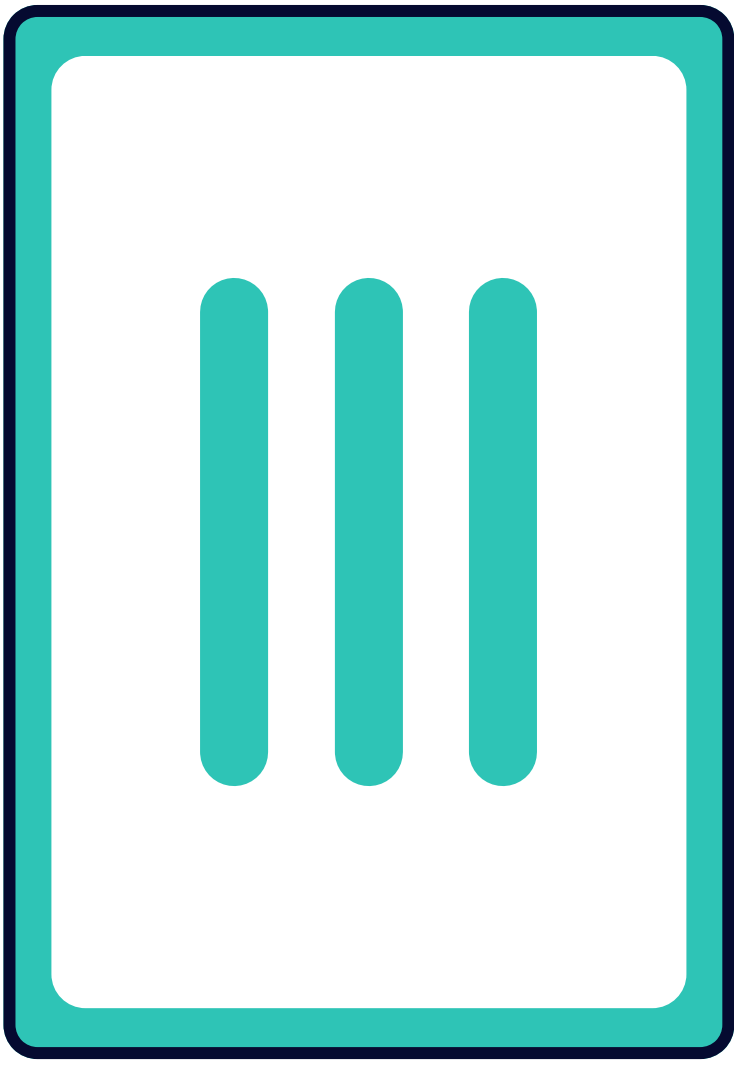
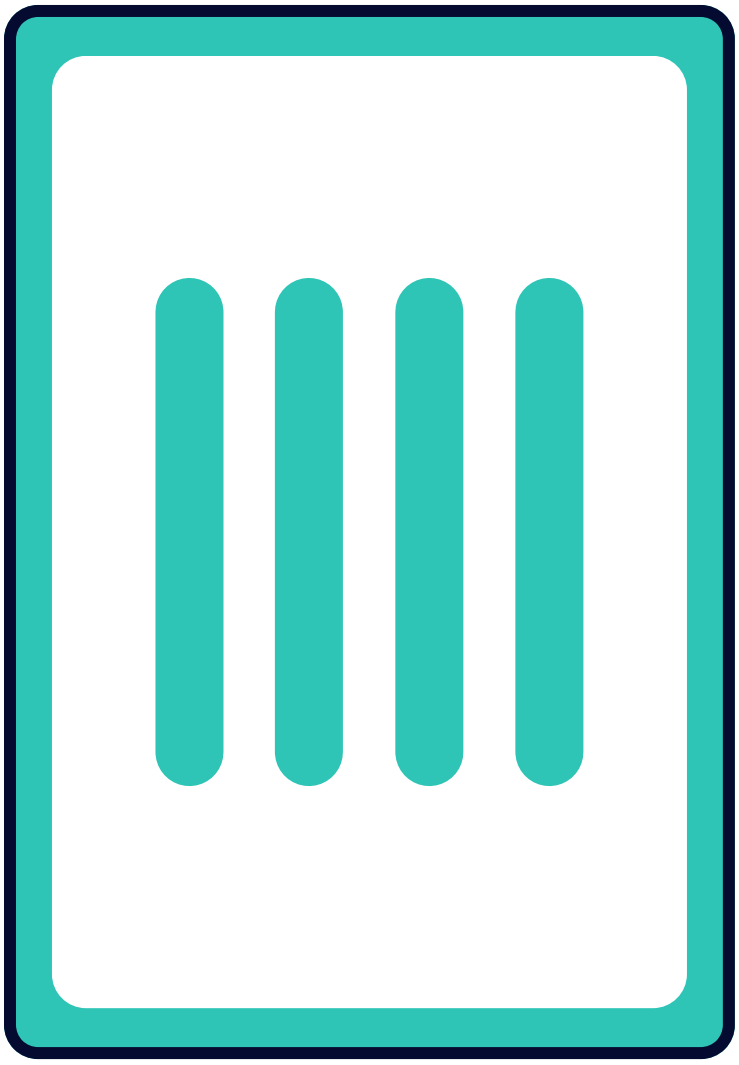

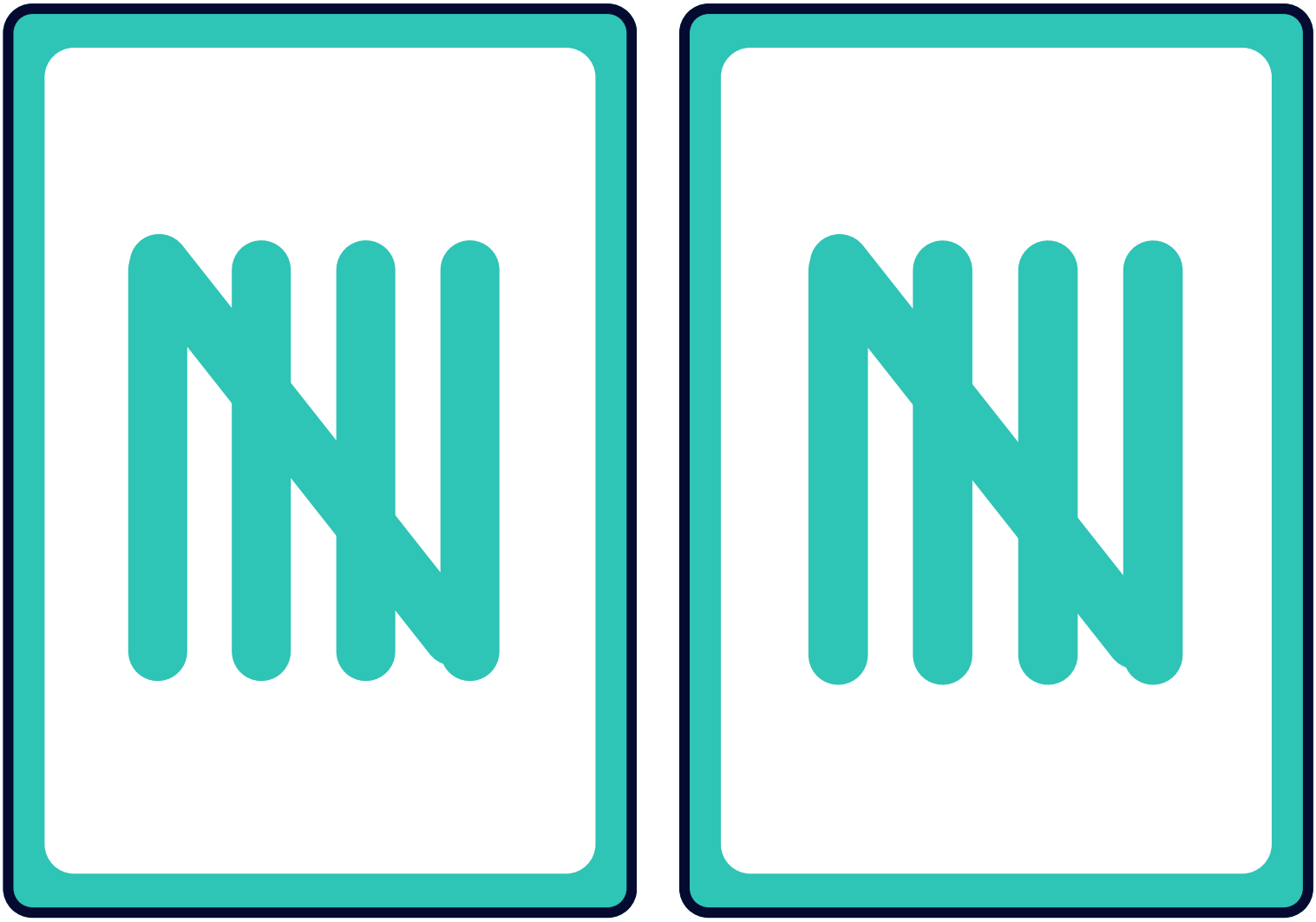

To demonstrate numbers more than five use two cards, the five and other to show a number upon to 9, for 10 use two fives.