What is the math symbol for greater than

Unveiling the Symbol of Superiority: A Deep Dive into the Mathematical Signifier "Greater Than"

The seemingly simple "greater than" symbol, a fundamental concept in mathematics, underpins countless applications, from everyday calculations to complex scientific models. This delves into the historical development, mathematical significance, and various uses of this crucial mathematical notation. We will explore its relationship to other mathematical concepts, analyze its application in different branches of mathematics, and ultimately, understand its profound impact on our comprehension of numerical relationships.

Historical Origins and Evolution

The evolution of mathematical notation is a fascinating journey, reflecting the changing needs and understanding of different cultures and time periods. The "greater than" symbol, >, likely arose from a need for concise and unambiguous representation of numerical comparisons. While its precise origin is shrouded in the mists of mathematical history, it's widely recognized that its form evolved from a stylized inequality notation. Early mathematical manuscripts often employed different symbols or even verbal descriptions for expressing these relationships. This suggests that the development of a standardized symbol was a gradual process, driven by the increasing sophistication of mathematical thought. Early examples of inequality notation, predating the modern symbol, are found in the work of various mathematicians across different civilizations. For example, [Cite historical mathematical texts, e.g., works by al-Khwarizmi, or specific examples from medieval European manuscripts, and the work of specific mathematicians]. The shift toward the familiar ">" likely emerged as a more efficient way to express relationships as mathematics evolved.

Formal Definition and Properties

The "greater than" symbol, formally denoted as ">", represents a fundamental binary relation in mathematics. It establishes an ordered relationship between two numbers or algebraic expressions. Formally, for real numbers *a* and *b*, *a > b* denotes that *a* is greater than *b*. This implies that *b* is less than *a*, denoted as *b < a*. This relational

property adheres to several crucial mathematical principles: • **Transitivity:** If *a > b* and *b > c*, then *a > c*. This property ensures consistency in the ordering of numbers. • Asymmetry: If *a > b*, then *b < a* and vice versa. This reflects the inverse relationship inherent in the comparison. • Trichotomy: For any two real numbers *a* and *b*, exactly one of the following holds: *a > b*, *a < b*, or *a = b*. This principle highlights the exhaustive nature of the relationship.

Applications Across Mathematical Disciplines

The "greater than" symbol permeates various branches of mathematics, acting as a cornerstone for analysis, algebra, and calculus:

1. Inequalities and Intervals

Inequalities, utilizing the ">" symbol, define ranges of values. These ranges, often expressed in interval notation, are crucial for describing functions, solving equations, and understanding complex phenomena. For instance, the set of all *x* such that *x > 5* can be represented as (5, ∞).

2. Algebraic Manipulation

In algebraic equations and expressions, the symbol is vital for determining the validity of solutions, manipulating variables, and solving complex inequalities. This frequently involves adding or subtracting the same values from both sides of an inequality while maintaining the directionality of the symbol.

3. Calculus and Analysis

Calculus utilizes the "greater than" symbol extensively to describe limits, derivatives, integrals, and continuity conditions. For example, the concept of a function approaching a limit as *x* approaches a specific value frequently involves expressions defining values *greater than*, or *less than* a specified value.

4. Probability and Statistics

Probability and statistics draw upon the "greater than" concept to determine probabilities, analyze distributions, and interpret statistical significance. For example, when comparing experimental outcomes against theoretical probabilities or confidence intervals, the symbol helps identify which outcomes lie outside a specific range.

Visual Representation and Symbolic Extensions

The visual representation of "greater than" is a straightforward, open-faced symbol. Visually, this notation communicates the concept of one value being positioned to the right of another on a number line. Extending beyond basic numerical comparisons, the "greater than" symbol can be employed within complex mathematical expressions involving variables, functions, or even vectors. This highlights its flexibility in handling sophisticated mathematical constructs.

Summary

The "greater than" symbol, though seemingly simple, is a fundamental mathematical concept with deep implications across various disciplines. Its origins lie in the evolution of mathematical notation, underpinning important properties such as transitivity and asymmetry, and enabling the representation of ordered relationships and intervals. Its pervasiveness in algebra, calculus, statistics, and other mathematical fields underscores its importance in problem-solving, model building, and theoretical analysis.

Advanced Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How does the "greater than or equal to" symbol (≥) differ from the "greater than" symbol (>)?* The "greater than or equal to" symbol incorporates the possibility of equality, whereas the "greater than" symbol specifically excludes the possibility of equality. 2. **Can the "greater than" symbol be used with complex numbers or vectors?** Yes, the concept of "greater than" can be extended to complex numbers and vectors using specific ordering rules or norms that define a natural ordering. 3. **What are some real-world applications of the "greater than" symbol beyond mathematics?** The principles behind comparison and ordering are present in fields like computer science, engineering, and economics. 4. **How does the "greater than" symbol relate to other relational symbols like "less than" or "equal to"?** The "greater than" and "less than" symbols represent opposite directional relationships, whilst "equal to" denotes a specific point of equivalence. 5.

What are the limitations in applying the "greater than" concept to different mathematical structures, such as matrices or graphs? Applying the standard "greater than" definition to matrices or graphs would depend on specific definitions of ordering within these structures. These structures may require different methods or specialized relationships. **References:** [Include academic sources, textbooks, or scholarly s on mathematical history and notation. For example, include a book on the history of mathematics, or s detailing the evolution of mathematical symbols.] This provides a comprehensive overview, but further research can extend understanding in specific areas. For example, exploring different approaches to defining orderings on abstract mathematical structures can deepen our grasp of these fundamental concepts.

Understanding the Greater Than Symbol: A Comprehensive Guide

Ever stared at a mathematical expression and wondered, "What's that little pointy thing mean?" You're not alone! In the world of numbers and logic, symbols are our secret

handshake. Today, we're diving deep into one of the most fundamental and widely used symbols: the 'greater than' symbol.

Whether you're a student tackling early math lessons, a seasoned professional crunching data, or just someone curious about the language of mathematics, understanding the 'greater than' symbol is key. It’s more than just a symbol; it's a concept that helps us compare and order quantities, making sense of the world around us in a quantifiable way.

What is the Math Symbol for Greater Than?

Let's get straight to the point. The math symbol for "greater than" is:

>

This seemingly simple mark is incredibly powerful. It's used to indicate that the number or expression on its left side is larger in value than the number or expression on its right side. Think of it as a directional arrow, pointing towards the smaller value.

Breaking Down the Symbol's Anatomy

It's easy to just see a '<' or '>' and move on, but a quick look at its form can actually help you remember which is which. The 'greater than' symbol (>) has a broader, open side and a narrower, pointed side. The convention is that the open, wider part always faces the larger number, while the pointed end

faces the smaller number.

Example:

5 > 3

Here, the '5' is on the left, and it's larger than '3' on the right. The wider part of the '>' symbol is facing the '5', and the pointy part is facing the '3'. This visually reinforces that '5' is greater than '3'.

Common Misconceptions and How to Avoid Them

The most common confusion arises between the 'greater than' symbol (>) and the 'less than' symbol (<). They look very similar, and it's easy to mix them up, especially when you're just starting out. Here's a foolproof way to remember:

1. **The Alligator Analogy:** Imagine an alligator's mouth. Alligators always want to eat the biggest meal they can find. So, the alligator's mouth (the wider part of the symbol) always opens towards the larger number.
2. **The Pac-Man Analogy:** Similarly, think of Pac-Man. He "eats" the larger number.

Example Recap:

1. 5 > 3 (Alligator mouth opens to 5)
2. 3 < 5 (Alligator mouth opens to 5)

The 'less than' symbol (<) works in the exact opposite way, with the pointed end facing the larger number. We'll touch on this briefly, but our main focus today is on its 'greater than'

counterpart.

Where Do We Use the Greater Than Symbol?

The 'greater than' symbol isn't confined to dusty textbooks. You'll find it popping up in all sorts of places, from simple arithmetic to complex programming. Let's explore some common scenarios:

Basic Arithmetic and Comparisons

This is where most people first encounter the '>' symbol. It's used to compare two numbers and establish their relationship in terms of magnitude. This forms the foundation for understanding number lines, ordering numbers, and solving inequalities.

1. **Ordering Numbers:** Which is larger, 100 or 50? We use the symbol to say 100 > 50.
2. **Identifying the Largest/Smallest:** In a set of numbers like {7, 2, 9, 4}, we can see that 9 is the largest because 9 > 7, 9 > 2, and 9 > 4.
3. **Understanding Number Ranges:** You might see a price listed as "starting from $50," implying the price is > $49.99 (or strictly > $50 if it's an exact starting point).

Algebra and Inequalities

In algebra, the 'greater than' symbol is crucial for working with inequalities. Unlike equations that have a single solution

(or a few), inequalities describe a range of possible values. The '>' symbol helps define these boundaries.

1. **Solving for Variables:** If you solve an inequality like 2x + 1 > 7, your solution will be a range, for example, x > 3. This means any number greater than 3 will satisfy the original inequality.
2. **Graphing Inequalities:** On a number line, an inequality like x > 3 is represented by an open circle at 3 and a line extending to the right, indicating all values larger than 3.
3. **Comparing Expressions:** You might encounter situations where you need to determine if one algebraic expression is greater than another, such as 3a + 2b > a - b.

Computer Science and Programming

In the realm of coding and computer logic, the 'greater than' symbol is a fundamental operator. It's used extensively in conditional statements (if-then statements) and loops to control program flow.

1. **Conditional Logic:** Imagine a game where a player can only advance if their score is greater than 100. The code might look something like `if (score > 100) { advanceLevel(); }`.
2. **Data Sorting and Filtering:** When sorting data, you'll often use comparison operators like '>' to arrange items in ascending or descending order. Similarly, filtering data might involve selecting records where a certain value is greater than a threshold.
3. **Looping Constructs:** While less direct, the underlying logic of some loops might involve a condition that checks if

a counter has exceeded a certain value.

Everyday Life Applications

Believe it or not, the concept of 'greater than' influences decisions we make every day, even if we don't explicitly write the symbol.

1. **Age Restrictions:** "You must be 18 years or older to vote." This implies your age > 17.
2. **Promotional Offers:** "Spend over $50 and get free shipping." This means your total purchase > $49.99.
3. **Health and Fitness:** Tracking calories, steps, or workout intensity often involves comparing current values to target goals. For instance, aiming for a heart rate > 120 bpm during exercise.
4. **Stock Market:** Analyzing stock performance involves comparing current prices to previous ones or to benchmarks, using the 'greater than' concept implicitly.

Variations and Related Symbols

While '>' is our main focus, it's helpful to know its relatives, especially the 'greater than or equal to' symbol, which is very closely related.

Greater Than or Equal To (≥)

This symbol combines the '>' with an equals sign (=) underneath, forming '≥'. It means that the value on the left is either greater than OR equal to the value on the right.

Example:

$x \geq 5$

This means 'x' can be 5, or any number larger than 5. This is particularly important in contexts where a threshold value is inclusive.

Less Than (<) and Less Than or Equal To (≤)

As mentioned earlier, these are the inverse of the 'greater than' and 'greater than or equal to' symbols, respectively. They indicate that the value on the left is smaller than or smaller than or equal to the value on the right.

1. **<** (Less Than)
2. **≤** (Less Than or Equal To)

Not Equal To (≠)

This symbol signifies that two values are not the same. It's a fundamental comparison operator used when equality is not the desired outcome.

Tips for Remembering and Using the Greater Than Symbol

Mastering these basic mathematical symbols can make your journey through numbers much smoother. Here are some final tips:

1. **Practice Regularly:** The more you use the 'greater than' symbol in your calculations and problem-solving, the more natural it will become.
2. **Visual Aids:** Keep the alligator or Pac-Man analogy handy in your mind, especially when you're feeling unsure.
3. **Context is Key:** Pay attention to the context in which the symbol is used. This will help you understand its precise meaning and application.
4. **Read Aloud:** When you're reading an expression, say it aloud. "Five greater than three" for 5 > 3. This reinforces the meaning.
5. **Use Online Resources:** If you're ever in doubt, a quick search for "what is the math symbol for greater than" will bring up plenty of resources and examples.

The 'greater than' symbol (>) is a cornerstone of mathematical communication. It allows us to express comparisons, establish order, and build complex logical structures. From elementary school arithmetic to advanced computer algorithms, its presence is ubiquitous. By understanding its meaning and how to use it correctly, you unlock a clearer understanding of quantitative relationships and a more precise way to articulate them.

So next time you see that little pointy symbol, remember its purpose: to show which number is the bigger one! It’s a simple tool, but incredibly powerful in its ability to make sense of the numerical world.

The Symbol for Greater Than: A Fundamental Mathematics Notation Mathematics relies on a precise and universal

language to convey relationships between numbers and quantities, and among its most essential symbols is the representation of "greater than." This simple yet powerful notation serves as a cornerstone in comparing values, forming the basis for inequalities that drive reasoning across science, engineering, economics, and everyday problem-solving. The symbol commonly used to express "greater than" is the chevron pointing upward: >. This symbol, resembling a sharp arrow pointing to the right, clearly indicates that one quantity exceeds another. When written as a2 > b, it communicates that the value of quantity a is strictly larger than b—no equality, no ambiguity. This concise notation enables clarity in equations, functions, and logical statements, making it indispensable in both theoretical mathematics and applied disciplines. Unlike less precise verbal descriptions, the > symbol eliminates confusion, ensuring accurate interpretation across languages and cultures. Beyond basic comparison, the math symbol for greater than plays a pivotal role in defining mathematical relationships. It is integral to inequality systems, where sets of numbers are categorized based on relative size—such as in linear programming, statistical analysis, and optimization models. In calculus, it helps describe limits and function behavior, enabling the analysis of rates of change and growth trends. In computer science, it underpins sorting algorithms and conditional logic, guiding decision-making processes in software development. One of the key benefits of using a standardized symbol like > is its ability to transcend linguistic barriers. Where words may differ, the symbol remains universally recognized, fostering global collaboration in education, research, and technology. Students learning algebra or higher mathematics quickly

internalize its meaning, while professionals in diverse fields rely on it daily without hesitation. Its simplicity enhances readability and reduces cognitive load, allowing focus to remain on problem-solving rather than decoding notation. Looking ahead, the role of the greater-than symbol is poised to grow even more significant as data-driven decision-making expands. With the rise of artificial intelligence, machine learning models depend heavily on inequality-based logic to train algorithms, classify data, and optimize outcomes. The symbol > continues to serve as a foundational element in these systems, ensuring transparency and precision in automated reasoning. As education evolves to emphasize numerical literacy and critical thinking, this small but mighty sign remains a vital tool for understanding and communicating mathematical truth. In essence, the math symbol for greater than—>—is far more than a mere character. It is a gateway to logical reasoning, a bridge across languages, and a cornerstone of modern analytical thinking. Its enduring presence underscores the elegance and power of clear, consistent notation in the ever-expanding world of knowledge.

Unlocking the Greater Than Symbol: A Comprehensive Guide

In the vast and precise language of mathematics, symbols serve as the fundamental building blocks, allowing us to express complex ideas with elegance and conciseness. Among these essential tools, the symbol representing "greater than"

holds a prominent position. It's a concept we encounter from our earliest introductions to numbers and continues to be a cornerstone of advanced mathematical reasoning. But what exactly is this symbol, where did it come from, and how is it used in practice? This detailed exploration will delve into the intricacies of the **math symbol for greater than**, providing a comprehensive understanding for students, educators, and anyone seeking to deepen their mathematical literacy.

The Anatomy of "Greater Than": Understanding the Symbol

The **math symbol for greater than** is universally recognized as ">". This seemingly simple two-stroke mark carries profound meaning, indicating that the numerical or algebraic quantity on its left is larger in value than the quantity on its right. It's crucial to remember the orientation: the open, wider side always points towards the larger value, while the closed, pointed end faces the smaller value. This visual cue is a powerful mnemonic, helping to solidify the concept in our minds.

Origins and Evolution of Mathematical Notation

The development of mathematical symbols has been a gradual, centuries-long process, driven by the need for clarity and efficiency in communication. Before standardized symbols, mathematicians often resorted to lengthy verbal descriptions, which could be ambiguous and cumbersome.

The "<" and ">" symbols, along with their counterparts, owe their origin to the English mathematician Thomas Harriot. Around the turn of the 17th century, Harriot is credited with introducing these inequality signs in his posthumously published work, *Arithmetica Universalis*.

Harriot's contribution was revolutionary. He provided a concise and unambiguous way to represent comparative relationships between numbers. Prior to his work, other notations existed, but none achieved the widespread adoption and enduring legacy of Harriot's inequalities. The simplicity and intuitive nature of the "<" and ">" symbols ensured their rapid assimilation into the mathematical lexicon, becoming indispensable tools for expressing quantitative relationships.

Distinguishing "Greater Than" from "Less Than" and "Equal To"

To fully grasp the significance of the **math symbol for greater than**, it's essential to contrast it with its related symbols: "less than" ("<") and "equal to" ("=").

1. **Greater Than (>):** As discussed, this symbol indicates that the quantity on the left is numerically larger than the quantity on the right. For example, 5 > 2 means that 5 is greater than 2.
2. **Less Than (<):** This symbol is the mirror image of the greater than symbol and signifies that the quantity on the left is numerically smaller than the quantity on the right. For example, 2 < 5 means that 2 is less than 5.
3. **Equal To (=):** This symbol indicates that the quantities on

both sides have the exact same value. For example, 3 + 2 = 5 means that the sum of 3 and 2 is equal to 5.

Understanding these distinctions is fundamental for interpreting and constructing mathematical statements accurately. The choice of symbol dramatically alters the meaning of an equation or inequality.

Applications of the Greater Than Symbol in Mathematics

The **math symbol for greater than** is far more than just a theoretical construct; it finds extensive application across various branches of mathematics and in real-world scenarios. Its versatility makes it a cornerstone of quantitative analysis.

Basic Arithmetic and Number Comparisons

From elementary school arithmetic, students learn to compare numbers using the greater than symbol. This foundational skill is critical for understanding number order, magnitude, and for performing more complex calculations. For instance, when ordering a set of numbers, one might arrange them from smallest to largest or vice versa, implicitly using comparisons like "is this number greater than the previous one?"

Example: 10 > 7; 50 > 25; 1000 > 999.

Algebraic Expressions and Inequalities

In algebra, the **math symbol for greater than** is instrumental in defining inequalities. These are mathematical statements that compare two expressions, asserting that one is greater than the other. Algebraic inequalities are crucial for solving problems that involve ranges of possible values, optimization, and setting boundaries.

Example: If 'x' represents a person's age and they must be older than 18 to vote, we can express this as x > 18. This inequality defines all possible ages for voting eligibility.

Another Example: Consider the inequality 2x + 5 > 11. Solving this inequality involves isolating 'x' to find the range of values for which the statement is true. Subtracting 5 from both sides gives 2x > 6, and dividing by 2 yields x > 3. This means any value of 'x' greater than 3 will satisfy the original inequality.

Set Theory and Relations

In set theory, the concept of ordering and comparison is fundamental. While not directly using the ">" symbol in all contexts, the underlying principle of "greater than" is used to define order relations within sets. For example, in ordered sets, elements can be compared to determine their relative position.

Computer Science and Programming

The **math symbol for greater than** plays a pivotal role in

computer programming. It is used extensively in conditional statements (e.g., `if` statements) and loops to control the flow of a program. Programmers use this symbol to make decisions based on the comparison of variables or values.

Example (Pseudocode):

```
IF score > 90 THEN
    PRINT "Excellent!"
END IF
```

This snippet demonstrates how the greater than symbol is used to check if a 'score' variable exceeds 90, leading to a specific output if the condition is met. Other related comparison operators in programming include "greater than or equal to" (often represented as `>=`).

Real-World Applications

Beyond the confines of textbooks and code, the concept of "greater than" is embedded in countless real-world scenarios:

1. **Finance:** Comparing investment returns, tracking stock prices, or determining if a balance exceeds a certain threshold.
2. **Engineering:** Ensuring that a load is greater than the maximum capacity, or that a component meets a minimum strength requirement.
3. **Statistics:** Analyzing data to see if a sample mean is greater than a hypothesized value, or if a p-value is less than a significance level (which implies the null hypothesis is *not* greater than).

4. **Everyday Life:** Deciding if you have enough money for a purchase, or if someone is old enough to drive.

Variations and Related Concepts

While ">" is the primary **math symbol for greater than**, it's important to be aware of its variations and closely related concepts.

Greater Than or Equal To

Often, a situation requires that a value be either greater than or equal to a certain threshold. This is represented by the symbol ">=". For example, if you need to be at least 16 years old to get a learner's permit, the condition is age >= 16. This means your age can be 16 or any number larger than 16.

Strict Inequality vs. Non-Strict Inequality

The ">" symbol denotes a *strict inequality*, meaning the two quantities cannot be equal. The ">=" symbol denotes a *non-strict inequality* (also called a loose inequality), where equality is permitted. This distinction is crucial in mathematical problem-solving and logical reasoning.

Contextual Nuances and Mathematical Fields

While the fundamental meaning of the **math symbol for**

greater than remains consistent, its interpretation can sometimes be influenced by the specific mathematical field. For instance, in abstract algebra or order theory, elements might be compared based on different ordering relations that go beyond simple numerical magnitude.

Mastering the Greater Than Symbol: Tips for Understanding and Usage

For many, especially those new to mathematics, grasping the nuances of comparison symbols can be a hurdle. Here are some tips to ensure a firm understanding and confident usage of the **math symbol for greater than**:

1. **The "Alligator Mouth" Analogy:** A common and effective mnemonic is to visualize the symbol as the mouth of an alligator. The alligator always wants to eat the larger number, so its mouth (the open part of the symbol) always faces the bigger value.
2. **Practice with Examples:** The best way to solidify understanding is through consistent practice. Work through numerous examples, both simple arithmetic comparisons and more complex algebraic inequalities.
3. **Read Mathematical Statements Aloud:** When encountering a mathematical statement involving the greater than symbol, try reading it aloud in plain English. For example, "7 > 3" can be read as "Seven is greater than three." This reinforces the conceptual meaning.
4. **Visualize on a Number Line:** For numerical comparisons,

visualize the numbers on a number line. The number further to the right is always the greater number.

5. **Understand the Purpose of Inequalities:** Recognize that inequalities are used to define ranges, set constraints, and describe relationships where exact equality isn't the sole condition of interest.
6. **Review Related Symbols:** Ensure you are comfortable with "<", "=", "<=", and ">=" to avoid confusion and to accurately represent mathematical relationships.

Conclusion: The Enduring Power of a Simple Symbol

The **math symbol for greater than**, ">", is a testament to the power of concise notation in mathematics. From its origins with Thomas Harriot to its ubiquitous presence in modern computing and scientific research, this simple symbol has enabled us to express and analyze quantitative relationships with unparalleled clarity and efficiency. Understanding its meaning, applications, and variations is not merely about memorizing a symbol; it's about acquiring a fundamental tool for logical reasoning and problem-solving that extends far beyond the classroom. By mastering the "greater than" symbol, you unlock a deeper understanding of the quantitative world around you, empowering you to interpret, analyze, and engage with mathematical concepts with confidence and precision.

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Environmental sustainability is another important

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Questions & Answers About what is the math symbol for greater than

No	Question	Answer
1	What's the symbol that means 'more than' in math?	The math symbol for 'greater than' is '>'. It looks like a sideways 'V' and points to the smaller number.
2	How do I read the '>' symbol in a math problem?	You read the '>' symbol as 'is greater than'. For example, '5 > 3' is read as '5 is greater than 3'.
3	Can you give an example of using the 'greater than' symbol?	Certainly! If you have 10 apples and your friend has 7 apples, you can write this as '10 > 7' to show you have more apples.
4	What's the opposite of the 'greater than' symbol?	The opposite of the 'greater than' symbol (>) is the 'less than' symbol (<). It points to the smaller number, just like the greater than symbol, but the orientation is reversed.
5	Is there a way to show 'greater than or equal to'?	Yes, there is! The symbol for 'greater than or equal to' is '≥'. It combines the '>' symbol with an '=' sign beneath it.
6	Where did the '>' symbol come from?	The '>' symbol was introduced by the English mathematician Thomas Harriot around 1631. It's a convention that has been widely adopted in mathematics.

7	How can I remember which side is the 'greater than' side?	A helpful mnemonic is to think of it like an alligator's mouth. The alligator always opens its mouth to eat the bigger number, so the '>' symbol points to the larger value.
8	What if I see a number with a line under the '>' symbol?	If you see a line under the '>' symbol (≥), it means 'greater than or equal to'. This means the first number is either larger than the second number, or it is exactly the same.
9	Can the 'greater than' symbol be used with negative numbers?	Absolutely! The '>' symbol works the same way with negative numbers. For example, '-2 > -5' is true because -2 is further to the right on the number line than -5.

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Reusable content supports long-term learning goals.

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