

Pumpkins Add Up Fast!!

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It was Saturday morning. Halloween was just a week away. Sophie was still trying to figure out what she wanted to be. She always dreamed up a wild idea and her mom and dad would help make her costume. She was thinking that this year she was going to be a cloud. As she was drawing some sketches of her cloud costume, she looked at the clock and saw that it was almost 9 o'clock.

“Come on Sophie,” her dad shouted, “We’re about ready to go.”

Sophie's family was headed to their friend's farm. They had been working at the farm almost every weekend. Now with the fall harvest underway, their friends really needed their extra help. Sophie climbed into the back seat as they went to pick up Norman. Norman and Sophie are very good friends. Norman was so happy that Sophie's family always invited him to go to the farm with them. Norman loved visiting the farm.

As soon as Norman got into the car he said, "It's almost Halloween. I don't know what I want to be. What are you going to be?"

Sophie looked at Norman and said, "Promise you won't tell anyone."

"I promise," said Norman.

"A cloud," replied Sophie.

Norman scratched his head and then exclaimed, "Hey! Maybe I can be an umbrella and we can go trick-or-treating together."

"We can go together no matter what your costume is," said Sophie, "An umbrella would be a cool costume."

They were almost at the farm when Sophie's mom turned to the back seat and said, "Do you both want to stop and visit Ezra and Irma at the farm stand?"

"YES!!" Sophie and Norman said at the same time.

Sophie and Norman met Irma and Ezra the last time they visited the farm. Irma and Ezra had moved here from the big city just because they always wanted to run a farm stand. The last time they visited, Sophie and Norman had helped Ezra use math to solve some problems. It was fun.

“What do you think will be happening at the farm stand?” asked Norman.

“I don’t know,” replied Sophie’s dad, “Farm stands are pretty busy at harvest time. You will have lots to see and do.”

A moment later they arrived at the farm stand. It was already busy. Sophie and Norman hopped out. Sophie’s mom said, “Walk down to the farm for lunch. Have fun and be good helpers.”

Norman and Sophie walked over to Ezra, and Norman asked, “What are you trying to sell today?”

“Today I’m hoping to sell two things: pumpkins and gourds. They are the most popular items as we get closer to Halloween.”

He pointed at two long wooden boards resting on large barrels at each end. Ezra said, “I’m going to put all of the pumpkins on these **2 boards**. I have enough room to put out **20** pumpkins if I use the right mix of **big ones and medium ones**.”

Sophie and Norman were imagining how the **20** pumpkins would look sitting on the **2** boards when a dusty pickup truck suddenly turned down the road and came to a stop in front of Ezra and Irma's farm stand.

"The first pumpkin delivery!" Ezra said excitedly.

Farmer Dwayne rolled down his window and gave Ezra a wave. "It's been a good growing season, Ezra. I can sell you **1, 2, 3, 4, or 5** pumpkins. Pick out what you want," he said.

Ezra proceeded to take **5** large pumpkins out of the back of the truck and settled them on the ground in an open grassy area.

Irma, who had been busy arranging jars of pickles, relish, and jam inside the farm stand, came over to Ezra quickly.

“Okay Ezra, you know four more farmers are going to stop by today: Caroline, Jenny, Dominica, and McGregor. Remember that we promised to buy some pumpkins from each of them.”

“Of course I remember!” Ezra exclaimed, “A promise is a promise. The farmers are going out of their way to drive by and sell us pumpkins. I think we should buy at least **2** pumpkins from each farmer.”

“I know you Ezra,” said Irma. “These pumpkins all look beautiful, and I know you can’t resist a fine-looking pumpkin. Make sure you don’t buy more than **20** pumpkins today because we won’t have enough room on the boards to put them,” Irma reminded him gently. “And don’t forget you promised to buy **2** from each farmer.”

Irma winked at Sophie and Norman as she went back to arranging the jars inside the farm stand. Just at that moment, farmer Caroline drove over to the stand in her truck full of pumpkins.

“Wow, these pumpkins are gorgeous!” Ezra cried out. “How many can I have?”

“Well you promised you would buy some. You can have up to **5**,” Caroline said.

Ezra paid farmer Caroline for the pumpkins and put the **5** new pumpkins on the grass next to the jumbled pile of pumpkins that were already there.

“How many pumpkins do you have now?” Irma shouted from the other side of the farm stand.

Ezra looked at his pumpkin pile and began to count, pointing at each pumpkin as he went. “**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,**” he hollered back.

“Hmmm, wait a minute. I’m not sure I counted right. This is a little confusing when all the pumpkins are in pile,” Ezra mumbled. Ezra counted again, very slowly and trying to be careful. “**10!**” he yelled back to Irma. “I have **10**... I think.”

Sophie and Norman sat down in the grass and watched with great interest as the next farmer, Jenny, arrived at the stand. Ezra walked over to the truck and exclaimed, “Wow! These pumpkins are even more beautiful than the last ones! How many will you sell me?” “You can have up to **5** Ezra,” said Jenny.

Ezra paid Jenny for **5** pumpkins, took them from the truck and placed them in the growing pile. There was now a quite large and jumbled collection of pumpkins by his feet.

The pumpkins were getting harder and harder to count.

“How many pumpkins do we have now, Ezra?” Irma called out.

Ezra looked at the large pile of pumpkins by his feet and started to feel a little overwhelmed. “Just a minute, Irma. Let me figure it out,” he said.

Ezra tried to touch each pumpkin but couldn't reach all of them. Then he tried pointing at the pumpkins and counting out loud, “**1, 2, 3, 4, 5...** Oh my, I can't really see which ones I've counted. I wonder, if there is a way to start counting where I left off?” wondered Ezra.

1. Do you have ideas about how Ezra could count his pumpkins?

Sophie and Norman looked at each other.

“Ezra has two more farmers that he promised to buy pumpkins from and he already has a lot of pumpkins. Most of them are pretty big,” said Sophie.

“Yes,” Norman said, “and I’m not sure he knows how many he already has and how many more he can take.”

“I agree,” replied Sophie, “Why does he always start counting from **1** every time? He knew he had **10** pumpkins before the last farmer came by,” Sophie said.

“Yeah, it took him a long time to count all of those pumpkins again. And jumbled up like that, it’s easy to make a mistake,” said Norman.

Sophie and Norman walked over to Ezra. Norman waited for Ezra to look in their direction. “Ezra, instead of starting at **1** you can start counting where you stopped. You had **10** pumpkins. You bought **5** more from farmer Jenny.”

“Yes.” Sophie added, “Put one in the pile – that’s **11**, next **12** until you counted the **5** new pumpkins.”

2. What do you think of Norman and Sophie’s strategy? Is it like your ideas?

How many pumpkins does Ezra have now?

Just at that moment, farmer Dominica drove up with a load of pumpkins and once again, they were beautiful. Ezra completely forgot his promise to buy pumpkins from every farmer. And so, once again, he bought 5 beautiful pumpkins.

When Dominica drove away, he looked over at the enormous pile of pumpkins beside him and started to count. “**1, 2, 3...**” He stopped. “This is not the strategy Sophie and Norman suggested. I have **15** pumpkins. Hmm, how do I count the **5** pumpkins I just bought from Dominica?”

3. Can you help Ezra use the counting strategy that Norman and Sophie used?

How many pumpkins does Ezra have now?

Sophie was thinking and said to Norman, “Ezra knew he had **15** pumpkins before Farmer Dominica arrived. He needed to figure out how many he had so he could figure out how many more he could buy. How could Ezra have done that?”

Norman understood what Sophie was saying. “Ezra had **15** pumpkins. He bought **5** from Dominica.”

4. Can you help Norman and Sophie figure out how many pumpkins Ezra has now?

Sophie and Norman walked over to where Irma was standing. Sophie looked up at Irma and said, “We counted how many pumpkins Ezra has now.”

Norman said, “Ezra has **20** pumpkins already.”

Irma said, “I guess I’ll have to tell him that he cannot buy any more pumpkins.”

5. How many pumpkins could Ezra have bought from farmer Dominica without having more than **20** pumpkins?

Just at that moment, from around the corner came the oldest pickup truck Sophie and Norman had ever seen. It was farmer McGregor with the last load of beautiful pumpkins.

“Hello Ezra, how many pumpkins would you like today?” asked farmer McGregor.

Ezra was just about to say, “I would like **5** of your pumpkins,” when Irma tapped him on the shoulder. “I don’t think we have room for any more pumpkins,” she said.

Farmer McGregor realized what had happened. “I’ll be able to sell all my pumpkins at the farmer’s market in town. So, I guess it’s okay this time. But you did promise to buy at least **2** pumpkins from me,” he said.

“I know. I am sorry,” said Ezra. “I am going to have to do a better job counting next time.”

“Okay, Ezra,” smiled farmer McGregor, “I’ll be back next week.”

Sophie and Norman sat down in the grass with Ezra. He was admiring his **20** beautiful pumpkins.

“I think we can help you figure out how many pumpkins to buy from each of the farmers next time,” Sophie and Norman both said at the same time.

6. What are your ideas for figuring out how many pumpkins Ezra should buy from each of the **5** farmers. He only has room for **20**.