

Bigger, Smaller, Equal

1st Grade

The three comparison symbols, and the trick for remembering which way they point.

The open end of the symbol always faces the bigger number. The point faces the smaller one.

> greater than · < less than · = equal

8 _ 3

Eight is greater than three.

8 > 3

12 _ 21

Compare the tens first: 1 ten beats nothing, 2 tens beats 1.

12 < 21

9 _ 9

Exactly the same, so equals.

9 = 9

45 _ 54

Same digits, different order, very different numbers.

45 < 54

THE COMMON MISTAKE

× Reading **3 < 8** as 'three is bigger'

✓ **3 < 8** means **three is less than eight**

Read it left to right like a sentence. The first number is the subject.

For two-digit numbers, compare the tens. Only look at the ones if the tens are the same.