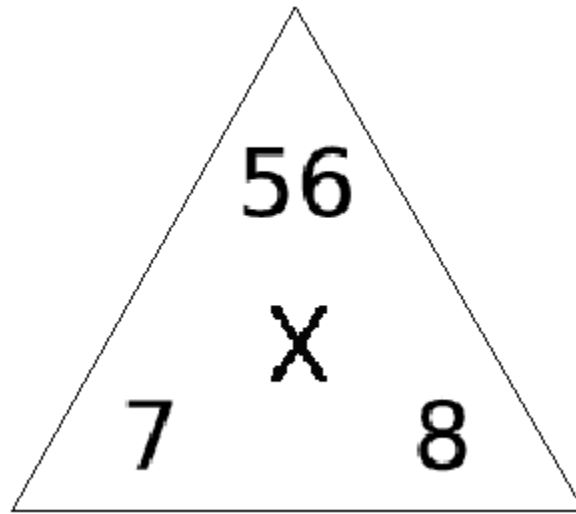


How to Use Triangular Multiplication/Division Flash Cards



The multiplication facts can be seen as "families" of numbers: two "factors" and a "product." In the case illustrated here, the two factors are 7 and 8, and the product is 56. If the parent presents the card to a child with the top number covered, it is a multiplication problem. The goal is to multiply 7 and 8 to get 56. However if one or the other of the bottom numbers is covered, it becomes a division problem: $56 \div 7 = 8$ or $56 \div 8 = 7$.

One important advantage of using the same triangular cards to practice multiplication and division is that division becomes seen as "puzzle multiplication": find the missing factor. The division problem $56 \div 8 = ?$ literally means, "What do you have to multiply by 8 to get 56?" Division is the "inverse operation" of multiplication; learning the multiplication combinations in families like this is a good way to learn what that concept means (the opposite of multiplication). Understanding the meaning of division is at least as important as knowing how to divide. If a person doesn't recognize when a situation calls for division in a real-life problem, he or she will not be able to get the right answer even with a calculator.

Another advantage of learning multiplication and division on the same set of cards is that division can be introduced informally without even giving it a name. Once the child becomes reasonably fluent in multiplying pairs of numbers, covering other corners of the card becomes a game of "find the missing number." The parent need not even introduce the word "division" until the child has mastered the activity.

Finally, learning to divide in this context reinforces multiplication skills. By the time the child can give the answer no matter which corner is covered, he or she has literally learned multiplication "backward and forward"!

