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Ive come across an opinion of the native speakers of English that if one says, for example, that Ann has 3 times less apples than John, this doesnt equals to John has 3 times as many apples as Ann does. They claim that in the strict logical sense, the meaning of the former sentence is that of subtraction (actually, the subtraction of 3*number of apples Ann has from John's), not division. And the correct way of conveying the intended meaning of division would be Ann has one-third as many apples as John. Assuming that this chain of reasoning is correct, how does one state that X is, say, 1/25 of Y? (without inverting the sentence to Y is 25 times as much as X). I would very much appreciate some clarification on the matter!(And my apologies if this question had already been discussed here).UPD: Here is a link to one such debate: Last edited: Feb 12, 2014 There are two questions here: grammatical and mathematical. Grammatically correct would be: three times fewer., not less.Mathematically correct would be: A third as many. This would be unambiguous. Hi mean,"3 times less" [or fewer] is readily understood as meaning 1/3 of; as you state. I don't agree with the opinion you cite. There is nothing to do with subtraction: That would be said as, "Ann has three less [fewer] apples than John." Ann has 3 times less apples than John ..... John has 3 times as many apples as Ann does.They claim that in the strict logical sense, the meaning of the former sentence is that of subtraction, not division. I don't understand how it could be substraction if it's talking about "times"I'd expect:Ann has two apples fewer than John hasAm I wrong? cross-posted with bennymix Many people do object to it. "3 times" any number greater than 1 results in a larger number not a smaller number. I often see this sort of language result in errors and miscommunications and if you involve percentages it gets worse. This language is used and generally understood so you should understand what it means when people say that, but I, personally, would suggest that you avoid using it yourself. Ok, but I suppose using something like ''1/25 as many as....'' in a non-scientific text would sound pretty odd, wouldn't it? That is the bit that confuses me the most, not the "fewer/less" thing. I'm sorry if I failed to put it clearly in the initial question, but this is the actual problem how do I express the meaning of "1/25 as many as..." without sounding strange and at the same time be logically correct? (and without inverting the whole sentence). I find nothing strange in saying something is 1/25th (one twenty-fifth) as large as something else. Maybe the ending "th" is what you're looking for. I don't understand how it could be substraction if it's talking about "times"I'd expect:Ann has two apples fewer than John hasAm I wrong? cross-posted with bennymix Actually, it's seems to be a little bit more complicated than just division/subtraction. Following your comment, I've added a link to my question where the matter is explained in greater detail (see under "UPD"). I find nothing strange in saying something is 1/25th (one twenty-fifth) as large as something else. Maybe the ending "th" is what you're looking for. Well, I really thought that something like "one twenty-fifth as large/big/many etc." would sound quite weird in, say, a news article. If it isn't, well, the case is closed) X is 4% of Y would be another way As long as you avoid a comparative (larger than, less than, smaller than, etc) you can use times or fractions. If you think your audience might be "arithemtically challenged" (i.e. simply would not understand a fraction like 1/25th) you will need to turn the sentence around and use 25 times bigger than. X is 4% of Y would be another way As long as you avoid a comparative (larger than, less than, smaller than, etc) you can use times or fractions. If you think your audience might be "arithemtically challenged" (i.e. simply would not understand a fraction like 1/25th) you will need to turn the sentence around and use 25 times bigger than. Nifty idea with percentages, but yes - too cool for most target audiences) Going by comments, its more natural for Anglophones to express ratios by the concept of the larger than of the smaller. This is not the case in any of the other languages I've been studying. If this larger-instead-of-smaller suspicion of mine is true, then, its a very interesting point to arrive at, as long as one is a strong advocate of the SapirWhorf hypothesis. [...] Grammatically correct would be: three times fewer., not less.Mathematically correct would be: A third as many. This would be unambiguous. In fact the second one would be both mathematically and grammatically correct which, for me, makes it infinitely preferable. [...] "3 times less" [or fewer] is readily understood as meaning 1/3 of [...] Well, maybe readily understood by some, benny but not by everyone, as is shown by some of the posts in the thread that JS linked to in #4. (I particularly liked cuchuflete's suggestion of a letter to the editor, asking "Just what the hell do you people mean by "four times less"?). Come to think of it, it seems odd to me that anyone would want to use the complicated and dubious "three times less", when "a third" is so much simpler (and, to me, instinctive). Ok, but I suppose using something like ''1/25 as many as....'' in a non-scientific text would sound pretty odd, wouldn't it? [...] how do I express the meaning of "1/25 as many as..." without sounding strange and at the same time be logically correct? (and without inverting the whole sentence). I don't think it sounds strange. We see, in non-scientific texts, "a thirtieth", "a thousandth", ... Perhaps it's less common with 'unround' numbers, but that's probably because we talk about them less than we do about round numbers, not because there's anything intrinsically odd about "a twenty-fifth".Also, we often use forms other than "as ... as". We hear "1/25th the size of", "1/25th the depth of", etc. With numbers, it can be "1/25th the number of", provided that fits with the rest of the sentence. Nifty idea with percentages, but yes - too cool for most target audiences) [...] Really?! In this day and age, when people have percentages rammed down their throats at every turn (even down to the curious "0% interest"), I'd have thought "4%" would be unremarkably ordinary. [...] Going by comments, its more natural for Anglophones to express ratios by the concept of the larger than of the smaller. This is not the case in any of the other languages I've been studying. [...] Which comments were those, mean machine? And what do you mean by "larger-rather-than-smaller"? And if you're advocating Sapir-Whorf, what's the anglophone perception in question? ... and what's the linguistic structure that's influencing it? Sorry, but your last post has me bewildered. Can you cast some light?Ws To me, "three times less than X" means -2X. Me too. (As I said, benny: 'not by everyone')Ws No, not subtracting 2X but (2*X) as a negative number. It would be -2, not -1.I have no idea how you could have 3 times less/fewer than someone else. That's similar to saying we've reduced expenditures by 300%. How is this logically possible? Once you've reduced expenditures by 100% you have no more expenditures. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 [...] So, if X=1, then "three times less than X" means 1 - (2 x 1) = -1? [...] "three times less than X" means 1 - (3 x 1) = -2 ... assuming that "three times" means "three times X" (and I can't see what else it could mean).[Edit] To any ardent supporters of the idea that "three times X" means "one-third of X" (and I don't see any in this thread so far), I would say "Do you say two times less, or twice less, instead of half.? If not, why not?"Ws Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 Gotcha (finally!) The result of "three times less than X" is "-2X". (in arithmetic terms: X -3X = -2X) The use of "times" means something has to be multiplied by three, so this is what I'd probably have ended up with, too. That's it, JS.Ws To Word and others, Originally Posted by JulianStuart [...] So, if X=1, then "three times less than X" means 1 - (2 x 1) = -1? [...] "three times less than X" means 1 - (3 x 1) = -2 [Wordsmyth:] ... assuming that "three times" means "three times X" (and I can't see what else it could mean).[Edit] To any ardent supporters of the idea that "three times X" means "one-third of X" (and I don't see any in this thread so far), I would say "Do you say two times less, or twice less, instead of half.? If not, why not?" === Hi Word,"3 times less" means 1/3, as I said in post #3. To answer your question. Yes, one says 2 times less, and that means one half of. The link to the pressure cooker story and its content make it clear that the new version has '4 times less' pressure than 15 psi. And though that puzzled some posters, it likewise, clearly, means 1/4. I note that Panjandrum seems to have given the same analysis, and no other poster proposed an answer to the question of the OP. and Julian, your purported demonstrations are purely fanciful. Checking the term in the wild and properly applying the 'times' (multiplication) principle show the correct interpretation of these expressions. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 To Word and others, === Hi Word,"3 times less" means 1/3 as I said in post #3 To answer your question. Yes, one says 2 times less, and that means one half of. The link to the pressure cooker story and its content make it clear that the new version has '4 times less' pressure than 15 psi. And though that puzzled some posters, it likewise, clearly, means 1/4. and Julian, your purported demonstrations are purely fanciful. Checking the term in the wild and properly applying the 'times' (multiplication) principle show the correct interpretation of these expressions. Please help meWhen I learnt my multiplication tables, I got a pretty good understanding of the meaning of "times". Three times four equals twelve. Or in general "A times B = A*B". (Arithmetically the operator " * ") When someone says "A is C less than B", I know that B - C = A is true. (Arithmetically the operator " - ".)So when "A is three times less than B", what gets multiplied by what (the "times" word) and what gets subtracted from what (the "less than" phrase)?(I don't deny that when some people say "A is three times less than B" they do mean "A is 1/3 the size of B" but I am trying to understand the grammar here Checking the term in the wild and properly applying the 'times' (multiplication) principle show the correct interpretation of these expressions. I see no errors in the multiplication in posts 8 and 9. A is three times greater than B is as confusing as A is three times less than B, and they are both confusing. A is three times as large as B is as straightforward as A is one third as large as B, and they are both plain. What is as large as B is B, and what is three times as large as B is 3B. What is three times greater than B or three times less than B is a mystery solved only by bennymix and perhaps a few others. Nothing says that the author of the Mail Online article knew what she meant. Under atmospheric pressure, water boils at 212F, and there is no way to increase the temperature in an open vessel, because the water boils away rather than become hotter - all the added heat from the burner is expended in changing the state of the water from liquid to gas. Pressure cookers work by allowing the water inside the device to become hotter than 212F. (Hotter water cooks stuff faster.) They do this by trapping steam, increasing the pressure in the cooker. The higher the pressure, the higher the boiling point.A pressure cooker that operates at lower pressures above one atmosphere would cook faster than at atmospheric pressure, but not as fast as older cookers. A quarter the usual pressure in a pressure cooker would be below atmospheric pressure. If "4 times less" means "one quarter the original", it doesn't make cooking sense. I don't think it makes any sense. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 One can describe increase(decrease) in a multiplicative way or an additive way. The former is indicated by 'times', also the word 'factor'. (Percentages are a different notation, but are multiplicative.) Natural growth processes are generallymultiplicative. Suppose the bacteria colony today is 'half again as large' in number, as it was yesterday. (Multiply by 1.5). Today there are 1.5 million and yesterday, 1 million. One will expect that the new number, reproducing for a day, will generate a larger number than .5 million; the 'base', so to say, is greater. (As with a compound interest investment.) The new number should be 1.5 million multiplied by 1.5, or 2.25 million. Lets assume yesterday's size of the bamboo sprout was 3.33 cm. Today's size is 10 cm. Tomorrow's (expected) size, 30 cm. (Measurements taken at the same time, each day.) The daily growth is by a factor of 3, moving from earlier to later. On a graph, there is an upward sloping (to the right) line, whose slope is 3. If we move in the other direction, the daily decrease is by a factor of 3. That would be division by 3 or multiplication by 1/3. Moving leftward, the line slopes down; measuring in reverse, the slope is -3.These are equivalent: A. Today's size is 3 times yesterday's. B. Yesterday's size times 3 is today's size.Equivalent to A, is A*: Today's size is 3 times more than yesterday's. Now, what is the meaning of '3 times less'? What would this sentence mean? C: Yesterday's size is 3 times less than today's. We must get to 'less' and it must be by multiplication (because of the word 'times'). Proposal: Inverse multiply, that is, divide by 3 (multiply by 1/3)We propose, then. A* Today's size is 3 times more than yesterday's as equivalent to C. Yesterday's size is 3 times less than today's. The number tells you the multiplier ('times' tells you to multiply) and 'more' or 'less' tells you whether to multiply to make bigger, or inverse-multiply (divide) to get smaller. The number 1 will generate no increase or decrease. 'X's value is now 1 times more than X's value yesterday', means the two values are the same. 'X's value yesterday is 1 times less than today's value' means no change.The above proposal is consistent with common usage, and above text may help explain it, except to the wholly unregenerate. But 'times less' has tradition, if not logic, on its side; it was idiomatic English for at least two centuries before anyone claimed it was confusing, according to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage.Jonathan Swift, for instance, used it in 1711, writing "I am resolved to drink ten times less than before." It wasn't till the 20th century that language commentators - not mathematicians - came up with the notion that "three times closer" and "100 times slower" were illogical and confusing. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 Reply to srk srk A is three times greater than B is as confusing as A is three times less than B, and they are both confusing. A is three times as large as B is as straightforward as A is one third as large as B, and they are both plain. What is as large as B is B, and what is three times as large as B is 3B. What is three times greater than B or three times less than B is a mystery solved only by bennymix and perhaps a few others. Nothing says that the author of the Mail Online article knew what she meant. Under atmospheric pressure, water boils at 212F, and there is no way to increase the temperature in an open vessel, because the water boils away rather than become hotter - all the added heat from the burner is expended in changing the state of the water from liquid to gas. Pressure cookers work by allowing the water inside the device to become hotter than 212F. (Hotter water cooks stuff faster.) They do this by trapping steam, increasing the pressure in the cooker. The higher the pressure, the higher the boiling point.A pressure cooker that operates at lower pressures above one atmosphere would cook faster than at atmospheric pressure, but not as fast as older cookers. A quarter the usual pressure in a pressure cooker would be below atmospheric pressure. If "4 times less" means "one quarter the original", it doesn't make cooking sense. I don't think it makes any sense. I'm sorry you are confused by the pressure cooker article (as were some other posters in that old thread). It said, WiKook model. Like the classic version it [WiKook] uses pressure to heat food 25 per cent quicker than a saucepan, ensuring nutrients are better preserved. But unlike the old stainless steel cooker, the aluminium WiKook model from Tefal can be opened at any time during cooking so you can stir, season or add a forgotten ingredient.This is because it operates at four times less pressure than the old pressure cookers. Normal atmospheric pressure is 14.7 pounds per square in, absolute. The usual pressure cooker works at about 15 pounds per square inch, 'gauge.' that is on top of the normal. (In other words, 29.7 psi absolute.) The WiKook apparently generates a quarter of that ("four times less), or 15/4 psi guage, or 3.75 pounds per sq inch on top of the normal (that is, 18.45 psi absolute), which speeds up cooking.I'm not sure how you came up with A pressure cooker that operates at lower pressures above one atmosphere would cook faster than at atmospheric pressure, but not as fast as older cookers I suspect you took the gauge pressure of 15, for the cooker as absolute, and divided by 4, and construed that as likewise absolute pressure, i.e. 3.75 pound absolute, which is less than the normal 14.7 for the atmosphere. Alternatively, you may have converted the 15 psi gauge to absolute, making it 14.7 + 15, or 29.7. Then you divided that by 4, getting an absolute number, 7.43. which is less than the normal atmosphere, in absolute.In any case, the answer is rather simpler than going through all the hoops you did. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 [...] To answer your question. Yes, one says 2 times less, and that means one half of. [...] I've obviously never met the "one" who says that. Or perhaps I just have: Hi, benny. Seriously. I don't think I've ever heard a native English speaker say it (and I don't consider I've led a linguistically sheltered life!). [...] These are equivalent: A. Today's size is 3 times yesterday's. B. Yesterday's size times 3 is today's size.Equivalent to A, is A*: Today's size is 3 times more than yesterday's. [...] Let's call yesterday's size H1 and today's size H2 (and I'll use x to indicate 'times', for readers who aren't so familiar with *)- Sentence A says: H2 = 3 x H1- Sentence B says: H1 x 3 = H2 (which is indeed mathematically equivalent to A) Now let's look at sentence A*:- Yesterday's size is H1. 'One time more' is H1 + H1 = 2H1 .. 'Two times more' is H1 + 2H1= 3H1.. 'Three times more' is H1 + 3H1= 4H1..So sentence A* says: H2 = H1 + 3H1 ... which equals 4H1...So sentence A* is not equivalent to sentence A. Your reason for disagreeing with that, benny, was: [...] The number 1 will generate no increase or decrease. 'X's value is now 1 times more than X's value yesterday', means the two values are the same. 'X's value yesterday is 1 times less than today's value' means no change. [...] Apart from the grammatical problem with "1 times" (1 is singular), do you honestly believe that if you said "X's value is now 1 time more than X's value yesterday", anyone would take that to mean the two values are the same? For that to be so, your listener would have to think that "1 time more than" means "the same as"! If you've seen a movie three times, and I've seen it "one time more than you", then I've seen it four times. But by your argument I've seen it only three times!The fundamental difference between your principle and that of the 'unregenerate' (i.e. most of us) is that you don't seem to differentiate between "3 times" and "3 times more". So if you ever stamp your foot and complain that I have more candy than you, I can reply that there's no problem, 'cos you actually have the same.Ws bennymix:You know more about pressure cookers than I do. I thought they operated at a few psi above atmospheric pressure, not at twice atmospheric pressure. I've carried my wrong idea around over the years from who-knows-where, thought it was right, and didn't think it was worth checking. Even then, I was thinking absolute rather than gauge pressure. That's all really bad. I apologize. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 Gotcha (finally!) The result of "three times less than X" is "-2X". (in arithmetic terms: X -3X = -2X) . That can hardly be the meaning of the original, though: Ann has 3 times less apples than John. Suppose John has nine apples. If the operation is x - 3x = -2x, then Ann has 9 - 27 = -18 apples. How is she going to get -18 apples into her shopping-bag? Perhaps she would be able to carry home -18, but if John bought, say, a couple of hundred, Ann might have difficulty keeping her feet on the ground. Amusing thought, wandle. But since the statement does mean that (even if the speaker didn't intend it to), your examples go to show that the original sentence is pretty nonsensical. If I hear "Ann has 3 times less (fewer) apples than John", my first thought is 'That can't be true, so the speaker must mean something else'. Of the other things that the speaker might mean, "a third" is the most likely (if not the only) possibility. However, if the first misstatement was down to muddled thinking, I wouldn't be sure that my assumption was the right one, so (if I cared) I'd end up having to ask what the speaker really meant.The problem is greater with "three times more", because it makes sense in the first place. If John has nine apples, then Ann has 36 apples (not 3 times John's, which would be 27, but 3 times more than John: 9 + 3x9). Unfortunately, some people use it to mean that Ann has 27 (instead of saying, correctly, "Ann has 3 times as many apples as John"). So the sentence "Ann has 3 times more apples than John", whilst not senseless, is actually useless: if I heard it, I wouldn't have the slightest idea whether the speaker meant 36 or 27.Ws To Word and others, === Hi Word,"3 times less" means 1/3, as I said in post #3.To answer your question. Yes, one says 2 times less, and that means one half of. I have heard a few people say this and, honestly, I wouldn't trust them to calculate their share of the tab at a restaurant. I've read through the thread and still don't see where 2 times what is explained. What are you multiplying by two in order to get the result? If I have 100 dollars and you have 2 times less and you say this means 50 dollars, then 1 time must be 25 somehow. 100 - (2*25) is the only way I see to figure out what is being multiplied by 2 in order to get the answer you propose.I consider it sloppy speaking that I assume is a result of sloppy thinking. That is my prejudiced opinion, I know, but it is my honest reaction. As I understand it, James, benny was proposing (and I paraphrase) that "times" on its own means 'multiplied by', and that "times more" means the same, but that "times less" indicates 'divide the original number by the number immediately preceding this phrase'. Not a definition I've ever seen in any dictionary, nor in any maths textbook.Ws I certainly wouldn't recommend using "times less" to mean "divided by previous number" to a non-native speaker. I don't think that's a general consensus at all among English speakers. 5 times less than 100 = 20 100 divided by 5 = 20 1/5th of 100 = 20 20% of 100 = 20 (The logic doesn't make sense to me. So "one times less" is same as the thing itself? One times less than 100 is 100. ??? That's too convoluted for me.) Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 Hi Wordsmyth.Your speculations are rather out of touch--in my unbiased opinion. Essentially you say that Ann, in your example, with 36 apples, has "3 times more than John: 9 + 3x9). " 36, you say, is 3 times more than 9. This is a well debated topic on the 'net, e.g., and the 'reasoning' by 'your' side has always seemed a bit wacky to me. It reminds me of those who say, "I don't know nothing" actually means, "I know something" because "two negatives make a positive." But, to my mind, the realities of language use always trump such attempts at reason.Your example is self made, and not surprisingly, self serving--contrived by you to corroborate this wacky ratiocination. {Not that you, my friend, as less than entirely sane, rational and empirical, here, but maybe you've been bitten by some strange internet bug! } The problem is greater with "three times more", because it makes sense in the first place. If John has nine apples, then Ann has 36 apples (not 3 times John's, which would be 27, but 3 times more than John: 9 + 3x9). Unfortunately, some people use it to mean that Ann has 27 (instead of saying, correctly, "Ann has 3 times as many apples as John"). So the sentence "Ann has 3 times more apples than John", whilst not senseless, is actually useless: if I heard it, I wouldn't have the slightest idea whether the speaker meant 36 or 27. ===== The best way to bring actual reason to the matter--and I say this dispassionately-- is to start with the higher numbers, and take examples "from the wild" **. They are quite clear for the higher numbers, and very favorable (to my interpretation) for the lower. Two and three (times more) are debated, but my proposal is very simple "X times more than" something is means the same as "X times" [Corrected 4 pm EST, Feb 13](as many as that something or the measure of that something), assuming we're talking of some things that are, respectively, countable or quantifiable) . Here are some examples--I've chosen sources with numerical data so that matters are clear. [Alberta Can, newspaper]County sees two times more snow than normal for December By: Sara Wilson | Posted: Monday, Dec 30, 2013 11:43 am If you were thinking theres more snow this month as there was last year, you are right two and a half times more. According to Environment Canada from the beginning of November until Dec. 18 a total of 70 centimetres (cm) has accumulated in Airdrie and surrounding county communities. Thats two-and-half times the normal accumulated amounts of 28 cm.Theres been lots of snow, said Bill McMurty, meteorologist with Environment Canada. ZHIVAGO'S CHILDREN - Page 311 - Google Books Resultbooks.google.ca/books?isbn=0674033442Vladislav Zubok - 2009 - History In 197172 there were 105,000 Jewish students in Soviet universities, two times more than the number of university students in Israel. Among sixty thousand . === Disease Ten Times More Prevalent Than Previously Thought The CDC now estimates that 300,000 Americans are infected with Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses are a growing threat as well. By Jeff Wheelwright, Breanna Draxler When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated last summer that the number of people diagnosed with Lyme disease each year was 300,000 10 times as high as the official counts the agency must have expected headlines, and it got them. The alarmingly high figure justified assertions by patient advocacy groups that the 30,000 cases reported annually were just the tip of the iceberg. === === Hens: Why Women Are Different - Page 61 - Google Books Resultbooks.google.ca/books?isbn=0741429543Carl Fors - 2006 - Social Science Red meat has six times as much zinc as a chicken breast and ten time[s] more than fish. Men need 45% more zinc than woman. remains two times more likely in children with brain ...www.news-medical.net/.../Depression-remains-two-times-more-likely-in-... Oct 25, 2013 - Adults with head injuries are known to be at high risk for depression, and yet little research had been done on the topic related to children. [...]Using data from the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health, researchers identified more than 2,000 children with brain injuries, reflecting the national child brain injury rate of 1.9 percent in 2007; and 3,112 children with diagnosed depression, mirroring the 3.7 percent national child depression rate that year. Compared to other children, 15 percent of those with brain injuries or concussions were diagnosed as depressed-a 4.9 fold increase in the odds of diagnosed depression. == This same approach may be applied to "X times less than" and there are lots of examples (re Swift, in my post #5) showing that in common usage, the expression means "1/X times" whatever measured entity--typically a rate-- is being spoken of. ===**ADDED: James, below makes a good point about the 'wilds' of the internet. I should have said to look for "actual usage"--not constructed--preferably from published sources, e.g., books from well-known publishers, scholarly journals, respected magazines and better newspapers. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 I agree that "X times more" is in common usage, but I would argue that "X times less" is far less common. We can find examples "in the wild" of all sorts of errors. In fact, many of the threads on this forum testify to that. I don't think examples in the wild is a measure of accuracy or even commonality. Here is an interesting paper on typical errors made when describing mathematical comparisons: schield/MiloPapers/984OfSigCompare3.pdf Among the most common errors: .Using times less as an inverted form of times as much. Since six is three times as much as two, it is tempting to say that two is three times less thansix. But if two were three times less than six, then six should be three times more than two. Recall that six is three times as much as two two times more than two. Timesless than is an inverted form of times more than not times as much. His correction for "times less than" is an interesting one: When using times more/less than: Five is 0.25 times more than four. Four is 0.20 times less than five. I can see the math in this: 5 - (5 * 0.2) = 4 Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 On the "more than" side, the paper has this to say: schield/Mil...igCompare3.pdf If B is three times as much as A, then B is two times more than A not three times more than A. The essential feature is the difference is between as much as and more than. As much as indicates a ratio; more than indicates a difference. More than means added onto the base So, Wordsmyth's self-made example follows this "wacky" reasoning. I would apply the same reasoning. If you have $100 and I have twice as much as you, I have $200. If I have two times more than you I have $300. If I have half as much as you have and you have $100 I have $50.If I have half again more than you have I have $150. Last edited: Feb 13, 2014 Hi Wordsmyth.Your speculations are rather out of touch--in my unbiased opinion. [...] Given the number of opinions in this thread in favour of your arguments, benny, vs those that are not (and I won't be saying how many more are in the second group than in the first), I leave it to any unbiased reader to decide who's out of touch. [...] This is a well debated topic on the 'net, e.g., and the 'reasoning' by 'your' side has always seemed a bit wacky to me. [...] Well there's some pretty wacky thinking by the guy on that site who (I suppose) is on your side. He declares that a speed of 1000 ft/min is "hundreds of times faster" than 10 ft/min. Now I'll agree that 1000 ft/min is hundreds of ft/min (990 ft/min to be exact) more than 10 ft/min. But by your own definition (and his, and in fact anybody's), "times" requires multiplication; and 1000 = 100 x 10. Since when is 100 = "hundreds"? (If I've told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate!) But I would agree that "hundreds of times more than" expresses the same idea as "hundreds of times as many as", because 'hundreds" is very approximate. So if I have 800 apples and you have only one, it's true to say that I have hundreds of times as many (800 = 'hundreds') or that I have hundreds of times more (799 = 'hundreds'). That's not the same case as "X more than", where X is an exact number. [...] It reminds me of those who say, "I don't know nothing" actually means, "I know something" because "two negatives make a positive."[...] But it can mean just that if, for example, you say to me "You know nothing", and I reply "But I don't know nothing, I know quite a lot". It's not because a group of people use language 'approximately' (he said with restrained politeness), that the rest of us should be scorned for using it accurately. The same applies to the 'approximate' use of "X times more/less/fewer than". [...] But, to my mind, the realities of language use always trump such attempts at reason. But the 'realities of language' include both reasoned and unreasoned usage. I don't see how something can trump an intrinsic part of itself. [...] Your example is self made, and not surprisingly, self serving--contrived by you to corroborate this wacky ratiocination. [...] Look back! My example was neither self-made nor contrived. It was the sentence that the OP asked about in post #1! Should we now stop answering OPs' questions in case someone who disagrees might think our comments to be self-serving? Your repeated but very subjective use of "wacky" reminds me of the guy in the straightjacket being hauled off by the men in white coats, as he cried out "I'm the sane one. Everyone else is crazy." Finally, as James has pointed out, quoting numerous sources (even those as impressive as the Rocky View Weekly) doesn't prove the acceptability of a language form by everyone, or even by most people. It just shows that it's used by some people. What makes this discussion different from most is that we're talking about a language form that is used to communicate a mathematical fact and mathematics is (mostly) an exact science based on reason. I'd say that supports the case for reason trumping muddled usage. Ws There are some muddles in your post, but let's try to clarify the most obvious one.You say //My example was neither self-made nor contrived. It was the sentence that the OP asked about in post #1! // Let's look at the OP, then at your text in post 30, *esp. its last para-- the one I quoted as an example and commented on. OP Ive come across an opinion of the native speakers of English that if one says, for example, that Ann has 3 times less apples than John, this doesnt equals to John has 3 times as many apples as Ann does. They claim that in the strict logical sense, the meaning of the former sentence is that of subtraction (actually, the subtraction of 3*number of apples Ann has from John's), not division. And the correct way of conveying the intended meaning of division would be Ann has one-third as many apples as John.Assuming that this chain of reasoning is correct, how does one state that X is, say, 1/25 of Y? (without inverting the sentence to Y is 25 times as much as X). Wordsmyth said, post 30. Amusing thought, wandle. But since the statement does mean that (even if the speaker didn't intend it to), your examples go to show that the original sentence is pretty nonsensical. If I hear "Ann has 3 times less (fewer) apples than John", my first thought is 'That can't be true, so the speaker must mean something else'. Of the other things that the speaker might mean, "a third" is the most likely (if not the only) possibility. However, if the first misstatement was down to muddled thinking, I wouldn't be sure that my assumption was the right one, so (if I cared) I'd end up having to ask what the speaker really meant.The problem is greater with "three times more", because it makes sense in the first place. If John has nine apples, then Ann has 36 apples (not 3 times John's, which would be 27, but 3 times more than John: 9 + 3x9). Unfortunately, some people use it to mean that Ann has 27 (instead of saying, correctly, "Ann has 3 times as many apples as John"). So the sentence "Ann has 3 times more apples than John", whilst not senseless, is actually useless: if I heard it, I wouldn't have the slightest idea whether the speaker meant 36 or 27. === I commented on the highlighted para as follows (my post #34) Your example is self made, and not surprisingly, self serving--contrived by you to corroborate this wacky ratiocination. wordsmyth, replies, post 37 Look back! My example was neither self-made nor contrived. It was the sentence that the OP asked about in post #1! Should we now stop answering OPs' questions in case someone who disagrees might think our comments to be self-serving? === I was clear about the example, and indeed it's made by you. It not from the OP. In fact "times more" is not even mentioned in the OP. ======As to the examples I furnished, you say, post #37, Finally, as James has pointed out, quoting numerous sources (even those as impressive as the Rocky View Weekly) doesn't prove the acceptability of a language form by everyone, or even by most people. It just shows that it's used by some people. What makes this discussion different from most is that we're talking about a language form that is used to communicate a mathematical fact and mathematics is (mostly) an exact science based on reason. I'd say that supports the case for reason trumping muddled usage. If I've show my interpretation is shared and used by some, I'm content. Debates on the 'net can't canvass massesof evidence. The fact remain that, esp. for the larger numbers (e.g. 10 times more than), you've not shown that anyone, in real life, in a respectable publication speaks the way you believe to be dictated by reason. I can't really make out your argument about mathematics. You want to argue that findings from 'an exact science'trump 'muddled usage.' You haven't shown anything about 'muddled usage' and "X times more than..." as "X times..."is a common equating; calling it muddled is simply arguing in a circle. Your view of 'trumping' seems to be like that of a boy physicist whose mother says, "Come here this instant." The boy replies, "In the science of physics an instant has no duration; no one can move to another location in an instant. Further 'this instant,' even if I could come in it, has already passed. You make no scientific sense. Your command is a muddle." One wants language usage to have a certain consistency and coherence in its best use. This is not the rigorous consistency of mathematics. Nor does ordinary usage present scientific truths. "He's over the moon" is not a scienfic statement. Thus language as ordinarily used is not subject to correction by scientific findings. Suppose one is asked the meaning of "He's in seventh heaven." One should seek, I would say, to understand the sentence in terms of the language usage and language world (religious and philosophical worldview) of the time when the expression originated. If one asks what that means, one doesn't expect someone to say, "Science has found no evidence of a 'heaven,' not to say a 'seventh level.' Further 'he' with a physical body, cannot be in heaven, which has no physical location. So the statement is nonsense as it stands. The person should abandon muddled usage and simply say, 'He's very happy.' " Last edited: Feb 14, 2014 I got a bit lost with your last post, benny. But here are my reactions:Three times as much as xThree times more than x: sort of (though I'm not 100% sure what it means)Three times less than x: definite - it makes my brain hurt. Hi Loob,If you follow my suggestion and take a big number you'll get lots of hits. For "ten times less than", it's over a million--and I've scanned the first 20 Google pages, where there are, perhaps a 100 good examples. Though I'm sure Word and James will pooh pooh such examples and suggest that we defer to their mathematical speculations, the language usage is clear as to its meaning (many articles give the numbers). Youth Count Ten Times Less than Its Banks By Roberto Savio Reprint | | Print | Send by email In this column, Roberto Savio, founder and president emeritus of the Inter Press Service (IPS) news agency and publisher of Other News, argues that European leaders recent decision to allocate 60 billion dollars to banks, but only six billion dollars to fight youth unemployment, paints a clear picture of the regions priorities: financial institutions above the well-being of the people. ===Free Will: A Guide for the Perplexed - Page 24 - Google Books Resultbooks.google.ca/books?isbn=1441102094T. J. Mawson - 2011 - Philosophy If I borrow ten pounds off one man and a hundred pounds off the other, then my debt to the first is a debt for an amount ten times less than is my debt to the [second]. ===I've taken the more difficult case ('less'). For 'ten times more than,' there's a small sample in my last post. The usage and its meaning are crystal clear. Last edited: Feb 14, 2014 Here are two examples of 'five times more than'. Local Government Association Care loans scheme could cost councils up to five times more than estimated Figures published by the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents councils in England and Wales, show the cost of the scheme could reach more than 1.1 billion by 2025 in comparison to an estimate based on Government assumptions of 230 million. Facebook Has Five Times More TV Chatter Than Twitter After all, Facebook has a billion users to Twitters 200 million, so that 5x ratio makes plenty of intuitive sense. In each case, 'five times more than' represents 'multiply by five'. This is so natural, I find it difficult to imagine that anyone would in practice understand the expression any differently. The phrase 'five times more than' contains only one term that expresses a mathematical operation, namely 'times (more than)'. This simply means 'multiply'. If addition were meant to be performed as well as multiplication, this would need to be expressed by a term such as 'plus' or 'add', and there would also need to be something to show what should be added to what. Are there any examples from reputable sources in real life (as distinct from examples made up for the sake of argument) where 'five times more than' means 'multiply by five and add the number you first thought of'? Last edited: Feb 14, 2014 It contains two terms - times and more than. The first indicates that something is to be multiplied, the second that something is to be added. That, with respect, is assertion. The examples in post 41 go to show that 'five times more than' means simply 'multiply by five'. Do you know of any real-life examples (in the sense mentioned above) where 'five times more than' means 'multiply by five and add to the first number'? Last edited: Feb 14, 2014 It's a good point, wandle, and yes, I know you're not the first to make it in this thread.I've looked for real-life examples and haven't found any yet. So, "5 times as much" and "5 times more than" are equivalent in practice, even though there are plenty of educational sources that say otherwise? I may have been converted by this thread. It still doesn't make logical sense to me, but much of language doesn't make logical sense. I still would avoid using them if I wanted to make sure that the number I was picturing was the number the listener was hearing. It seems so odd that "as much as" and "more than" can be equivalents, in any context, but I haven't seen real-life examples to support my prejudice... yet. I'm still not sold on the "five times less than". If "5 times more than" is "multiply by five", how can "5 times less than" be other than "multiply by five and subtract"? I don't see how it can be "divide by 5". I may just have to sit with it for a while. [...] I was clear about the example, and indeed it's made by you. It not from the OP. In fact "times more" is not even mentioned in the OP. The example (a typical sentence representing the subject under discussion) was the OP's. The analysis of it was mine. By the time I made that analysis, others had already extended the discussion to the "times more" concept (including you in your bamboo sprout example in #25, but I won't make any accusations about it being contrived or self-serving.). As for your examples (and analysis) of other expressions, "Come here this instant", "He's over the moon", "He's in seventh heaven", they have nothing to do with the present subject. The first (relative to the 'scientific' definition) is hyperbole. The last two are metaphors. None of them communicates an arithmetic expression that leads to a numerical answer. There is nothing metaphorical, nor hyperbolical, about "times less/more than". ----------What's clear is that there are people who understand "times more than" to have an 'approximate' definition, and others who understand it literally. Of the former, some use "times less than" as a sort of inverse form, while others find it meaningless. For those who understand "times more than" literally, "times less than" is nonsense (except where negative values are relevant). Oh, and then there are those who recognise "times more than" (sort of), but aren't 100% sure what it means (and I'm sure Loob's not alone!) Proof of all that exists in this thread, but also in numerous other discussion forums, as well as in educative sources. No amount of time-consuming searching for individual instances is going to change that.So the only practical conclusion is that "X times more/less than" should be avoided in favour of less confusing forms: "X times as much/many as", "X times as [any appropriate adjective] as", "X times the number of", "X times the size of", etc. A cautionary tale to illustrate the wisdom of that. A large company I once worked for strongly prohibits the use of "X times more/less than", because they once used it in an ad, with the 'arithmetically incorrect' interpretation. They were threatened with legal action for false advertising, but settled out of court via a mediation body. The mediator accepted that there was no deliberate intent to deceive (so there'd be no risk of punitive damages), but concluded that the ad was at best ambiguous, and, strictly speaking, incorrect.Ws Last edited: Feb 15, 2014 This is an interesting thread "Ann has 3 times fewer apples than John."It is said this way to emphasize how little Ann has in relation to John. If you wanted to emphasize John's good fortune, you could say "John has three times more apples than Ann." It's still multiplication either way.(Ann's apples) * 3 = (John's apples) It's not really multiplication, as I see it. I ran across an article that helped me to accept it. It explained it as an informal way to describe a ratio. However, I'd be curious to see how you would write "Ann has 3 times fewer apples than John" as math. It's not really (Ann's apples) * 3. That's a conversion of the original statement. It's (John's apples) / 3 = (Ann's apples), as far as I can see, which is the part that bugs those of us who think in formulas when we see word problems. So how would you write the second sentence as a multiplication problem, assuming you have to make the formula's components match the order of words in the sentence: "John has three times more apples than Ann" = "(John's apples) = 3 * (Ann's apples)""Ann has three times fewer apples than John" = ??? Last edited: Feb 14, 2014 "Ann has 3 times fewer apples than John" and "John has three times more apples than Ann." are two different ways of speaking the same equation.There is technically no such thing as division. You could say "John's apples times .3 repeating equal Ann's apples" and mean the same thing but the person you're talking to will probably make fun of you (Ann's apples) * 3 = (John's apples)A computer, for example, could not possibly see this two ways. It's (Ann's apples) * 3 = (John's apples) and nothing else makes any sense. There is technically no such thing as division. That's interesting. On the face of it, that seems like a ludicrous statement.

sentence in which the phrase appears. Instead of my original idea from the age of eight, when I read The Wizard of Oz, to become a Great Author, I ended up as a Long letter Writer, using at least four carbons on my electric IBM. The text is derived from a manuscript. Carbon here means a sheet of carbon paper (this meaning is listed in the dictionary- did you see it?)Someone using four sheets of carbon paper on a typewriter is typing an original and 4 copies of a document. No. It refers to carbon film ribbon - the replacement for inked fabric ribbon. That would make more sense but its the first time Ive seen carbon used in that way. I called them cartridges or spools. What exactly is 4 carbon?Can you give a more uniform and correct answer? It's four carbon film typewriter ribbons. The carbons are the ribbons used in the typewriter. If you write a lot, you use a lot of ribbons. I also first thought of carbon paper, but that would make four copies of one page, which was difficult (you probably don't remember using carbon paper), and is not writing a lot of pages, just making many copies of each page. A carbon here stands for "carbon paper sheet." IBM typewriter was also just an electric typewriter. (I had a SHARP) Also, IBM (not necessarily IBM only) typewriter (also teletype) was an old input-output device used to enter commands for and print results from old "room-size" computers, like IBM Mainframe, PDP-11 and such. Eventually they were supplanted by displays and printers. The ribbon was used for the primary copy, but if one wanted to print multiples at once, carbon paper sheets would be used in addition to, placed between the additional sheets of paper.So if one wanted 5 copies, 4 sheets of carbon would be used.PS. We did not call the ribbons "carbons." The carbon is a sheet, and the ribbon is a spool-wound ink tape. Last edited: Apr 29, 2025 It doesn't seem to fit the 'long letter writer' idea.Perhaps if we knew what document the text is derived from, we could get a little more context. I agree. Lht011230, can you please tell us the source of this text, when it was written, and when the narrative takes place?I took "electric IBM" to mean an electric typewriter made by IBM. Sorry, this is just a manuscript that cannot be found online and is not convenient for publication A carbon here stands for "carbon paper sheet." No, you're probably wrong in this context.Wiki shows that those carbon ribbons were introduced by IBM Selectric typewriters. I've never used an electric typewriter myself, so I only know the old ink ribbons, but a Google search shows that some people called those things 'carbon ribbon'. The IBM Selectric typewriter required ribbons of polymer (plastic) tape and popularized their use, even with other manufacturers. This type of ribbon is sometimes called a "carbon ribbon". IBM (not necessarily IBM) typewriter (also teletype) was an old input-output device used to enter commands for and print results from old "room-size" computers, like IBM Mainframe, PDP-11 and such. Eventually they were supplanted by displays and printers. A typewriter is not a teletype nor an input device for a computer. Back in the day, IBM made regular office typewriters (they were rather expensive compared to typewriters for home use). The Selectic models were the gold standard of regular office typewriters. Some of them used a regular ribbon on spools, but most of them used a special ribbon that came in cartridges. I learned to type on an IBM Selectric (a model II, I think) and have used them in an office setting back in the early 1980s. We just called the ribbons "ribbons" at the time. Until today, I had no idea there was anything "carbon" about them. four carbons means four ribbons? Is it right? That's what we're arguing about. Four ribbons, or four sheets of carbon paper for duplicating? It is not entirely clear. A typewriter is not a teletype nor an input device for a computer. Back in the day, IBM made regular office typewriters (they were rather expensive compared to typewriters for home use). The Selectic models were the gold standard of regular office typewriters. Some of them used a regular ribbon on spools, but most of them used a special ribbon that came in cartridges. I learned to type on an IBM Selectric (a model II, I think) and have used them in an office setting back in the early 1980s. We just called the ribbons "ribbons" at the time. Until today, I had no idea there was anything "carbon" about them. Yes, I also added that. Should've earlier. I typed my resumes on a Sharp typewriter (the ribbon/daisy wheel type) in 1990s.But if I wanted more than one copy, I used carbon sheets. The bottom line is, regardless of whether we've heard "carbons" used with that meaning or not:- four ribbons makes sense in the context;- four pages of carbon paper doesn't. In the era of carbon paper and carbon ribbons, if a person were to write the same letter to four or five people, they'd ideally use a stack of five pieces of paper alternating with four sheets of carbon paper.If they are writing long letters ("I ended up as a Long letter Writer") then they wouldn't be making four copies of one letter, they'd be writing several pages each of many letters. = carbon ribbons. four carbons means four ribbons? Is it right? That seems to be the case, though it would be quite helpful if you could reveal whether the source is British or American and what time the author is writing about. One ribbon is supposed to be able to type about 10,000 characters which would be around 1500 words or more. 6000 words would be quite a long letter - about 20 pages double-spaced. I would agree 4 ribbons makes sense as he had to use this much tape to write his "long letters."But they are not carbons. I wonder if the author is a native English speaker. I can only speak for American English, but "four carbons on my electric IBM" is not what I (a native AmE speaker who typed a lot of pages on an IBM Selectric II) would have said about the large amount of typing I did on a particular brand of typewriter. I wonder if the author is a native English speaker. I can only speak for American English, but "four carbons on my electric IBM" is not what I (a native AmE speaker who typed a lot of pages on an IBM Selectric II) would have said about the large amount of typing I did on a particular brand of typewriter. Another explanation (other than the author not being a native speaker, and short of this expression allowed in BE) could be, the author simply forgot the therminology. (After all, electric IBM Model 1 typewriter started selling in 1935. Their products were IBM until transferred to Lexmark in 1991; I remember it very well. By this time they had ball and later daisy wheel typewriters).So, it could be vaguely remembered that there was some carbon something, carbon copies. So his memory served him with "carbons" for what should've been "tapes." Last edited: Apr 29, 2025 Or maybe it was a local abbreviation. Languages work in mysterious ways. Could be too. In the context (now that we have it) it seems to have been eventually understood by most (as we can observe here) as "typewriter ribbon", but "carbon" had been confusing me for some time. Now I wonder not only about the author's native language but also about the author's age. I can well imagine that someone born in 1990 would have only a vague knowledge of ribbons and carbon paper and typewriters. Now I wonder not only about the author's native language but also about the author's age. I can well imagine that someone born in 1990 would have only a vague knowledge of ribbons and carbon paper and typewriters. Lemme surprise ya Royal typewriterMore Amazon Electric Typewriters I am not sure who and why uses these today, buy obviously they do.And as you can see from these links' customer reviews, those are not one-time buys of used equipment. Now I wonder not only about the author's native language but also about the author's age. I can well imagine that someone born in 1990 would have only a vague knowledge of ribbons and carbon paper and typewriters. Lht011230: Could you at least provide this much context? English is spoken around the world and there are variations. I remember my grampa had a real suitcase Erika. He still used it in 70-s.After I bouhgt that Sharp typewriter (paid $100 which I did not have), while I was working in a computer repair shop on Coney Island, I pulled a broken Brother HR-15 daisy wheel job out of our garbage bin along with an APPLE II Plus in the same condition, fixed both and then used them to print more resumes. Had to buy the ribbon.The difference was, the old typewriters used spools (two bobbins) and the newer used a cartridge (spools were inside; sometimes one spool, which both dispensed and received the ribbon). Last edited: Apr 29, 2025 Lemme surprise ya Royal typewriterMore Amazon Electric Typewriters I am not sure who and why uses these today, buy obviously they do.And as you can see from these links' customer reviews, those are not one-time buys of used equipment. It'll take more than that to surprise me. I didn't say that no one born in 1990 knows about typewriters; I said I could imagine someone would have only a vague knowledge.Sounds like you had fun working in that shop on Coney Island. I hope the resumes worked! They did too. I am an EE in my 60-s, and I am paid an infinity times more than I was while working there (that is the owner did not pay me even though he promised. But I got a printer and an APPLE][out of it for 10 months of work. But I still had to by the carbon). Hey, it worked. This is a ribbon cassette for an IBM Selectric typewriter. Unlike older typewriters with cloth ribbons that were fed between two spools and could reverse direction when they got to the end because the ink was never used up on the first pass (or the second), these kind of cassettes were single-pass only because when a key was struck it physically removed the black coating (carbon?) on the plastic ribbon by pressing it onto the page. You could see the used letter on the ribbon as a clear area against the black background of the rest of the ribbon. So that spot couldn't be used again, and when you got to the end of the ribbon, the ribbon had to be replaced.The advantage of it was that it was easy to insert the cartridge (instead of hand-guiding spools of cloth ribbon) and the letters were always crisp and dark. There was also an erasing cassette designed to be able to lift that "ink" off the page (or going over it with white "ink"?), by typing the same letter, in case of a mistake. But I have never heard that kind of cartridge called a carbon ribbon myself. Last edited: Apr 29, 2025 What if - and this is just a guess, seeing as the source text remains 'not convenient for publication' - what if 'carbon' is a typo for 'carton'. Our long letter writer went through at least four cartons (of paper). What if - and this is just a guess, seeing as the source text remains 'not convenient for publication' - what if 'carbon' is a typo for 'carton'. Our long letter writer went through at least four cartons (of paper). Nah... What if - and this is just a guess, seeing as the source text remains 'not convenient for publication' - what if 'carbon' is a typo for 'carton'. Our long letter writer went through at least four cartons (of paper). Ingenious, but it doesn't say "cartons of paper". Either he wrote very long letters, thus using up lots of typewriter ribbons--or he typed 4 extra copies of these long letters, using multiple sheets of carbon paper. The information about the carbons may have nothing to do with the letters being long, and is just an added tidbit of information: the letters were very long, and I typed several copies too.I don't think there's enough context for us to be sure. Original manuscript:At that time, no woman in the world was known as a famous journalist, much less a foreign correspondent, and only a few names were even recognizable by a few readers. A few were editors, such as Snows sponsor, Mrs, William Brown Meloney of the New York Beraid-Tribune Magazine, owned by Mrs. Ogden Reid. I had been influenced by Ida Tarbells books, not her magazine work. She interviewed Owen D. Young, the admired success story of American business and asked his secret. He replied: I never repeat my own mistakes and I find out the mistakes others have made and dont repeat those either. That impressed me and I strictly followed staying out of messes usually that other people had got into. However, I did repeat my own mistakes beginning with writing Inside Red China I wrote as fast as I could not trying to make the book saleable, but only to get it published. I got into this habit, so that I even now never even re-read my writing, much less editing and changing it except of course for articles intended to be published for certain. This I call do-gooderist journalism, meaning it is written as a public service, not to build up the reputation and readership of the writer herself. I always intended to be careful later but that time never came. Instead of my original idea from the age of eight, when I read The Wizard of Oz, to become a Great Author, I ended up as a Long letter Writer, using at least four carbons on my electric IBM. I once wrote a big book, China Builds for Democracy, for only half a dozen people to readthat is a true do-gooder project. Introduction Carbon paper, also known as carbon paper, was invented in the 20th century. Its practice is generally in the original writing, in advance of the white paper into a copy of the paper. It is possible to make several copies at once, because the carbon is transferred to the copies by the pressure of writing. Therefore, copy paper is a special copy of the paper. Overseas generally referred to as carbon paper, which is also commonly known as carbon paper. There seem to be two voices going here - Helen Foster Snow, and another ("...such as Snow's sponsor...") Carbon film typewriter ribbon wasn't invented when 'Inside Red China' was written but would have been other of her works were written, so the text doesn't really shed any light on the matter.Is this your own work? Thanks for the context. I still think that 'carbon ribbons' is much more likely than 'cartons (of paper)'.My reasoning behind it: Paper is cheap and I doubt a journalist would remember how many cartons they used over the years. Carbon ribbons (cartridges) on the other hand were comparatively expensive. The internet shows a price range of $50 to $150 for 2 cartridges, and that's an expense a freelance journalist might remember (especially if they had to pay for it themselves).[x-posted] Last edited: Apr 30, 2025 There seem to be two voices going here - Helen Foster Snow, and another ("...such as Snow's sponsor...") Carbon film typewriter ribbon wasn't invented when 'Inside Red China' was written but would have been other of her works were written, so the text doesn't really shed any light on the matter.Is this your own work? NO, it is a Official manuscript That final sentence in the extract I once wrote a big book, China Builds for Democracy, for only half a dozen people to readthat is a true do-gooder project. reinforces the case for "carbons" to mean typerwiter ribbons, not carbon paper. That final sentence in the extractreinforces the case for "carbons" to mean typerwiter ribbons, not carbon paper. Not really - they could have produced the six copies using the carbon paper I ended up as a Long letter Writer, using at least four carbons on my electric IBMI don't see that using four sheets of carbon paper has anything to do writing long letters. It has to do rather with writing the same letter to five people (assuming the writer doesn't want to keep a copy of the letter).I take it that "That impressed me" begins Helen Foster Snow's words. I wonder if the text in #38 reproduces what she actually said -- there are no quotation marks indicating direct speech and some of the punctuation and syntax is a little odd. there are no quotation marks indicating direct speech and some of the punctuation and syntax is a little odd. I think this explains it: "I wrote as fast as I could", "even now never even re-read my writing, much less editing and changing it ","I always intended to be careful later but that time never came". Not really - they could have produced the six copies using the carbon paper Nah, she was just exaggerating -- in a sarcastic overly humble way.That book was published in India in 1942 (and is now even freely available as pdf on the internet). It even contains a foreword by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Indian prime minister.Maybe it didn't sell as well as she had hoped for at that time, but I'm sure it had its share of readers over the years. Hello everybody.I have some problems when I want to say that something needs to be increased/decreased several times. I don't want to use "six,seven-fold" or something like that. I know that we can say it using "one, two, three, four ..... times". But the problem is that I don't know how to say it correctly if I, for example, want to say "The incomes in the country decreased by eight times" or "You have to increase the capacity of that device by four times". And hence I have one more question: what we have when saying "by X times"? What would be the difference if we said that without "by", just "increased/decreased X times"?Thank you. Unfortunately English is ambiguous in this respect. People argue about it. Everyone thinks it's obvious that 'four times bigger' means X and 'four times as big' means Y, but they disagree about X and Y. If the budget was 1000 and it increased (by) eight times, or by a factor of eight, or by eight, is it now 8000 or 9000? We have previous threads about this, though I'm not sure how you would find them. Thank you. But is what I suggested correct? I mean my two sentences. "Decreased by 8 times" doesn't mean anything to me at all. "Decreased to an eighth of its former size or amount" is precise, and perhaps that's what some muddle-headed innumerate meant by "decreased by 8 times," but I don't know, and I wouldn't trust the writer's arithmetic. Sometimes I read "decreased by" over 100%, which would produce a negative number as far as I can understand, but sometimes that's impossible.I think the best thing to do in these cases is to provide both numbers and let the reader draw his own conclusion about the relationship between them. Just say, "increased from 6 to 48" or "decreased from 48 to 6" and either leave it at that or, if you must give a proportion, add it. "From 1950 to 2000, the country's gross national product increased eight times, from 6 billion flinds* to 48 billion flinds." "The war years were an economic disaster. The gross national product fell from its prewar level of 48 billion flinds to 6 billion flinds."*The country's unit of currency is the flind of 100 urthals. Thank you too. But there's still a problem. What if I need to say: "You have to increase the capacity of that device by four times"? Or is it better to say that sentence using "fourfold"? I don't think "fourfold" is used much currently in AE; I don't know about BE. I've seen x-fold in older written material, but I especially wouldn't expect to see it in technical material. If you are dealing with engineers, "by four times" ought to mean " 4" and you should be all right. If you are not, and the people you are speaking to might think "by four times" means to add an amount that is 4 the base amount (making the new total five times the base), then you had better say "to four times its current level" and give the numbers.Example: "Increase the capacity of the pump from 400 cc/min to 1600 cc/min."That's probably what the engineers would want anyway. Be specific and let them do their own math. Hello all, my question might be a typical case of splitting hairs since it doesn't make much of a difference whether or not you use the preposition "at"... but just out of curiosity, can anybody tell me if both of the following sentences are gramatically correct? 1) It gets dark at around 5 p.m.2) It gets dark around 5 p.m. Personally, I would opt for sentence 1) since we generally use "at" when referring to specific times of the day but I believe to have heard sentence 2) more often.I'd be happy to hear some of your opinions! I'm equally happy with either. Thank you both for your answers! I have a question about "around to", let me give you an example. "I will be in office around to noon." Does this mean I will be in office until noon? I have a question about "around to", let me give you an example. "I will be in office around to noon." Does this mean I will be in office until noon? No, this is not correct English (BE anyway). "I will be in the office until around noon" means I am in the office now and will stay there until about 12.00. I may leave a little before or a little after 12.00. "I will be in the office around noon" means something different. It says nothing about where I am at the moment. But I will be in the office later, at about 12.00, although I am not specifying the time exactly. I cannot think of a sentence including the phrase " around to" except something like "I wonder whether the gardener will be around to cut the grass this afternoon"; But in that sentence, the words 'around' and 'to' are not really linked as a phrase. Last edited: May 14, 2010 Thank you for immediate response to my question. Someone sent me an email using "around to noon" confused me. Now I am all cleared. Thanks! I disagree that using both prepositions are necessary. It either gets dark around 5pm or it gets dark at 5pm. The first is general and allows some latitude for the time of sunset. The second is specific and doesn't allow for a few minutes before or after. Based on Orwell's 6 rules of English, one of these prepositions is redundant, not needed and should be cut from the phrase. Why do we need 2 prepositions when 1 will do? I would always delete the "at", unless it's specifically at that time, like "sunset was at 5.03pm on Monday, 20 November." I disagree that using both prepositions are necessary. That's what is known as a straw man. Nobody said that using both prepositions is necessary. I also didn't realise that Orwell was a rule-making authority on English usage - he was, of course, entitled to his opinion. There is no rule of English to prevent the use of "It gets dark at around 5pm", and there is nothing ungrammatical about it. "It gets dark at {a time}" is correct. The phrase "around 5pm" is a time statement, exactly as is "approximately 5pm", and with the same meaning. I can't see anybody saying "It gets dark approximately 5pm", can you? At around 5 o'clock and Around 5 o'clock are, of course, acceptable. Perhaps around is preferred in AE.The Orwell rule is If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out. (See George Orwell - Politics and the English Language - Essay) His rules are certainly worth reading and he is as much entitled to state them as some grammarians.But he falls into the same trap that people who lay down rules sometimes fall into: he sometimes breaks them.In the text I quoted from he writes Never use the passive where you can use the active. But in the second paragraph of the text, he writes "Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble."So much for this rule! Hi everyone, I can't figure out what "Four to the floor" means, in Starsailor's song... It sounds like an expression, or a variation of an expression, but I don't know it.I wanted to post a link to the entire lyrics, but I'm not allowed before I've posted 30 times on this forum... So, you will have to look for it on yourselves if you want/need. Thanks for your helpEl Effe un coup-coll !et hopWith hand on heart your right from the start,You taught me to take my part.No cross to bear, no reason to care, my life was all up in air,Four to the floor, I was sure, never seeing clear,I could have it all, whenever you are near. est-ce que vous n'avez pas une expression avec four meaning quatre pattes ? eh oui "on all fours"les pieds sur terre, j'tais sr de ne pas voir clair ? Je suis anglaise et je n'ai aucune ide de ce que cela veut dire dans ce contexte-ci, ni dans d'autres contextes... mais je sais que souvent les paroles n'ont pas de sens, qu'ils sont utilis pour le son.a+ ma prcdente proposition "ne colle pas" vraiment pas! la suite du texte est: Four to the floor I was sure, that you would be my girl,Wed rent a little world, have a little girl.Four to the floor I was sure, never seeing clear dans un contexte marinparler vous de quatre vents ?comme dans "dispers aux quatre vents" (scattered to four winds ?) oh ! alors ce qui suit ne colle pas non plus !tantpis! prs de toi, je vivais dans le ciel (my life was all up in air)je n'ai rien vuj'y btissais dj notre monde (nid) four to floor = fourth floor ? trop haut dans le ciel je dcrochais les toiles (je croyais pouvoir atteindre les toiles, I could have it all) mais je rcidive ! je me suis encore laisser influenc par le nom de l'artiste "star-sailor" Thank you all for your answers!I bookmarked the urban dictionary, and I guess I will visit it quite often in the future... "Four to the floor" est une expression qui vient de la musique. De la musique de danse, pour tre prcis: sur un rythme Disco (ou House-music, Techno et autres par la suite), on utilise la plupart du temps un pied de grosse caisse (kick-drum) sur TOUS LES TEMPS... d'une mesure 4 temps : d'o l'expression "FOUR to the FLOOR". Ceci sert bien marquer la mesure pour les danseurs, notamment pour les plus abrutis qui se trouvent l, quand ils ne sont pas dans leur voiture que vous entendez arriver de trs loin, justement parce que la musique l'intrieur fait BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM, prcisment "Four to the floor". Au sens figur, en franais l'expression qui serait la plus proche serait "dur comme fer", dans la mesure o la notion vhicule ici est celle de la certitude concrte. a vous va ? ;-) Hello."On 27 April, Royal Air Maroc launched a twice-weekly service between Casablanca (CMN) and Warsaw (WAW). The route, operated by Atlas Blues 737-800s, is now the only link between Morocco and Poland, as LOT Polish recently dropped its Agadir service.""The Berlin airport also saw the addition of four times weekly services to Gdansk (GDN) aboard Q400s and five weekly 737-700 flights to Graz (GRZ)."Source: New routes launched during the last week. Anna Aero Airlines. I can understand the expression "five weekly flights". It sounds like "five new flights" or five flights, which are new.I have difficulty with the expressions "a twice-weekly service" and "four times weekly services". To me, they sound like a twice service, which is weekly, and four times services, which are weekly. What is wrong with me? Last edited by a moderator: Dec 12, 2013 I don't like it either, to be honest. A similar question was just discussed on this forum, here.However, this is one way we express the idea of "every week there are four planes that fly to Gdansk" in English. At a certain point, we just have to deal with it... They do sound a little awkward but they avoid the confusion of the "bi-" prefix. A "bicycle" has two wheels but "bi-monthly" (usually) means "once every two months". So is bi-weekly twice a week or once every two weeks? If it's every two weeks should we then use "semi-weekly"? English doesn't handle these well. I can't even imagine what the prefix would be for "four times weekly" -- "quatra-weekly"? It's also worth pointing out that twice-weekly may be Saturday and Sunday, so the flights might not be evenly spaced in the week. Thank you, Lucas and James. So I am not alone. It is impossible to express it that way in Polish. I think it's confusing too, wolf, but it's the 'five weekly flights' that are foxing me, or so it seems. (Once; twice; thrice; four times; five times; etc ... I presume we can take that for granted, can we?) Weekly = once a week => one flight per week. Twice-weekly = twice a week => two flights per week. Thrice-weekly = three times a week (I don't think we say 'thrice a week') => three flights per week. Four-times-weekly* = four times a week => four flights per week. Five-times-weekly* = five times a week => five flights per week. ... etc. *these could have been hyphenated in the OP context. So when they say 'five weekly 737-700 flights to Graz' I'm not sure what is intended.Does it mean five flights per week on a range of different planes?Does it mean one flight every five weeks on a yet-to-be-determined model of plane? (Cross-posted)Perhaps there's a difference between 'service' and 'fight' that I don't know about. No, you're not alone, wolf. I prefer it with the hyphens, too ("five-times-weekly"). It makes it clear that the phrase is being used as an adjective. What wrong with 'weekly' really? I eat 3 pizzas PER week. I used, in a language course, the translation 'I eat weekly 3 pizzas' and I get as the 'correct solution': I eat 3 pizzas PER week.Can somebody confirm that 'I eat weekly 3 pizzas' is not wrong? I eat three pizzas weekly. Not wrong but we would normally say a week in place of weekly. Can somebody confirm that 'I eat weekly 3 pizzas' is not wrong? "I eat three pizzas weekly." sounds much better, but it's still unusual.In speech, someone would ask you why you feel weak or if your mouth is sore. Last edited: Jan 22, 2019 'A week' yes. I was a bit surprised about 'per week'. I hadn't expected Dutch there. Well I have to translate basic sentences, this one said 'weekly' in the original, and of course sometimes I'm not wrong, but unnatural.Thank you for the reactions. My doubt is resolved. Thanks all. Why are you surprised to see it in one but not the other? I don't even understand that question. Were did I say , whatever that may mean? Assuming you mean to ask why I was surprised to see 'per week':1 I'm under the impression I saw it less used than 'weekly'.2 I am also under under the impression I have seen 'a week ' more used than 'per week'. => Google hits for 'a week' :553 m"per week" 167m, but those include also the Dutch expression 'per week' 'weekly': 1.190 m Ngram Google: Last edited: Jan 23, 2019 Dear all,What is the preposition if we take some part of the total: of or out of? 5 (out) of 7, 6 (out) of 10? I have always believed that the only version possible was "out of." However, not long ago my colleague (Russian) made square eyes at me and claimed that "of" was the right one. I do not know her sources of wisdom, but I can cite Margaret Thatcher:Let us together set our sights on a Britain that three out of four families own their homes... So, which one (or both?) is right? Or is "out of" emphatic in this particular example? So the question is who is right - Margaret Thatcher or your Russian colleague? My guess is that Thatcher knows English better So the question is who is right - Margaret Thatcher or your Russian colleague? My guess is that Thatcher knows English better The assumption is funny , but my question is which one is right: the preposition "of" or the preposition "out of." Better is better, but sometimes variants exist, that is why I am asking. Politicians say all sorts of incredible, inarticulate things, but I agree with Mrs. Thatcher here. Whenever I'm talking about numbers as a statistic -- i.e. three out of four families own their own homes -- I think I would always use "out of." At least I can't think of a time right now when I wouldn't. The assumption is funny , but my question is which one is right: the preposition "of" or the preposition "out of." Better is better, but sometimes variants exist, that is why I am asking. Well, you cited Thatcher and didn't give any examples of what your collegue said . I have never heard that 'of' can be used in such cases but of course only native speakers can really help. So Copyright did. About the only use of 'three of four' would be where there are four items altogether; it would not normally be used for the proportion 75%. I've had a look through Google Books, and almost all* the instances are of this type: a team lost three of four games; a medical diagnosis met three of four criteria; a curve passes through three of four points. Even in these, 'out of' would still be the more common choice.* but some are proportional - but are very small number compared to "out of" I see a difference between, three of four and three out of fourThree of four is used where there are four choices or instances and three are significant or have been achieved/missed, etcThree out of four is a ratio and applicable generally"Three of four people own their own house" = Of the four people I asked, three own their own house. (Often written and said, "Three out of the four") see entangledbank's examples above."Three out of four people own their own house." = 75% of the population/category own their own house. Hello, I have one question/problem: Lyric of song King of the Road:Ah but, two hours of pushin' broom (I understand, it = sweeping)buys an eight by twelve four-bit room ("Four bit" = $0,5? What does buys he? What does this words together mean?)Thank you! The first line of the song is "Trailer for sale or rent, rooms to let*, fifty cents.No phone, no pool, no pets, I ain't got no cigarettesAh, but, two hours of pushin' broom"The cost to rent a room is $0.50 and it's a small room (8 feet by 12 feet) *let = to allow to be leased:[no object]an apartment to let. Is that 50 cents a day, do you think? Last edited: Apr 18, 2017 Given how old the song is I suspect so I've always been intrigued by the "four-bit room" part. How can "four-bit" mean "fifty cents"? Two bits is long-standing American slang for 25 cents.For example, it appears in the well known phrase "Shave and a haircut...two bits", meaning that's the cost of a shave and a haircut (in the old, old days). Apparently there's some great uncertainty about where that phrase actually originated but it's spoken like it came from a song or something - with a sing-songy rhythm. Last edited: Apr 19, 2017 Ah - so is there such a thing as "one bit"? bit - WordReference.com Dictionary of English 3 an amount equivalent to 12 U.S. cents (used only in even multiples):two bits; six bits. Online Etymology Dictionary Meaning "small piece, fragment" is from c. 1600. Sense of "short space of time" is 1650s. Theatrical bit part is from 1909. Money sense in two bits, etc. is originally from Southern U.S. and West Indies, in reference to silver wedges cut or stamped from Spanish dollars (later Mexican reals); transferred to "eighth of a dollar." Spanish dollar - Wikipedia The real de a ocho, also known as the Spanish dollar, the eight-real coin, or the piece of eight (Spanish peso de ocho), is a silver coin, of approximately 38 mm diameter, worth eight reales, that was minted in the Spanish Empire after 1598. Its purpose was to correspond to the German thaler. We don't use "one bit" any more because it doesn't fit with our current coinage. The WR dictionary extract seems to indicate that you only use "two-bit", "four-bit" etc. I take it that's how you see it too, Myridon? The dictionary extract seems to indicate that you only use "two-bit", "four-bit" etc. I take it that's how you see it too, Myridon? Right. We haven't had any half-cent coins since 1857 so there's no way to make 12.5 cents with coins worth one cent, five cents, and ten cents. A quarter (1/4 of a dollar) is two bits, but there's no way to have one, three, five, or other odd number of bits so we don't talk about those amounts. Thank you. I'm sure I'll understand this when my mind stops boggling... As noted above, the concept of 8 "bits" in a dollar derives from the Spanish silver dollar coin that was worth 8 reales. These coins were the "pieces of eight" one finds in pirate stories. As the most common coin in use in the New World, the Spanish dollar was the model for the US dollar - and thus the idea of the dollar having 8 component parts. When the New York Stock exchange began at the end of the 18th Century, stock prices were calculated in eighths of a dollar (later modified to sixteenths), and this continued to be the way stock prices were reported on the NYSE until 2001. Keep in mind it's not common current slang. It's mostly seen in old songs and old movies. There's not much left you can buy for two bits (certainly not a shave and a haircut) and, even for those things that you can, no one today will tell you that you owe them two bits. So your mind can unboggle a bit. Old cheerleading call, still (I think) current when I was in high school: "Two bits, four bits, six bits, a dollar --All for [team name], stand up and holler!" Yes, I remember that one. I have no idea if any child in school today would know it. Thank you, it is very interesting to me! Completely different reality than here!I'll ask my English teacher, if she can count in bits... JulianStuart: And these things (Spanish silver dollar / 8 bits >>> a term "byte/8 bits") are really derived? Hello, I have one question/problem: Lyric of song King of the Road:Ah but, two hours of pushin' broom (I understand, it = sweeping)buys an eight by twelve four-bit room ("Four bit" = $0,5? What does buys he? What does this words together mean?)Thank you! Back in Abe Lincoln's day two bits was 25 cents, SO, that means that One Bit equalled 12.5 cents. In the Song by Roger Miller "8 hours of pushin' broom buys a 8 (foot) by 12 (foot) 4 bit room", (12.5/bit x 4= 50 cents.) That's a room barely big enough to put a single mattress or perhaps an army cot in, but if you're poor with no money whatsoever then 8 hours of sweeping dirt into a dustpan and emptying it buys a dry place inside a building overnight instead of sleeping outside in the elements of cold, rainy, dirty, unsafe, and pest infested outside.A happy and positive song for enduring a lonely, miserable, and hellish way to exist! Also still boggling somewhat, but it's interesting to learn that even the US money system isn't entirely decimal..... Well, wasn't entirely decimal. Bits are not used in calculating the price of anything these days. 'Two-bit' still means 'cheap' in the sense of 'poor quality,' but I doubt that many people use it. I think, but I haven't done any actual research, that the concept of two bits might possibly go all the way back to the Spanish pieces of eight, which were Spanish coins cut into eight pieces by dividing them in half and in half and in half. 25 cents is a quarter of a dollar and two pieces of eight are a quarter of the 8 pieces in the full coin. Early American money was based on Spanish money, specifically the Spanish dollar.Spanish dollar - WikipediaWe've been binary (powers of two) as long as we've been decimal. If two hours if pushin' a broom buys an 8' by 12" four-bit room, he's getting the equivalent of 25 an hour 'in kind' (not in money but in a place to sleep).< Topic drift removed, Cagey, moderator > Last edited by a moderator: Feb 8, 2024 Very little money was minted (or printed) in the North American English colonies, but shillings were minted in Massachusetts in the mid-seventeenth century, and Spanish reales (as international currency) and British coins circulated in the colonies also. The colonies had a surprising (to us) cashless economy.

Factors of production. List the four factors of production. What are the four (4) factors of production. Whats the four factors of production. What are the four main factors of production.

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