

Which Operation?

3rd Grade

The four questions that tell you whether to add, subtract, multiply or divide.

Do not hunt for key words — they lie. Ask what is happening to the amount.

What is happening	Operation	Signal
Joining two amounts	add	altogether, in total, both
Taking some away	subtract	left, fewer, how many more
Equal groups joining	multiply	each, per, groups of
Splitting into equal parts	divide	shared, each gets, how many groups

'How many more' means subtract, even though 'more' sounds like adding. Key words lie.