MATHEMATICS · GRADES 4-6

Fractions in word problems

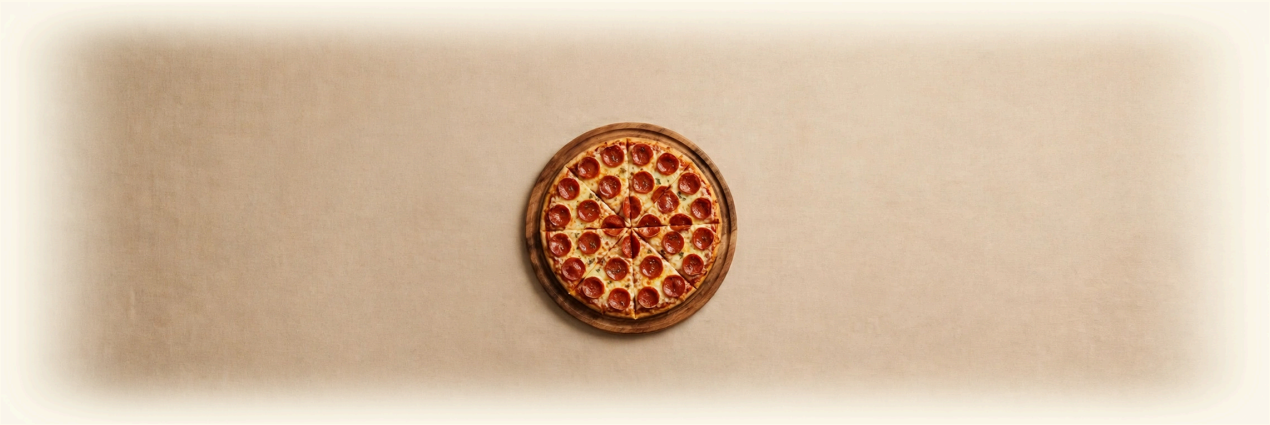
Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 4-6

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Overview of the concept

This is how you work out shares of real things, like splitting a pizza bill or scaling a recipe up for extra guests. Most fractions you meet in real life are not on a worksheet, they are a share of a bill, a part of a recipe, or a portion of a trip already driven. Knowing how to work with them means you can split costs fairly with friends, double a recipe for a party (see Converting improper fractions to mixed numbers), or work out how much of a job is already done.

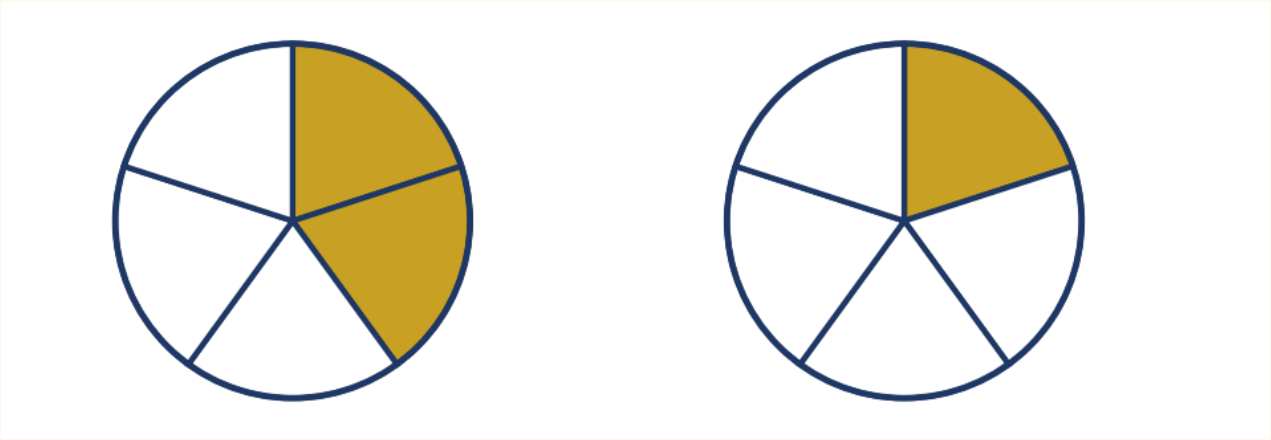


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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Mia eats $\frac{2}{5}$ of a pizza, then $\frac{1}{5}$ more. What fraction of the pizza did she eat?



SOLUTION

This is a fraction word problem, and the one rule to remember is that when the bottom numbers are the same, you add the top numbers and the bottom stays the same.

Mia ate $\frac{2}{5}$ and then $\frac{1}{5}$, so add them: $\frac{2}{5} + \frac{1}{5} = \frac{3}{5}$

She ate $\frac{3}{5}$ of the pizza. The 5 never changes, because the pizza was cut into 5 pieces the whole time.

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EXAMPLE 2

Q A rope is $\frac{3}{4}$ m long. Sam cuts off $\frac{1}{4}$ m. How much rope is left?



SOLUTION

This is a take-away word problem with the same bottom number, so subtract the top numbers and keep the bottom.

$$\frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{4} = \frac{2}{4}$$

$\frac{2}{4}$ is the same as $\frac{1}{2}$, so $\frac{1}{2}$ m of rope is left.

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Practice questions

1 Tom reads $\frac{1}{3}$ of a book, then $\frac{1}{3}$ more. What fraction of the book has he read?

- **A** $\frac{1}{3}$
- **B** $\frac{2}{3}$
- **C** $\frac{1}{2}$
- **D** 1

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2 A jug holds $\frac{5}{6}$ L of juice. $\frac{1}{6}$ L is poured out. How much juice is left?

- **A** $\frac{2}{3}$ L
- **B** $\frac{1}{6}$ L
- **C** $\frac{5}{6}$ L
- **D** 1 L

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3 A recipe uses $\frac{3}{5}$ cup of sugar, and you want to make it twice. How much sugar do you need?

- **A** $1\frac{1}{5}$ cups
- **B** $\frac{3}{5}$ cup
- **C** $\frac{2}{5}$ cup
- **D** $1\frac{3}{5}$ cups

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4 A cake is cut into 8 equal slices. Sara eats 3 slices. What fraction of the cake is left?

- **A** $\frac{3}{8}$
- **B** $\frac{5}{8}$
- **C** $\frac{1}{4}$
- **D** $\frac{3}{4}$

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5 Ben walks $\frac{1}{4}$ km each day for 4 days. How far does he walk in all?

- **A** $\frac{1}{4}$ km
- **B** $\frac{1}{2}$ km
- **C** 1 km
- **D** 2 km

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6 A lemonade pitcher has 12 cups. One serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. How many servings are there?

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7 Sara has $\frac{5}{6}$ of a pie. She eats $\frac{1}{3}$ of the pie. How much pie does she have left?

A $\frac{1}{2}$

B $\frac{2}{3}$

C $\frac{1}{6}$

D $\frac{5}{6}$

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8 A garden is $\frac{2}{3}$ planted. Half of the planted part gets watered today. What fraction of the whole garden gets watered?

- **A** $\frac{1}{3}$
- **B** $\frac{2}{3}$
- **C** $\frac{1}{6}$
- **D** $\frac{1}{2}$

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9 $\frac{5}{8}$ of a class of 24 students walk to school. How many students walk to school?

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10 Ana uses $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour for one recipe and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for another. How much flour does she use in all?

- **A** $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- **B** $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- **C** $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
- **D** 1 cup

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ANSWER KEY

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

2. $\frac{2}{3}$ L

3. $1\ \frac{1}{5}$ cups

4. $\frac{5}{8}$

5. 1 km

6. 24

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

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

9. 15

10. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

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