Unit 2

Instructional Days: 10-12

Topic Description: This lesson introduces the binary number system and how to count in binary. Students will learn how to convert between binary and decimal numbers in the context of topics that are important to computer science.

Objectives:

The students will be able to:

• Count forward and backward in binary.

• Explain why binary numbers are important in computer science.

• Use binary digits to encode and decode messages.

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• Outline of the Lesson:

• Journal Entry (5 minutes)

• CS Unplugged Activity 1: Count the Dots—Binary Numbers (counting in binary) (50 minutes)

• CS Unplugged Activity 1: Count the Dots—Binary Numbers (binary number system) (50 minutes)

• Revisit journal entry (5 minutes)

• Journal Entry (5 minutes)

• Discussion of why binary numbers are important in computer science (15 minutes)

• CS Unplugged Activity 1: Count the Dots—Binary Numbers (Email and Modems, Counting Higher than   
31) (35 minutes)

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Student Activities:

• Complete journal entry.

• Participate in the Count the Dots activities.

• Revisit journal entry.

• Complete journal entry.

• Participate in a discussion of why binary numbers are important in computer science.

• Complete Count the Dots activities.

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

• Journal Entry: How high can you count with your ten fingers?

• Use the CS Unplugged: Count the Dots activity to introduce binary representation and counting in   
binary.

• Start with the introductory activity on p. 4 of the activity. (The activity can be downloaded from http://csunplugged.com ) It will be helpful to read through the entire activity in advance, so that you can revise questions, add your own questions, and think about how you might want to structure each part of the activity. The goal is for students to be actively involved in some way and for all students to be able to represent numbers and count in binary. What follows is the minimal suggestion.

• Have 5 students come to the front of the room and demonstrate as you follow the instructions and ask the questions. (Each student should receive a large card with one of the numbers of dots—1, 2, 4, 8, 16)

• Use the CS Unplugged: Count the Dots activity to explain the binary number system and have the students practice counting forward and backward.

• Complete the Binary Numbers activity on p. 5 and Working with Binary activity on p 7.

• Have 5 students come to the front of the room and try counting as you call out the numbers. (Each student should receive a large card with one of the numbers of dots—1, 2, 4, 8, 16); have them call out their number as they work.

• Have different groups of 5 students at a time come to the front and have the other students provide counting and representation challenges. You could also have a competition with multiple teams of students each trying to get the answer. There are many other possibilities. Be creative!!

• Revisit Journal Entry.

• Journal Entry: Complete the Sending Secret Messages activity on p. 8 of the CS Unplugged: Count the   
Dots activity. (Solution is on p. 13.)

• Discussion of why binary numbers are important in computer science

• Complete the remaining activities in CS Unplugged: Count the Dots. (Email and Modems—p. 9, Counting   
Higher than 31—p. 10, and/or More on Binary Numbers—p. 11)

Resources:

• Bell, Tim, Ian Witten and Mike Fellows. Computer Science Unplugged. Canterbury, New Zealand: 2002.

• Computer Science Unplugged Activity 1: Count the Dots—Binary Numbers, pp. 3-13

• Binary number cards for each student, some in Braille as needed (can use puffy paint or similar material to create them)

• Large binary number cards for the demonstrations