## Dividing Whole Numbers by Unit Fractions



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### **Table of Contents**

Hello Teachers	3
Teacher Introduction	4
Modeling Fractions	5
Teacher Tips	8
Activities:	
Model Two Ways (1)	10
Mathematical Notation	
and Number line (9)	18
Mathematical Notation (19)	28
Answer Key	36

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**Colorful Collections** 

A Mindful Exploration of Proper Fractions

## Isabelle

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## **Dividing Whole Numbers by Unit Fractions**

#### Division answers questions such as:

- How many of these can fit into that?
- How many times can this amount be subtracted from that amount?
- How many this size groups, can be made from that?
- If we start with this much, and share equally between this number of groups, how much will each group receive?
- In this amount of time, how often does a periodic event occur?

These questions use division - repeated subtraction - to find an answer. It's the same when the divisor, dividend, or quotient are fractions.

#### When dividing Whole Numbers by unit fractions students struggle with:

- Visualizing problems.
- Restating the question.
- Understanding what each number references.
- Making sense of the magnitude of the answer.

These issues can be addressed with: direct teaching, working on story problems, using manipulatives to solve fraction division problems (including linear, area, set, and volumetric models), discussing student questions, focusing on vocabulary, and giving students reflection time.



## **Modeling Fractions**

#### **Linear Models**

**Measure People** 

yarn rulers string ribbons yardsticks	Set up stations where students can measure the lengths of feet, stride, shoulder width, hands*, and cubits*. Consider inviting special- ist teachers and administration so	Give teams of students a clip board and a measuring tape. Let them measure and record the height and width of straight lines in the room: door jams, wall tiles, floor
tape measures edges of shapes	students can measure adults.	tiles, desks, chairs, windows, books.
Cuisenaire Rods	Compare adult and student sizes.	Compare and discuss.
	*Let your students research these ancient measurements first.	Variation: give teams different units of mea- surement

#### **Area Models**

Measure Shadows

rulers grid paper unit squares tangrams origami pattern blocks tesselations	Give teams of students chalk, a clip board, rulers, cardboard squares, and some objects like balls, books. Take them outside on a sunny day. Let them trace and measure the shadows of each object. They can make a grid with the cardboard square, rulers, and chalk.	Give students handouts with squares, triangles, and circles, along with a grid printed on a transparency. Let them use the transparency as an overlay, count and record the number of squares for each shape.
	·	Compare and discuss.
	surement and different sizes of cardboard squares	Variation: give teams different units of mea- surement

#### Volumetric Models

Measure Geometric Solids

cups tablespoons boxes unit cubes	Have student teams measure and find the volume of the prisms or pyramids by using the formula.	Gather sets students co sand, snow, Have them
play dough, slime, or Oobleck rulers	Add water to a clear measuring cup. Submerge the solid. Record the water level before and after	fractions ar numbers of
geometric solids with triangular or rectan-	the solid was submerged.	Compare ar
gular sides sand or snow toys	Recalculate the volume, discuss, and compare.	Variation: ask h

#### How Many 1/4 cups in ?

Measure the Room

Measure Geometric Shapes

of measuring cups. Let ollect and measure clean water, or dry beans. record how many unit e needed to fill various cups.

nd discuss.

ow many 1/2, or 1/3 cups in ?

## **Modeling Fractions**

#### Set Models

Unit Fractions of Office Supplies

buttons bottle tops paper clips pebbles centimeter cubes dry beans novelty toys mini erasers Give each team a boxed set of office supplies ~ 144 paperclips, 24 crayons, 12 markers, six pack of tape, or a box of batteries. Alternatively, print and share ads for boxes of office supplies.

Let the groups use a calculator if needed. Have them record how many items in half a box, a third of a box and so on.

Unit Fractions of a Dozen

Give each group a collection of a dozen items. Let them record how many halves, thirds, fourths, and so on are in that set.

Variation: count how many unit fractions in groups of other sizes~ a pair, trio, quartet, months/seasons in a decade

#### **Durational Models**

	Sand Limers	How Many 1/2 Inches in a Minute?
clocks digital timers sand timers	Give teams of students a set of sand timers and paper to record	Gather the class to take notes on some unusual races. Set yardsticks
stop watch windup toys or pull back racers music	their results. If heeded tape over the decimal marking and write the fractions on each timer.	Appoint someone to time the race. Wind up some cute toys and cheer quietly as they move along the
rhythm timing activities iump ropes	Let each team record the number of flips needed in order to measure a minute. Make sure they count the	track. Measure and compare the speed of each toy. Make Posters
heart beats seasons of the year	first flip! Do three or four trials for each sand timer. Compare results.	Variation: mix up the units of measurement - include how many thirds of a foot or tenths of a meter.

#### **Linguistic Models**

Student Authors

everyday language story problems asking questions second languages vocabulary lists dictionaries glossaries math journals class discussions writing about math reading about math

Invite each student to write a story problem about a given equation. Let them create a colorful display of several different ways to model the story problem.

Share and compare the diverse results considering that everyone had the same starting point.

#### Vocabulary IS Content

Listen to your students discuss division, whole numbers, and unit fractions.

Do they own the essential academic vocabulary? Listen to their questions, their peer to peer conversations. Read their reflections and explanations.

Have they 'just met' each word or are they good friends?

## **Modeling Fractions**

#### **Graphic Models**

Doodles

doodles Encourage students to make quick images abstract doodles to help them pictures 'think on paper' while dividing cartoons whole numbers by unit fractions. diagrams blue prints Perhaps they could show the whole maps numbers with rectangles and then illustrations mark off 5 segments when dividing by fifths. Doodles are not accurate or to scale, they simply show basic information.

#### **Angular Models**

Young students can easily tell when a circle is complete or whole. This is one reason that fractions of circles are a fantastic starting point for introducing rational numbers.
Angular models measure distance around the circle's center. This also corresponds to fractions of the circle's area.
When your students are ready to measure angles, then you can separate angular models from area models. Until then, it makes sense to consider them area fractions.

#### **Symbolic Models**

Mathematical Notation	Students will be expected to understand mathematical notation fluently. The ultimate goal is for students to use mathematical notation to model and solve math problems.
Math text	Fluency includes being able to translate equations from mathematical symbols into a variety of models, and back into mathematical notation
base 10 number system	accurately.
	Eventually this will make it possible for advanced students to translate
Roman, Egyptian or Babylonian number systems	displays of data into equations and math text, or to create data displays based on math texts or mathematical notations.

#### Concrete to Abstract

Give story problems to teams. Have them make three illustrations of their story problem ~ one like a photo, precise with lots of detail, one like a quick sketch of the photo, and the last like an abstract design of the photo. All three illustrations should contain enough information to solve the problem.

Display the graphics with the story problems and the solutions.

### Introducing Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Fractions Worksheets



#### Read the instructions.

Explain that some times there will be circles to help get them started with an area model. Other times the page will have blank space for them to choose which kind of model to use.

There will always be a linear model. Some times numbers will already be marked off and other times, students will get to segment the line on their own. Let them know how precise you would like them to be.

#### Read the equation and write out the question.

First, 'translate' the equation into English. It says, "What is eight divided by one-fourth?"

Next, invite students to restate the question. Answers might include: 'How many 1/4 size pieces will fit inside eight whole numbers?' or 'How often can 1/4 be subtracted from eight?'

Show the students where to write the question.



Make sure students understand what the number onefourth references.

Ask, 'One-fourth of what?'

Some students might answer, 'One-fourth of eight.' However, one-fourth of eight is two. Have them restate the question in more detail; 'how many one-fourth pieces of a circle can fit inside eight circles.'

Explain that the dividend and the divisor refer to the same whole circles. Answer, 'Onefourth of a whole number.' Remind your students that each circle is a whole number and that the question is how many fourths fit in eight circles. Let them decide what to do next.

Once they have drawn and counted the fourths, ask, 'How many fourths fit inside eight?'

Students answer, 'Thirty-two.'

'Thirty-two? That's so many! Usually division gives a smaller answer. How can the quotient be larger than the dividend or the divisor?'

Let your students explain, 'That's what happens when dividing by a unit fraction. Unit fractions are smaller than whole numbers so more of them fit inside.'



Use a different way to model the same question: How many fourths fit between zero and eight on the number line?

Ensure your students know that the answer, '32' references the number of fourths. In this case, each one-fourth piece counts as 1.

Have them check their answer by multiplying 32 times 1/4 or adding 1/4 together 32 times.

For students who need more support, walk through another problem with them, or ask a similar question in a different format.



How many sides are there on four octagons?













Whole Numbers Divid	led by Unit Fractions
Model the problem in two ways to answer the question.	name:
Question:	
Answer:	
Question:	
	<b>→</b>
Answer:	
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	Whole Numbers Di	vided by Unit Fract	ons
	Question:		
Answer:			
	Question:		
Answer:		8	© 2023 UnCommon-Core.com









# Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Fractions Use mathematical notation, the multiplicative name: identity property of one, and a number line to solve. Question: $6 \div \frac{1}{2} = ?$ Answer: Question: $5 \div \frac{1}{5} = ?$ Answer:



## Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Fractions Use mathematical notation, the multiplicative name: identity property of one, and a number line to solve. Question: $3 \div \frac{1}{4} = ?$ Answer: Question: $9 \div \frac{1}{2} = ?$ Answer: 15 © 2023 UnCommon-Core.com



Whole Numbers Divided by Unit F Use mathematical notation, the multiplicative identity property of one, and a number line to solve.	ractions name:
Question:	
Answer:	
Question:	
	>
Answer:	© 2023 UnCommon-Core.com

Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Erections
Question:
<b>`</b>
Answer
Answer.
Question:
Answer:
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<b>Whole Numbers Divided</b> Find the answer using Mathematical notation and the Multiplicative Identity Property of On	by Unit Fractions name: e
$8 \div \frac{1}{4} = ?$ Question:	
Answer:	
Question:	
$5 \div \frac{1}{3} = ?$	
Answer:	
10	



Whole Find the answer using and the Multiplicative	A Numbers Divided by Mathematical notation Identity Property of One	y Unit Fractions name:
$0 \div \frac{1}{4} = ?$	Question:	
Answer:		
12÷ <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> =?	Question:	
Answer:		
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## Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Fractions Find the answer using Mathematical notation name: and the Multiplicative Identity Property of One Question: $4 \div \frac{1}{2} = ?$ Answer: Question: $3 \div \frac{1}{6} = ?$ Answer: 23 © 2023 UnCommon-Core.com



Whole Numbers Divided by Un Find the answer using Mathematical notation and the Multiplicative Identity Property of One	nit Fractions name:
Question:	
Answer:	
Question:	
Answer:	
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	Whole Numbers Divided by Unit Fractions
	Question:
Answer:	
	Question:
Answer:	© 2023 UnCommon-Core com











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