

2026 national curriculum tests

Key stage 1

Mathematics

Administering Paper 1: arithmetic

Key stage 1 tests are designed to be taken at the end of the key stage 1 programme of study. It is suggested that schools administer the tests during **May**, to help inform the support that can be given to pupils ahead of their transition to key stage 2.

Schools may choose to administer the non-statutory key stage 1 tests under test conditions. To help maintain the integrity of the tests for those doing so, we ask that all schools treat all test materials as confidential until **June 2026**.

For test administration

Key stage 1 mathematics test

The key stage 1 mathematics test consists of 2 papers. The papers should be administered in order. Pupils do not have to sit both papers on the same day. If both papers are administered on the same day, pupils may benefit from a break between papers. Both papers can be administered to the whole class, smaller groups of pupils or on an individual basis.

Paper 1: arithmetic

The following information explains how to administer the key stage 1 mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic.

Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 1: arithmetic consists of a single test paper. It is expected that Paper 1 will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, but it is not strictly timed. It is at your discretion to choose when or if a pupil requires a break during the test or whether to stop the test early.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each pupil will need the equipment specified below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a pencil or blue or black pen a ruler. Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out. Highlighter pens may be used if this is normal classroom practice. Pupils are not allowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> calculators number apparatus, for example, base ten materials and number squares.
Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should ensure that nothing you say or do during a test could be interpreted as giving pupils an advantage, for example, indicating that an answer is correct or incorrect, or suggesting the pupil look at an answer again. If a pupil requests it, you may read a question to them on a one-to-one basis. If reading to a pupil, you may only read numbers and not mathematical symbols. This is to ensure that pupils are not given an unfair advantage by having the function inadvertently explained by reading its name. There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test, but be careful when signing numbers and mathematical signs. You should ensure you do not convey information that would give pupils an advantage. Guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment is contained in the relevant modified test pack. The examples below illustrate how to deal with some common situations. <p>Question: What does this sign here mean? Answer: I can't tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.</p> <p>Question: Does this mean 'take away'? Answer: I can't tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.</p> <p>Question: What does 'of' mean? (If the pupil's query asks about an everyday word that has a mathematical meaning within the question, for example, 'What is half of 8?') Answer: I can't tell you, but think hard and try to remember. We can talk about it after the test.</p>
Guidance for specific questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are two different types of working space for the pupils to use. Sometimes there is a blank working space and other times there is a grid. Pupils can use these spaces to show any working. A grid is included for questions where pupils are more likely to use a written method.
Before the test begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the list of pupils with any particular individual needs, for example, pupils who may need support from a scribe or a transcript made at the end of the test.

What to do at the start of the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check seating is appropriately spaced and that no pupil can see another pupil's test paper. • Check pupils do not have mobile phones or other disruptive items. • Check pupils do not have any materials or equipment that may give them extra help. • Ensure each pupil has a copy of mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic.
How to introduce the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to brief pupils fully at the start of each test. Use these instructions to introduce Paper 1: arithmetic. • The wording of these instructions can be adapted, provided the meaning is retained. <p><i>This is the mathematics test Paper 1: arithmetic. You should have a test booklet in front of you. This test will take around 20 minutes.</i></p> <p><i>Write your name on the front of your test booklet.</i></p> <p><i>Open the test booklet at page 3. We'll do one practice question together and then you'll need to complete the rest of the test by yourself.</i></p> • Find the practice question on page 3. Read the practice question. <p><i>The practice question says:</i></p> <p><i>Six take away two equals...</i></p> <p><i>Write your answer in the box.</i></p> • Give pupils the opportunity to answer the question in their booklet. If any pupil is not sure what to do, explain what they need to do to answer the question. Check that all pupils understand what they need to do before continuing. • Tell the pupils: <p><i>In a moment, you will complete the rest of the questions on your own.</i></p> <p><i>You should try to answer all of the questions. If you can't answer a question, move on to the next one and come back to that question later on if you have time.</i></p> <p><i>There is space on the test paper if you need to do any working out. There are two different types of working out space for you to use. Sometimes there is a blank space and other times there is a grid to show your working. You should use these spaces for any written working that might help you answer the question.</i></p> <p><i>If you want to change an answer, you should rub it out or put a line through the answer that you don't want to be marked.</i></p> <p><i>You should put your final answer for each question in the answer box on the test booklet. Your answers should be numbers, not number sentences. For example, for the practice question, your answer should be 4, not 2 add 2</i></p> <p><i>Remember to check your work carefully.</i></p> <p><i>If you have any questions during the test, you should put your hand up and wait for someone to come over to you. Remember that we can't help you to answer any of the test questions.</i></p> <p><i>You need to work on your own. You need to think of your own answers and you shouldn't talk about them with anyone else.</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any questions?</i></p> <p><i>Turn to page 4 and find question 1.</i></p> <p><i>Now start the test.</i></p>

What to do at the end of the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you need to make a transcript of a test script, complete it with the individual pupil at the end of the test, under test conditions. Particular care should be taken to ensure accurate transcriptions are made and the pupil's answers are not corrected or amended.
Marking the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the key stage 1 test mark schemes to mark the test, following both the general guidance and any specific guidance for each question.

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Standards
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