

Which is larger,  $3n$  or  $n + 3$  ?

### Commentary

The aim of this starter is to see what approaches students use to compare algebraic expressions.

- Do students understand the algebraic notation?
- Do they focus on the operations ('multiplication makes bigger') ?
- Do they evaluate the expressions for specific values of  $n$  ?
- Do they respond to the fact that we don't know the value of  $n$  ?
- Do they realise that the difference between the expressions might change as  $n$  varies?

*Use the starter a few days before teaching the two lessons.*