

## Games

# Using an Abacus to Keep Score

An abacus is a handy device for counting, keeping score, and doing math. There's a bar in the upper third of the abacus called the separation bar. Each bead below the bar has a value of 1. Each bead above the bar has a value of 5.

The right-most column, Column 1, is the ones column. Column 2 is the tens column. Column 3 is the hundreds column, and so on.

With the abacus in front of you, place it so the separation bar runs left to right and is about one-third of the way from the top. The rods containing four beads should be below the separation bar.

## Keeping Score

To use an abacus to keep score, you'll set, add, and clear numbers:

- Setting is like writing the number in print.
- You set beads when you push them toward the separation bar. You clear beads when you push them away from the separation bar.

- If you push one bead from below the bar toward the separation bar in Column 1, you have set 1. If you push it way from the bar and back to the frame of the abacus, you have cleared 1.
- If you push two beads from below the bar toward the separation bar, you have set 2. If you push the beads back to the frame, you've cleared 2.
- If you push a “five” bead from above the separation bar toward the bar in Column 1, you have set 5. If you push it away from the bar and back towards the frame of the abacus, you have cleared 5.
- To set 10, set one bead in Column 2. To clear 10, push this bead away from the separation bar.
- To set 50, set the “five” bead in Column 2, and so on.

## Simple addition

- Set 1 in Column 1. Set another bead; you now have 2. Continue to set beads below the bar until you have 4.
- Add one more. But there are no unused beads below the bar. So set a “five” bead. But this means you've added 4 too many. So clear 4 beads from below the bar. Now you just have the one “five” bead. So the abacus now shows 5.

- Keep adding beads in Column 1 until you've pushed all the beads toward the bar. So you have one "five" bead and four "one" beads. The abacus shows 9.
- How do you add one more since you've already used all the "one" beads in Column 1? Set one bead in Column 2. Now you've added 10, not 1, so you have 9 too many. So clear the beads from Column 1 (the "five" bead above the bar, and the four "one" beads below the bar). Your abacus now shows 10.
- To add one more, set one bead in Column 1. Your abacus has one bead in Column 2 and one bead in Column 1; the abacus now shows 11.