# Yard Sale (Grades 1-3, Subtraction)

Number of players: Two or more

What you need:

* 10 or more 3 × 5 cards, cut in half to make sale item cards
* Colored pens or pencils
* Coins or play money—one dollar per player, plus extra for change, consisting of pennies, nickels, and dimes (later you can change it to 2 dollars per player to involve larger numbers and longer game play)

To make the sale item cards: In order to play the game, you need 20 or more sale item cards. Each card should have a drawing or picture of something kids might like to buy at a yard sale, and a marked price (usually between 5 and 30 cents). *Tip—making the cards is great fun, and gets the best buy-in from children*. I always have the children make the cards and decide what will be for sale, but I choose the prices, so I can make sure they are practicing with the kinds of numbers I want them to practice!

How to play:

1. Spread out the sale item cards in the middle of a table or floor.
2. Provide each player with one dollar in change or play money.
3. Put several pennies and nickels in the middle of the table or floor, next to the sale item cards. This is the “bank.”
4. Have players take turns buying items they like. Each player can buy one item each turn. To buy an item, the player puts the appropriate coins in the bank, making change as needed.
* The easiest way to play is for children to “trade in” dimes or nickels for pennies so they can pay in exact amounts. Making change is more challenging. I suggest starting by teaching how to pay with exact change (which mimics the exchanging in the standard subtraction algorithm!), and only later moving to a variation where they make change.
1. Continue until everyone has spent all their money, or has bought all the things they want to buy.

I don’t specify a winner for this game. When asked who wins I tell them “no one—do you *win* when you go shopping?” If you want to have a winner, you can decide that the “winner” is the person who buys the largest number of items, or who spends the most money on purchases, or who has the most money left over at the end. Each of those would make for a slightly different strategy and game play.

**Example:** Some possible items and prices for yard sale cards

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| http://www.wpclipart.com/money/coins/coin_US_nickel_T.pngPennyThttp://www.wpclipart.com/money/coins/coin_US_nickel_T.pngUS Quarter front | Apple Coloring Fruit Clip Art 15¢ | Musical Note Clip ArtMusical Note Clip Art 48¢ |  26¢ |  |
|  | Running, Shoes Clip Art 23¢ | Closed Book 1 Clip Art 17¢38¢ | Plane Clip Art  |  |

Variations:

* Start each player with 25 cents, and use two 6-sided dice. Each turn, roll the dice to see how many more cents are added to what the player has.
* Each time you play the game, let each player create one or two new cards to add to the existing set of sale item cards.
* For players in grade 3, add quarters to the mix. Instead of trading in so they can pay in exact amounts, encourage them to pay using the coins they have, then get the appropriate change from the bank.