

Rational Numbers!

“Understanding Simple Numbers.”

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Rational Numbers Unit

I. Introduction & Overview

A. Grade Level

B. Objectives and Rationale for Unit

II. Annotated Internet Links

A. Teacher

B. Student

III. Teaching Strategies & Lessons

A. Comparing Integers

1. Lesson Plan

2. Understanding less than ($<$), greater than ($>$), and equal ($=$) numbers
Examples

3. Ordering integers from least to greatest and greatest to least
Examples

4. Graphing on the number line
Examples

5. Integers and variables
Examples

6. Student practice worksheet





7. Worksheet answer key and rubric
 8. Quiz
 9. Quiz answer key and rubric
- B. Adding rational numbers
1. Lesson Plan
 2. Adding rational numbers of the same signs
Examples
 3. Adding rational numbers of different signs
Examples
 4. Simplifying and evaluating rational expressions
Examples
 6. Student practice worksheet
 7. Worksheet answer key and rubric
 8. Quiz
 9. Quiz answer key and rubric
- C. Subtracting rational numbers
1. Lesson Plan
 2. Subtracting integers of the same signs
Examples
 3. Subtracting integers of different signs
Examples
 4. Simplifying expressions
Examples



5. Real life applications

Examples

6. Student practice worksheet

7. Worksheet answer key and rubric

8. Quiz

9. Quiz answer key and rubric

D. Rational numbers and the absolute value

1. Lesson Plan

2. Find the absolute value of the given rational numbers

Examples

3. Evaluate the expressions with absolute value

Examples

4. Student practice worksheet

5. Worksheet answer key and rubric

6. Quiz

7. Quiz answer key and rubric

E. Multiplying rational numbers

1. Lesson Plan

2. Find the product of two rational numbers

Examples

3. Simplify each expression

Examples

4. Evaluate each expression

Examples





5. Student practice worksheet
 6. Worksheet answer key and rubric
 7. Quiz
 8. Quiz answer key and rubric
- F. Dividing rational numbers
1. Lesson plan
 2. Find the quotient of each rational number
Example
 3. Simplify the algebraic expressions
Examples
 4. Evaluate the algebraic expressions
Examples
 5. Student practice worksheet
 6. Worksheet answer key and rubric
 7. Quiz
 8. Quiz answer key & rubric

IV. Power Point Presentations

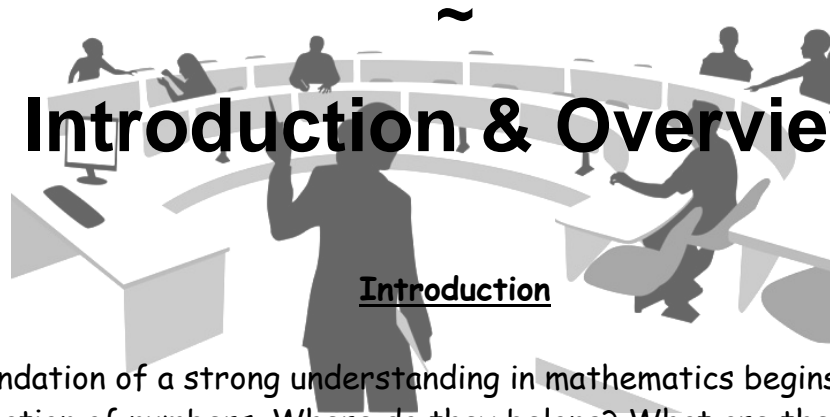
V. Video Clips





Rational Numbers

Introduction & Overview



The foundation of a strong understanding in mathematics begins and ends with the classification of numbers. Where do they belong? What are they called? Where can I use them? How do they interact with each other? These are some of the many questions we try to answer as we study mathematics.

For most of our lives, since the moment we begin to make sense of the world, we work with rational numbers. There is no way to escape them. Whether we decide to work at the World Trade Center managing billions and trillions, become the next best thing in Nascar, explore other planets, become an athletic trainer, work at the family business, or be a stay-at-home mom or dad, rational numbers will be part of our daily lives. So, what are rational numbers?

Rational numbers are divided into the following classes:

- **Natural Numbers**

Natural numbers are also called "counting numbers." These numbers begin with the number 1 and are non-negative and do not have fractions or decimals.

Natural Numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,...

- **Whole Numbers**

After the idea of "zero" developed, a new class also developed. The class, the whole numbers, are the natural numbers plus the number zero. Although different people define it differently, this is the most consistent definition of whole numbers. If Carlos comes to class without a pencil, how many pencils does he has? Zero.



However, Carlos can go and get one or more pencils.

Whole Numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4,...

- **Integers**

The word "Integer" is a Latin word which literally means "untouched" or "whole." Integers are formed by combining the whole numbers and negative numbers. Integers, just like natural and whole numbers, **do not** have **fractions or decimals**.

Integers: ...-3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3,...



- **Rational Numbers**

Rational numbers are numbers which can be expressed as the quotient (answer to a division) of two integers, such as $\frac{a}{b}$ ($\frac{5}{6}, \frac{12}{4}, \frac{17}{3}, \dots$). The only exception is that the **denominator cannot be equal to zero**. This would produce an undefined result ($\frac{a}{0}$ is wrong).

Rational Numbers: $2, \frac{1}{3}, -\frac{3}{5}, \sqrt{16}, 13.72$

Rational numbers have two rules which are easy to remember:

1. **Rational numbers repeat.** Such as (1.3333̄)
- and
2. **Rational numbers terminate.** Such as (4.7)

- **Irrational Numbers**

Irrational numbers, unlike rational numbers, cannot be express as a fraction such as $\frac{a}{b}$ where a and b are integers and b is a non-zero integer. One of the most famous irrational numbers is Pi (π).

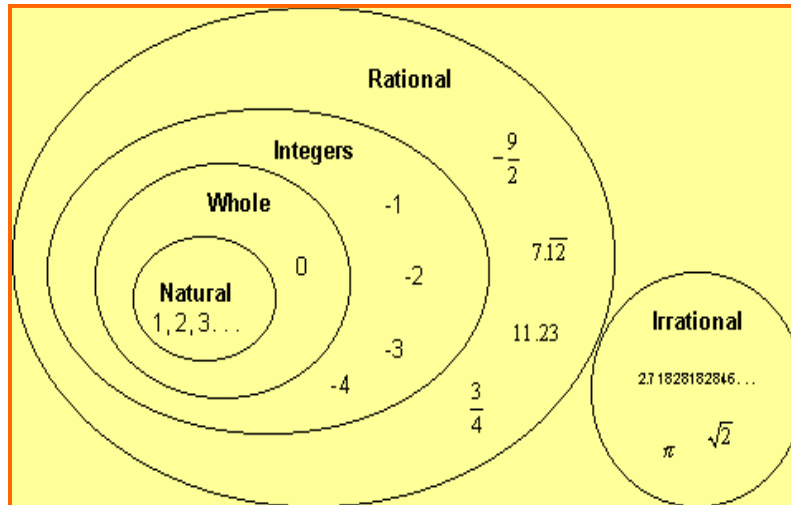
Irrational numbers: $\pi, \sqrt{2}, 2.345456534569823\dots$

Irrational numbers have two rules which are easy to remember:

1. **Irrational numbers NEVER repeat.** Such as Pi.
- and
2. **Irrational numbers NEVER terminate.**



The following diagram illustrates the relationship of the sets that make up the real numbers.



Use the graph to help you see the relationship between the different definitions of numbers:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Are natural numbers rational numbers? | Yes they are. Always. |
| Are rational numbers natural numbers? | Sometimes. |
| Are whole numbers irrational numbers? | Never. |
| Are irrational numbers integers? | Never. |
| Are integers rational numbers? | Sometimes. |

Rational numbers and irrational numbers are both considered to be part of the real numbers. In a future lesson, we will also cover imaginary numbers. 😊



Overview

In this unit, we will cover the following topics about rational numbers. This is a simple overview to help you prepare. This unit covers the following topics:

- **Comparing Integers**

In this section we will order integers from least to greatest, graph using the number line and compare rational numbers and variables. We will use the $<$, $>$, and $=$ signs to compare rational numbers.

- **Adding Rational Numbers**

This section covers the addition of rational numbers with the same sign (+ and +), with different signs (+ and -), the addition of several rational numbers and simplifying expressions.

- **Subtracting Rational Numbers**

Just as in the addition section, we will learn how to subtract rational numbers with the same sign (+ and +), with different signs (+ and -), and simple expressions with the properties of subtraction.

- **Rational Numbers and the Absolute Value**

Understanding rational numbers when dealing with absolute value and the distance from zero will be covered. This will lead into evaluating expressions involving rational numbers.

- **Multiplying Rational Numbers**

Finding the product, simplifying expressions, and evaluating expressions with rational numbers will be covered in this lesson.

- **Dividing Rational Numbers**

After the previous lessons have been mastered, we will explore the concept of division, finding the quotient of rational numbers, simplifying algebraic expressions, and evaluating algebraic expressions using division.

