

Procedures with Fractions

Difficulties in learning fractions

Fractions is one of the most troublesome topics in the mathematics curriculum for primary, elementary and middle years students and their teachers. A number of reasons are probably behind this situation, including the number of different forms in

which fractions can be written, the different fraction numbers, the instructions for computation and understanding.

This is a key idea in the process of learning fractions. Commensurate percentages

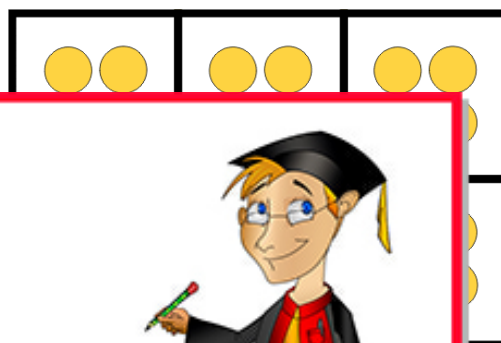
To be successful in these exercises, students first need to be confident and proficient in all basic number facts, including especially multiplication facts to 10×10 and associated division facts.

Multiplying by Fractions

Multiplying a whole number by a unit fraction (i.e., one with a numerator of "1") is equivalent to dividing the whole number by the denominator. The reason for this is

clear: a unitary common fraction is one of a number of equal parts of the whole; if the whole is an integer, the fraction is then equal to the whole divided by the number of parts.

For example:



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(e.g., $4\frac{1}{2}$) may be recorded as either an improper fraction or a mixed number.

An *improper fraction* has a numerator which is greater than the denominator. The fraction is thus greater than one.

A *mixed number* has a whole number part and a common fraction part. Again, it is clearly greater than one. For every improper fraction there is a unique mixed number equal to it which uses the same denominator, and vice versa.