GAMBIAN MATH ACTIVITY: COUNTING IN WOLOF

Wolof is the language that appears throughout ONE PLASTIC BAG. Here’s how to say numbers 1-5, and the number 10 in the Wolof language.*

1 = benna (BEH-na)  4 = ñenet (NYEH-net)
2 = ñaar (NYAAR)  5 = juróom (jur-OME)
3 = ñet (NYET)  10 = fukka or fuuk (FOOKA or FOOK)

Wolof numbers are counted in groups of five. To get numbers 6-9, you have to combine five and another number together to make the number you want to say.

For example:
To say “6”, it’s like saying 5 + 1: juróom benna
To say “7”, it’s like saying 5 + 2: juróom ñaar

Can you figure out how to say “8” and “9” using this pattern?

To get numbers from 11-15, you have to combine ten and another number to form the number you want to say. Add the word “ak” in between them, which means “and.”

For example:
To say “11”, it’s like saying 10 + 1 = fukka ak benna
To say “12”, it’s like saying 10 + 2 = fukka ak ñaar

Can you figure out how to say “13”, “14”, and “15” using this pattern?

Things get trickier when you are counting over 15! You’ll need to combine three or more numerals to say most numbers.

For example:
To say “16”, you’ll say 10 + 5 + 1 = fukka ak juróom benna
To say “19”, you’ll say 10 + 5 + 4 = fukka ak juróom ñenet

When counting by tens in Wolof, you will say the number in the tens place first.

For example:
20 = two tens = ñaar fukka
30 = three tens = ñet fukka
40 = four tens = ñenet fukka
50 = five tens = juróom fukka

Can you figure out how to say numbers such as 21, 34, 46, and 59?

*spellings/pronunciations may vary by region. **currency rates vary; rounded for ease of calculation
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Try to write out these numbers in Wolof.

8 ______________________________________________________
9 ______________________________________________________
11 _____________________________________________________
26 _____________________________________________________
31 _____________________________________________________

Which numbers are these?

fukka ak ñenet ______
ñaar fukka ak juróom ñaar ________
fukka ak juróom ñet ______
ñenet fukka ak benna ______
ñet fukka ak juróom ______

DALASI MONEY ACTIVITY:
CURRENCY EXCHANGE

In the book ONE PLASTIC BAG, Isatou turns trash into purses and earns DALASI.
1 U.S. Dollar (USD) equals about 40 Gambian Dalasi (GMD)**
$1.00 = D40 (use D instead of a dollar sign for Gambian money)

Can you figure out these conversions? Use multiplication, division, fractions, or ratios to fill in the equivalent amount of USD or GMD.

D80 = $ ____________  
D10 = $ ____________ 
D400 = $ ____________  
D2 = $ ____________ 
D__ = $3.00  
D____ = $1.00 
D__ = $0.50 (fifty cents) 
D____ = $100.00 
D ___ = $0.10 (10 cents) 
D____ = $6.00

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