

Introduction to Negative Numbers

Chapter 10: The Other Side of Zero · Topic 1

Key Concept

On a number line, negative numbers extend to the left of zero, with values becoming 'smaller' (more negative) the further left they go — so -10 is actually less than -2, even though 10 is greater than 2 as positive numbers, an important and sometimes confusing concept for students first learning about negatives. Real-world contexts, like a thermometer showing sub-zero temperatures or an elevator going below ground level, help make sense of this 'reversed' comparison for negative values.

Quick Revision Notes

- Negative numbers are less than zero, written with a minus (-) sign.
- Real-world uses: temperatures below freezing, depths below sea level, debt.
- On a number line, negative numbers extend left of zero; further left means a smaller value.
- -10 is less than -2, even though 10 is greater than 2 as positive numbers.

Practice Questions

- 1 Give one real-life example where negative numbers are used.
- 2 Arrange these integers in increasing order: -5, 3, -1, 0, 2.
- 3 Explain why -10 is less than -2 on a number line.