

EASIER WAY TO SUBTRACT

Many students struggle with learning the regrouping method for subtraction.

Here is a relatively painless way I call the Tic-Tic Method which is really the opposite of regrouping but much easier. When the bottom number is larger than the top number, one Tic is placed to the left of the top number (¹5 making it **15**) and one Tic is placed to the right of the bottom number on the left of the one being subtracted (₁7 making it **8**).

In the example below:

For the units column the result is **15** minus **9** equals **6**.

For the tens column the result is **10** minus **8** equals **2**.

For the hundreds column the result is **13** minus **6** equals **7**.

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \text{ } ^1 2 \text{ } ^1 4 \text{ } ^1 3 \text{ } ^1 0 \text{ } ^1 5 \quad (\text{Minuend}) \\ - 4 \text{ } _1 6 \text{ } _1 8 \text{ } _1 5 \text{ } _1 7 \text{ } _1 9 \quad (\text{Subtrahend}) \\ \hline 2 \text{ } 5 \text{ } 5 \text{ } 7 \text{ } 2 \text{ } 6 \quad (\text{Difference}) \end{array}$$

This method does not explain the actual mechanics behind subtraction but, as long as the student knows his number facts*, the correct answer is arrived at quickly every time. I have found that after a little practice, many older students (and adults) prefer the Tic-Tic method.

Of course, regrouping is an important concept that is used in other areas of Math, but there is no rush to learn it. With the Tic-Tic method, young students can enjoy early subtraction success with fast, accurate answers.

Remember, it will take practice to make it automatic. It can be fun to create a huge subtraction question that even a normal calculator cannot handle by having 15 digits in the Minuend and 15 digits in the Subtrahend. Make sure that the leftmost digit in the Minuend is always larger than the leftmost digit in the Subtrahend.

*Some fun ways to practise addition and subtraction are to play board games like Snakes & Ladders and Monopoly or card games like Cribbage.

The Tic-Tic Method has been used by David Harris since he was in Grade 2 (1954-55)