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Two mice balance on a teeter-totter. More animal friends come to join in, but the teeter-totter doesn't always balance. Find out what happens when a bird wants to join in the fun.

Ages: 2 to 6 years**Interest Level:**

Toddler to 1st grade

ATOS Reading Level:

0.9

Lexile: 330L**ISBN:** 9781481420518**Copyright:** 2010**Genre:** Fiction**Classification:**

Picture Story Book



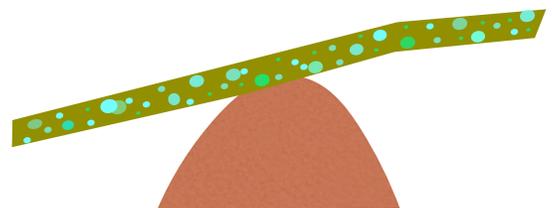
Balancing Act

What does it take to balance a teeter-totter?**Topics:** equal, balance, weight

Math Connections: Use this story to engage your child in an investigation of balance and what it means to be equal. In the story, the teeter-totter balances when there are the same number and type of animals on each side. This is the basis for equations: one side is equal to the other with the equal sign being the balancing point. Investigate this concept of equal by playing with a balance scale. (See below for directions on scale making.) Ask your child to make the scale balance by putting objects that weigh the same, one on each side of the scale. Remind your child that the objects weigh the same and that is why the scale balances. Then add other objects that weigh the same as each other, one at a time just like in the story. As long as the weight on each side of the scale is the same, the scale will balance.

Once the scale balances, ask your child to switch the objects from one side to the other. Do they still balance each other? For younger children, this is important when they solve number sentences or equations and understand that " $2 + 3 = 5$ " AND " $5 = 2 + 3$ ". Many children view the equal sign as a signal to do something, add or subtract, and do not view it as meaning that the two sides of the equation are equal. This misconception holds even later in Algebra. Children see " $x + 8 = 25$ " and expect to perform an operation. They must un-learn this notion of the equal sign.

In the story, when the bird joins the fun, the animals must rearrange themselves to balance the relatively heavy bird! On the balance scale, children can place one heavier object on one side of the scale and add several lighter objects to the other side until it balances. This concept is important so



Extension Questions:

1. What do you think would happen if you sat on one end of the teeter-totter and the mouse sat on the other end? How many mice do you think would balance you? How do you know?
2. If you were sitting on one end of the teeter-totter, who (or what) could you place on the opposite end to balance you? How do you know? How could you find out?
3. In the beginning of the story, the two mice balance on the teeter-totter. What would happen if the mice switched places? Would the teeter-totter still balance?
4. What happened when the bird wanted to join in? Why do you think that happened?
5. Why do you think the teeter-totter broke at the end of the story?

Early Math Project Resources:

[Make a Scale](#) (English)

[Make a Scale](#) (Spanish)

[Balancing One at a Time](#) (English)

Balancing One at a Time (Spanish) coming soon!

Online Resources:

[What weighs more: cereal or noodles?](#) An investigation from Scholastic, Inc.



Spanish Title: Not available

Related Books: *Just a Little Bit* by Ann Tompert

Find this book at your local library: https://www.worldcat.org/title/balancing-act/oclc/881445454&referer=brief_results

Vocabulary for Building Math Concepts	another, balance, one, too many
Vocabulary for Extending Math Concepts	equal, fulcrum, weight
Vocabulary for Reading Comprehension	stepped in, ta-da, teeter-totter

Age Level	Related Preschool Foundations and CA State Standards
Infant/Toddler	Problem Solving The developing ability to engage in a purposeful effort to reach a goal or figure out how something works.
Preschool/TK	Measurement 1.1 Demonstrate awareness that objects can be compared by length, weight, or capacity, by noting gross differences, using words such as bigger, longer, heavier, or taller, or by placing objects side by side to compare length. Mathematical Reasoning 1.1 Begin to apply simple mathematical strategies to solve problems in their environment.
Kindergarten	Measurement and Data K.MD.1 Describe and compare measurable attributes.
Grade 1	Operations and Algebraic Thinking 1.OA.7 Work with addition and subtraction equations. Understand the meaning of the equal sign ...