Day 36 · A question worth making a table for

Pick a little question. What would you need to count?

Useful purpose: Choose a useful question, define one data unit and distinguish a category from a discrete whole-number count.

1 · Find the starting point

Ask what one record represents. Use a familiar fictional craft tray rather than asking for private family facts. Check that the same item is not counted once by colour and once by shape in one single-variable table.

2 · Prepare

Use safe familiar paper cards or supplied records. Offer colour/label alternatives so sight or colour naming is not required. No identity, diagnosis, preferences, face/image collection or public survey. A willing person may help count objects without being a required survey participant.

3 · Brief worked model

MODEL question: "Which paper shape labels are in this five-card kit?" Unit=one card; variable=shape name, a category. Records: triangle, square, triangle, circle, square. Table: triangle 2, square 2, circle 1; total 5 cards. A different question "How many corners does each card’s described shape have?" uses a discrete number:0,3 or 4. The first variable is shape type, not quantity; the frequency is still a count of cards.

4 · A different guided try

Choose an unrelated six-record set of labelled paper colours or a verbal list. Agree the unit and one mutually exclusive category rule before recording. If one record is unavailable, mark it unavailable rather than invent its category.

5 · Your own attempt

Choose a question about safe non-personal objects you care about, or access the complete supplied fictional records. State unit, variable and purpose. Collect/observe only if suitable; supplied data use is a different acquisition route. Leave your own table empty until your attempt.

6 · Observe what was actually shown

Observe whether question/unit/variable/method connect, categories are usable, and the child knows what was actually observed versus accessed. Choosing a table title alone is not a guided investigation.

Specific next teaching

If variable and frequency are confused, inspect one new item then two with the same category. If the question asks a count per item, build an unrelated discrete-variable list. If secure, decide how to avoid omissions or double counts.

Three choices you can switch between

1 · Choose your kit question

What would help organise it?

Choose safe paper labels, described toy cards or a supplied list. Make a category question and define one record. Use a small suitable set or original model; no purchase or personal survey.

Evidence/observation: Own question/method; record accessed model versus actual observation.

Specific next teaching: Narrow any question whose categories overlap for one single-variable table.

2 · Which variable?

Name or number for each item?

MODEL each paper token has a shape name and a number of corners. Choose whether your question uses the category name or the corner count, then explain what one row record means.

Evidence/observation: Supplied variable reasoning; no actual token collection implied.

Specific next teaching: Use a new set where different shape names share the same corner count.

3 · Local source reader

Count the right kind of entry.

With an adult, read F03’s dated RRC service-entry list. Unit=one named listed service, variable=Library/History Centre. Four Library entries and one History Centre entry do not mean five different buildings. No visit/current-open claim.

Evidence/observation: Accessed dated primary-derived record list, not a site survey or live service guarantee.

Specific next teaching: Refresh one actual primary page before changing the example; retain unknowns if it is unavailable.

Short child start · Ordinary cues/full alternatives · Adult preparation

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