Eleven Plus Maths How To Do – Cancelling Fractions (Lowest Terms)

A fraction should always be expressed in its lowest terms.

e.g. $\dfrac{3}{6} = \dfrac{1}{2}$ $\dfrac{8}{24} = \dfrac{1}{3}$ $\dfrac{5}{20} = \dfrac{1}{4}$

Sometimes it is possible to see the fraction in its lowest terms. Sometimes the process known as cancelling has to be used.

If the numerator and denominator of a fraction are divided by the same number the value of the fraction does not change.

$\dfrac{3}{6} \div \dfrac{3}{3} = \dfrac{1}{2}$ $\dfrac{8}{24} \div \dfrac{8}{8} = \dfrac{1}{3}$ $\dfrac{5}{20} \div \dfrac{5}{5} = \dfrac{1}{4}$

To prove this we will divide first and then multiply like this.

$\dfrac{8 \div 4}{12 \div 4} = \dfrac{2 \times 4}{3 \times 4} = \dfrac{8}{12}$