Key words for fractions
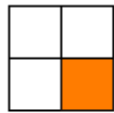
Fraction
Any part of a whole. When you divide something into equal pieces, each piece is a fraction of the whole thing.

Numerator and denominator
Fractions are written as one number on top of another. For example a half is written as 1 on top of 2 like this $\frac{1}{2}$.

Numerator - top number
how many parts you are interested in

Denominator - bottom number
how many parts to the whole

To remember which is which
n**U**merator is **U**p   and   **D**enominator is **D**own

The parts are given the names **numerator** and **denominator**.

Common fraction or proper fraction
Common fractions are smaller than 1. They are also called **proper fractions**. For example, $\frac{2}{5}$.
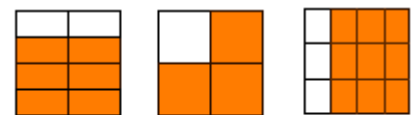
Improper fraction or top-heavy fraction
Improper fractions are bigger than 1. They are also called **top-heavy fractions**. For example, $\frac{9}{4}$.

Mixed number
Mixed numbers are bigger than 1. A mixed number is a combination of a whole number and a common fraction. For example, $2\frac{1}{4}$.

Equivalent fraction
Equivalent fractions have the same value. For example, $\frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$.

You can make equivalent fractions by multiplying or dividing the top and bottom of a fraction by the same number.

$$\frac{6 \div 2}{8 \div 2} = \frac{3 \times 3}{4 \times 3} = \frac{9}{12}$$

Reducing, simplifying or cancelling down fractions
To simplify a fraction you divide the numerator and the denominator by the largest number that divides into both exactly. The value of the fraction stays the same. This is also called **reducing** or **simplifying**.

E.g. $\frac{18 \div 9}{45 \div 9} = \frac{2}{5}$

Key words for fractions

Compare
When you compare fractions you have to put them in order of size.

You'll find more maths words explained in the **Skillswise glossary**.