

America Needs to Study Fractions

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Scientific American:

What part of math was most intimidating when you were in grade school? Maybe it was fractions. Or even worse, long-form division. Somehow splitting numbers really seemed complicated.

And the U.S. might be paying for kids' inability to overcome those early challenges: a new study finds that Americans are falling significantly behind in math aptitude compared with China, Finland, the Netherlands and Canada. And the root cause is deficiencies in knowledge of fractions and division.

Nearly 600 children were tested once when they were 10 to 12 years old and again five years later. Researchers found that a fifth graders' understanding of fractions and division accurately predicts their high school competency in general math achievement.

The researchers controlled for parents' education and income as well as for the students' gender, IQ and knowledge of addition, subtraction and multiplication. The study is in the journal *Psychological Science*.

Read the whole story or listen to the podcast: [Scientific American](#)