Put Together/Take Apart
Word Problems
Task Cards and Work Mats
Addition and Subtraction Word Problems

1.OA.A.1 Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions.

Materials: task cards, work mats, counters (either cut outs to match the word problems or counters available in the classroom)

Directions: Students may word in pairs or individually.
1) Student reads the word problem.
2) Using a work mat, the student solves the problem by acting out the situation with counters.
3) If students are working with partners, they may check each others work and explain the strategy they used to get an answer.
Put Together/Take Apart Problems

• Put together/take apart problems involve two groups being put together or two groups being taken apart or separated. These problems do not involve change.

• A part-whole mat is a good model for this type of situation. As students work with the mat, they will recognize that the two parts can be added together to get the whole, and a part can be subtracted from the whole to get the other part.

• On the part-whole mat, the word “total” is used in place of the word whole. I have found, in the primary grades, it is easier for students to conceptualize the idea of the total number of objects than it is for them to conceptualize the idea of a whole and its parts.
Tom collects 2 pink shells and 7 blue shells. How many shells does he collect?

Nan’s sandcastle has 4 towers. Ted’s sandcastle has 3 towers. How many towers are there in all?

Sam has 10 shells in his bucket. He has 3 pink shells and some blue shells. How many blue shells does he have?

Altogether there are 8 towers on Nan’s and Ted’s sandcastles. Nan’s has 6 towers. How many towers does Ted’s sandcastle have?
Sid collects 2 orange starfish and 4 red starfish. How many starfish does he collect?

Nan’s sandcastle has 5 windows. Ted’s sandcastle has 3 windows. How many windows are there in all?

Sid has 9 starfish in his bucket. He has 1 orange starfish and some red starfish. How many red starfish does he have?

Altogether there are 7 windows on Nan’s and Ted’s sandcastles. Nan’s has 2 windows. How many windows does Ted’s sandcastle have?
Sid has 10 shells in his pail. There are pink shells and blue shells. What combinations of shells might he have?

Nan has 9 things in her bucket. She has shells and starfish. How many shells and starfish might she have?

Sid has 7 starfish in his bucket. Some of the starfish are orange and some are red. What combinations of starfish might he have?

Jill finds 8 shells on the beach. Some are in the water and some are in the sand. How many shells could be in the water and in the sand?
5 penguins are on the iceberg. 3 penguins are on the land. How many penguins are there altogether?

3 penguins are on the land. 7 penguins are on the iceberg. How many penguins are there altogether?

There are 9 penguins altogether. 5 penguins are on the land. The rest of the penguins are on the iceberg. How many penguins are on the iceberg?

10 penguins are playing on a sunny day. 4 penguins are splashing in the water. Some penguins are playing on the iceberg. How many penguins are playing on the iceberg?
2 polar bears are swimming. 5 polar bears are playing in the snow. How many polar bears are there altogether?

8 polar bears are on swimming. 1 polar bear is on the iceberg. How many polar bears are there altogether?

There are 8 polar bears. 4 of the polar bears are on the land. The rest of the polar bears are on the iceberg. How many polar bears are on the iceberg?

9 polar bears are playing. 5 polar bears are swimming. Some polar bears are playing in the snow. How many polar bears are playing in the snow?
10 penguins are playing near the water. Some are on the land and some are on the iceberg. How many penguins could be on the land and on the iceberg?

There are 9 animals in the water. There are penguins and polar bears. What combinations of penguins and polar bears might be in the water?

There are 8 penguins. Some are in the water and some are on the land. How many penguins could be in the water and on the land?

7 animals are resting on the iceberg. There are penguins and polar bears. What combinations of penguins and polar bears might be on the iceberg?
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Counters