

Misconceptions

As a reminder, the equal sign shows that two groups have the same number of items.

The Question: (Focusing on the Misconception)	The Follow Up Question	The Background Info to be Provided
The answer is always on the right of the equals sign. Ex. $3+5=?$	$?=3+5$	Misunderstanding: Students see this as wrong. They feel the answer must come after the equals sign. Since the equal sign is showing that two groups have the same number of items, it does not matter which group you look at first. $3+5=8$ is showing the same relationship as $8=3+5$
An equal sign means the answer is coming after. Ex. $3+5=?$	$3+5=?+2$	Misunderstanding: Students often answer this as $3+5=8+2$ Children see the equals sign as an operation rather than as a relationship. Suggestion: Use the phrase "is the same as" and other phrases rather than just "is equal to" when referencing the equals sign