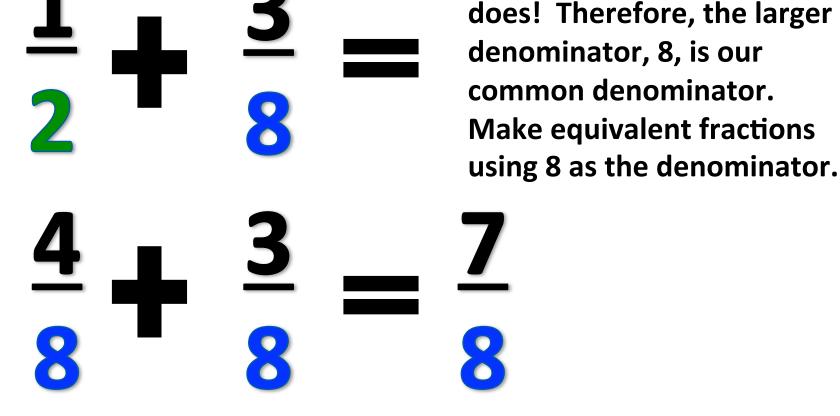# Three Ways to Find Common Denominators

Check to see if the smaller denominator divides into the larger denominator. If so, use the larger denominator as your common denominator!

Does 2 divide evenly into 8? Think: $8 \div 2 = 4$. Yes it does! Therefore, the larger denominator, 8, is our common denominator. Make equivalent fractions using 8 as the denominator.

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{8} =$$

$$\frac{4}{8} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{7}{8}$$

Multiply the two denominators together. Use the product as your common denominator.

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{8} =$$

2 x 8 = 16
Therefore, my common denominator is 16. Make equivalent fractions using 16 as the denominator.

$$\frac{8}{16} + \frac{6}{16} = \frac{14}{16} \text{ or } \frac{7}{8}$$

Find the least common multiple (LCM) of the denominators by listing the multiples of each and circling the first one that is common to both.

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{8} =$$

Count by 2's: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10
Count by 8's: 8, 16, 24, 32

Circle the least multiple that is in common. Make equivalent fractions using the least common multiple, 8.

$$\frac{4}{8} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{7}{8}$$