Introduction

This work was part of an effort to create a compelling and comprehensive resource for fractions in grade 3. This guide includes 25 lessons, with activities, lessons, and games to help students learn everything they should know about fractions by the end of third grade.

These lessons are best employed as the main work in a classroom setting over a five-week period of approximately hour-long lessons. While sample dialogs between teachers and students abound, they should serve as inspiration, not a script. Ideally, both students and teacher will feel like the lessons give them a sense of ownership over the content in these pages.

What you have in your hands (or on your computer screen) was commissioned and piloted by the Renton School District in Washington State, and is being used throughout that district as of this writing. These activities were written by Dan Finkel of mathforlove.com, drawing on principles from Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), as well as the principles put forward in the author’s TED Talk (ted.com/talks/dan_finkel_5_ways_to_approach_math_better) and his own work with students. Big thanks go to Ivan Flores of the Renton School District and educator-consultant Becca Lewis, who contributed ideas abstract and concrete, large and small to this project.

Every lesson is designed to launch by inviting the curiosity of students. Questions begin with equal sharing and manipulative-heavy explorations (pattern blocks are a central tool), and progress to develop subtler and more abstract tools, including working on number lines and reading and manipulating written fractions.

If you have feedback, I’d love to hear it. Email me at dan@mathforlove.com.

Enjoy!