

2023 Parent Engagement Session
Common Misconceptions in Primary Mathematics

1) Fractions

Primary 5

- a. Common denominators - change to common denominators when the fractions refer to the same total.

Example 1 - Change to common denominators

There are some cookies in a bag. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cookies are chocolate chip cookies. $\frac{2}{5}$ of the cookies are almond cookies. The rest are butter cookies. What fraction of the cookies are butter cookies?

Referring to the same total/whole

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Butter} &= 1 - \frac{1}{4} - \frac{2}{5} \\ &= \frac{7}{20} \text{ (Ans)} \end{aligned}$$

Ans: $\frac{7}{20}$

Example 2 - Part of a part (different denominator)

$\frac{5}{7}$ of the students in a Computer Club are boys. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the girls in the Computer Club are in Primary 6. What fraction of the students in the Computer Club are ~~not Primary 6 girls?~~ girls who are not Primary 6? * Please note typo.

Different total/whole

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Girls out of total} &= 1 - \frac{5}{7} \\ &= \frac{2}{7} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Girls not in P6} &= 1 - \frac{1}{4} \\ &= \frac{3}{4} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Girls not in P6 in computer club out of total} \\ &= \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{2}{7} = \frac{3}{14} \text{ (Ans)} \end{aligned} \quad \text{Ans: } \frac{3}{14}$$

Primary 6

b. Remainder in the answer - dividing fractions

Example 1

A jug contains 4 l of water. Mr Tay uses the water to fill some identical glasses to the brim. The capacity of each glass is $\frac{5}{8}$ l. How much water is left?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{No. of glasses} &= 4 \div \frac{5}{8} \\ &= 6\frac{4}{5} \end{aligned}$$

6 complete glasses $\frac{4}{5}$ of a glass

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Amt of water left} &= \frac{4}{5} \text{ of a glass} \\ &= \frac{4}{5} \times \frac{5}{8} \times 4 \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \text{ (Ans)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Ans: } \frac{1}{2} \text{ l}$$

Example 2

Joyce added $\frac{4}{5}$ l of water to $\frac{1}{10}$ l of orange syrup to prepare a drink.

Then she poured $\frac{1}{8}$ l of the drink into identical glasses.

- (a) What was the greatest number of glasses that contained $\frac{1}{8}$ l of drink?
- (b) How much drink did she have left?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total} &= \frac{4}{5} + \frac{1}{10} \\ &= \frac{9}{10} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(b) left} &= \frac{1}{5} \times \frac{1}{8} \\ &= \frac{1}{40} \text{ (Ans)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{(a) No. of glasses} = \frac{9}{10} \div \frac{1}{8}$$

$$= 7\frac{1}{5}$$

7 complete glasses $\frac{1}{5}$ of a glass

$$\approx 7 \text{ (Ans)}$$

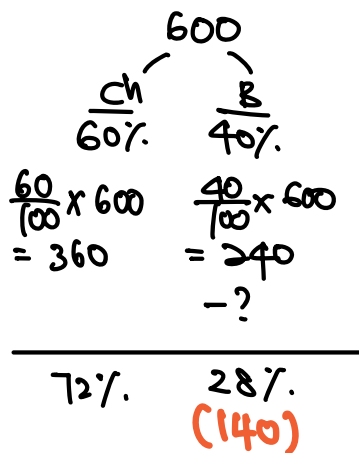
$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ans: (a) } &7 \\ \text{(b) } &\frac{1}{40} \text{ l} \end{aligned}$$

2) Percentage

Are the percentages referring to the same whole?

Example 1

Mrs King baked 600 cookies. 60% of them were chocolate cookies and the rest were butter cookies. She sold some butter cookies and the percentage of chocolate cookies increased to 72%. How many butter cookies did she sell?



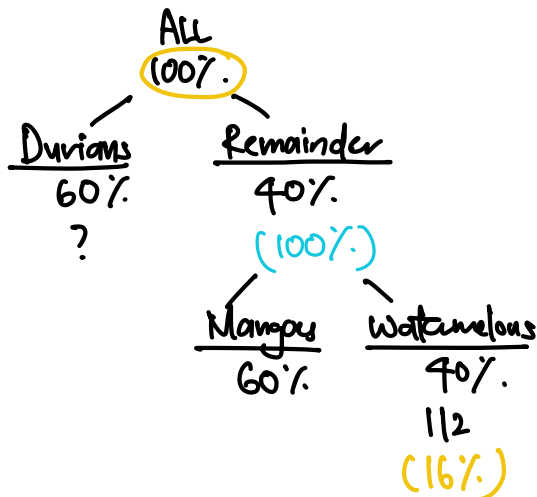
72% of new total
 $= 360$
 28% of new total
 $= \frac{360}{72} \times 28$
 $= 140$

Butter sold
 $= 240 - 140$
 $= 100$ (Ans)

Ans: 100

Example 2

At a fruit stall, 60% of the fruits are durians. 60% of the remaining fruits are mangoes and the rest are watermelons. There are 112 watermelons. How many durians are there?



40% of Remainder = watermelons
 $= \frac{40}{100} \times 40$
 $= 16\%$

16% of total = 112
 Durians = $\frac{112}{16} \times 60$
 $= 420$ (Ans)

Ans: 420

3) Algebra

Algebra vs Model - Which is better?

Mrs Loke had some red, green and yellow buttons. She had 80 more green buttons than yellow buttons and 15 more red than green buttons. She used $\frac{3}{4}$ of her green buttons and $\frac{1}{2}$ of her yellow buttons to sew on some dresses. She had 290 buttons left. How many buttons did Mrs Loke have at first?

Model

Group green into 4 equal groups



$$Tu + 80 + 20 + 15 = 290$$

$$Tu + 115 = 290$$

$$Tu = 290 - 115$$

$$= 175$$

$$12u = \frac{175}{7} \times 12$$

$$= 300$$

$$\text{At first} = 300 + 80 + 80 + 15 = 475 \text{ (Ans)}$$

Ans: 475

Algebra

Let x be no. of yellow

$$G = x + 80$$

$$Y = x$$

$$R = x + 80 + 15$$

$$= x + 95$$

$$\frac{G}{x + 80}$$

$$\text{used} = \frac{3}{4}x + \frac{3}{4} \times 80$$

$$= \frac{3}{4}x + 60$$

$$\text{Left} = x - \frac{3}{4}x + 80 - 60$$

$$= \frac{1}{4}x + 20$$

$$\frac{Y}{x}$$

$$\text{used} = \frac{1}{2}x$$

$$\text{Left} = \frac{1}{2}x$$

$$x + 95 + \frac{1}{2}x + \frac{1}{4}x + 20 = 290$$

$$1\frac{3}{4}x + 115 = 290$$

$$1\frac{3}{4}x = 290 - 115$$

$$= 175$$

$$x = 175 \div 1\frac{3}{4}$$

$$= 100$$

$$\text{At first} = 100 + 80 + 100 + 100 + 95$$

$$= 475 \text{ (Ans)}$$

Ans: 475

Children must be able to select the correct unknown to be x .

Outside primary syllabus