



Stuart J. Murphy's  
**MathStart**<sup>®</sup>

**Ready. Set. Hop!**  
**Level 3 / Ages 7+**  
**Building Equations**



## Knowing how equations are built is central to children's learning how to interpret and write number sentences.

### Story Description

Who's the better hopper? Matty, the tall frog? Or Moe, who's just plain big? Only a hopping contest can settle the matter. It takes Moe only five hops to make it to the big rock. Matty needs two more hops. So how many hops did Matty take? ( $5 \text{ hops} + 2 \text{ hops} = ?$ ). The happy hoppers keep going until—splash!—they're in the pond. Knowing how equations are built is central to children's learning how to interpret and write number sentences.

Illustrated by Jon Buller.

### Activities

- Identify the clues that suggest operations: "More" suggests addition. "Less" suggests subtraction.
- Look at things in the real world and work together with your child (or students) to create addition and subtraction problems. For example, fruit: 3 apples plus 2 oranges equals 5 pieces of fruit. Or you could also use pets: 3 dogs minus 1 dog equals 2 dogs. Draw pictures of these examples and write the equations under the pictures.
- Gather some crayons, buttons or keys. Ask, "How many are in the pile?" Add a few more. Ask, "How many are in the pile now?" Take away several and ask, "Now how many are there?"
- Bookseller Idea: For "Ready, Set, Hop!," we used a strip of oak tag and paper muffin wrappers to create lily pad number lines. We glued 21 muffin wrappers on the strip of oak tag and wrote the numbers from 0 to 20 in the center of them. Each participant was given a plastic frog. As we build each equation, the frog hopped along the number line.  
—Carol Hartrey, bookseller, *The Learning Tree Store*, Stoneham, NH



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