

Family Letter

Dear Student and Family Members,

We live in a digital age! So, it is becoming more and more likely that a number is shown as a decimal instead of as a fraction. For example, a weather forecaster may say that we've had 2.5 inches more rain than normal this month, but you know that means $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. However, it is still important to be able to compute with fractions because many real-life measurement problems, especially in cooking and the building trades, use fractions. Here are two examples:

- A chocolate chip cookie recipe calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup brown sugar. You want to double the recipe. How much brown sugar should you use?
- Suppose you have a wooden board $36\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and cut off a piece that is $6\frac{3}{8}$ inches long. How much do you have left?

In the next few weeks, you'll be learning to add, subtract, multiply, and divide with fractions and how to multiply and divide with decimals. Working with fractions and decimals can be tricky, and there are many ways to make errors. That is why it's so important to decide whether your answers seem reasonable.

Vocabulary There is only one new term in this chapter—*reciprocal*. You'll use reciprocals when you divide fractions.

What can you do at home?

You might help your student think about or work with fractions and decimals as they come up day to day:

- In the grocery store, find the unit cost (the cost of 1 ounce, 1 liter, or 1 piece) of different brands or different packaging for the same item, and decide which is the better value.
- Figure out the correct quantities when doubling or halving a recipe.
- Work with measurements, customary or metric, when you are measuring, sewing, or doing carpentry work.