

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDANCE: MAGNITUDE COMPARISON

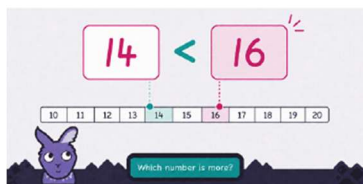
Teaching guidance and background

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Display two numerals, such as 35 and 30, with Base-10 materials and a place-value chart. 35 > 30 46 > 42 54 > 38 Both numbers have 3 tens. But 35 has more ones, so 35 is more. Both numbers have 4 tens. But 46 has more ones, so 46 is more. 54 has more tens than 38, so 54 is more. 10 (one ten) 1 (one) Compare tens first. If tens are the same, compare ones.	has 3 tens and 0 ones. The tens are the same, so I compare the ones. 5 ones is more than 0 ones, so 35 is more than 30."	Correction: If students say 38 is more than 54 because 8 is more than 4, respond: "You compared the ones before the tens. In two-digit numbers, we compare tens first. 54 has 5 tens. 38 has 3 tens. Five tens is more than 3 tens, so 54 is more."	write each number, compare tens first, compare ones only if needed, and say or write the comparison sentence.
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Once students can accurately compare numbers within the taught range, move those comparisons into brief daily review. Review should use numerals first, with number tracks, number paths, ten-frames, counters, Base-10 materials, hundreds charts, or place-value charts used to support, check, or explain when students are unsure or inaccurate.

If many students are inaccurate during review, pause the review routine and return to explicit modelling with the relevant representation before continuing.



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Review and Practice

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Daily review should be brief: about 5–10 minutes. Use numerals first, with representations used to support, check, or explain when students are unsure or inaccurate.

Use high rates of active participation so all students respond. Students can respond chorally, on mini-whiteboards, with response cards, or through brief partner rehearsal.

Check the Magnitude Comparison: Resources for a slide bank that can be used to support these review and practice routines.

Core review routine: Which number is more?

Use this routine for quick daily review once students have been explicitly taught how to compare numbers within the relevant range.

Step	Teacher action	Student response
1. Show two numerals	Display two numerals, such as 7 and 9.	"The numbers are 7 and 9."
2. Ask which number is more	"Which number is more?"	"9 is more than 7."
3. Ask which number is less	"Which number is less?"	"7 is less than 9."
4. Ask students to explain	"How do you know?"	"9 comes after 7, so 9 is more."
5. Check with a representation if needed	Use a number track, number path, ten-frame, counters, hundred chart, or Base-10 materials to check or explain.	"I can see/check that ___ is more than ___."
6. Repeat with quick examples	Use 4–8 examples, mixing more, less, and same-number pairs, such as 4 and 6, 8 and 5, 10 and 10, 12 and 15.	"___ is more than ___." "___ is less than ___." "___ and ___ are the same."

Review variations

Once students know the routine, vary the response mode to maintain engagement and increase opportunities to respond.

- **Choral response:** Students say the full comparison sentence together.
- **Mini-whiteboards:** Students write the number that is more or less, then say the sentence.
- **Partner rehearsal:** Students tell a partner which number is more or less and how they know.
- **Same-number examples:** Include pairs such as **8 and 8** so students practise identifying when numbers are the same.
- **Mixed review:** Include a small mix of current and previously taught number ranges.

Correction routine

If many students are inaccurate, pause the review routine and return to explicit modelling. For example:

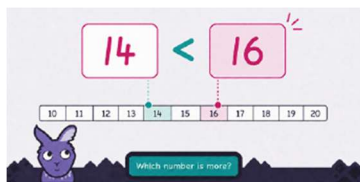
- "Let's point to both numbers on the number track."
- "Which number comes after?"
- "Numbers that come after are more."
- "Now say the comparison sentence with me."

If Year 1 students are comparing two-digit numbers inaccurately, return to Base-10 materials, a hundreds chart, or a place-value chart and model comparing tens first.

Links to related review routines

- Some related routines appear in other recommendation areas because they serve a different primary purpose.
- In **Number Sequence**, routines such as **Before and After Flash**, **Number Order Build**, and **Cover and Reveal on a Number Path** support students who need more practice with before, after, and number order.
- In **Magnitude Estimation**, routines using linear board games, movement along number tracks, number paths, and number lines support students to connect number order with position, distance, and relative magnitude.

Teachers may draw on those routines when students need additional work with number order or linear magnitude, but the main goal in Magnitude Comparison is for students to compare numerals and explain which number is more, less, or the same.



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Implementation Summary

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- Magnitude comparison means deciding which number is more, less, or the same.
- The main goal is for students to compare **numerals**, using representations to prove or explain their thinking.
- For Foundation, number tracks or number paths are the strongest core representation for comparison within 20.
- For Year 1, instruction should extend to comparing numbers within 100.
- Teen numbers as **10 and some more** can begin in Foundation as emerging understanding and should be revisited in Year 1 as a bridge into two-digit place value.
- For Year 1, base-10 blocks should be used to connect teen numbers to broader two-digit numbers as tens and ones.
- Place-value charts and two-digit comparison should be clearly labelled as a **Year 1 extension from Foundation work**, not as the starting point for students still insecure within 20.
- Stem sentences should be used consistently to support participation, reasoning, and precise mathematical language.
- Instruction should include explicit modelling, guided practice, independent practice, brief daily review, and cumulative review.