Does the data support that claim?

Our invented library record

Books borrowed (invented data)
Monday: 12 Tuesday: 8 Wednesday: 15
Thursday: 8 Friday: 17
Counts are books, not pupils.

1. True, false or cannot tell?

A. Friday had the most books borrowed. B. Twice as many books were borrowed on Friday as on Tuesday. C. Pupils enjoy reading most on Fridays. Give a reason for each.

2. Check the whole week

How many books were borrowed altogether? Were Wednesday and Friday together more than half the weekly total? Explain. Write one question this record cannot answer.

Teacher notes and possible answers

Checked answers

A true: 17 exceeds 12, 8, 15 and 8. B false: twice 8 is 16, not 17. C cannot tell: borrowing counts do not measure enjoyment. Total: 12 + 8 + 15 + 8 + 17 = 60 books. Wednesday plus Friday: 15 + 17 = 32, greater than half of 60 (30).

What “cannot tell” means

It is not the same as false. Pupils might enjoy reading most on Fridays, but this record does not establish that. Valid unanswered questions include which titles were borrowed, how many different pupils borrowed books, whether anyone finished reading, or why borrowing varied.

Run the discussion

Prerequisite: read a simple table and add within 100; teach half of a total before the extension. Allow 15 minutes. Write the days and counts in two columns. Ask pupils to point to the evidence behind each claim. Require units: books, not children.

Support and revisit

For support, compare two days and use counters or a simple bar chart with a zero baseline and equal scale. For stretch, ask for a claim that is nearly true and correct it: “Friday was one more than twice Tuesday.” Later use another small invented record; check whether pupils distinguish measured facts from possible explanations.

Original SkillFlex activity. Local review draft; not classroom-trialled. Free to copy and adapt for teaching with credit. Not for resale.