

Whole Numbers: *Key Skill 2*

YEAR
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Identify and describe prime numbers and composite numbers



A **prime number** has 2 factors (1 and the number itself).

A **composite number** has more than 2 factors.

A **factor** is a whole number that can be divided exactly into another whole number. For example, the factors of 12 are 12, 6, 4, 3, 2 and 1.



Knowing prime and composite numbers helps children to divide larger numbers and work with fractions. It helps when simplifying fractions. 1 is neither prime nor composite. It has only 1 factor: itself.



Create factor trees for numbers to find if they are prime or composite.

Use playing cards to make a game. Flip a card, and ask your child whether it is a prime or composite number, and why. Flip 2 cards to create bigger numbers. See who can get the most right in a row.

We can explain whether a whole number is prime, composite or neither by finding its factors:

13 has 2 factors (1 and 13). Therefore, 13 is a prime number.

21 has more than 2 factors (1, 3, 7, 21). Therefore, 21 is a composite number.



WEB LINKS go to:

[Video: Factor tree demonstration](#)

[Video: Prime and composite numbers](#)

[Video: What are factors?](#)

[Game: Prime numbers](#)

[Game: Number factors](#)

[Game: Factor trees](#)