

Problem Solvers Activity 4: Six Eggs in the Nest

CHILDREN ARE LEARNING TO...¹

- Say or sign some number words in sequence (1, 2, 3...), starting with one.
- Understand that counting words are separate words, such as "one," "two," "three" versus "onetwothree".
- Understand that one number word represents one object being counted (one-to-one correspondence).
- Understand that the last number named represents how many objects are in a group (cardinality).

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Bag of dried beans, ideally Great Northern or Navy beans, or other counters

4 small cups or bowls

Glue

Cardboard or manila folder (6 pieces)

1 piece of colored construction paper

Hook and loop fastening such as Velcro®

1 popsicle stick

Optional:

Clear contact paper/laminate tape (optional, to make a sturdier resource)

Small easel or clipboard

Handout 1: Nellie's Nest for Teacher Use

Handout 2: Nellie's Nest (6 eggs)

Handout 3: Nellie's Nest (10 eggs)

Handout 4: Eggs

Handout 5: Egg Cards

Handout 6: Nellie

¹ Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>

PREPARATION:

- Place 6 beans in each of the four cups. Keep the cups close by for the pair activity.
- Print out **Handout 1**, cut out the nest and glue to a piece of cardboard/manila folder. Optional: Cover in clear contact paper or laminate tape if you want to make it sturdier for repeat use. Keep the nest, the Nellie puppet, the colored construction paper, eggs, and one set of egg cards close by for the group activity.
- Place 6 small squares of hook and loop fastening (the loop or soft side) on the nest. Place the tape squares so there is enough space to place each egg.
- Make 4 copies of **Handout 2**. If you wish, glue to cardboard/manila folder to make them sturdier. (For a more challenging activity, substitute **Handout 3**, which has space for 10 eggs instead of 6).
- Cut out the 6 eggs from **Handout 3** and glue each egg to a piece of cardboard/manila folder. Place a small square of hook and loop fastening (the hook or rough side) on the back of each. Place eggs in a cup or bowl.
- Make 4 copies of **Handout 4**. Cut along the lines, keeping the cards separated into 4 decks. Optional: If you wish, glue to index cards/manila folder to make them sturdier. Remove the 3-egg cards for 30-36 month olds. Set aside for later play.
- Print out **Handout 5** and glue to a piece of cardboard/manila folder. Glue a popsicle stick to the bottom of the image to use as a stick puppet.
- Optional: Keep an easel or clipboard close by for the activity.
- Prepare copies of the parent handout for distribution.
- If you plan on implementing the optional book activity, refer to the preparation instructions in that section.

Activity Instructions

ENGAGE

Gather a group of 4 children at a table or in a circle on the floor.

ASK: Does anyone know about nests? What can you tell me about a nest?

Other questions you might ask include: What kind of animal do you think uses a nest? What do think you might find in a nest? Use this conversation to prime children's background knowledge about nests, birds, and eggs. (Note: Some reptiles—like alligators, crocodiles, and turtles—also lay eggs in holes/nests. Dinosaurs laid eggs in nests too!)

SHOW children the nest you have created. Place it on the wall at children's height, or clip it to an easel or clipboard where all children can see.

ASK: What do you see? This nest belongs to my friend Nellie. (Take out Nellie puppet and move her to the nest.) Nellie is a hen and this is the nest where she lays her eggs. But—uh-oh!—I don't see any eggs! Do you see any eggs? No? Ellie needs some eggs!

EXPAND

Take out the eggs you have prepared. Lay them in two rows of three on a piece of colored construction paper.

SAY: Let me tell you a story. Here's my story about Nellie. (Use the stick puppet to act out these movements.)

Nellie the Hen ate her corn for dinner.

She clucked at the other hens. Cluck, cluck! (Can you cluck too?)

And then she walked across the farm, walked inside the barn, and climbed into her nest.

Nellie did a great big yawn. (Can you yawn too?)

And went to sleep. (Can you snore like Nellie?)

When she woke up, there were eggs in her nest!

Nellie the hen laid down to rest.

How many eggs were in her nest?

Take out the egg cards and spread them face down in front of children.

Select a helper to choose an egg card to find out how many eggs were in the nest. Invite the child to count the eggs on the card.

Ask the helper to choose that number of eggs from those you've prepared and place them on Nellie's nest. As the child places them on the eggs on the Velcro spots, count them aloud.

SAY: Would you like to hear what happened next?

That night, Nellie Hen ate her corn for dinner.

She clucked at the other hens. Cluck, cluck! (Encourage children to cluck with you)

And then she walked across the farm, walked inside the barn, and climbed into her nest.

[Have the children join you for the chorus:]

Nellie the hen laid down to rest.

How many eggs were in her nest?

Select a new helper to pick an egg card to find out how many eggs to add to the nest. Count the eggs on the card. Then ask the helper to choose that number of eggs from those you've prepared. As the child places them on the Velcro spots, count them aloud.

ASK: What can we do to find out how many eggs Nellie has now?

Take several ideas. Select a child to count how many eggs are in the nest; encourage all children to join in. If the child does not point to each egg as they count, model how to do so. When they finish counting, reinforce the total number of eggs: "Yes, we counted to ____ so Nellie has ____ eggs in her nest."

SAY: Should we see what happens next?

That night, Nellie Hen ate her corn for dinner.

She clucked at the other hens. Cluck, cluck! (Encourage children to cluck with you)

And then she walked across the farm, walked inside the barn, and climbed into her nest.

[Have the children join you for the chorus:]

Nellie the hen laid down to rest.

How many eggs were in her nest?

Select a helper to pick an egg card to find out how many eggs to add to the nest. Count the eggs on the card. Then ask the helper to choose that number of eggs from those you've prepared. As the child places them on the Velcro spots, count them aloud.

ASK: What can we do to find out how many eggs Nellie has now?

Select a child to count how many eggs are in the nest; encourage all children to join in. If the child does not point to each egg as they count, model how to do so. When they finish counting six, reinforce the total number of eggs: "Yes, we counted to ____ so Nellie has ____ eggs in her nest."

SAY: Let's see what happens next!

That night, Nellie Hen ate her corn for dinner.

She clucked at the other hens. Cluck, cluck! (Encourage children to cluck with you)

And then she walked across the farm, walked inside the barn, and climbed into her nest.

[Have the children join you for the chorus:]

Nellie the hen laid down to rest.

How many eggs were in her nest?

SAY: Do you know how our story ends? Nellie decided that it's time for her to sit on all her eggs until they hatch. So she did! (Hold the Nellie stick puppet on top of the nest.) Nellie sat and waited, sat and waited, until all of her eggs hatched and she met her baby chicks.

ASK: Do you know what sound baby chicks make? They say "cheep, cheep!!" Can you make baby chick sounds with me? (Children may want to talk about what happens when the chicks hatch or imagine a different ending—like finding even more eggs. Feel free to follow children's interests for a bit before moving on.)

EXPLORE

Repeat 6 Eggs in the Nest as a group activity—for children up to 3.5 years of age.

Try 6 Eggs in the Nest as a partner activity—for children aged 3.5 and up. Form pairs of children. Give each child a copy of **Handout 2**, a deck of egg cards, and a cup of beans to represent eggs. Help children discover how many spots there are on Nellie's nest for eggs (6). Explain that in this game, they need to fill Nellie's nest with eggs. Have children take turns choosing egg cards, counting the eggs, stating the quantity, and then placing that number of eggs on the nest. Explain that they can continue the game until they have each filled their nest. If time allows, they can switch partners and play a second time.

OBSERVE the pairs to see if children are recognizing the quantities on the dice without counting them (subitizing). This is most likely to happen with small numbers (1-3).

If you see children make a counting error in recognizing the quantity on the dice or placing that quantity of candles on their cake, you might say: "Hmmm, let's doublecheck." Point to each dot on the dice as you count aloud. When done, ask the child: "So there are ____ dots. That means Nellie found how many eggs in her nest? (*Wait for child response.*) That's right. She found ____ eggs. Let's count to make sure." Then suggest the child count the eggs once more

REFLECT

To close the activity, bring the children back together. Use a reflective question/s - like those below - to prompt children's thinking about counting and quantity.

- What did you do to figure out how many eggs to put in Nellie's nest?
- Let's talk about how you found out how many eggs were in Nellie's nest.
- Tell me about a card you chose—how many eggs did you put in Nellie's nest?
- Did you fill up Nellie's nest with eggs? How many eggs filled the nest?

SAY: Before we say good-bye, let's pretend we are Nellie! Can you flap your feathers for me? Can you cluck to say good-bye? Cluck, cluck! Thank you, Problem Solvers, for helping Nellie with her nest!

Individualizing the Activity

MAKE IT MORE CHALLENGING:

- Use the 10-egg nest and add the 3-egg cards to the deck.
- For partner work, ask children to count the total number of eggs on their nest after each turn.
- After children have filled their nest, work with them to practice removing eggs (after they are "hatched"). Have children select egg cards and remove that quantity of eggs from the nest until there are no eggs left.

MAKE IT LESS CHALLENGING:

- Use the 1-egg cards only, and set the 2- and 3-egg cards aside.
- Skip the pair activity and continue with the group story. Some children may also benefit from using 3D props, such as plastic eggs and a nest you have made from a blanket or basket.

MAKING CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE DAY:

- Count the cubbies as children are entering the classroom. Notice which cubbies have jackets or backpacks and which still "need" jackets or backpacks.
- Notice counting opportunities like a box of 8 crayons—is there a crayon in each spot? Does the box need any more crayons to be full? How many? The same with windows—is there a sticker or decoration on each pane of the window? If not, how many more does it need to be "full"?
- When offering children snack, ask if they would like 1, 2, or 3 crackers. Ask them to help you count to "doublecheck." You can also line items up in rows of 2 or 3 and prompt children to notice these visual quantities.
- Create a morning check-in procedure where each child's name/photo is in a row of five. Help children "check" their box when they are present. Notice and count as the boxes are checked off. Count at the end to see how many children there are "all together."
- Use the dice as a fun way to do transitions. For example, ask a child to roll the dice and have the children jump up and down that many times before transitioning to lunch. Or roll the dice and then do that many stretches before transitioning to nap.

Song: *Nellie's Nest*

Gather the Nellie puppet, 10 plastic eggs in a bag or basket, and a straw basket to represent Nellie's nest.

Introduce the song: Let's hear a song about Nellie's adventures! We'll listen to it once all the way through, and then we'll listen to it again and help Nellie by counting out her eggs! Are you ready, Problem Solvers? Let's go!

Lyrics

Nellie, the hen, sat in her nest.
She was sleeping, taking a rest.
She stood up and what did she find?
Two big eggs; she was impressed.

Nellie, the hen, went for stroll.
She saw her friend and clucked "hellooooo"
Back at her nest, what did she find?
Three more eggs wiggled and rolled.

How many eggs does Nellie have now?
1-2-3-4-5; five eggs, wow!

Nellie, the hen went out to eat.
She nibbled some apples; they were so sweet.
Back at her nest, what did she find?
One more egg; what a nice treat.

How many eggs does Nellie have now?
1-2-3-4-5-6, six eggs in the sticks.

Nellie, the hen stretched her wings wide.
She took a dust bath right outside.
Back at her nest, what did she find?
Two more eggs; side by side.

How many eggs does Nellie have now?
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8, eight eggs is great!

Nellie, the hen, went to the pond.
She took a big drink, then wandered on.
Back at the nest, what did she find?
Two more eggs rolling around.

How many eggs does Nellie have now?
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10, ten eggs – let's count them again!
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10! Ten eggs! Ten eggs!

Build on the song by pausing it after each stanza. Select a helper to count out the appropriate number of eggs mentioned in that stanza and place them in the nest. As you restart the song with the lyrics "How many eggs does Nellie have now?", encourage your helper to touch each egg in the nest as the whole group counts along with the song.

Making Literacy Connections

Share the following book with children as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of counting and quantity. The literacy extension activity below suggests another play-based experience to invite counting.

Suggested Book: *Big Fat Hen* by Keith Baker

AS YOU READ:

Prompt children to count the illustrations. On each page, the author features two numbers (like 5 and 6) and has included five items and six items in the illustration. Help children discover these quantities in the pictures. Focus on having children count the sets on each page and tell how many they see. Focus less on the idea that they are adding one more.

BUILD ON THE BOOK:

Materials: 20–30 plastic eggs, a basket for every 2 children, and a die (can be made from a cube block with dots in quantities 1 to 6 drawn on each side)

Preparation: Place 20–30 plastic eggs around the classroom. Eggs should be visible to children (not hidden).

1. **SAY:** Guess what? The big fat hen and all her friends have been to our classroom and they left so many eggs for us to find!! Would you like to help me find the eggs?
2. **SHOW** children the dice. Help them discover the quantities as you count the dots on each side.
3. **SAY:** What we'll do is roll the dice like this (roll it) and see what number is on top. Who would like to help me? Can you help me figure out how many eggs we should collect?
4. **ASK** a pair of children to find that quantity of eggs in the classroom and put in their basket.
5. **REPEAT** until every pair has a chance to roll the dice and collect eggs, until all eggs are collected.
6. **If you wish**, children can be asked to place the eggs in their basket around the classroom in order to play again. These materials can be included in a center area to encourage math play across the day.

Handout 1: Nellie's Nest for Teacher Use



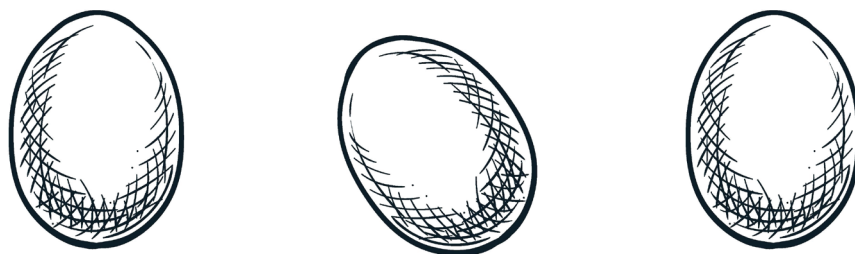
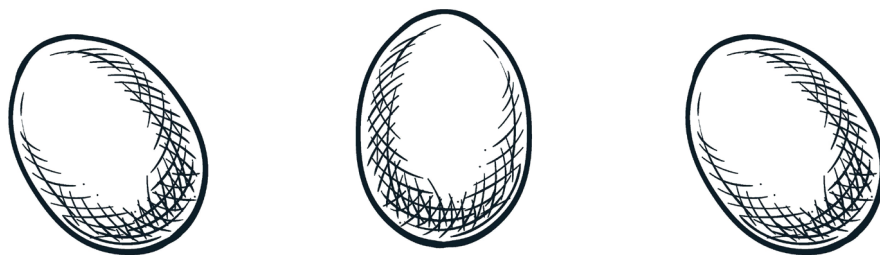
Handout 2: Nellie's Nest (6 eggs)



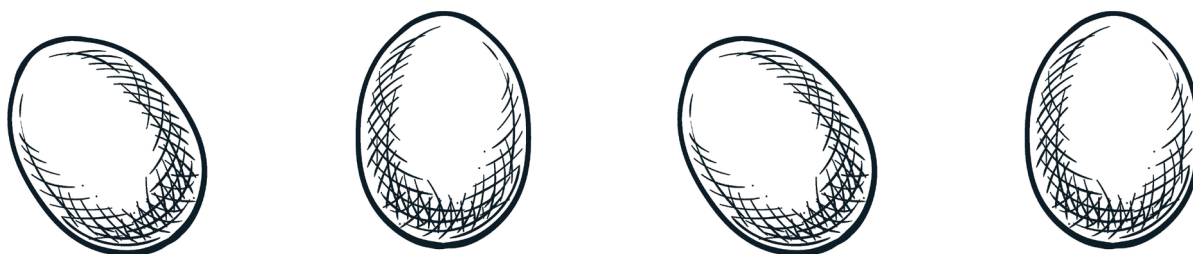
Handout 3: Nellie's Nest (10 eggs)






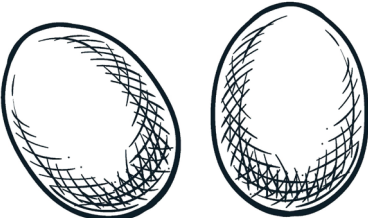
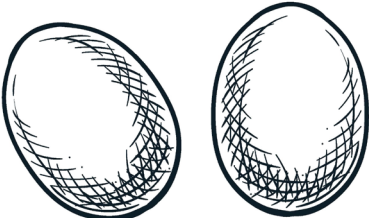
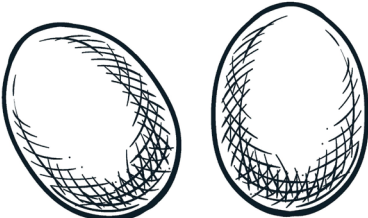
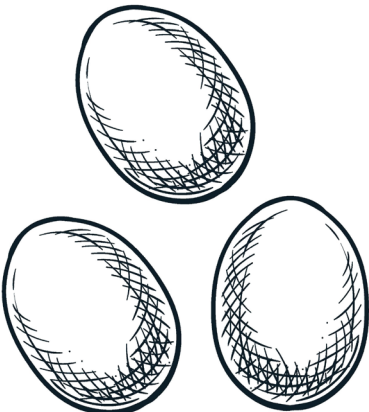
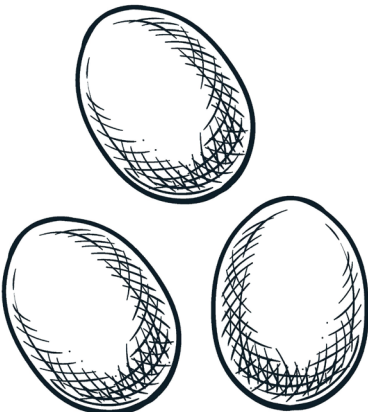
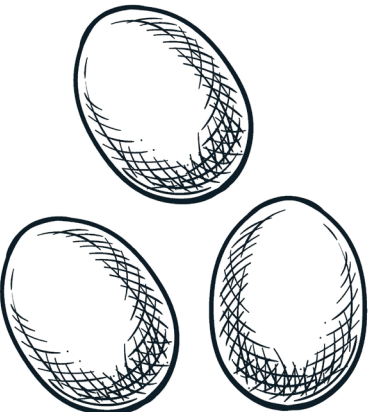
Handout 4: Eggs



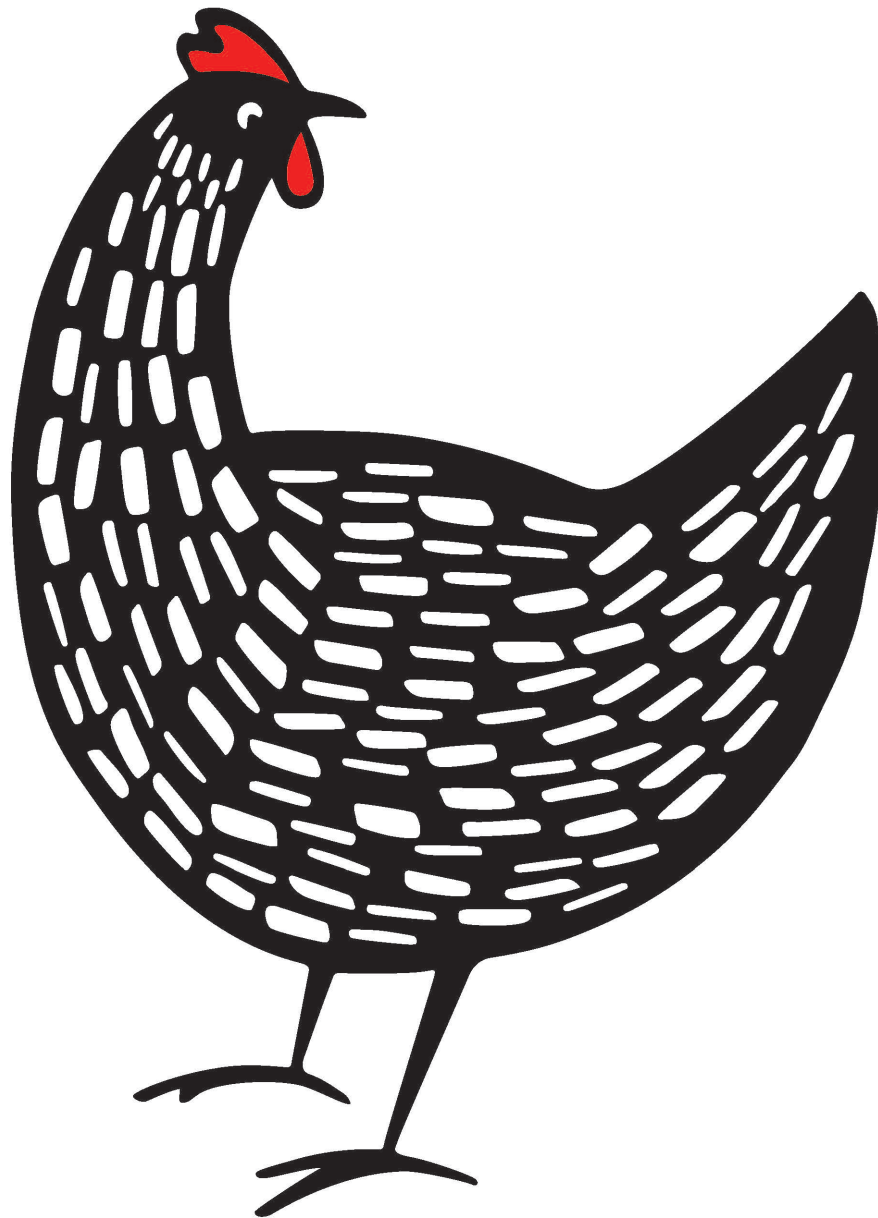
Additional eggs if you are using the 10-egg nest with your students:



Handout 5: Egg Cards

Handout 6: Nellie





So Many Spots to Fill!

This week, try a counting game with your child!

Gather an empty egg carton or muffin tin. You'll also need 12 small items that fit inside—dried beans or pasta pieces, toy cars or blocks, or something similar.

Point to the empty egg carton: "Look, it's empty! There are so many spots to fill! Do you want to help me fill all of these spots? Let's find out how many spots there are." Point to each opening and count with your child.



Say: "Let's see how many beans we should put in first. Hmmmm—here's how many!" Hold up 1, 2 or 3 fingers. Help your child count your fingers and then place that quantity of beans in the egg carton, with one bean in each spot.

Continue the game until your child has filled all twelve spots. As you get 9-10 spots filled, take a moment to ask your child, "What can we do to find out how many spots are left to fill?" When you are done and all 12 spots have something inside, take a moment to count with your child to discover how many there are "all together."

After you have played a few times, let your child tell you how many beans to put in each time.



Solo para familias

¡Tantos lugares para; llenar!

¡Esta semana, practique un juego de contar con su hijo!

Reúna una caja de huevos vacía o un molde para muffins. También necesitará 12 artículos pequeños que quepan dentro: frijoles secos o trozos de pasta, carros o bloques de juguete, o algo similar.

Señale el cartón de huevos vacío: “¡Mira, está vacío! ¡Hay tantos lugares que llenar! ¿Quieres ayudarme a llenar todos estos espacios? Averigüemos cuántos lugares hay “. Señale cada hueco y cuente con su hijo.



Diga: “Veamos cuántos frijoles debemos poner primero. Hmmm, ¡aquí tienes cuántos! “ Levante 1, 2 o 3 dedos. Ayude a su hijo a contar sus dedos y luego coloque esa cantidad de frijoles en el cartón de huevos, con un frijol en cada lugar.

Continúe el juego hasta que su hijo haya llenado los doce lugares. A medida que llene de 9 a 10 lugares, tómese un momento para preguntarle a su hijo: “¿Qué podemos hacer para saber cuántos lugares quedan por llenar?” Cuando haya terminado y los 12 lugares tengan algo adentro, tómese un momento para contar con su hijo y descubrir cuántos hay si los suman “todos juntos”.

Después de haber jugado algunas veces, deje que su hijo le diga cuántos frijoles poner cada vez.

Si este juego es demasiado fácil para su hijo, puede usar cantidades mayores de frijoles, hasta de 4 a 5 a la vez. Una vez que la caja esté llena, también puede pedirle a su hijo que retire una cierta cantidad de frijoles (levantando 1, 2 o 3 dedos a la vez) hasta que la caja esté vacía nuevamente.

Si este juego es un desafío para su hijo, concéntrese en cantidades de 1 a 3. Además, puede optar por llena solo la primera fila del cartón de huevos (6 lugares).