

1st Grade Math: Comparing Numbers

Comparing numbers helps students understand how two numbers relate to each other in size. This involves determining which number is **greater than**, **less than**, or if the numbers are **equal**.

What Does It Mean to Compare Numbers?

When we compare numbers, we check:

- Which number is **bigger** or **smaller**.
- If two numbers are **the same**.

We use three main symbols for comparison:

1. **Greater than** ($>$)
2. **Less than** ($<$)
3. **Equal to** ($=$)

Example: Comparing 8 and 5

- 8 is **greater than** 5, so we write: $8 > 5$.
- 5 is **less than** 8, so we write: $5 < 8$.

Steps to Compare Numbers

1. **Start with the larger place value** (in 1st grade, this is typically the tens place).
2. **Compare the digits** starting from the **leftmost** place.
 - a. If the digits in the **tens** place are different, the number with the **larger digit** is greater.
 - b. If the digits in the **tens** place are the same, compare the digits in the **ones** place.

Comparing One-Digit Numbers

When comparing one-digit numbers (0-9), it's easy to see which number is bigger:

- $4 < 6$ because 4 is smaller than 6.
- $7 > 3$ because 7 is bigger than 3.
- $5 = 5$ because both numbers are the same.

Comparing Two-Digit Numbers

For two-digit numbers, follow these steps:

1. **Look at the tens place:**
 - a. The number with more tens is larger.
 - b. Example: **42 > 35** because 42 has **4 tens**, and 35 has **3 tens**.
2. **If the tens are the same, compare the ones:**
 - a. If the tens are equal, the number with more ones is larger.
 - b. Example: **34 < 39** because both numbers have 3 tens, but 34 has **4 ones**, and 39 has **9 ones**.

Using Symbols to Compare

We use three symbols to compare numbers:

1. **>** (greater than) shows that the first number is bigger.
 - a. Example: **12 > 9** (12 is greater than 9).
2. **<** (less than) shows that the first number is smaller.
 - a. Example: **7 < 14** (7 is less than 14).
3. **=** (equal to) shows that the two numbers are the same.
 - a. Example: **15 = 15** (both numbers are equal).

Comparing Numbers with Real-Life Examples

- You have **8** apples, and your friend has **6** apples. Since 8 is greater than 6, you can say **8 > 6**.
- If one person has **12** toys, and another has **15**, then **12 < 15** because 15 is greater than 12.

Practice

Let's compare some numbers:

1. **24 and 32:** 24 has **2 tens** and 32 has **3 tens**, so **24 < 32**.
2. **47 and 41:** Both have 4 tens, but 47 has more ones, so **47 > 41**.
3. **56 and 56:** Both numbers are the same, so **56 = 56**.

Conclusion

Comparing numbers is about checking which number is bigger, smaller, or if they are the same. This skill helps us in everyday situations, like comparing amounts of objects, and it sets the foundation for more advanced math concepts.