

Sharing or Grouping? Two Ways to Understand Division in Year 2

Key points

- Year 2 children learn two different division models that both give the same answer but feel different when working them out.
- Sharing division means dividing things equally between a number of groups (for example, sharing 12 sweets fairly among 3 children).
- Grouping division means putting things into sets of a particular size (for example, packing 12 sweets into bags with 4 in each bag).
- Division is the opposite or 'inverse' of multiplication, so if $3 \times 4 = 12$, then $12 \div 3 = 4$ and $12 \div 4 = 3$.
- Many children find one model more natural than the other, and both are equally valid ways to solve a division problem.
- Using real objects to work through both models helps children understand that division is a skill they're building, not something they need to memorise.

Things to try at home

- At snack time, ask your child to share a handful of biscuits, grapes or pasta shapes equally between two or three people, and count how many each person gets.
- Give them a collection of buttons, coins or toy cars and ask them to put them into groups of a set size (for example, 'make groups of 2'), then count how many groups they made.
- Use a deck of cards or number cards to make a simple sharing game: lay out a number, then ask your child to share counters or objects equally between that many piles.
- When you spot division in everyday life ('We need to share the pizza among 4 of us' or 'Let's put these books into piles of 5'), mention what kind of division you're doing and ask which way they'd solve it.
- Play with connecting both models: if you've just made groups of 3, ask 'How many groups did we make?' and write down the number sentence together.

Find out more

- Ask your child's teacher which division models they're using in class and whether your child finds one approach easier than the other.
- The National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 Mathematics ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)) sets out what children are expected to learn about division.
- Education Makes Sense: the site has linked resources on arrays and multiplication, which help explain why division is the 'opposite' of times-table facts.