Maths teacher Colin Foster finds a glass of fizzy orange can help students get to grips with the tricky topic of ratio

### MATHS

ANY PUPILS can write a statement like 3:4 = 6:8, but struggle to explain the meaning of the equals sign in between the two ratios.

In what sense are the two sides equal? What is it that is the same about them? I have found that challenging pupils over this can create a lot of difficulty and confusion in an otherwise skill and routine lesson of exercises, and therefore I am often tempted to do it for them.

Aside from being mischievous, I am uneasy about pupils writing “squiggles” on the page that hold very little meaning for them, their only reward being a teacher’s “ticks” and approval.

I have found “ticks” to be an excellent way to talk about ratio, and the activity below calls on pupils to use their sensory imaginations. It is not offered as a contrived “real life context”, but simply to facilitate discussion about quantities and their comparison.

### Make maths sparkle

![Image of a glass of fizzy orange]

**An opportunity to recognise and celebrate people who are at the heart of a successful school**

Headteachers’ PA of the Year Awards 2007

The awards aim to identify and promote the outstanding contribution of a headteacher’s personal assistant in an outstanding school.

**Nomination Form**

Nomination forms should be returned to Headteachers’ PA of the Year Awards, SecEd, 160 Shaftesbury Road, London, SW10 0ZE by 27th September 2007.

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**A high-profile celebratory lunch will be held in November at a location to be confirmed. This will be attended by the shortlisted candidates as well as educationalists.**