

The Number Game

John Newstrom, Edward Scannell & McGraw Hill Publishing

Possible Objectives: Persistence, Patience, Attention to Task, Accepting Limitations...

Needs: Each student will need one copy of **The Number Game** handout and something to write with.

Procedure: Students should be seated at their desk for this one. Place the number sheet face down on each desk. They are not to turn the sheet over until you give instructions to do so. (I have found that there is no advantage gained for students who try to look “through” the back of the sheet. There’s an interesting process to explore here. Why are they looking for an advantage?)



Tell students that this activity is a hand-eye coordination exercise. Have them work independently, without talking, and as fast as they can within the given time period. When you say “Go,” players turn their papers over and locate the number “1” (the only number that is circled on the page) and place their index finger on this number. Then they should look for and place their index finger on the number “2,” then find and place their index finger on the number “3” and so on. It is important to “physically” place their finger on each number before they locate the next number. Continue finding numbers until time is up. Each round lasts 60 seconds. When time is up say, “Please stop. Turn your papers over and write the last number you touched on the back of your sheet.”

At this point of the game (don’t worry there’s more) decide how you would like to continue. You can ask everyone to share their numbers with the class (good issues here). You can do a general sharing: “Who made it above 5, 10, 15, 20...?” This way the students can fit “within a group” (issues here). You can also just continue with the next round.

“Get ready for round two.” Each round has the same rules—building on previous skills. Always start with the number “1,” use the index finger, and count as high as you can in 60 seconds. Repeat this procedure at least six or seven times—I like to do ten rounds if I have the time (oh yes, more issues), and don’t forget to write the numbers on the back. When you have completed all the rounds (you and they can possibly stand), it will be time for a little discussion. As customary, I have included some questions.

NOTE: I have presented this activity over 100 times. More often than not, after the first round, scores will drop for the next round or two. Then the scores tend to go above the first round’s score by the end—proving the process that “practice pumps performance” (I think I just made that up). I call this slump the “Learning Wall.” We face pressure to constantly improve our performance—especially if we are being graded. Pressure can cause stress, and stress is related to physiological responses of the body. One possible response is a lack of oxygen to the brain. Lack of oxygen to the brain...the “Wall.” Some students will give up at the wall, finding it too difficult to continue. So how can students get over the wall? With some effort. (Encouragement from us sure wouldn’t hurt either.) The out-

--THE NUMBER GAME-----

come of anything is the product of effort. If we can demonstrate this to our students, the light might turn on. I like to refer back to this activity whenever the group hits the “Wall” at another time. I will ask them what it is that we need right now to get over the “Wall.” Please keep in mind that you might have to work through some issues with students who don’t get over the “Wall.” These students are our opportunity to really teach—OUR “Wall.” Just don’t forget what effort can do. So I talked your ear off, let’s get back to it.

Observations/Questions:

- What were some feelings you were going through during the activity? Are there times in the classroom when you might feel like this? What can we do to help each other through these feelings?
- What do you think the point of the activity was?
- What was difficult about the activity? How can we relate this to our classroom?
- How many of you experienced the “Wall” during the activity?
- How did/didn’t you react to the “Wall”?
- What was the effect of sharing the numbers with the class?
- How did students react to the sharing?
- Did anyone decide to not share her/his numbers?
- Did anyone choose to share an incorrect number? Why do you think this happens?
- Was everyone able to follow the rules?
- Did anyone use both index fingers during the process?
- Did anyone give up? What might be some reasons we give up on something?
- What might be a lesson from this activity?
- Do you want to do a few more rounds!?

(OTHERS)

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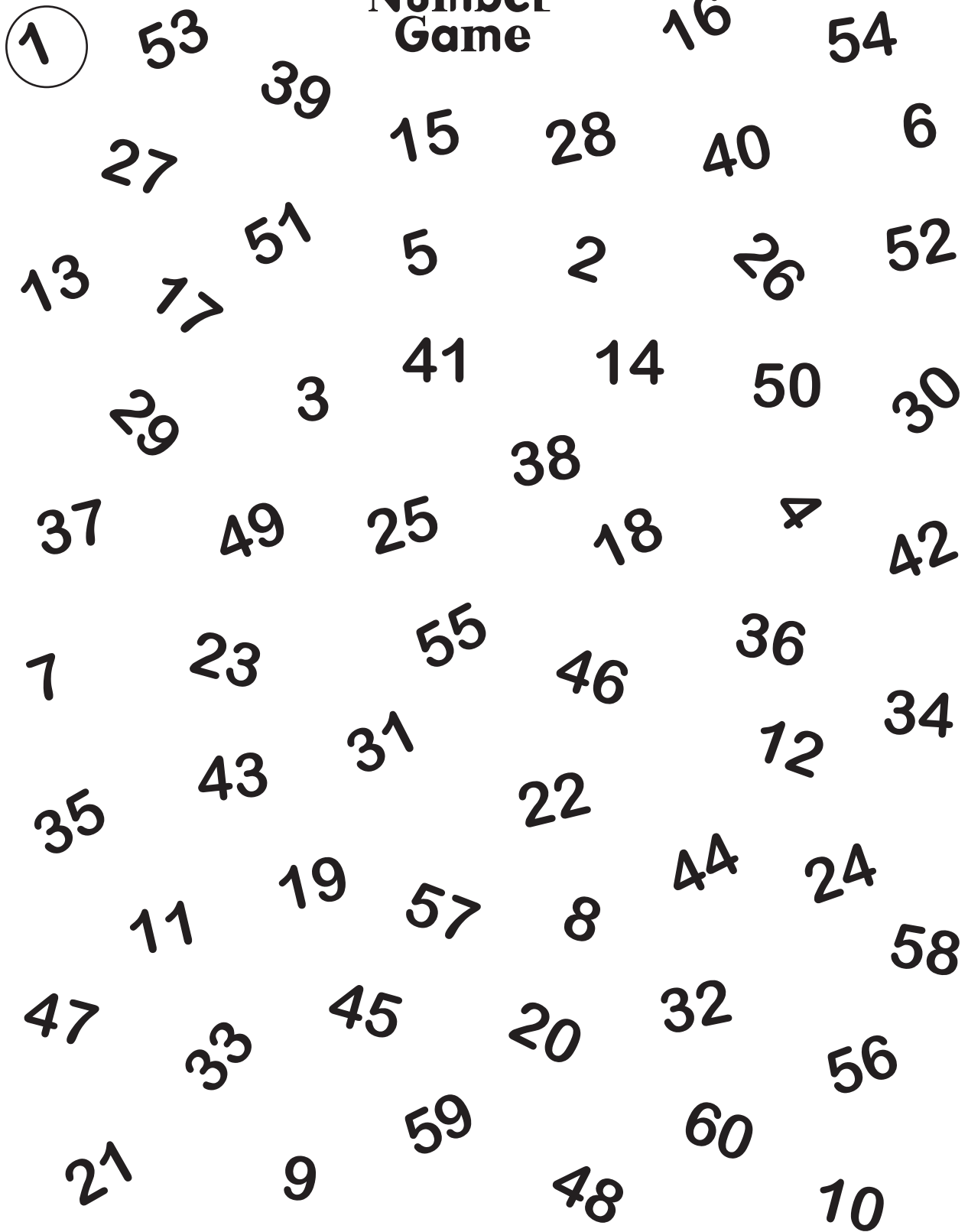
Variations:

- You can also use this activity to work on concentration and relaxation skills. As the time is going down, count off the time remaining every 5 seconds, “55 seconds left, 50 seconds left, 45 seconds left.....10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, TIME’S UP!” (Wear eye protection if you decide to try this.) What skills can be learned to help you relax more during/in a distracting environment?
- Turn the sheet upside down—same skills, different look.

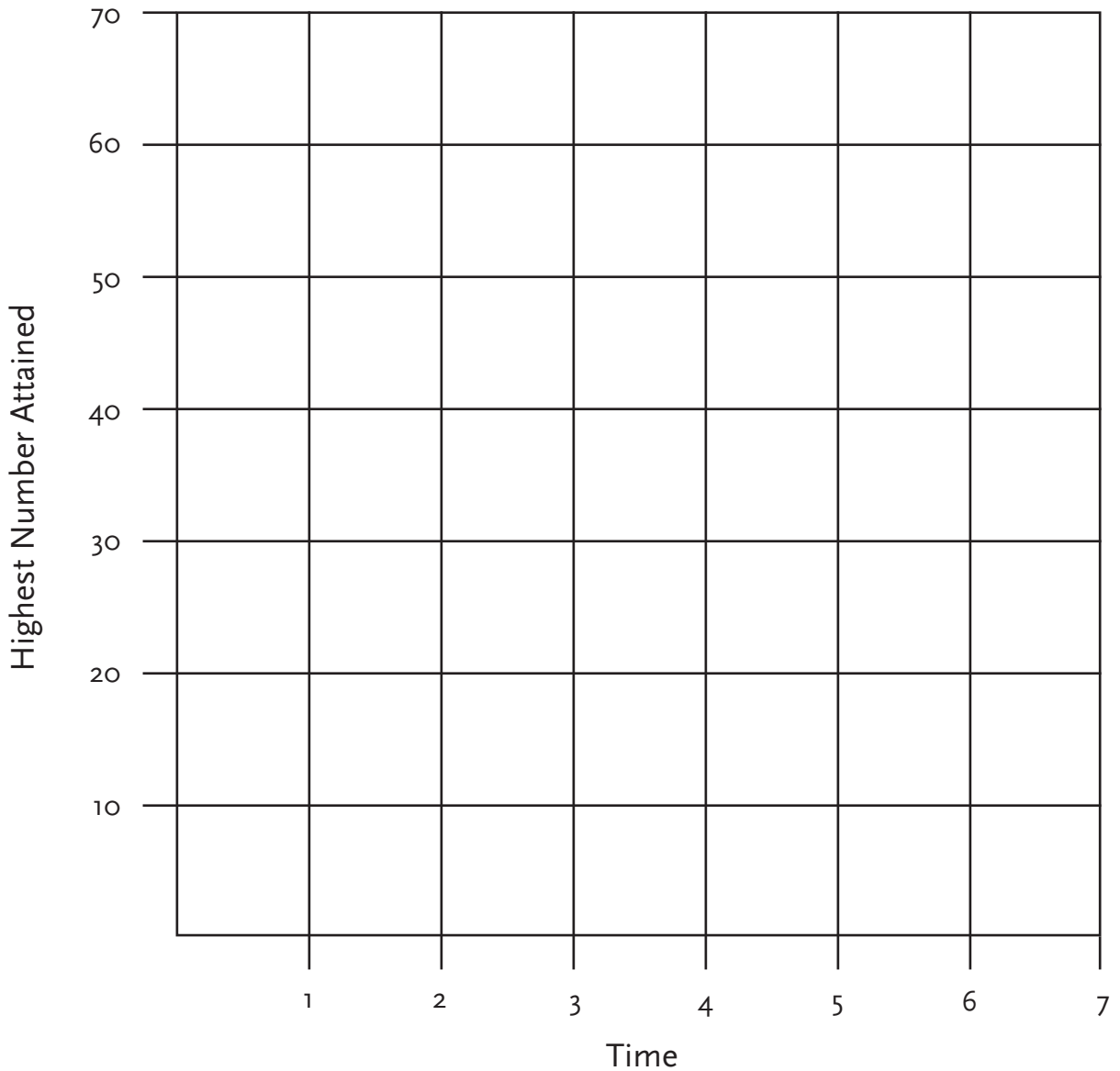
Other Ideas:

- The Learning Curve (pg. 33) can be used to plot students' numbers for a visual of their progress (not to mention a little math work).
- The Number Game** is a good lead into the **Group Number Game**.

The Number Game



Learning Curve



After completing **The Number Game**, have students plot each of their results (sequentially) on the learning curve. Interpolate as needed. Connect each of the seven dots to complete your learning curve. Some possible questions for discussion:

1. Did anyone have an increase every time?
2. Many of us experienced a slight decline or “learning plateau.” What might cause this?
3. If we are likely to experience these “plateaus,” how can we be more understanding of these situations and adapt to them?

Newstrom, John W., Scannell, Edward E., *Games Trainers Play*, 1980, McGraw Hill, Inc.