

## 5 THE MIXED FRACTION PROBLEM

One day a student in my math class showed me how they multiply a pair of mixed fractions. TAKING  $3 \frac{1}{4} \times 5 \frac{1}{2}$  they simply took  $3 \times 5 = 15$  and  $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{8}$  so the answer is  $15 \frac{1}{8}^{\text{th}}$ . The student was wondering why they had a different answer than I did. How could you use this students way of multiplying to arrive at the correct answer thus perhaps discovering something you never realized about mixed fractions?