2 + 4 x 3 =
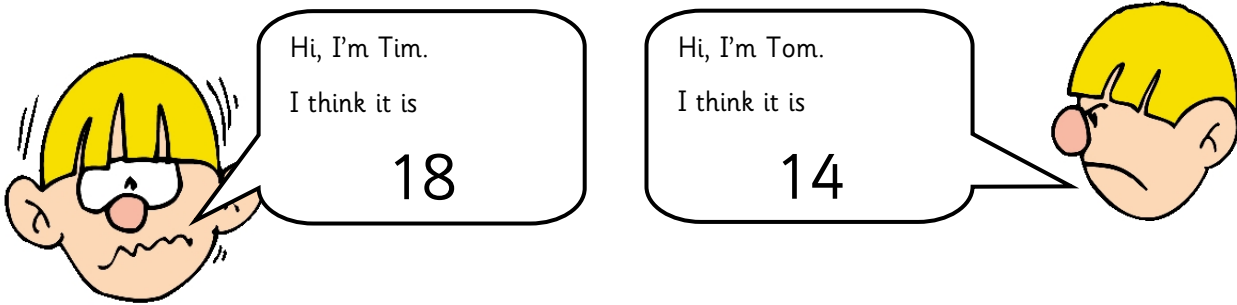
Here's a simple problem for Tim and Tom to solve.

But they each come up with a different answer. Who is correct?

Hi, I'm Tim.

I think it is

18

Hi, I'm Tom.

I think it is

14

Well, Tim did the sum like this: 2 + 4 = 6. 6 x 3 = 18.

Whilst Tom did the sum like this: 4 x 3 = 12. 12 + 2 = 14.

If you use a calculator and key in 2 + 4 x 3 you might get 18 or 14, it depends on the type of calculator you use (simple or scientific). So who is correct?

Answer: Tom!!

Mathematicians have come up with a set of rules on this so that we can all agree on which way to do a question like this.

The rule says:

Division or multiplication from left to right comes first.

Addition and subtraction from left to right follow.

So with 2 + 4 x 3, the first thing to do is 4 x 3, then add the 2.

To make this easier we often put brackets round parts of the question, to make it clearer, like this:

2 + (4 x 3)

Put a tick or a cross next to these expressions to say whether the answer is correct or incorrect.

1. $2 + 5 \times 3 = 17$ ☐

2. $2 + 6 \times 2 = 16$ ☐

3. $4 + 3 \times 3 = 21$ ☐

4. $5 + 3 \times 2 = 11$ ☐

What is the value of:

5. $3 + 3 \times 3 =$ ☐

6. $5 + 4 \times 4 =$ ☐

7. $6 + 2 \times 3 =$ ☐

8. $7 + 3 \times 5 =$ ☐

9. $9 - 4 \times 2 =$ ☐

10. $10 - 2 \times 3 =$ ☐

11. $8 - 2 \times 4 =$ ☐

12. $15 - 5 \times 2 =$ ☐

13. $8 - 8 \div 4 =$ ☐

14. $15 - 6 \div 2 =$ ☐

Answers

1. true   2. false   3. false   4. true

5. 12   6. 21   7. 12   8. 22

9. 1   10. 4   11. 0   12. 5

13. 6   14. 12

Lots more like this on the MathSphere, 'It's All Figured Out' worksheet CD www.mathsphere.co.uk

Early years worksheets at www.urbrainy.com