

Sue and Julie are running equally fast around a track. Sue started first. When she had run 9 laps, Julie had run three laps. When Julie completed fifteen laps, how many laps had Sue run? (Susan Lamon)

Jafr. Oh, this is easy. Let's just set up a proportion and solve it.

Emily. Yeah, let's see. It's $9/3 = x/15$. Cross multiplying, we get $3x = 135$, so $x = 45$.

Jesse. It's a whole number, so it must be right. This proportion stuff is really easy—nothing to it. My kids get this cross-multiplying rule pretty quickly. Once they get the numbers set up, it's a piece of cake.

Jafr. Yeah, mine, too. It's easy for them as long as the numbers come out nice and neat. They have problems when fractions are involved.

Denille [who has been reading and working on the problem quietly]. You know, I don't think that answer is right. It really doesn't make much sense when you draw a picture of a running track and mentally move the girls around the track.

Jesse. It has to be right. It's a proportion problem; we set up the proportion and did the computation correctly. It's just like the others we have been doing in class.

Emily. No, it isn't. Denille is right. This one is different. You just subtract, then add. Just think about it for a minute.