Grade One

Number Sense Using Unknown
Numbers

1.OA.1: *Using 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, e.g., by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.*

1.OA.8: *Determine the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation relating three whole numbers. For example, determining the unknown number that makes the equation true in each of the equations $8+?=11$, $5=\square-3$, $6+6=\square$.*

Rationale: In order to develop true number sense, students need to be exposed to an unknown in various positions. This allows them a deeper understanding of numbers and their value. Simply solving addition and subtraction with the unknown as the sum or difference does not foster deep number sense, and can lead to rote memorization rather than a strong sense of what the number sentence is representing.

Step by step instructions:

-When using math sentences present them using the following ways: $1+\square=5$ or $\square+4=5$ or $1+4=\square$.

-Create situational stories with unknowns in various places. For example: I had some fish. I got 3 more. Now I have 6 fish. How many did I start with? OR I had 10 balloons. Some popped. Now I have 5 left. How many popped?