Meaningful Contexts: Thinking Outside the Base 10 Box

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Base 10 is the most commonly taught number base in mathematics classrooms. In this article, we give some examples from mathematics courses taught in the first two years of college in which bases other than 10 may arise. Then we describe the importance of applying real-world examples as a way to help close the equity gap in the classroom. We then provide a list of examples to help instructors begin to teach bases in the classroom. We conclude with suggestions for other ways that instructors can encourage students to identify base number systems in their everyday lives as a way of thinking and problem solving.

Keywords: base 10, base number systems, real-world applications, equity gap

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