

Example Weekly Letter, Second Grade

Dear Families,

This week your child will learn to add two numbers between 10 and 99 using a strategy called **partial sums**. Reminder: a **sum** in math is the total, or result, of adding numbers.

When using **partial sums**, break apart each number into smaller parts and then combine all the parts to find the total. This week, we will break apart the numbers by place value (tens and ones). In the future, your child might break apart the numbers differently.

How your child might talk about it:

$$45 + 56$$

I can break apart each number by place value: $45 = 40 + 5$ and $56 = 50 + 6$.

I can add the tens: $40 + 50 = 90$

I can add the ones: $5 + 6 = 11$

I can add the parts: $90 + 11 = 101$

What it might look like mathematically:

$$\begin{array}{r} 45 = 40 + 5 \\ + 56 = 50 + 6 \\ \hline 101 = 90 + 11 \end{array}$$

At the end of the week, talk with your child about using **partial sums** to add by asking them to show you how to find the total for $39 + 57$ using this strategy. If they struggle, ask these questions:

- Do you think the answer will be greater or less than 100? Why?
- How can you rewrite 39 as tens and ones?
- How can you rewrite 57 as tens and ones?
- What do you get when you add the tens and the tens? The ones and the ones?
- Can you draw your base-ten blocks to help you?

(Continued)

Why we are learning it this way:

Growing up, you may have added numbers like this:

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 45 \\ + 56 \\ \hline 101 \end{array}$$

Your child will learn to add numbers like this in fourth grade.

We want to make sure they first understand how our number system works so that when they write it like this, they understand why they are doing the steps.

Look at how the way we are learning connects to the way they will learn it later:

$$\begin{array}{r} 45 = 40 + 5 \\ + 56 = 50 + 6 \\ \hline 101 = 90 + 11 \end{array} \longleftrightarrow \begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 45 \\ + 56 \\ \hline 101 \end{array}$$

Students add $5 + 6$ and $40 + 50 + 10$ in both methods, but writing out the numbers by their place values helps students understand *how much the numbers are worth*. This will help prevent mistakes later on when they get to fourth grade and learn a shorter method.

If you have any questions, please reach out!

Sincerely,

[Signed Teacher or Grade 2 Teachers]