

Primary maths

Vocabulary progression document

September 2025

Introduction

The use of accurate mathematical vocabulary is essential for children's understanding and communication of mathematical concepts.

This progression document provides an outline of where key mathematical vocabulary is introduced and developed in the White Rose Maths schemes of learning.

| Measure (length and height) | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---------|
| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
| big bigger large little small smaller | height length long longer longest measure short shorter shortest tall taller tallest | centimetres | metres | convert millimetres perimeter | area kilometres rectilinear width | imperial inches metric | formula |

To save repetition of vocabulary, words are listed only where they are first introduced. For example, although the word 'sharing' is used throughout school, it is listed in Reception. Key vocabulary is revisited frequently as students progress through the curriculum.

Teachers can use this document to ensure that children are supported in using the correct mathematical vocabulary at each stage of their learning. By developing confidence with key terms, pupils can better articulate their thinking, reason effectively, and build a strong foundation for future learning in mathematics.

Place value

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| amount, backwards, collection, count, few, fewer (than), forwards, how many, largest, lot(s), more (than), number, numeral, same, smallest, subitise | after, before, different, represent, zero | compare, count on, digit, fewest, greater than, greatest, less than, most, one(s), order, partition, represent, ten(s), ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc) | exchange, interval, least, multiple, value, | ascending, descending, hundred(s), part, whole | place holder, Roman, numeral, round, thousands | hundred, thousand(s), integer, negative number, millions, power of 10, ten thousand | ten million |

Addition and subtraction

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|---|---|--|---|---|--|------------------------|
| | 1 less, 1 more, add, add more, altogether, first, left, now, part, take away, whole | addition, add together, subtraction/ subtract, difference, double, efficient, equal to, fact family, greater, group, inverse, less, minus, near double, number bond, plus, symbol, systematic, total | calculation, exchange, method, multiple, one(s), operation, partition, related facts, ten(s), value, increase, decrease, sum | column, addition, column, subtraction, digit, estimate, exchange, hundred(s), inverse, crossing the 10, crossing the 100, | efficient, inverse, round, thousand(s) | accurate, approximate, constant difference, strategy | order of operations |

Multiplication and division

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| | double, equal groups, even, fair, grouping, groups, odd, pair, sharing, unequal, groups | array, divide, repeated, addition | divide, even, half, lots of, multiply, odd, twice, times times-table, | commutative, inverse, multiple, product, remainder, scaling | factor, factor pair, inverse, triple, efficient | common multiple, common factor, cube number, prime number, square number | composite number, order of operations, powers of |

Fraction, decimals and percentages

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | equal parts, half, quarter, whole | numerator, denominator, equivalent, unit fraction, non-unit fraction, third, two-quarters, three-quarters | scale, compare, convert | decimal equivalent, decimal place, decimal point, hundredths, improper, fractions, mixed, numbers, proper fractions, round, tenths | common denominator, fractional part, percentage, thousandth | simplify, simplest form, recurring |

Measure (money)

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|-----------|--|---------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| | | amount, coin, note, money, pence (p), pound (£), unitise, value | change, cost, worth | convert | decimal | | |

Measure (length and height)

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------|
| big, bigger, large, little, small, smaller | height, length, long, longer, longest, measure, short, shorter, shortest, tall, taller, tallest | centimetres, ruler | metres | convert, millimetres, perimeter | area, kilometres, rectilinear, width | imperial, inches, metric, volume | formula |

Measure (mass, capacity and temperature)

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|--|--|--|---------|--------|--|--|
| big, bigger, large, little, small, smaller | balanced, balancing scales, empty, float, full, heavier, heaviest, heavy, least, less, light, lighter, lightest, mass, more, most, narrow, sink, tall, thin, weight, wide, | capacity, container, non-standard, volume | celsius, circular scales, degrees, grams, kilograms, litres, millilitres, temperature, thermometer | convert | | cubic, centimetres, imperial metric, pints, pounds, | formula, gallon, ounces, tonnes |

Measure (time)

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--------|--------|--------|
| first, next, now, then | after, afternoon, before, clock, day, evening, later, lunchtime, minute, morning, night, night-time, today, tomorrow, week, weekend, yesterday, | half past, hour, month, o'clock, second, watch, week, | five-minute intervals midnight, noon, quarter past, quarter to, | analogue clock, 12-hour clock, 24-hour clock, digital clock duration, leap year, am, pm, Roman numerals, | | | |

Shape

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|--|------------|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| build, curved, curvy, different, flat, match, pointy, round, same, sharp, stack | 2-d shape, 3-d shape, circle, cone, corner, cube, cuboid, curved, cylinder, face, flat, pyramid, rectangle, rotate, set, sides, solid, sort, sphere, square, straight, surface, triangle | properties | edge, line of symmetry, symmetrical, vertex, vertices | acute, obtuse, angle, vertical horizontal, parallel, perpendicular, polygon, right angle | equilateral, regular, irregular, isosceles, parallelogram, quadrilateral, rhombus, scalene, trapezium | adjacent, degrees, reflex angle | base, circumference, diameter, dimensions, interior angles, intersect, net, opposite, angles, radius, |

Statistics

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|-----------|--------|--|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | | | block diagram, key, pictogram, table, tally chart, collect, record | axis, bar chart, cell, horizontal axis, label, scale, two-way table, title, vertical axis, | data, estimate, line graph | timetable, variable | average, dual bar chart, mean, pie chart |

Position and direction

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|--|--|--|--|--------|--|-----------|------------------------|
| behind, between, down in, in front, inside, move, on, out, outside, over, through, under, up, | above, around, backwards, below, beside, bottom, forwards, map, next to, position, route, top | far, full turn, half turn, left, near, quarter turn, right, three-quarter turn, direction | anti-clockwise, between, clockwise | | coordinates, grid, reflection, translation, | quadrant, | x -axis y -axis |

Ratio and proportion

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| | | | | | | | additive, enlargement, multiplicative, proportion, ratio, scale factor, scaling, simplest form |

Algebra

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| | | | | | | | algebra, equation, expression, function, input, linear output, rule, solve, substitution, value, |

Pattern

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|--------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| after, line, next, pattern, spot, star, stripe, swirl, zigzag | continue, copy, mistake, repeat, repeating, pattern, same, unit of repeat, | | decreasing, increasing, sequence | | | | |