

Comparing Numbers: math lesson, Kindergarten – download the PDF

Which pile has more apples? Who has fewer stickers? Which number is bigger? Today you will become a number detective. You will compare groups of objects and compare numbers from 1 to 10, and you will use the words **greater than**, **less than** and **equal to**.

1. Comparing means looking for a difference

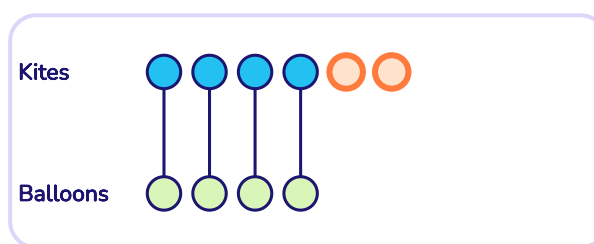
To **compare** two groups, we ask: is one group bigger, is one group smaller, or are they the same? You can answer without any number at all, and you can answer by counting. Both ways give the same answer.

2. Comparing groups by matching

Put one object from the first group next to one object from the second group. Make pairs, like partners in a game. The group that still has objects left over is the bigger one.

M**Method: match and look**

1. Line up the two groups, one above the other.
2. Draw a line between one object of each group. Do not use an object twice.
3. Look for objects with no partner. The group with leftovers has **more**. The other group has **fewer**.
4. If every object has a partner, the groups are **equal**.



Look at the picture. There are 6 kites and 4 balloons. Four kites have a partner, but two kites are left over. So there are more kites than balloons.

3. Comparing groups by counting

Matching is great, but counting is faster when the groups are big. Count each group carefully and say the last number out loud. That last number tells you *how many*. Then compare the two numbers.

E**Example 1: counting**

Tara has 8 shells. Jonas has 5 shells. Who has fewer shells?

We compare 8 and 5. Five comes before eight when we count: 5, 6, 7, 8. So 5 is less than 8, and **Jonas has fewer shells**.

E Example 2: equal groups

A tray holds 7 muffins. A basket holds 7 oranges. Are there more muffins or more oranges?

Both groups have 7. Seven is equal to seven, so there are **the same number**: the groups are equal.

A Careful: size does not matter

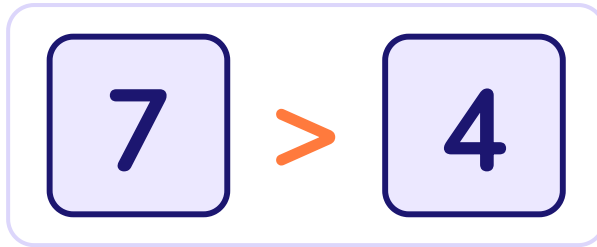
We compare *how many*, not how big each object is. 3 huge balls are still fewer than 6 tiny marbles, because 3 is less than 6.

4. Greater than, less than, equal to

D Words and symbols

When one number comes later in the counting order, it is **greater**. When it comes earlier, it is **less**. When two numbers are the same, they are **equal**.

In words	Symbol	Example
is greater than	$>$	$7 > 4$
is less than	$<$	$4 < 7$
is equal to	$=$	$6 = 6$



! Zyro's tip

On planet Zyro, the sign is a hungry mouth. The mouth always opens toward the bigger number, because it wants the bigger snack!

5. Comparing two written numbers from 1 to 10

A number line helps a lot. On a number line the numbers grow as you go to the right.



P Rule of the number line

The number that is farther to the **right** is the **greater** one. The number that is farther to the **left** is the **less** one. In the picture, $8 > 3$ and $3 < 8$.

E Example 3: two numerals

Compare 9 and 6.

Count up: 6, 7, 8, 9. We reach 9 after 6, so 9 is farther right. We write $9 > 6$ and also $6 < 9$. Both sentences say the same thing.

6. More and fewer

We say **more** for the bigger group and **fewer** for the smaller group when we can count the things one by one: more cookies, fewer cookies. You can also ask *how many more*. Count the leftovers after matching. With 6 kites and 4 balloons there are 2 more kites, and there are 2 fewer balloons.

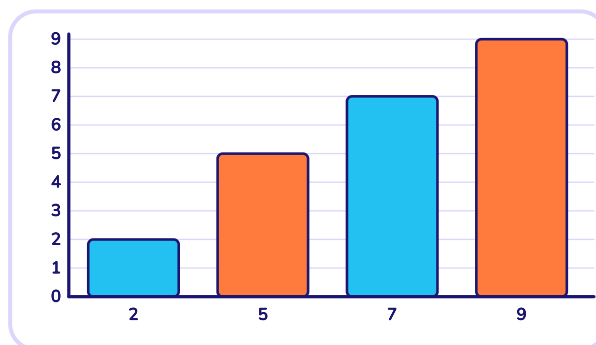


Careful: two sentences, one fact

“6 is greater than 4” and “4 is less than 6” are both true. Do not mix up the two numbers when you write the symbol.

7. Ordering numbers

To **order** numbers, put them in a line from the **least** to the **greatest**, or the other way around. Towers help: a taller tower means a greater number.



Method: order a list

1. Find the least number and write it first.
2. Cross it out and find the least number that is left.
3. Keep going until no number is left.

Example: 6, 2, 9 becomes 2, 6, 9 from least to greatest.

Key takeaways

- To compare groups, match objects in pairs: leftovers mean **more**, and the smaller group has **fewer**.
- You can also count each group and compare the two numbers.
- The symbols are $>$ for greater than, $<$ for less than and $=$ for equal to.
- On the number line the number on the right is greater.
- Size does not matter, only *how many* counts.
- To order numbers, go from least to greatest or from greatest to least.



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