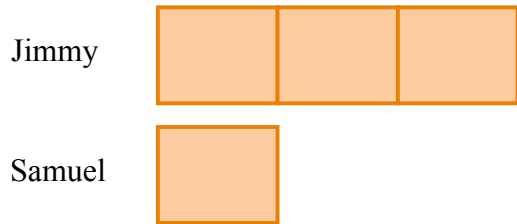


Want to see what I mean? Attempt this word problem, which comes from a 4th grade Singapore math book:

Altogether, Jimmy and Samuel borrowed 24 books from the library. Jimmy borrowed 3 times as many books as Samuel. How many books did Jimmy borrow?

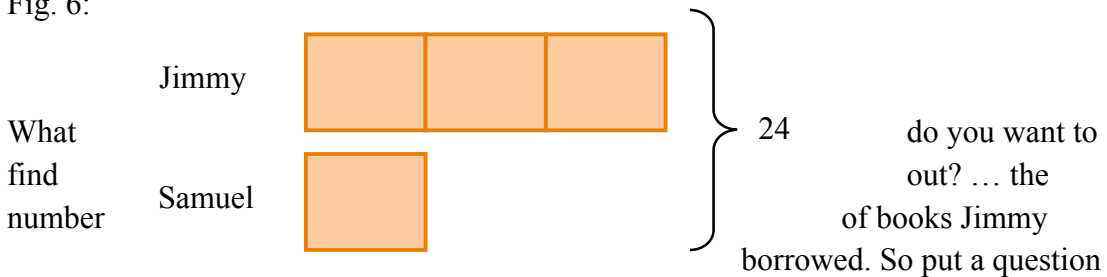
Can you do it in your head? Can a fourth grader really? Any fourth grader? Well, actually, *yes*. If you DRAW it, this picture is fairly simple: Jimmy borrowed 3 times as many books as Samuel, so give him 3 rectangles, and Samuel gets one:

Fig. 5:



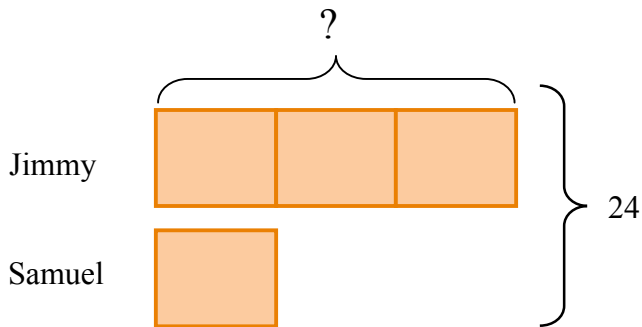
Now add a bracket to show that they borrowed 24 books altogether:

Fig. 6:



mark over that quantity:

Fig 7:

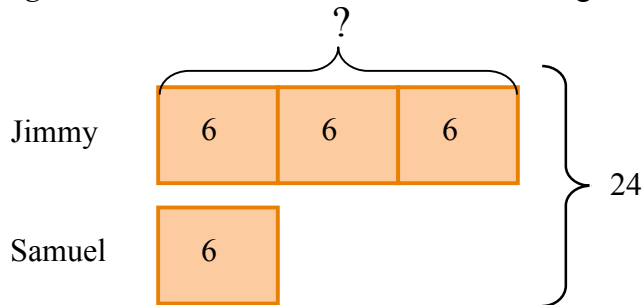


Right, four. So divide 24 by 4, and you have 6 books *per rectangle*. Visualize a 6 inside each of the rectangles:

Fig 8:

How many equal rectangles are there? Right, four. So divide 24 by 4, and you have 6 books *per rectangle*. Visualize a 6 inside each of the rectangles:

Fig 8:



Since Jimmy has 3 units, he borrowed 18 books (and Samuel borrowed 6 books).

Voila! – done. Wasn't so bad, was it?