

Danny had been so busy trying to answer questions that it hadn't occurred to him that he'd have to ask some. Claude was much better at tables than he was.

"Come on. You have to ask me a riddle now, and if I get it right then it's dinner time!" The dragon was getting impatient.

But the mention of dinner time made Danny remember the pub lunch and the figures he'd seen Hugo writing in his book.

"If four knights drink four pints of beer at a shilling a pint, and each eats three sandwiches at a shilling each, and their squire has a glass of lemonade costing a penny, and only one sandwich, how much does it cost altogether?"

The dragon looked confused. "Well I think that's a bit complicated. Bit unfair really. I can count treasure, but I'm not so sure when it comes to beer and sandwiches." He thought for a while, blowing smoke rings from his nostrils as he did so.

"All right, I give up. But you'd better know the answer yourself, and I want a full explanation of how you work it out." He looked fierce again.

"Well, four knights have four pints of beer each at a shilling a pint. Four times four is sixteen. And three sandwiches at a shilling each, well three times four is twelve so that's sixteen plus twelve, plus one shilling and a penny for the squire's lunch. Which all adds up to twenty nine shillings and one penny.

"It's the adding up that gets me, said Claude. I couldn't add up the sixteen and twelve."

"Well you should have added up the four and the three first, then multiplied it," said Danny. "Four pints of beer and three sandwiches, all costing a shilling each, is seven shillings each, and as there are four of them, it's seven times four which is twenty eight, then you just add on the extra bit for the squire's lunch." Danny had forgotten to be frightened; he felt rather pleased with himself.

"I suppose that means you've won." The Dragon suddenly looked tired.
"Why is life so complicated? You'd better sit down while I explain a few things. Don't worry, I wasn't going to eat you anyway, it's just that being a dragon I have to be fierce and frightening."

Four Twits, a Dragon and a Princess - A Story About Learning the Four Times Table by Professor Paradox