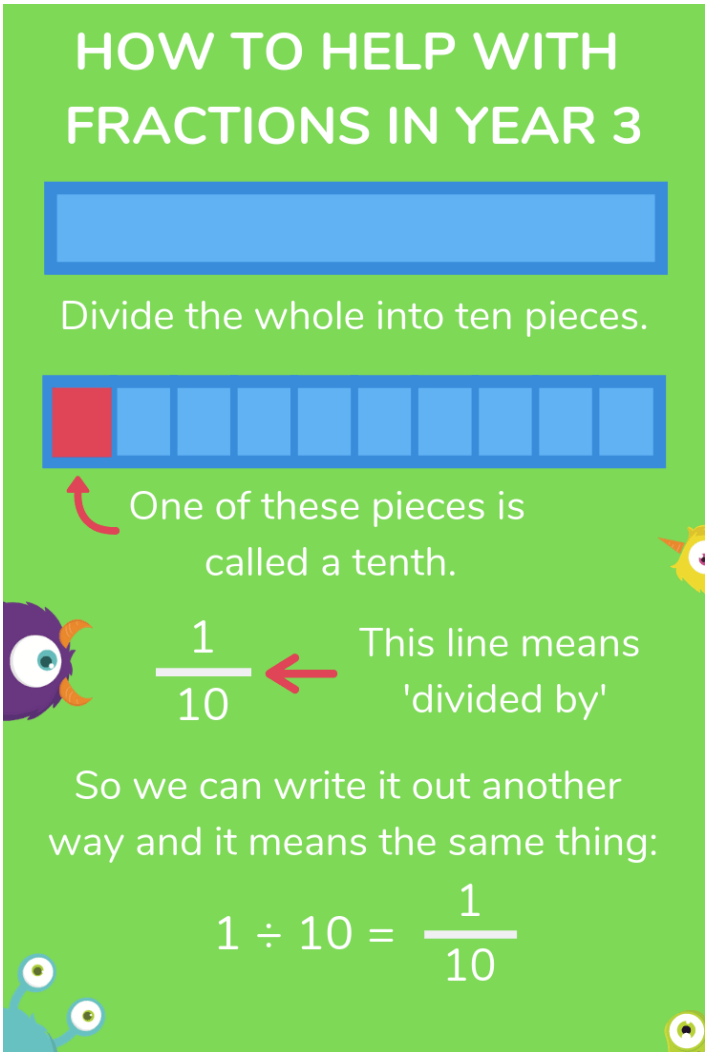
How to help teach your child fractions in KS2

KS2 is the time when fractions can get slightly tougher for your child, but with all of the help on offer below, you won't have any trouble helping them learn all about fractions at home!

How to help teach your child fractions in Year 3

Fractions for 7 and 8 year old kids in Year 3 involves them starting to move away from using objects to understand fractions.

They will still use some visual aids when working with fractions, but there is more of a focus on understanding how to write fractions as rational numbers (the form you are used to seeing them in) too.



Side note... the division symbol looks like ÷ as it shows a fraction bar (or – its proper name – a vinculum) with a dot above and below it; the top dot signifies a missing numerator and the bottom dot represents a missing denominator. The division symbol itself is a constant reminder of the link between fractions and division!

Equivalent fractions in Year 3

At this age, children also need to know a few equivalent fractions with small denominators, and be able to put them in order.

Equivalent fractions is a real leap for many children, and most teachers find it a real stumbling block for many children in their classes.

However, there are three sure-fire ways of helping your child understand how to do equivalent fractions in Year 3, and you can see them below!

Equivalent fraction playdough

This is a simple, yet very effective activity that can help your child to visualise equivalent fractions in a way that they will understand.

How to run the activity

1. Give your child three evenly sized balls of playdough.
2. Get them to break one ball down into halves, another into quarters and the third into eight evenly sized pieces.
3. Now, use a scale – preferably a balance scale – to show that the half is equal to two quarters and four eighths. (Also, that a quarter is equal to two eighths, and that three quarters is equivalent to six eighths.)
4. You could get them to reform the three original balls of playdough, breaking them down into three, six and nine equal pieces. Again, you can demonstrate that a third is equal to two sixths and three ninths, and that two thirds are the same as four sixths and six ninths.

Equivalent fraction paper strips

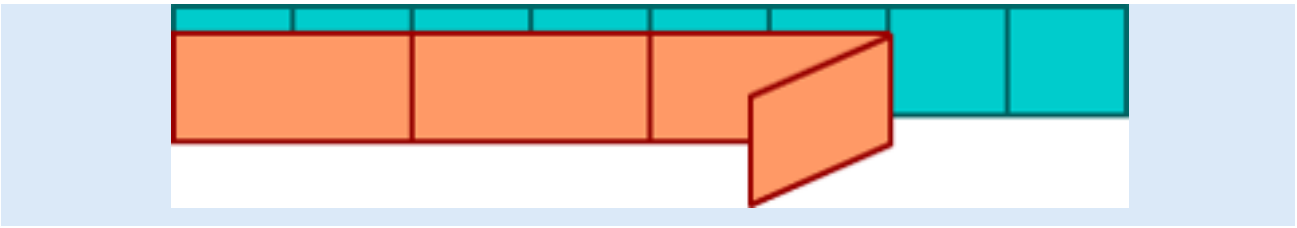
All you need for this activity is a sheet of paper, some scissors, and a bit of patience when it comes to cutting the strips!

How to run the activity

1. Firstly, cut some strips of paper. They must be paper strips of equal length.
2. Fold the first strip in half.
   Fold the second strip into quarters.
   Fold the third strip into six equal parts or sixths.
   Fold a fourth strip into eight equal parts or eighths.
   Finally, fold a strip into twelve.
3. Next, work with your child to label the strips, so each part on the first strip has $\frac{1}{2}$ written on each part, the second strip is labelled with $\frac{1}{4}$s, and so on. Now, you / they can show that a half is equal to two quarters, three sixths, four eighths, and six twelfths.

You can then show that a quarter is equal to two eighths and three-twelfths.

You could repeat the process again, folding equal length paper strips into three, six, nine and twelve, showing that two sixths, three ninths and four twelfths are equal to a third.

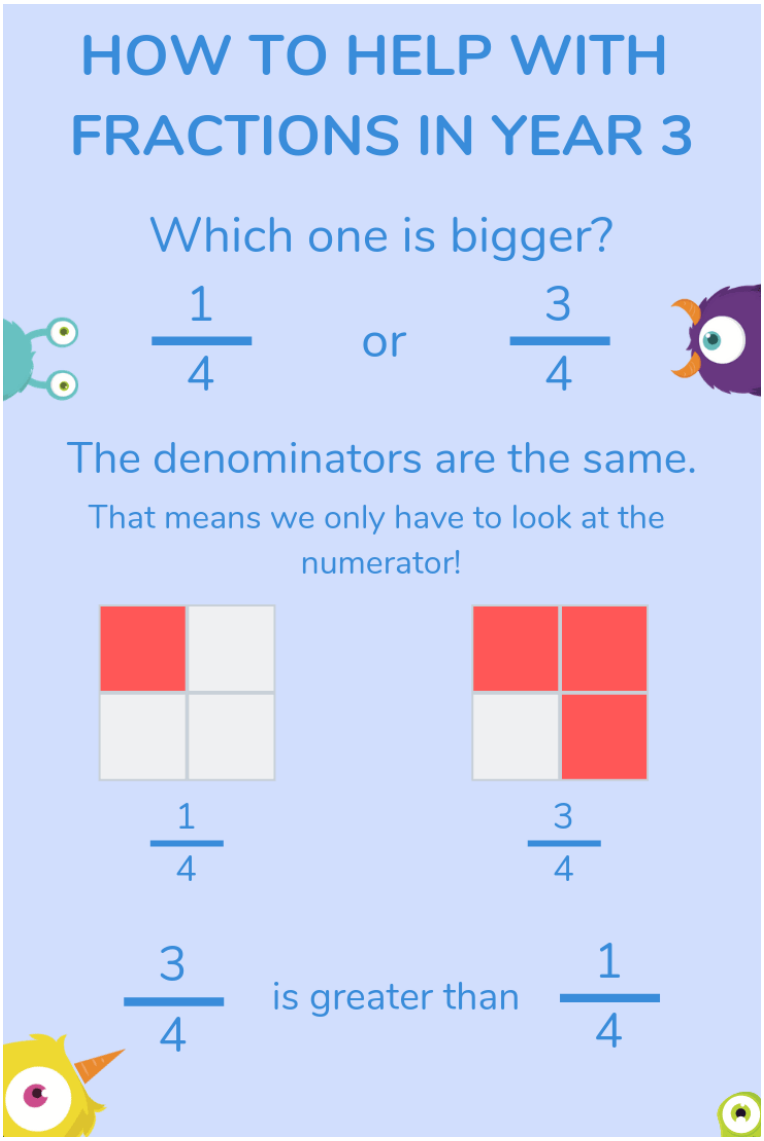


Using the strips you've made, you can do the same for ¾ and ⅔ too! You're off to the races!

Comparing, and adding & subtracting fractions in Year 3

Of course, the value of a fraction depends on the numerator (the top number) and the denominator (the bottom number).

Fortunately, in Year 3, you only need to compare fractions with the same denominator, which makes things easier.



When the denominators are different, there are a few more steps to follow, which we'll explain later on in this blog.

You'll be pleased to hear that adding and subtracting fractions isn't too scary in Year 3.

As the denominators are the same at this point, you just add the numerators, like this:

$\frac{1}{4} + {}^{2}/_{4} = \frac{3}{4}$

Which can be shown using paper strips again:

The principle is the same for subtraction in Year 3.