

Comparing many collections introduction



1 The most, the least, or all equal

Put out three groups of counters with small, easy amounts — say three, six, and four. With more than two groups, saying which has more between two is not enough — we ask which has the most and which has the least.

“More than two groups now. We do not just say more or fewer — we ask which has the most, and which has the least.”

Find the group with the most by checking every group. The most is the one with more than all the others — and the answer is a group, so we name it.

“Which group has the most? Check them all. Point to it — the group with the most is this one.”

Find the group with the least — the group with fewer than all the others. Again, name the group.

“Now the least — the group with fewer than all the others. Which group is it?”

Keep track. With several groups it is easy to lose your place — put the groups in a row or label them, and remember which you have already checked. The counting is easy; keeping track is the real work.

“It is easy to lose track with lots of groups. Line them up, label them, and remember which you have checked.”

Show the all-equal case — when every group has the same amount, there is no most and no least; we say they are all equal.

“Every group has four. Is there a most? A least? No — they are all equal.”