

## **A Lesson on Fractions**

(Original)

*Lujain Swaiss*

*(Age 15, Jordan)*

*Rosary School - Marj Elhamam, Amman*

In my primary math class, I was taught that you must make the denominators identical whenever you subtract or add fractions. However, whichever number you decide to multiply the denominator by, you must multiply it to the numerator as well, making it "fair". This concept has always struck me as unfamiliar, foreign, and rather peculiar. Why is "fairness" applied in rudimentary math rules but not brought to bear in our everyday life? To my way of understanding, the act of making something "fair" means you are putting both sides of the dispute at peace. So the lingering question that is conspicuous to some but abstruse to others is why peace is such an exiled thought in our society, and leaves some with a feeling of unease.

At the beginning of the lesson, I was informed that a fundamental rule of fractions is that when you divide two fractions, you switch the sign and flip the adjacent fraction upside down. And in the same manner as peace, people tend to think of peace as a serene place, perhaps a tranquil ocean, a place where one can rest and escape from harsh reality; a rather selfish comprehension. But when asked about a peaceful world, one's perception of peace becomes flipped in a much more benevolent matter, much like a fraction. People think of a peaceful world as a world where people can live in eternal harmony, fending off each other's foes and uniting together as allies after each storm. Perhaps this is true, but at its core, a peaceful world is a world where people are at peace with themselves.

And as many people learn the art of "peace of mind", a picture of a peaceful world can be painted: a picture-perfect world where women can walk down the street without the never-ending fear of being assaulted; a picturesque world where humans who are born with a physical disability are treated with basic respect; an impeccable world where every war is just an inner turmoil between political parties and not a gruesome, violent external force

used to harm others; an unblemished world where social standards never chain down individuals' worth; a sublime world where a person's age, race, or personal agenda would never affect their social status. An ideal world where humanity is more human, perhaps, this is world peace to me.

Ultimately, a common mistake I made when solving fractions is when simplifying the fraction after getting the answer. Unbeknownst to many, it is much easier to simplify the fraction during the solving process. And reasonably, simplifying the problems that don't abide by peace can catalyze the rate at which they are solved. Namely, the problem of racism can be watered down to not being exposed to diverse communities. So as young people, we should commit our time to indulge in media where people of color are represented in a positive matter. By doing this we are liberating ourselves from the harmful boundaries that separate us all, encouraging us all to be at peace with others.

And to achieve ultimate world peace, our "world" must be at peace. So tackling the everlasting problems that are slowly destroying our nature might be the solution to many exacerbated competitions over resources. By advocating for the neglect of unrecyclable materials, and steering away from appliances that omit harmful substances, you are making a small change that could, later on, have the biggest impact on our well-being.

Moreover, as youth, we should engage in community service acts; by putting ourselves in the shoes of those who did not grow up as privileged and fortunate as us, it will remove the barrier we put up between us and others, showing us the world is not all black and white, but perhaps many shades of grey. In the long run, this will benefit both you and society as a whole.

And finally, to turn a mixed number into a fraction, you multiply the denominator by the whole number and add the result to the numerator. So likewise, let's multiply the chances of achieving peace by adding our minds together so we can coincide with world peace and hopefully make fractions a less bewildering topic for future generations.