

Understanding Multiplication

Multiplication is just a fast way to add equal groups. “Five bags with three apples in each” is 5 groups of 3, which we write as 5×3 .


How to read $a \times b$	Equal groups picture
a groups of b	a rows, b in each row

Key Concepts

- Multiplication is repeated addition with *equal* groups. The same number is being added over and over.
- In $a \times b$, the first number is the *number of groups* and the second is the *size of each group*. So 3×4 means 3 groups of 4.
- An **array** is a rectangle of dots or boxes arranged in equal rows. The number of rows times the number of columns gives the total.
- The answer to a multiplication problem is called the *product*.

Worked Examples

① Write a multiplication sentence for: 5 bags with 3 apples in each bag.

 The number of bags is the number of groups, so write that first: 5. The size of each group is the apples per bag, so write that second: 3. Now multiply: 5×3 . You can think of this as adding 3 five times: $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 15$. Multiplication just gives us the same answer, faster.

 **Answer:** $5 \times 3 = 15$

② Write $6 + 6 + 6 + 6$ as a multiplication sentence.

 Count how many times the same number is being added. There are four 6's, so this is 4 groups of 6, which we write as 4×6 . The product is 24. (You can double-check by counting: 6, 12, 18, 24.)

 **Answer:** $4 \times 6 = 24$

③ An array has 2 rows and 7 columns. What is the total?

 An array is a rectangle of objects. Each row has 7 objects (because there are 7 columns), and there are 2 rows. So the total is 2 groups of 7, which is $2 \times 7 = 14$. You could also count down the columns: each column has 2, and there are 7 columns, so $7 \times 2 = 14$. Either way works!

 **Answer:** 14

Practice Problems

Write a multiplication sentence and find the product.

1. 3 groups of 5 = _____

3. $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 = ? \times ?$ _____

2. 4 groups of 2 = _____

4. $7 + 7 + 7 = ? \times ?$ _____

5. Array: 4 rows, 6 columns _____

6. Array: 5 rows, 3 columns _____

7. 6 groups of 8 = _____

8. 9 groups of 2 = _____

9. $5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = ? \times ?$ _____

10. 3 groups of 10 = _____

11. Array: 7 rows, 2 columns _____

12. 8 groups of 4 = _____

Study Tips

- 👉 When you see “ a groups of b ,” write $a \times b$ in that order. The first number is always the count of groups.
- 👉 For repeated addition, the number being added tells you the *size* of each group, and how many times it appears tells you the *number* of groups.
- 👉 For arrays, “rows \times columns” always gives the total. Some teachers prefer “columns \times rows” — both work because the answer is the same.

Word Problems

1. There are 6 tables in the cafeteria. Each table has 4 chairs. How many chairs in all?

Answer: _____

2. A garden has 3 rows of flowers. Each row has 8 flowers. How many flowers altogether?

Answer: _____

Answer Key — with Friendly Explanations**Practice Problems**

1. 3 groups of 5 = 3×5 .

 **Answer:** 15

2. 4 groups of 2 = 4×2 .

 **Answer:** 8

3. Five 2's added = 5×2 .

 **Answer:** $5 \times 2 = 10$

4. Three 7's added = 3×7 .

 **Answer:** $3 \times 7 = 21$

5. Array 4×6 : 4 rows of 6.

 **Answer:** 24

6. Array 5×3 : 5 rows of 3.

 **Answer:** 15

7. 6 groups of 8 = 6×8 .

 **Answer:** 48

8. 9 groups of 2 = 9×2 .

 **Answer:** 18

9. Four 5's added = 4×5 .

 **Answer:** $4 \times 5 = 20$

10. 3 groups of 10 = 3×10 .

 **Answer:** 30

11. Array 7×2 : 7 rows of 2.

 **Answer:** 14

12. 8 groups of 4 = 8×4 .

 **Answer:** 32**Word Problems**

1. 6 tables of 4 chairs each: $6 \times 4 = 24$ chairs.

 **Answer:** 24 chairs

2. 3 rows of 8 flowers each: $3 \times 8 = 24$ flowers.

 **Answer:** 24 flowers

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