Parents' Guide to Written Calculations

Before children are taught written methods, they must have

- Understanding of place value
- Fluency in number bonds – 1-digit + 1-digit
- Doubles and near doubles

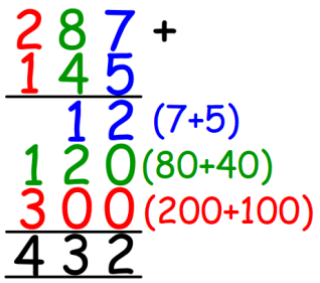
Addition

Expanded Column Method

This method helps children build a strong understanding of place value by separating the calculation into hundreds, tens and ones. Each part is added separately before the totals are combined. Children will often use place value counters to support understanding.

Expanded column method

Example: 287 + 145



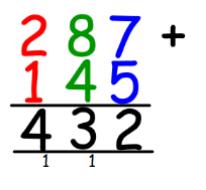
First add the ones
Next add the tens
Then add the hundreds
Finally add them all together

Compact Column Method

Once children are confident with place value, they move on to the more efficient compact method. This is the standard column addition method where numbers are added in columns, starting with the ones, and carrying digits when needed.

Compact column method

Example: 287 + 145



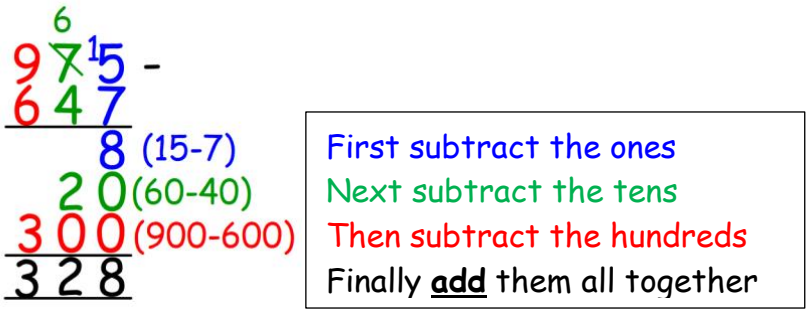
Expanded Column Method

This method helps children develop a strong understanding of place value by breaking the numbers into hundreds, tens and ones. Subtraction is carried out step by step, with regrouping (also known as exchanging or borrowing) clearly shown.

Subtraction

Expanded column method

Example: 975 - 647



Compact Column Method

Once children are confident with place value and the process of regrouping, they move on to the compact version of column subtraction. This method sets numbers out in columns and uses standard notation for carrying and exchanging digits.

Compact column method

Example 975 - 647

