

LESSON PLAN

Comparing fractions with unlike denominators

Math · Grade 4 · 45 min · Term 3, Week 1

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Grade 4 Math. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.NF.A.2: Compare two fractions with different numerators and different denominators by creating common denominators or numerators, or by comparing to a benchmark fraction such as one half, and record the results using the symbols $>$, $=$, or $<$.

[Common Core State Standards](#) ↗

LEARNING INTENTION

Compare fractions with unlike denominators using benchmark fractions and common denominators

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain why two fractions with unlike denominators are hard to compare directly.
- I can use the benchmark fraction one half to decide which of two fractions is greater.
- I can find a common denominator to compare two fractions.
- I can record a comparison using the symbols $>$, $=$, or $<$.
- I can explain my reasoning using math vocabulary such as numerator, denominator, and equivalent fraction.

Lesson Structure

HOOK

- Two pizza slices on the board: $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pizza and $\frac{5}{8}$ of a pizza.
- Marisol and DeShawn each ate one slice. Who ate more?
- Turn and talk. Be ready to defend your answer.

TEACHING

- Fractions with unlike denominators: the pieces are different sizes.
- I cannot compare $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$ directly. The denominators tell me the piece size.
- Strategy 1: benchmark fractions. Is each fraction above or below one half?
- Strategy 2: find a common denominator. Rewrite both fractions with the same denominator.

PRACTICE

- Compare $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{3}{5}$ together on whiteboards. Choose your strategy.
- Record your answer using $>$, $=$, or $<$.
- Hold up boards. Who used benchmarks? Who used common denominators?

CLOSURE

- Which two strategies did we use today to compare fractions?
- Can you compare $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ without finding common denominators?
- Thumb up if you can explain your comparison symbol choice.

Differentiated Groups

EMERGING

TASK

- Sort fraction cards as above or below one half.
- Use fraction strips to line up pieces side by side.
- Record one comparison using $>$, $=$, or $<$.

MATERIALS

Fraction strips (one set per student showing halves, thirds, fourths, sixths, eighths), fraction cards showing pairs such as $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ (6 pairs per student), anchor chart with benchmark fraction one half, recording sheet with sentence stems, pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Sit with this group for first 8 minutes.
- Model benchmark strategy with fraction strips aloud.
- Check each student records at least one symbol correctly.

DEVELOPING

TASK

- Compare four fraction pairs using either strategy.
- Show working: write the common denominator or benchmark used.
- Record each comparison with $>$, $=$, or $<$.

MATERIALS

Fraction comparison worksheet with four pairs (one per student), mini whiteboards and markers (one per student), fraction strips for reference (one set per pair), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Check in at minutes 5 and 12 of group time.
- Prompt students to name their strategy aloud.
- Redirect to fraction strips if a comparison is incorrect.

EXTENDING

TASK

- Create three fraction pairs that cannot use benchmarks easily.
- Find common denominators and compare each pair.
- Write a sentence explaining why the strategy works.

MATERIALS

Blank task card (one per student), grid paper for fraction models (one sheet per student), math vocabulary reference card listing numerator, denominator, equivalent fraction (one per student), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Brief check-in at minute 8 of group time.
- Challenge students to justify using math vocabulary.
- Listen for precise use of equivalent fraction in explanations.

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- Criterion 1: students explain piece-size difference before comparing.
- Criterion 2: students correctly place fractions above or below one half.
- Criterion 3: students rewrite both fractions with a matching denominator.
- Criteria 4 and 5: comparison symbol is correct and student names the strategy used.

RELIEF TEACHER NOTES

- Fraction strips and worksheets are in the Math group tray.
- Emerging group needs the most support. Sit with them first.
- All groups record comparisons using $>$, $=$, or $<$ symbols.
- Anchor chart showing benchmark one half is posted near the board.