

Comparing numbers to 9,999 – digit by digit

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

To compare two numbers up to 9,999, line them up by place value and check the columns from the left. The first column where the digits differ decides which number is bigger.

→ 4,260 and 4,209 tie in thousands and hundreds, so the tens decide: 6 tens beats 0 tens, so 4,260 is bigger.

→ $6,231 < 6,238$ because the units differ: 1 unit is less than 8 units.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

COMPARING DIGIT BY DIGIT

- 1 Line the numbers up in the Th H T U columns.
- 2 Thousands and hundreds match ($4 = 4$, $2 = 2$), so move right.
- 3 Tens differ: $6 > 0$, so this column decides.
- 4 $4,260 > 4,209$.

Th	H	T	U
4	2	6	0
4	2	0	9

DISCUSSION STARTER

REFLECT When two numbers look almost the same, which column decides for you first?

ANSWER KEY

a) $>$

b) $<$

c) $>$

Q1: $3,000 > 800$

Q2: $5,400 < 5,700$

Q3: $5,360 > 5,309$ (tens)

a) **Never** — The lesson says to line up place values and check columns from the left (thousands first).

b) **Sometimes** — Hundreds decides only when those digits differ; if they match too you keep moving right.

c) **Never** — Thousands match, then hundreds 0 is less than 5, so 4,050 is smaller.

d) **Always** — Lining up by place value gives the 3-digit number 0 thousands, which loses to any thousands digit 1-9.

EXTENSION SHEET · STRETCH ANSWERS

S1: 1876, 5819, 9614, 9788

S2: between 7,900 and 8,000, nearer 8,000

S3: 1378, 3620, 7575, 9975

S4: 3290, 5976, 8934, 9621

S5: $4,857 = 4,000 + 800 + 50 + 7$

Investigation: Shuffle the digits — open-ended; scan pupils' working for valid solution paths rather than a single answer.