

Which is longer?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Compare from the same starting point

<https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/which-is-longer>

Wonder together

Which end goes farther?

Materials

Two large straight paper strips, one clearly longer than the other. An adult prepares them before the game. A flat stable surface.

Adult setup – read before trying

Adult prepares two wide strips of different lengths, such as about 25 cm and 18 cm. Put cutting tools away. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. An adult prepares the paper and puts cutting tools away. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult prepares two wide strips of different lengths, such as about 25 cm and 18 cm. Put cutting tools away.
2. Lay them straight and parallel. Shift the shorter strip so its far end reaches beyond the longer strip's end.
3. Invite a first idea, then ask whether the strips start at the same place.
4. Slide one strip until the near ends line up. Keep both flat and straight; do not stretch, fold or trim them.
5. Compare the other ends. The farther end belongs to the longer strip.
6. Swap roles arranging and checking. Try another pair, including equal lengths if wanted.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: length, width and color of both strips; flat surface; camera and light.

What changes: Only the yellow strip's horizontal position.

Look for: The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Explain with care

Line up one end of two straight paper strips to compare their lengths. The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Compare straight, flat strips from one aligned end. Moving a strip changes its position, not its length. The pictures are not a ruler or a calibrated scale.

Talk about it

Why did the yellow strip reach farther at first?

Answer cue: It started farther along the surface.

What stayed the same when we slid it?

Answer cue: Both strips kept their lengths.

How can we compare more clearly?

Answer cue: Line up one end and look at the other ends.

A parent move: Welcome the first guess. Ask what would make the comparison easier to check.

Start simply: Start with the ends already aligned and a very clear length difference. Let the child point to the farther end.

Explore further: Try two equal strips with offset starts. Align the ends and discover that neither is longer.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

Flexible 15-minute small-group sequence; prepare materials first, and shorten or pause as needed.

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show aligned starting ends before identifying the longer strip; distinguish moving a strip from changing its length. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show aligned starting ends before identifying the longer strip; distinguish moving a strip from changing its length.

Answer guidance: The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Start with the ends already aligned and a very clear length difference. Let the child point to the farther end.

Words to explore

length — How far something reaches from one end to the other.

align — Put things in line with each other.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Welcome the first guess. Ask what would make the comparison easier to check.

Compare straight, flat strips from one aligned end. Moving a strip changes its position, not its length. The pictures are not a ruler or a calibrated scale.

These are shared activities inspired by Benny's story world. Suggested ages and times are editorial starting points; they are not standardized assessments or measured learning outcomes.

Related reading

Meet Benny in Benny the Forest Detective, an interactive Little Clue Tales forest mystery about noticing clues, counting, matching, sequencing and sharing. This household game is a new carousel activity, not a page or experiment from the book. Browse Kiddos Books for the digital story and Amazon for the physical titles currently available; this link does not promise a matching paperback.

Scientific sources

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children —
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful>

Stanford DREME — Math Talk: Measurement at Home — <https://dreme.stanford.edu/news/math-talk-measurement-at-home/>

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App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/app/id6720721998>

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