

Zero the Hero

by Joan Holub and Tom Lichtenheld

AGE LEVEL 7–10 YEARS

About the Story

In this hilarious and math-rich story, Zero thinks he is a Hero but the other numbers don't agree. After all, you can't count nothing. And if you add 0 to another number or subtract 0 from it, nothing happens. Sometimes the numbers even think Zero is a donut or the letter O. But one day, when they are captured by vicious Roman Numerals, the numbers cry out for help. Zero the Hero comes to their rescue. What is his magic power?



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Words to Learn

MATH WORDS

ten ones, circular, random, divisor, times tables, infinity, round off, round down, round up, odd, Roman numerals, ones, tens and hundreds places

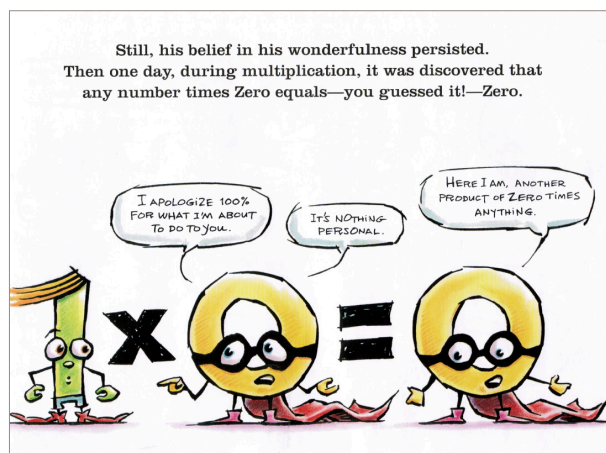
OTHER WORDS

glamorous, virtually, invisible, frustration, extinction, realization, confidence, oblivion, encountered, gladiators

About the Math

There is *lots* of math in this book. Your child can learn what the number 0 cannot and can do:

- Adding 0 to a number does not change it.
- Subtracting 0 from a number does not change it.
- Multiplying any number by 0 results in 0.
- You can't divide any number by 0.
- Writing a 0 to the right of any number produces a tens number (and then hundreds and thousands...).
- Rounding up and down sometimes requires a number with 0 on the right.



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Math Talk During Reading

TALK ABOUT THE ROLE OF ZERO IN MULTIPLYING

“Multiplying 7 by 2 is like adding 7 two times. How much is 7 times 0? Why?” (Zero, because you’re not adding 7 at all.) “How much is 0 times 7? Why?” (Zero, because seven zeros add up to nothing.)

TALK ABOUT THE FRUIT STORY PROBLEM

“What is the problem the numbers are trying to solve? Why do they need Zero?”

TALK ABOUT THE ROUND-OFF PROBLEM

“What are 1 and 3 trying to do? What is rounding down? What are 2 and 8 trying to do? What is rounding up?”

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

Activity After Reading

MAKE UP NUMBER STORIES

Help your child make up a story about numbers. Among the questions you can ask: “Can you think about an adventure that numbers might have? What do numbers do to have fun? Does something strange or weird or scary happen? Are the numbers happy or sad?”

Mathical

BOOK PRIZE

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

PreK WINNERS:

Baby Goes to Market by Atinuke

Crash! Boom! A Math Tale
by Robie H. Harris

8: An Animal Alphabet by Elisha Cooper

Have You Seen My Dragon? by Steve Light

Lia & Luis: Who Has More? by Ana Crespo

One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller
by Kate Read

1 Smile, 10 Toes by Nelleke Verhoeff

ONE Very Big Bear by Alice Brière-Haquet

GRADES K-2 WINNERS:

Absolutely One Thing: Featuring Charlie and Lola by Lauren Child

The Animals Would Not Sleep
by Sara Levine

Max's Math by Kate Bank

Nothing Stopped Sophie: The Story of Unshakable Mathematician Sophie Germain by Cheryl Bardoe

One Big Pair of Underwear by Laura Gehl

Pigeon Math by Asia Citro

Sheep Won't Sleep: Counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s by Judy Cox

Uma Wimple Charts Her House
by Reif Larsen and Ben Gibson

PreK HONOR TITLES:

Animal Shapes by Christopher Silas Neal

Circle Under Berry by Carter Higgins

Count the Monkeys by Mac Barnett

Count with Maisy, Cheep, Cheep, Cheep!
by Lucy Cousins

Goodnight, Numbers by Danica McKellar

I Know Numbers by Taro Gomi

Marta! Big and Small by Jen Arena

A Mousy Mess by Laura Driscoll

One Happy Tiger by Catherine Rayner

100 Bugs! A Counting Book by Kate Narita

One Is a Piñata: A Book of Numbers
by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

Over in a River: Flowing Out to the Sea
by Marianne Berkes

Press Here by Hervé Tullet

Round by Joyce Sidman

Shape Up, Construction Trucks
by Victoria Allenby

What Will Fit? by Grace Lin

GRADES K-2 HONOR TITLES:

Billions of Bricks: A Counting Book about Building by Kurt Cyrus

Bird Count by Susan Edwards Richmond

The Boy Who Loved Math
by Deborah Heiligman

Cao Chong Weighs an Elephant
by Songju Ma Daemicke

Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13 by Helaine Becker

Counting the Stars: The Story of Katherine Johnson, NASA Mathematician
by Lesa Cline-Ransom

Count on Me by Miguel Tanco

The Girl With a Mind for Math: The Story of Raye Montague by Julia Finley Mosca

How Many Jelly Beans? A Giant Book of Giant Numbers! by Andrea Menotti

Is 2 a Lot?: An Adventure with Numbers
by Annie Watson and Rebecca Evans

Lifetime: The Amazing Numbers in Animal Lives by Lola M. Schaefer

Shapes, Reshape! by Silvia Borando

3x4 by Ivan Brunetti

We Are One: How the World Adds Up
by Susan Hood

When Sophie Thinks She Can't
by Molly Bang

Zero the Hero by Joan Holub

HALL OF FAME TITLES:

Anno's Counting Book, Mitsumasa Anno

Hippos Go Berserk! by Sandra Boynton

One Grain of Rice: A Mathematical Folktale
by Demi

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

