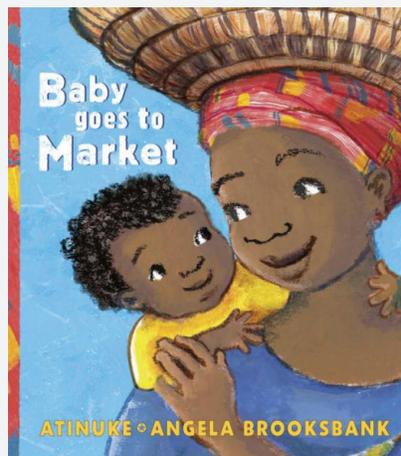


## **Second Reaction: *Baby Goes to Market: A Global Education Tale that Invites Subtraction Exploration***

Atinuke. *Baby Goes to Market*. Illustrated by Angela Brooksbank, Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2017. Print.

Lynn Navin



*Baby Goes to Market*, written by Antinuke and illustrated by Angel Brooksbank, provides a sensory-rich view of a world market through vibrant, colorful pictures and rhythmic language. The book's cover is a beautiful picture of Baby and his mama. As I read the author and illustrator names, the children immediately recognized that the author had just one name rather than two as most do. We talked a bit about the use of first and last names and had a short book talk where they predicted what the story would be about. I then shared the story with a group of preschoolers. The beautiful illustrations took us on a trip through a market in southwest Nigeria. *Baby Goes to Market* is a subtraction lesson as Baby is gifted market items, always eating one and placing the remaining in the basket Mama wears on her head.

The story begins with the repeated text, "Market is very crowded. Baby is very (adjective word changes)." Baby is given six bananas by a market seller, eats one, and puts the remaining five in the basket worn on the Mama's head, which she does not notice. As I read the book to my students, one child immediately questioned why the mama did not have a bag, prompting a rich discussion about markets in other parts of the world. One little girl shared about her visits to markets in Mexico. The rest of the pages follow a similar pattern, with the number of items gifted to Baby decreasing by one as well as the number of items Baby puts into the basket. As we continued reading, some of the children were able to count down to complete

the subtraction task when I asked how many items Baby would put into the basket. We spent time discussing their likes and dislikes of the food items presented in the story. Roasted sweet corn was their favorite. The story ends with Mama calling for a taxi because Baby must be hungry. This brought a rumble of laughter from one child who understood the irony of the situation. The illustrations of the “bicycle taxis,” as one child called them, generated another rich discussion about taxis around the globe. The story’s ending provided opportunity for recall as the children helped list the items Mama found in her basket: five bananas, four oranges, three chin-chin biscuits, two roasted sweet corn, and one piece of coconut.

The illustrations in the book are powerful. I spent time discussing each page with the children the second time I read the book. They noticed the colors of clothing, that the “moms” were wearing dresses and flip flops, and that a lot of people were selling things. I asked probing questions to intertwine the book and their experiences with local farmers’ markets. The children liked the story, but they did not ask me to read it again.

*Baby Goes to Market* is a story that more naturally lends itself to a culturally diverse discussion about global markets than to a discussion of numbers and subtraction. However, with repeat presentation and planning, I believe the book would be a tremendous addition to a mathematics unit on basic subtraction. The book is a natural story problem and could be used with first and second graders as they practice writing and solving early subtraction by one quantity. I would make sets of manipulatives that represented each of the items gifted to the baby in the story to assist in the story presentation as well as with individual problem solving. Graphing skills could be supported by using pictographs and bar graphs of the children’s likes and dislikes of the items gifted as well as the story items. I would also use the book to support the economic concepts of production and distribution. Setting up a market within the dramatic play area of the classroom allows for much critical thinking and imagination. A visit to a local market could be a wonderful culminating event of a mathematics unit about markets.

### **About the Author**

**Lynn Navin** is currently an assistant professor of early childhood education and director of the University Child Development Center in the Department of Educator Preparation and Leadership at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. She has spent her entire career as director of laboratory schools and teaching early childhood education to pre-service, in-service, and graduate students.