MATHEMATICS · GRADES 4-6

Comparing and ordering fractions

Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 4-6

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Overview of the concept

This is how you tell who ate more pizza or who finished more of a job. Fractions are only comparable when you compare them fairly, even when the pieces are different sizes. Once you can line them up properly, you can settle any argument about who got the bigger share.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Which is bigger: $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$?

SOLUTION

$\frac{2}{3} = \frac{8}{12}$

$\frac{3}{4} = \frac{9}{12}$

$\frac{9}{12}$ is bigger -> $\frac{3}{4}$

Give both the common denominator 12: $\frac{2}{3} = \frac{8}{12}$ and $\frac{3}{4} = \frac{9}{12}$

Now compare the tops: 9 is bigger than 8.

So $\frac{3}{4}$ is bigger than $\frac{2}{3}$.

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EXAMPLE 2

Q Order from smallest $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{4}$

SOLUTION

$\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$

Order: $\frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{4}$

Give all the common denominator 4: $\frac{2}{4}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{4}$

Compare the tops: 1, then 2, then 3

Order: $\frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{4}$

Practice questions

1 Which is bigger: $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$?

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2 Which is smaller: $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$?

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3 Put these fractions in order from smallest to largest:

$\frac{1}{2}$

$\frac{1}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$

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4 Which is bigger: $\frac{3}{5}$ or $\frac{2}{5}$?

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5 Put these fractions in order from largest to smallest:

$\frac{2}{3}$

$\frac{1}{3}$

$\frac{5}{6}$

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6 Which is smaller: $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$?

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7 Which is bigger: $\frac{4}{5}$ or $\frac{7}{10}$?

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8 $\frac{1}{3}$ m

$\frac{2}{3}$ m

$\frac{1}{6}$ m

Put them in order from shortest to longest.

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9 Which is bigger: $\frac{5}{6}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$?

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10 Which is smaller: $\frac{2}{7}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$?

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ANSWER KEY

1. $\frac{3}{4}$

2. $\frac{1}{4}$

3. $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$

4. $\frac{3}{5}$

5. $\frac{5}{6}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{1}{3}$

6. $\frac{3}{8}$

7. $\frac{4}{5}$

8. $\frac{1}{6}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{2}{3}$

9. $\frac{5}{6}$

10. $\frac{2}{7}$

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