

Negative Numbers



Method

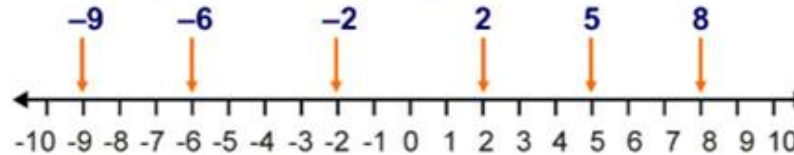
Negative numbers are numbers that are less than zero.

Inequality symbols can be used to show which number is greater. For example, $-2 < -1$ means -2 is less than -1. The wider part of the inequality sign faces the large number (the crocodile 'eats' the bigger number!). $-1 > -2$ means -1 is greater than -2 because -1 is closer to zero than -2.

We can also use a number line to help us write integers in order.

Write the integers -2, 8, 2, -6, -9 and 5 in order from smallest to largest.

Look at the position of the integers on the number line:



So, the integers in order are: -9, -6, -2, 2, 5, and 8



A to Z

Negative numbers are also referred to as directed numbers.

You will also hear the word minus when referring to negative numbers e.g. -5 could be read as negative five or minus five. We prefer negative five so that it does not get confused with minus, meaning subtract.



Did you hear about the mathematician who is afraid of negative numbers?

They'd stop at nothing to avoid them.



The nearer a negative number is to zero on a number line, the greater or bigger it is.

Zero, 0, is neither positive nor negative!

REAL LIFE



Shown below are the temperatures recorded over four days.

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|
| -3°C | -1°C | -6°C | 0°C |

- (a) On what day was the lowest temperature recorded?
(b) Arrange the temperatures in order, starting with the lowest.



Five numbers are added together in pairs to produce the following answers:

0, 2, 4, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15

What are the five numbers?

