Comparing Fractions: Which One Is Bigger?

KS2 MATHS FRACTIONS NUMBER Ages 9-12 ⏰ 3 min read

What Are Fractions?

A **fraction** is a part of a whole thing. The top number is called the **numerator** and tells you how many pieces you have. The bottom number is called the **denominator** and tells you how many pieces the whole is cut into. For example, in **3/4**, you have **3** pieces out of **4** total pieces.

Method 1: Same Denominator (Bottom Number)

If two fractions have the same denominator, comparing them is easy! Just look at the numerators. The fraction with the bigger numerator is the bigger fraction. For example, **5/8** is bigger than **3/8** because **5** is bigger than **3**.

Think of it like: Imagine you have two pizzas cut into 8 slices each. If one person gets 5 slices and another gets 3 slices, the person with 5 slices has more!

Method 2: Different Denominators (Bottom Numbers)

When fractions have different denominators, you need to do a bit more work. One way is to **convert them to have the same denominator**. Find a number that both denominators divide into. For example, with **1/2** and **3/8**, you can convert **1/2** into **4/8** by multiplying both the top and bottom by **4**. Now you can compare: **4/8** is bigger than **3/8**.

Think of it like: Imagine slicing one chocolate bar into 2 pieces and another into 8 pieces. To compare fairly, imagine cutting the first bar into 8 pieces too, so you're comparing the same-sized pieces.

Method 3: Convert to Decimals

Another way is to turn fractions into **decimals**. Divide the numerator by the denominator. **1/2** equals **0.5** and **3/8** equals **0.375**. Since **0.5** is bigger than **0.375**, we know **1/2** is bigger.

Method 4: Use Your Number Sense

Sometimes you can use what you know about fractions. Is it more than half? Is it close to a whole? **7/8** is nearly a whole thing, while **2/8** is just a small bit. So **7/8** is clearly bigger!

Think of it like: A cup that's almost full (7/8) obviously has more water than a cup that's barely started filling up (2/8).

With practice, comparing fractions becomes second nature. Try these methods with different fractions and you'll soon spot which is bigger straight away!