

Steps and Stairs

Differences

Players: 2-4

Materials: regular starter set of cuisenaire rods
set of Cuisenaire Cards

Skills: relative value of rods
concepts of "equals", "greater than" and "less than"
strategizing

Rules: Each player is dealt six cards. These are laid face up in a row. Players take turns placing a rod matching one of their cards to create "steps and stairs" array of cuisenaire rods in the centre of the playing surface. The rods are laid parallel to each other, and each rod must be equal to, or one greater than or one less than the last one placed. Once a card is used it is removed, set aside in a common "discard" pile, and replaced from the deck.

A player who cannot move must forfeit his turn and trade one card with the deck.

The aim is to have as few cards as possible remaining undiscarded at the end of the game.

Players: 1-4

Materials: regular starter set of Cuisenaire rods
set of Cuisenaire Cards

Skills: the concept of "difference"
relative value of rods
the idea that "same" means "zero difference"

Rules: Player chooses a rod, then draws a card. The object is to make rod diagram illustrating the difference between these two values.

eg. *Child chooses purple rod and draws a black rod card, then lines up purple beside black and demonstrates how light green fills in the difference.*

Parent can narrate the difference shown: "The difference between black and purple is light green. The difference between 7 and 4 is 3."

Other players take turns in a similar fashion.

To reduce difficulty, it may be helpful to remove the 11 and 12 cards from the deck.

Most children see the "zero difference" scenario as a funny joke. They enjoy the coincidence of choosing

Players: 1-4

Non-Competitive

Materials: regular starter set of Cuisenaire rods
set of Cuisenaire Cards

Skills: the concept of "sum"
relative value of rods
representation of numbers from 11-20 with rods

Rules: Player chooses a rod, then draws a card. The object is to make rod diagram illustrating the sum of these two values.

eg. Child chooses purple rod and draws a black rod card, then lines up purple end on end with black and demonstrates how orange and white match the sum.

Parent can narrate the result: "The sum of purple and black is orange with white. The sum of 7 and 4 is 11."

Other players take turns in a similar fashion.

If children have used the Cuisenaire Cards for other games they will be familiar with the standard cuisenaire representation of 11 and 12. You can explain that the other "teens" are named by adapting the names of the rods that represent them: "five-ten" is "five-teen" or "ff-teen". "Six-ten" is "sixteen" and so on.

Players: 1-4

Non-Competitive

Materials: regular starter set of Cuisenaire rods
set of Cuisenaire Cards

Skills: the concepts of "sum" and "difference"
the different way we represent these operations with rods
relative value of rods
representation of numbers from 11-20 with rods

Rules: This game is just a combination of "Sums" and "Differences". With each turn the player can choose whether to make a sum rod diagram or a difference rod diagram.

Players: 2

Competitive or Non-Competitive

Materials: Cuisenaire Cards

Skills: comparing rod lengths
recognizing and naming rod values to 12
concepts of equal, greater than and less than

Rules: Each player is dealt half the deck of cards. Both players face off, turning over one card each. The players with the higher-value card wins both cards, adding them to the bottom of his or her stack.

If there is a "tie", the tied cards stay face up. Each player adds three face-down cards, then one face-up card. The greater card wins the entire trick. Repeat if necessary for "double war" or "triple war" if further ties occur.

Non-competitive version: Game ends when players have been through the deck once.

Competitive version: Game ends when one player has won all the cards from the other. Or game ends at an agreed-upon time, and players count how many cards they each have to determine a winner.

Players: 2-4

Competitive or Co-operative

Materials: Cuisenaire Cards (remove "1" cards)
two six-sided dice

Skills: counting (dots on dice)
simple addition 2 to 12 (two dice added together)
pattern recognition (dots on dice)
correspondence of numerals and cuisenaire rods

Rules: Each player is dealt six Cuisenaire Cards. They are laid out in a row, face-up, in front of the player. Players then take turns rolling the dice. If the number rolled is equivalent to the value of a Cuisenaire card that player has, the card is flipped over. The object of the game is to turn over all one's cards.

Competitive version: winner is the first person to turn over all his cards.

Co-operative version: object is for all players to turn over all their cards, so a player who rolls a number he cannot use can give his roll to a player who can.

Gimmie Ten

Players: 2-4 Competitive or Co-operative

Materials: regular starter set of cuisenaire rods
Cuisenaire Cards (with 11's and 12's removed)

Skills: simple addition
numerical values of cuisenaire rods
identification of pairs of rods adding up to ten

Rules: Create a rod diagram with Cuisenaire rods, depicting "different names for ten". In other words, lay out an orange rod, and beside it place (blue + white), (brown + red), (black + light green), and so on. Keep this diagram in plain view in the centre of the playing surface.

Deal out five cards to each player. Cards are laid face-up. The youngest player begins. If this player has any orange rod cards, or any combinations of two cards which equal ten, he or she picks up all such cards. Dealer replaces the cards and play moves on. If no tens or ten-pairs can be made player can do a trade of 1 or more cards with the dealer in lieu of a turn. Play continues until all cards have been dealt.

Competitive version: Person who has picked up the most tens and ten-pair cards wins.

Co-operative version: Players co-operate to make tens out of all remaining cards.
