Parent Guide

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What is this resource and how do I use it?

This maths jargon buster has been written to help you to understand the key terms and vocabulary to help your child during their maths learning journey. Each of the terms within this resource are phrases that you or your child may come across within the early years curriculum.

What is the focus of this resource?

- Maths Vocabulary Terms
- Supporting Your Child
- Curriculum Knowledge

Further Ideas and Suggestions

Once you have familiarised yourself with the key maths terminology, why not help to support your child at home with some of our maths activities? You will find resources to help with **number**, **shapes** and **measure**.

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Maths Jargon Buster Early Years

2D Shapes

2D stands for two-dimensional. These are sometimes referred to as 'flat shapes'. When we refer to **2D shapes** in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), it means an image of a shape. Examples of 2D shapes include a square, triangle and a circle. Children in EYFS will learn to recognise and name 2D shapes and begin to talk about their properties.

3D Shapes

3D stands for three-dimensional. These are sometimes referred to as 'solid shapes'. **3D shapes** have faces, edges, vertices or points. Examples of 3D shapes include a cube, sphere and cuboid. Children in EYFS will learn to recognise and name 3D shapes and begin to talk about their properties.

Abstract Materials

Abstract materials are things which cannot be physically touched or moved, such as sounds.

Capacity

Capacity refers to how much liquid a container holds. For example, a small container may hold 200ml, whereas a larger bottle or container may hold 2L. In EYFS, children will begin to describe capacity using everyday language. For example, they may say 'This cup holds more water than the spoon.'

Cardinality

Cardinality is the understanding that the last number is the total. For example, when counting, if you get to five and then run out of objects to count, then the total is five. Children often forget to remember the total after they have counted or are tempted to say the next number in the sequence so this is an important skill to learn in counting.

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Composition

Composition means that numbers are made up of two or more smaller numbers. For example, the number 24 is made up of 20 and 4. There are lots of different ways that numbers can be made up - these are sometimes known as 'number bonds'. In the early years, children learn to recognise the composition of numbers up to 5 and then 10. Within this, they will learn to recite different sets of numbers that can be added together to make a number. For example, they will learn that 5 can be made up of 5 and 0, 4 and 1 or 3 and 2.

Concrete Materials

Concrete materials are solid objects that you can touch. In the early years, children often begin to learn maths concepts using concrete materials as they can move them. For example, when learning to count, it is helpful for children to be able to touch each object as they say each number or move the objects into a line.

Corners

2D shapes have **corners**. This is the part where two sides meet.

Edges

Most 3D shapes have **edges**. Edges are the part which joins two faces or vertices. They can be flat, like on a cube, or curved, like on a cylinder.

Even Numbers

Even numbers are any number that ends in 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8. They can be halved equally.

Faces

3D shapes have **faces**. This is the surface between two edges. A face can be flat, like on a cube, or curved, like on a cylinder.

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Number Bonds

Number bonds are sets of numbers which can be added together to make a specific total. For example, 10 can be made up of 0 and 10, 1 and 9, 2 and 8, 3 and 7, 4 and 6 or 5 and 5. Children may then begin to notice patterns, such as that 4 and 6 is the same as 6 and 4. In the early years, children will learn to recall number bonds to 5 and 10.

Number Facts

Number facts are mental maths calculations that children learn to recite. For example, they may instantly be able to recall that 2 + 2 = 4. Once children are more confident with smaller number facts, they can use these to help them work out other more challenging calculations. For example, if 2 + 2 = 4, 12 + 2 = 14 or 20 + 20 = 40.

Number Formation

In the early years, children will learn how to **form numbers** correctly, starting and finishing in the correct place.

Odd Numbers

Odd numbers are any number that ends in 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9. They cannot be halved equally.

One-to-One Principle

The **one-to-one principle** refers to the need to count each object in a group once and only once. Young children can be helped to do this by touching each object as they say the number name - this can help children to keep track of the objects that have been counted and ensure that they only count each object once.

Order-Irrelevance Principle

The **order-irrelevance principle** refers to the understanding that the order in which objects are counted is not important. Objects within a group can be counted from left to right, right to left or from somewhere else. As long as every object is counted, and only counted once, then the total will always be the same. This may seem like a simple principle but children who do not understand this principle may need to re-count a group if the objects are moved.

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Place Value

Place value refers to the value of a digit in a number. For example, in the number '15', the 5 digit is worth 5, whereas in the number '53' it is worth 50. Place value can be determined by the place that it lies within a number. For example, numbers can be made up of ones, tens, hundreds, thousands, etc. In the early years, it is important that children learn the value of numbers and understand, for example, that 1 ten is worth the same as 10 ones.

Repeating Patterns

In EYFS, children will learn about **repeating patterns**. Repeating patterns can be made up of numbers, objects, patterns or shapes. Children will begin to learn simple repeating patterns such as circle, square, circle, square. Then, they may begin to get more complicated, such as having three shapes: circle, square, triangle, circle, square, triangle.

Stable Order Principle

The **stable order principle** refers to number names being said in a certain order, knowing that the order of the numbers will not change and will always be said in the same order. As number names have no recognisable pattern until we reach the number 14, this can be a challenge for children. Young children will begin by rote counting numbers without meaning, often by memorising numbers from songs and rhymes. The order of these numbers will then begin to develop meaning as children begin to recognise why number names are said in this order.

Subitising

Subitising is the ability to recall a total of objects or images without having to count them. For example, recognising a pattern of four on a dice or five fingers.

Vertices

A vertex or **vertices** are the 'corners' of a 3D shape where two or more edges meet. Vertex is singular and vertices is plural. They will more often be referred to as 'vertices' as most 3D shapes have more than one.

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Visual Materials

The term **visual materials** is often used to describe things that you can see but cannot touch, such as a picture. In maths, children often learn to count concrete materials first, followed by visual objects, such as pictures on an electronic whiteboard or a piece of paper.

Volume

The **volume** of a container is different from the capacity. The volume refers to how much liquid is in the container. In the early years, children will begin to describe volume with words such as 'full' or 'empty'.