

Carry Collector

Grade 5/6 Math | Adding to millions and billions | Teacher notes



BC Math 5: addition and subtraction of whole numbers to 1 000 000.

BC Math 6: small to large numbers (thousandths to billions): place value and operations with thousandths to billions.

Both: Computational fluency develops from a strong sense of number. Learn through play.

Levels at a glance

Mat	Who	Numbers	Cards per round	Points per round
Thousands	Warm-up for everyone	3-digit + 3-digit	6	up to 5
Millions	Grade 5	6-digit + 6-digit	12	up to 8
Billions	Grade 6	9-digit + 9-digit	18	up to 11

You need (per group of 2 or 3)

- 1 set of 40 digit cards (the 2 Digit Cards pages, on cardstock), or a deck of cards: Ace = 1, 10 = 0, remove J, Q, K
- 1 mat per player, and a pencil
- Optional: sheet protectors and dry-erase markers

How it works

- One flip, everyone writes: all players use the same digit, so no one waits.
- Placement is the strategy: big digits stacked in one column make carries.
- Wrong answer = 0 points, so checking matters.

Teach it (about 15 min before groups play)

- **I do:** play one Thousands round on the projector game. Think aloud: "Where should this 8 go?"
- **We do:** class vs robot on the projector, Millions mat. Students vote on each box.
- **You do:** groups play 2 or 3 rounds. Gr 5: Millions. Gr 6: Billions. Start anyone unsure on Thousands.

Look-fors while you circulate

- Starts at the ones and lines up columns
- Writes the carry in the star, never 2 digits in one box
- Adds the carried 1 to the next column
- Reads the answer by periods ("1 billion, 245 million...")

Debrief questions

- Where did you put your 9s? Why?
- What makes a carry happen?
- Can a carry make another carry? Show us.
- What is the 1 in the crown box worth?

Easier

Thousands mat, or roll one regular die (digits 1 to 6). Pair a strong reader with each group.

Challenge

Fewest points wins: avoid carries! Or play Billions and read every answer aloud.

Checking

Partners re-add. A calculator is for checking only, after the round.