



Thomas Russell Infants' School

The maths work your child is doing at school may look very different to the kind of 'sums' you remember. This is because children are encouraged to work mentally, where possible, using personal jottings to help support their thinking. If your child is recording maths calculations on paper, let them explore different ways of recording their ideas. They may want to solve it by 'drawing a picture', writing it numerically or in words. There is no right or wrong way so long as the correct answer is calculated. An important part of the maths lesson in school is discussing with the children the efficiency and suitability of the different strategies they have used.



How you can help your child at home

Practising number facts

- ☆ Have a 'fact of the day'. Pin this fact up around the house. Practise reading it in a quiet, loud, squeaky voice. Ask your child over the day if they can recall the fact.
- ☆ Play 'ping pong' to practise complements with your child. You say a number. They reply with how much more is needed to make 10. You can also play this game with numbers totalling 20 or 100. Encourage your child to answer quickly, without counting or using fingers.
- ☆ Throw 2 dice. Ask your child to find the total of the numbers (+), the difference between them (-) or the product (x). Can they do this without counting?
- ☆ Play Bingo. Each player chooses five answers (eg numbers to 10 to practise simple addition, multiples of 5 to practise the five times tables). Ask a question and if a player has the answer, they can cross it off. The winner is the first player to cross off all their answers.
- ☆ Give your child an answer. Ask them to write as many addition sentences as they can with this number (eg $10 = \square + \square$). Try with subtraction.



- ☆ Give your child a number fact (eg $5+3=8$). Ask them what else they can find out from this fact (eg $3+5=8$, $8-5=3$, $8-3=5$, $50+30=80$). Add to the list over the next few days.

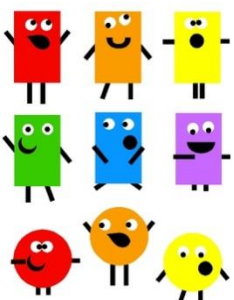
Counting ideas

- ☆ Practise chanting the number names. Encourage your child to join in with you. When they are confident, try starting from different numbers or practise counting backwards.
- ☆ Give your child the opportunity to count a range of interesting objects (coins, pasta shapes, buttons etc). Encourage them to touch and move each object as they count.
- ☆ Count things you cannot touch or see. Try lights on the ceiling, window panes, jumps, claps or oranges in a bag.
- ☆ Play games that involve counting (eg snakes and ladders, dice games, games that involve collecting objects). Your child could have fun creating their own game.
- ☆ Look for numerals in the environment. You can spot numerals at home, in the street or when out shopping.
- ☆ Cut out numerals from newspapers or magazines. Then help your child to put the numbers in order.
- ☆ Make mistakes when chanting, counting or ordering numbers. Can your child spot what you have done wrong?
- ☆ Choose a number of the week eg 10. Practise counting to and from 10. Count out groups of 10 objects or see how many places you can spot the numeral 10.
- ☆ Count back from 75 in fives. 'Starting at six, count up in tens. How far can you count?'
- ☆ Let children sort the washing! Matching and counting pairs of socks is a great way of practising odd and even numbers, counting in twos and the 2 times table and means it is one less job for you!
- ☆ Look at the pattern of house numbers as you walk along - are they odd or even numbers? What house number will be next?



Shapes and measures

- ☆ Choose a shape of the week eg a cylinder. Look for this shape in the environment (tins, candles etc). Ask your child to describe the shape to you (2 circular faces, 2 curved edges).
- ☆ Play 'guess my shape'. You think of a shape. Your child asks questions to try to identify it but you can only answer 'yes' or 'no' (eg Does it have more than 4 corners? Does it have any curved sides?).
- ☆ Hunt for right angles around your home. Can your child also spot angles bigger or smaller than a right angle?
- ☆ Look for symmetrical objects. Help your child to draw or paint symmetrical pictures/patterns?
- ☆ Make a model using boxes/containers of different shapes and sizes. Ask your child to describe their model.
- ☆ Practise measuring the lengths and heights of objects (in metres or cm). Help your child use different rulers and tape measures correctly. Encourage them to estimate before measuring.



- ☆ Let your child help with cooking at home. Help them measure ingredients accurately using weighing scales or measuring jugs. Talk about what each division on the scale stands for. Practise doubling/halving by baking eg 'If we wanted to make Grandad and Grandma a cake too, what are the total ingredients we would need? 'If I only wanted to make 10 buns rather than 20, what ingredients would I need?'
- ☆ Choose some food items out of the cupboard. Try to put the objects in order by weight, by feel alone. Check by looking at the amounts on the packets.

- ☆ Let your child borrow your watch and ask them various questions (eg Can you tell me when it is 2 o'clock? Can you tell me how long it takes for us to walk from our house to grandma's? You can play on the computer for 30 minutes. Can you tell me when the 30 minutes are up?)
- ☆ Play games like 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'
- ☆ What can your child do in exactly one minute? (eg hop on one leg, tidy their toys away, clear the table, count the seconds in their head)
- ☆ Buy your child a pocket diary or calendar and help them plan a daily timetable for their week. Write in the times of activities on the days of the week. 'How many days/weeks until your birthday/Christmas/our holiday?'

General/problem solving

- ☆ Food can be a very motivating way to help children learn their times tables and the corresponding division facts! For example, sweets can be grouped and counted, children can count the biscuits in a packet in twos as they put them in the biscuit tin, chunks on a chocolate bar can be counted in pairs, and so on. Pose questions such as 'There are five people in our family. If we have 2 biscuits each, how many will we eat altogether?' 'I have 15 sweets. If I share them between you and your two friends, how many will you get each?'
- ☆ Money can also be very motivating and the real stuff is the best! Give your child a jar of coins to sort by the different value coins. Ask them to 'Find the biggest coin. Is it worth the most?' 'Find the smallest coin. Is it worth the least?' 'Put them in order of value.' Use 2p, 5p and 10p coins to support learning the times tables.
- ☆ Create a shop. Ask your child to make price tags for different items around the house and use real money to play at being the shopkeeper. 'I'd like a teddy for 12p and a tin of beans for 10p - how much will that cost? If I give you 50p, how much change will I get?'
- ☆ Practise fractions by cutting pizza or sandwiches into halves and quarters. 'Is there a different way that I could cut my sandwich into quarters?'
- ☆ Peel an orange. Divide it into segments. Count how many there are. Eat one piece and ask how many are left. Eat half of the segments and ask how many pieces were eaten.
- ☆ 'Supercalifrajlisticexpalidoutius' How many letters has this word got? If the vowels cost 5p and the consonants cost 10p, how much would the word be worth? In the same way, how much is your child's name worth? How many words can you write for one pound?
- ☆ Look for repeating patterns all around you. Can your child create their own repeating patterns? Maybe they could draw a repeating pattern as a border for a thank you letter or special picture.
- ☆ Play 'I'm thinking of a Number'. Begin by giving clues such as 'My number is more than 50 but less than 100, it is an odd number, it is two more than 37 etc.' As your child becomes more confident, they can try to find out by asking questions eg 'Is it odd or even?' 'A multiple of 5?' 'More or less than 30?'



Maths is all around us and we're using it every day!

Many of you will already be doing these mathematical activities and practising your child's numerical skills without even thinking about it!

The most important thing is to make learning maths FUN.