

How to Remember Greater Than and Less Than Signs

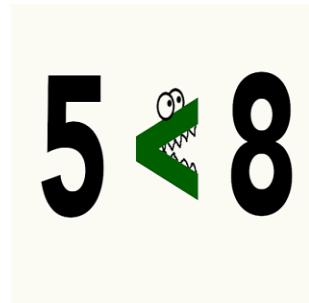
Though the greater than and less than signs have clear meanings, they can be kind of hard to remember. **So how can you remember them?**

Alligator Method

One of the best ways to memorize the greater than and less than signs is to **imagine them as little alligators (or crocodiles), with the numbers on either side representing a number of fish.** The alligator always wants to eat the larger number of fish, so **whatever number the mouth is open toward is the larger number.**



The alligator's mouth is open toward the 4, so even if we weren't sure that 4 is a bigger number than 3, the > sign would tell us. All inequality signs give us the relationship between the first number and the second, beginning with the first number, so $4 > 3$ translates to "4 is greater than 3."



This also works the other way around. If you see $5 < 8$, imagine the $<$ sign as a little alligator mouth about to chomp down on some fish.

The mouth is pointed at the 8, which means that 8 is more than 5. The sign always tells us the relationship between the first number and the second, so $5 < 8$ can be translated to "5 is **less** than 8."

When you're working with inequalities, you can even draw little eyes on the symbols to help you remember which means which. These can be tricky to remember, so **don't be afraid to get a little creative until you really have them memorized!**