About the Story

Bird Count Day takes place each winter when groups of people get together to conduct a bird census. Ava gets up early to join Mom and Big Al, her team leader, to find and count different kinds of birds. Ava learns to follow important rules about carefully counting the birds and accurately recording their number. She is learning to be a “citizen scientist” as she cooperates with others to get a census of birds in different places around the world. She learns a lot about many beautiful birds, too!

Words to Learn

MATH AND SCIENCE WORDS
census, citizen scientist, science research, tally, hatch mark, slash mark, rare, scan, average, investigate

AVA WORD
Avis means bird in Latin!

About the Math

Reading Bird Count, your child can learn that:

- A census is a careful counting of important things, like birds or the population of people in different places.
- There are important rules to ensure that counting is accurate and reliable (that different counters get the same correct result).
- Often it’s useful to use tallies to record the results of counting, but sometimes written numbers are preferable when counting many items.
- When counting results differ, an average gives a number showing what is a fair description of the combined results.

Math Talk During Reading

ENGAGE YOUR CHILD IN CAREFUL COUNTING
Ask your child to check the number of the birds on different pages of the book.

TALK ABOUT THE RULES FOR COUNTING
Discuss why there are 10 teams, and why at least two people need to see or hear a bird before recording the number. “Why is it hard to know if you counted a bird twice?”

TALK ABOUT THE USE OF TALLIES
“Why did they use tallies rather than just write down the number? Why didn’t Ava use tallies to show the number of turkeys?”

TALK ABOUT USING THE CLOCK TO SHOW DIRECTION
Mom describes the location of the bird as “two o’clock.” Discuss what that means and ask your child to find the bird that meets that description.

Try to come up with some of your own questions and comments, too!

Activity After Reading

TALLY OBJECTS AT HOME
In a notebook, count and tally the number of drawers, drawer handles, or objects in different colors in each room.
The Mathical Book Prize recognizes math-inspiring literature for kids ages 2-18. Prize-winning books are selected by a committee of teachers, librarians, mathematicians, and others. To get the Mathical List, plus reading guides, book reviews, and more, see mathicalbooks.org