

Busy at Maths 5 - Fifth Class - Teacher's Resource Book

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Chance

Home/School Links Sheet 33

Your child will be learning about chance (probability) over the coming days. S/he has already been introduced to chance in 3rd and 4th Classes. Probability or chance is a measure of the likelihood of a particular event actually taking place. Your child will need to know the language associated with chance: possibility, likelihood, probability, chances, impossible, likely, unlikely, possible, even chance, tails, heads, coin, spinners.

The language of chance

Focus your child's attention on the language of chance. If your child can come up with statements of his/her own about each of the following words, then s/he has a good understanding of them.

- **Possible:** It is possible that Dad will wash the dishes this evening.
- **Impossible:** It is impossible that I can jump and touch the sun.
- **Likely:** It is likely that I will get homework next Tuesday.
- **Unlikely:** It is unlikely that it will snow in June.
- **Certain:** It is certain that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow morning.
- **Even chance:** There is an even chance that I will get heads when I toss a coin.

Coin toss

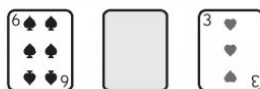


To play this game, you need a €1 coin (or any coin will do). Discuss the chances of the coin landing on tails (the side with the harp) or heads. Explain to your child that this represents an even chance or a 50/50 chance (50% for each). Either outcome is just as likely to occur. Challenge the odds by tossing the coin 10 times. What results did you get? Now toss the coin 50 times and see if the outcome remains the same or changes. Remind your child that there is very little certainty when it comes to chance!

Game 1: The mystery card

Place three cards on the table, the first one face-up, the second face-down and the third face-up. The card in the middle (face-down) is the mystery card.

The player must predict whether the mystery card will lie somewhere between the values of the two overturned cards or lie outside this range of values. If the prediction is correct, s/he gets a point (counter). If the prediction is incorrect, the dealer wins the point (counter). Whichever player has most counters after a specified number of turns is the winner.



Game 2: Beads in a bag

For this game, you will need some beads, counters or cubes. Encourage your child to use the language of chance as outlined above during this game. Get a bag or box. It is important that your child cannot see inside the bag or box. Place 10 coloured beads or cubes into the bag or box: five blue, three red, one yellow and one green. Explain that you are going to pick one bead out of the bag or box at random. Discuss the possible outcomes, asking questions such as:

- *Am I certain to pick out a blue bead? (No.)*
- *Is it possible that I will pick out a red bead? (Yes.)*
- *Is it likely or unlikely that I will pick a red bead? (It is possible, but it is more unlikely than likely.)*
- *Is it possible that I might pick out a black bead? Why? (No, it is impossible.)*
- *Which two colours have an even chance of being pulled out?*

Extension: Play the game using different colour combinations of beads.

Snakes and ladders

Play the traditional snakes and ladders board game with your child. As you play, discuss the role played by chance in the game: players have an equal chance of winning, but each roll of the die has different outcomes. You might land on a snake or a ladder – it's all about luck!