

The Ratio Base Trap

Rising Grade 8 math word-problem mini-lesson

Parent note

Give this as a 6-minute check. The goal is to make the student identify what the number represents before doing arithmetic.

Question

In a school club, the ratio of boys to girls is 3:5. There are 18 fewer boys than girls. How many students are in the club?

- (A) 36
- (B) 48
- (C) 72
- (D) 90

Answer and explanation

Correct answer: C

The ratio 3:5 has 8 total parts, but the 18 is not the total. It is the difference between the girls' 5 parts and the boys' 3 parts. That difference is 2 parts, so 2 parts = 18 and 1 part = 9. The whole club is 8 parts, so $8 \times 9 = 72$ students.

Common wrong move: treating 18 as the boys, the girls, or the whole group instead of the difference between the two groups.

Next step

If this was hard, use the free SHSAT weak-spot tracker after the next practice set. If you need a full ELA + Math baseline, use the \$1.99 diagnostic.

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