



From Zero to Infinity

Biography of Srinivasa Ramanujan

Warm up

Solve this

	2	4	
1			3
4			2
	1	3	

- ❖ Did you enjoy solving this?
- ❖ Was it easy or hard to solve?
- ❖ Do you like Mathematics? Give reasons.

The arithmetic class was in progress. The teacher was solving questions on division. On the blackboard were drawn three bananas.

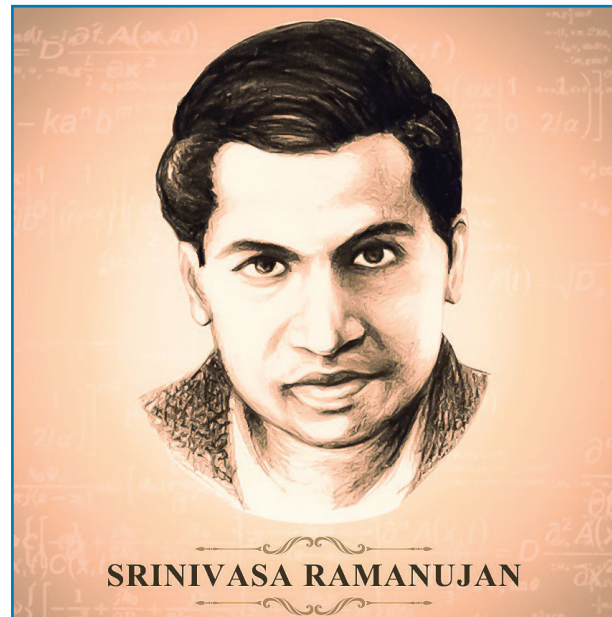
"We have three bananas," the teacher said, "and we have three boys. Can you tell me how many each will get?"

A smart boy in the front row replied, "Each will get one."

"Right," the teacher said. "Now, similarly, if 1,000 bananas are distributed among 1,000 boys, each will get one, isn't that so?"

While the teacher was explaining, a boy sitting in one corner raised his hand and stood up. The teacher stopped and waited for the boy to speak.

"Sir," the boy asked, "If no banana is distributed among no one, will everyone still get one banana?" There was a roar of laughter in the class. What a silly question to ask!



"Quiet!" the teacher said loudly and thumped the desk. "There's nothing to laugh at. I will just explain what he means to say. For the division of bananas, we divided three by three, saying that each boy will get one banana. Similarly, we divided 1,000 by 1,000 to get one. What he is asking is that if zero banana is divided among zero, will each one get one? The answer is 'no'. Mathematically, each will get an infinite number of bananas!"