

Think Ahead



Topics: Strategy, integers, visualization, thinking ahead, and mental math

Materials: Think Ahead game board, sheet protector, dry erase marker

Players: two (or two teams of players)

Recommended Grades: 2-8

Common Core Standards: MP1, MP3, MP6, MP7

In the game of Think Ahead, players take turns choosing integers from the game board following some special rules. The sum of these chosen integers becomes the player's score at the end of the game. The player with the highest score is the winner.

Why We Love Think Ahead.

Think Ahead is a game that depends on a player's ability to think ahead. This game of integers will have you thinking 2 or 3 steps ahead as you try to strategize what your next step should be. It's also a great game for introducing integers in the context of gaining or losing points. The mental math comes into play when adding up the final scores.

How to Play

Using your dry erase marker, randomly fill the gameboard with the numbers -10 to 10 two times (plus 2 more numbers). Player 1 first decides to be vertical (columns) or horizontal (rows). Player 2 will be the other. Then Player 2 decides to go first or second. The player who goes first chooses a number from the column (if they are vertical) or the row (if they are horizontal) that contains the **X**. She then marks an **X** through that number and writes that it on her score sheet. The second player then chooses a number from the row or column that contains the new **X** that the previous player just drew. Play continues in this manner until all of the numbers on the game board are crossed off, or until a player ends up with no numbers to choose from on his or her turn. Players then find the sum of their own numbers and compare their final scores.

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0	-10	5	-2	10
-4	7	-7	8	-9
9	-1	X	10	2
4	-5	1	-3	-8
-6	3	-10	0	6

Player 1 Player 2

Questions and Suggestions

1. Does it matter if you go first or second in this game?
2. Does it matter if you are the vertical or the horizontal player?
3. Should you always choose the largest number possible on your turn?
4. With younger children, use numbers -5 through 5 on the gameboard.
5. Verbalize your thinking and ask questions as you play with young children.
6. Play with teams of 2 or 3 players each and make decisions together.

Think Ahead

		X		

Player 1

Player 2

