2026 national curriculum tests

Key stage 1

Mathematics test mark schemes

Paper 1: arithmetic
Paper 2: reasoning

Standards & Testing Agency

Contents

1. Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) is responsible for the development and delivery of key stage 1 and 2 statutory and optional tests. STA is an executive agency of the Department for Education.

The 2026 optional tests assess the national curriculum. This test has been developed to meet the specification set out in the test framework[1] for mathematics at key stage 1.

This key stage 1 2026 test is not statutory. The key stage 1 tests can be marked internally within schools to inform teacher assessment. The evidence from the test can be used to help inform this teacher assessment.

A new test and new mark schemes will be produced each year.

Scaled score conversion tables are not included in this document. Conversion tables will be produced as part of the standards maintenance process. Scaled score conversion tables[2] for the 2026 tests will be published in June 2026.

The mark schemes should be used to mark pupils' responses. The pupil examples are based on responses gathered from the test trialling process. It is important when marking to refer to the general marking principles, the additional guidance and the exemplars section to ensure marking is accurate and consistent.

2. Structure of the test

The optional key stage 1 mathematics test comprises:

- Paper 1: arithmetic (25 marks)
- Paper 2: reasoning (35 marks)

1 www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-mathematics-test-framework
2 www.gov.uk/guidance/scaled-scores-at-key-stage-1

3. Content domain coverage

The 2026 test meets the specification in the test framework. Table 1 sets out the areas of the content domain that are assessed in Papers 1 and 2.

The references below are taken from the test framework. For example, a question with reference 2N6 assesses 'Using place value and number facts to solve problems' and is taken from the Y2 programme of study.

Table 1: Content domain coverage for Paper 1 and Paper 2

Paper 1: arithmetic	
Question	**Content domain reference**
1	1C2a
2	2C2b
3	2C2b/2C1
4	2C6
5	2N1/1N1b
6	1C4/1C2a
7	2N6/2C2a/2C2b
8	2C6
9	2N6/2C2a/2C2b
10	2C6
11	2C1
12	2C3/1C2a
13	2C2b/2C2a
14	2C6
15	2F1a
16	2C3/2C2b
17	2C2b
18	2C2b/2C2a
19	1C4/1C2a
20	2C6
21	2C2b/2C2a
22	2C3/2C2b
23	2C2b/2C2a
24	2C3/2C2b
25	2F1a

Paper 2: reasoning	
Question	**Content domain reference**
1	1N1a
2	1F1a
3	2C7/2C8
4	2C2b
5	1G1a/2G2a
6	2N2b
7	2N4
8	2C4/1C2a
9	2N3
10	2M1
11	2C4/2N6
12	2M4b/1M4c
13	2C8/2C6
14	1M1/1M2
15	2N1/2C1
16	2C6
17	2G2b
18	2C4
19	2S2b/2S2a
20	2C9b/2C7
21	2C8
22a	2C2b
22b	2C2b
23	2M9/2M3a
24	2N4
25	2C8/2C6
26	2S1
27	2M3b
28	2C8/2C4
29	2F2
30	2N1
31	2C4
32	2C4

4. Explanation of the mark schemes

Those marking the tests should familiarise themselves with the marking guidance in section 5 of this document before applying the mark schemes.

The practice questions are not marked as they are completed by the pupils together with the test administrator as an introduction to the test.

The marking information for each question is set out in the form of tables (sections 7 and 8).

The '**Qu.**' column on the left-hand side of each table provides a quick reference to the question number and part.

The '**Requirement**' column may include two types of information:

- a statement of the requirements for the award of each mark, with an indication of whether partial credit can be given for a correct method
- examples of some different types of correct answer.

The '**Mark**' column indicates the total number of marks available for each question part.

The '**Additional guidance**' column indicates alternative acceptable answers, and provides details of specific types of answer that are unacceptable. Other guidance, such as the range of acceptable answers, is provided as necessary.

5. General marking guidance

5.1 Applying the mark schemes

To ensure consistency of marking, the most frequent procedural queries are listed in Table 2, along with the action you should take. Unless otherwise specified in the mark scheme, you should apply these guidelines in all cases.

Example responses are also included in section 9 for the two working mark questions and one other question in Paper 2: reasoning. These should act as your guide when you are marking these questions.

5.2 General marking principles

Table 2: General marking principles

Possible issues when marking	
1. The answer does not closely match any of the examples in the mark scheme.	Those marking the test will use their judgement to decide whether the answer corresponds with details in the 'Requirement' column of the mark scheme. Refer also to the 'Additional guidance' column and to the examples of responses where appropriate.
2. The pupil has answered in a non-standard way.	Pupils may provide evidence in any form as long as its meaning can be understood. Diagrams, symbols or words are acceptable ways to present an answer.
3. The answer is correct, but the wrong working is shown.	Always award the mark for a final response that is correct.
4. No answer is provided in the expected place, but the correct answer is given elsewhere.	Where a word or number response is expected, a pupil may meet the requirement by annotating a graph or labelling a diagram elsewhere in the question.
5. The correct answer has been crossed (or rubbed) out and not replaced.	You should not award any marks for crossed out answers or working.
6. The answer in the answer box is wrong, but the correct answer is shown in the working.	Give precedence to the response provided in the answer box over any other workings. However, in a 2-mark question, one mark may still be awarded for evidence of a complete, correct method or a partial step, as indicated in the 'Requirement' column.

Possible issues when marking	
7. More than one answer is given.	If all provided answers are correct (or a range of answers is given, all of which are correct), a mark will be awarded unless the mark scheme states otherwise. If both correct and incorrect responses are given, no mark will be awarded unless the mark scheme states otherwise.
8. There appears to be a misread of numbers that affects the pupil's working.	A misread occurs when a pupil misreads a number given in the question and consistently uses a different number that does not alter the original intention or difficulty of the question. For example, if 43 is misread as 48, both numbers may be regarded as comparable in difficulty. However, if 43 is misread as 40 or 45, the misread number may be regarded as making the question easier, depending on the question. For example, 26 + 40 is easier than 26 + 48. The misread of a number will affect the award of marks. No marks are awarded if there is more than one misread in a question or if the mathematics is simplified by the misread. For **1-mark** questions: no mark is awarded for one or more misreads. For **2-mark** questions that have a method mark: one mark is awarded if the correct method is correctly implemented with the misread number, provided this does not simplify the mathematics.
9. The answer is numerically equivalent to the answer in the mark scheme.	Answers should be given as single values in their simplest form unless the mark scheme states otherwise, for example, for □ = 12 – 5, the answer 4 + 3 will not be accepted. Where alternative expressions are acceptable, these will be indicated in the additional guidance column.
10. The pupil reverses a digit in their answer.	A reversed digit is acceptable if it is clearly recognisable as the digit intended. For example, a reversed 2 must clearly show the characteristics of a 2 rather than a 5. As a further example, where the answer is 61 and the response ∂1 is given, then this should be awarded the mark. You should make a decision based upon your knowledge of the pupil's writing.

Possible issues when marking	
11. The pupil transposes digits in their answer.	A pupil transposes digits by reversing their order, for example, 83 instead of 38. For questions where no working is shown, an answer with transposed digits should not be awarded the mark. For example, a response of 16 or 1∂ when the answer is 61 should not be marked as correct.
12. The pupil has worked out the answer correctly, but then copied the wrong answer into the answer box.	A transcription error can occur when the pupil miscopies the correct answer from the end of their working into the answer box. Give precedence to the answer given in the answer box over any other workings. There may be cases where the incorrect answer is a transcription error, in which case you may check the pupil's intention and decide whether to award the mark(s).
13. The answer correctly follows through from earlier incorrect work.	'Follow through' marks for an answer may only be awarded when specifically stated in the mark scheme.

6. Internal moderation procedures

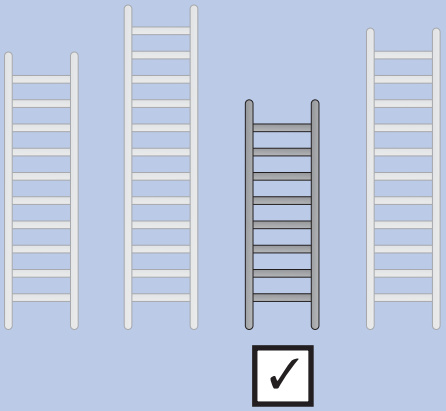
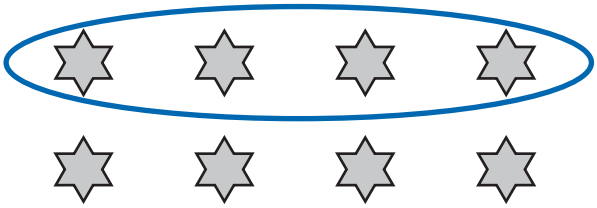
We recommend those who are involved in marking the key stage 1 tests undertake moderation activity to ensure marking is consistent across their school.

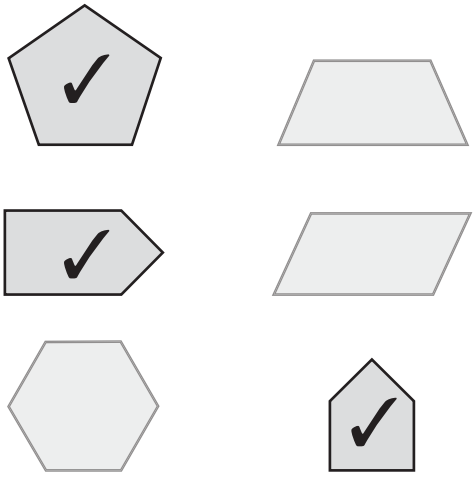
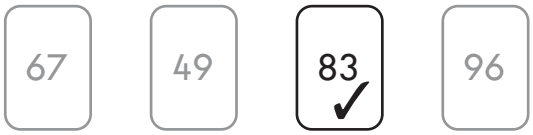
7. Mark schemes for Paper 1: arithmetic

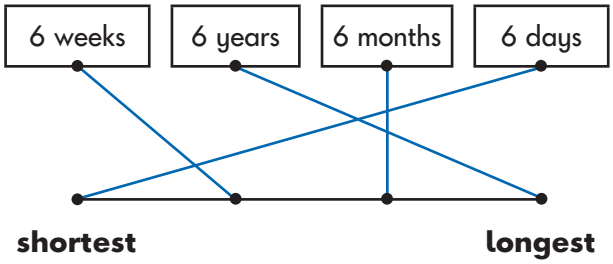
Equivalent answers are **not** acceptable, for example, 10 + 4 instead of 14. When marking the arithmetic questions, refer specifically to general marking principles 9, 10, 11 and 12. No misreads are allowed for 1-mark questions.

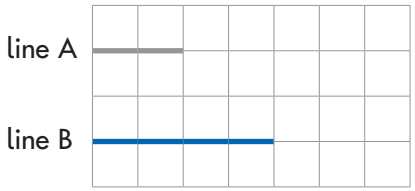
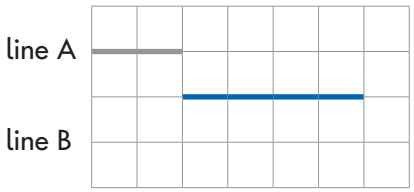
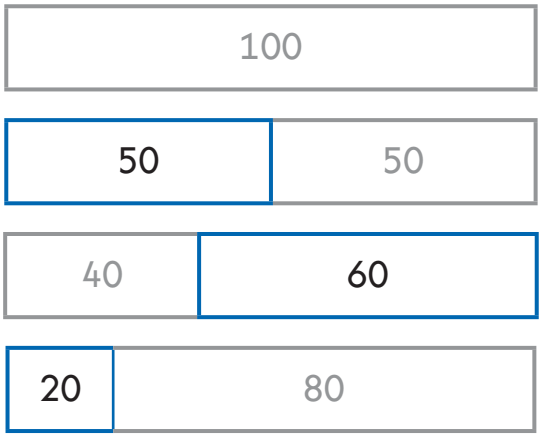
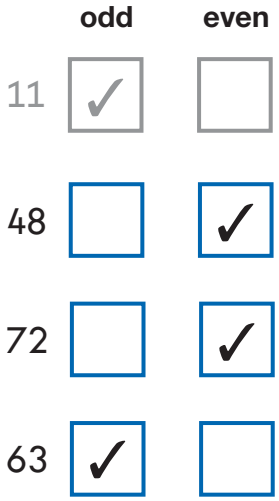
Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
P	4	**none**	Practice question
1	16	**1m**	
2	22	**1m**	
3	21	**1m**	
4	90	**1m**	
5	75	**1m**	
6	7	**1m**	
7	35	**1m**	
8	16	**1m**	
9	82	**1m**	
10	55	**1m**	
11	10	**1m**	
12	12	**1m**	
13	88	**1m**	
14	8	**1m**	
15	7	**1m**	
16	54	**1m**	
17	55	**1m**	
18	22	**1m**	
19	13	**1m**	
20	6	**1m**	
21	65	**1m**	
22	45	**1m**	
23	29	**1m**	
24	48	**1m**	
25	25	**1m**	

8. Mark schemes for Paper 2: reasoning

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
	Aural questions		
P	Correct ladder ticked as shown: 	**none**	Practice question
1	60	**1m**	
2	Four stars circled, e.g. 	**1m**	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct number of stars as long as the pupil's intention is clear, e.g. four individual stars circled. **Do not** award the mark if additional stars have been indicated, unless it is clear that the correct number of stars is the pupil's final choice.
3	Correct calculation ticked as shown: 6 – 2 6 × 2 ✓ 6 ÷ 2 6 + 2	**1m**	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct calculation as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional calculations are also indicated, unless it is clear that the correct calculation is the pupil's final choice.
4	66	**1m**	

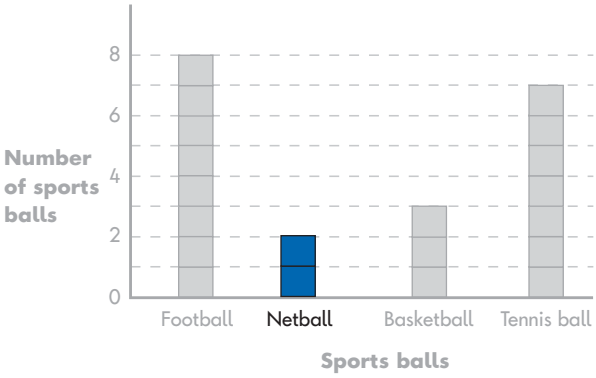
Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
5	Three correct shapes ticked as shown: 	1m	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct three shapes as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional shapes are indicated, unless it is clear that the three correct shapes are the pupil's final choice.
	Written questions		
6	Correct number ticked as shown: 	1m	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct number as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional numbers are indicated, unless it is clear that the correct number is the pupil's final choice.
7	73 (sticks)	1m	
8	(£) 9	1m	
9	Two correct numbers circled as shown: 	1m	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct two numbers as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional numbers are indicated, unless it is clear that the correct two numbers are the pupil's final choice.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
10	Correct signs used as shown: length of Pencil A **<** length of Pencil B length of Pencil A **>** length of Pencil C	1m	Both signs must be correct for the award of the mark. Accept slight inaccuracies in the drawing of the signs, as long as the pupil's intention is clear.
11	30 (g)	1m	
12	All four times matched correctly as shown:  	1m	All four times must be correctly matched for the award of the mark. Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct answer, as long as the pupil's intention is clear.
13	Correct number circled as shown: 5 10 15 **(20)** 25	1m	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct number as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional numbers are indicated, unless it is clear that the correct number is the pupil's final choice.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
14	Correct line drawn 4 squares long as shown: 	1m	Accept slight inaccuracies in drawing a line, as long as the pupil's intention is clear. Accept any line drawn 4 squares long on the grid, e.g. 
15	Diagram completed as shown: 	1m	All three numbers must be correct for the award of the mark.
16	Correct boxes ticked as shown: 	1m	All three numbers must be correct for the award of the mark. Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct answer as long as the pupil's intention is clear.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
17	5 (faces)	1m	
18	2 (cars)	1m	
19	25 (days)	1m	
20	Both number sentences completed correctly using the given number cards, i.e. 2 × 5 = 10 **OR** 5 × 2 = 10 **AND** 10 ÷ 2 = 5 **OR** 10 ÷ 5 = 2	1m	Both number sentences must be completed correctly for the award of the mark using the given number cards only.
21	9 (oranges)	1m	

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
22a	Award **ONE** mark for the calculation completed correctly using the given number cards only, e.g. 7 + 8 + 5 = 20 **OR** 7 + 4 + 9 = 20 **OR** 7 + 6 + 7 = 20	1m	Accept the correct combination of number cards placed in any order, e.g. 7 + 5 + 8 = 20 **OR** 7 + 9 + 4 = 20 **OR** 7 + 7 + 6 = 20
22b	Award **ONE** mark for the calculation completed correctly using the given number cards, provided the numbers are different from those used in Q22a, e.g. 7 + 8 + 5 = 20 7 + 4 + 9 = 20	1m	**Do not** award the mark if the pupil has repeated the numbers from Q22a.
23	Correct amount circled as shown: 30p 35p (40p) 45p	1m	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct amount as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional amounts are indicated, unless it is clear that the correct number is the pupil's final choice.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
24	18	**1m**	
25	9 (towers)	**1m**	
26	Two blocks added to the netball column correctly, as shown:  	**1m**	(Use the examples of responses given on pages 20–21 to help you determine the award of the mark.)
27	Boxes completed correctly as shown: 10p 10p 5p 2p **OR** 20p 5p 1p 1p	**1m**	All four coin values must be correct for the award of the mark. Coin values may be written in any order. **Do not** award the mark if correct coin values are not provided as part of the answer.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
28	Award **TWO** marks for the correct answer of 14 If the answer is incorrect or missing, award **ONE** mark for evidence of a complete, correct method, e.g. • 6 × 5 = 30 30 – 16 = (*incorrect or no answer*) • 6 × 5 = 28 (*error*) 28 – 16 = 12 **OR** Award **ONE** mark for a partial method correctly evaluated, e.g. • 6 × 5 = 30 **OR** • Sight of 30 (as evidence of a partial method completed correctly)	**2m** **OR** **1m**	(Refer to general marking principle 6 on page 6.) (Use the example responses on pages 22–23 to help you determine how many marks can be awarded.)
29	Correct fraction ticked as shown: $\frac{3}{4}$ ☐ $\frac{2}{4}$ ☑ $\frac{1}{4}$ ☐ $\frac{1}{3}$ ☐	**1m**	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct fraction as long as the pupil's intention is clear. **Do not** award the mark if additional fractions are indicated, unless it is clear that the correct fraction is the pupil's final choice.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark	Additional guidance
30	9 (cubes)	**1m**	
31	Award **TWO** marks for the correct answer of 27 If the answer is incorrect or missing, award **ONE** mark for evidence of a complete, correct method, e.g. • 24 + 6 + 12 – 15 = (*incorrect or no answer*) • 24 + 6 + 12 = 32 (*error*) 32 – 15 = 17 **OR** Award **ONE** mark for any of these partial methods correctly evaluated, e.g. • 24 + 12 + 6 = 42 • 12 + 6 – 15 = 3 • 24 + 12 – 15 = 21 **OR** • Sight of 42, 3 or 21 (as evidence of a partial method completed correctly)	**2m** **OR** **1m**	(Refer to general marking principle 6 on page 6.) (Use the example responses on pages 24–25 to help you determine how many marks can be awarded.)
32	Correct box ticked as shown: 27 ☐ 17 ☐ 23 ☐ 13 ☑	**1m**	Accept any other clear way of indicating the correct number as long as the pupil's intention is clear.

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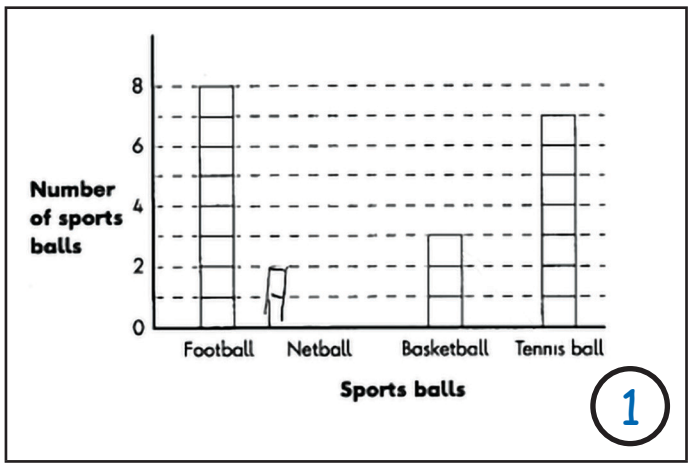
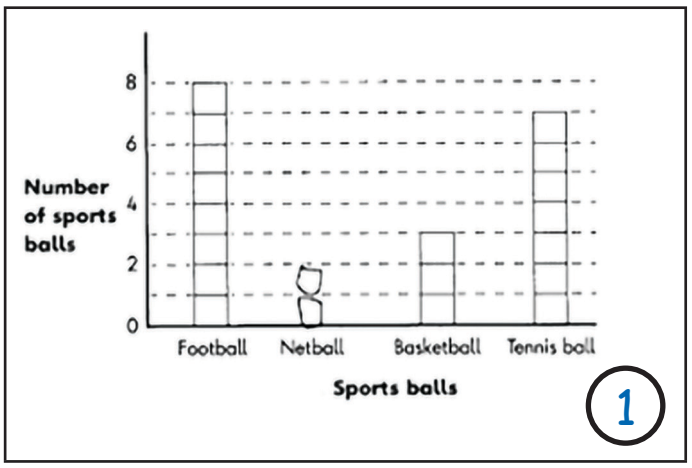
9. Example responses

9.1 Examples of responses from question 26

Lucy: 1 mark



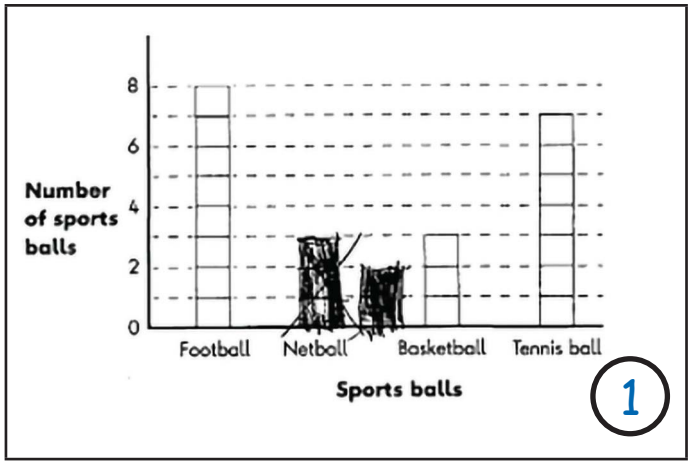
Oliver: 1 mark



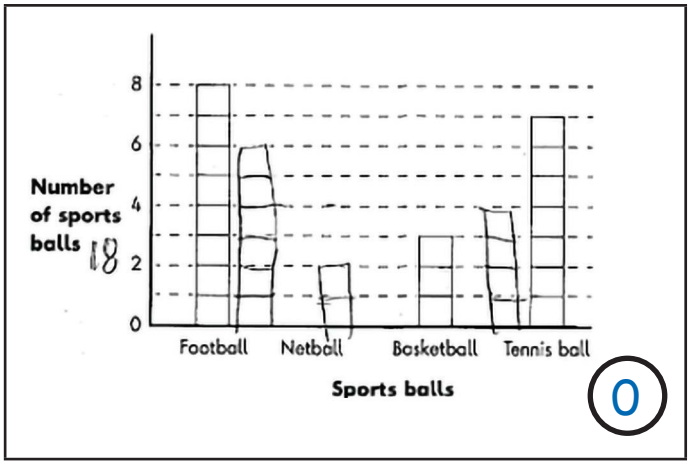
Both Lucy and Oliver have drawn two different correct answers. Lucy has drawn two blocks within the correct space. While her response is not centrally aligned with the label 'netball', it is unambiguously correct, and **ONE** mark is awarded.

In contrast, Oliver has drawn two separate blocks in the correct place. Although the blocks are not adjoined, they still represent two netballs in relation to the scale on the chart. Oliver is also awarded **ONE** mark.

Ava: 1 mark



Tommy: 0 marks

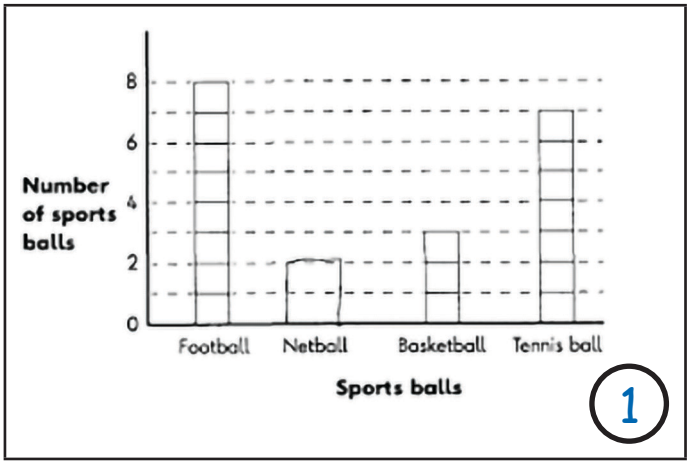


Ava has made two attempts to draw the correct number of blocks required. She has made a mistake in her first attempt and has crossed it out. Subsequently, she has replaced her crossed out answer with the correct number of blocks. **ONE** mark is awarded for a correct answer.

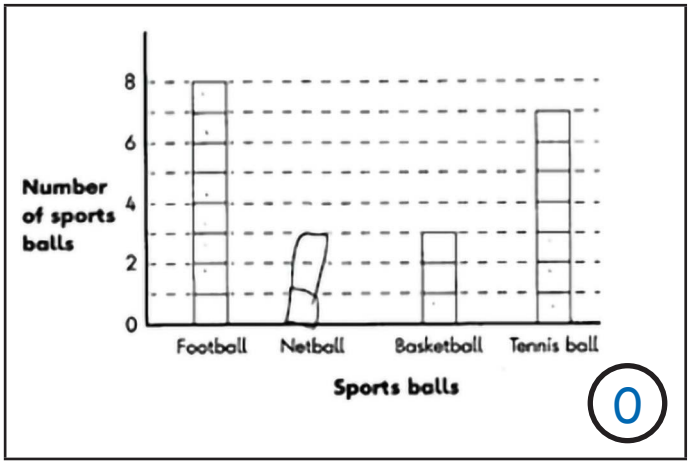
Tommy has provided more than one answer. Unlike Ava, Tommy has not specified which answer he wants to be considered for the mark. Although he has drawn a correct answer in the expected place, there are also two other responses which are incorrect. His final answer cannot be assured. Therefore, **no marks** are awarded.

9.1 Examples of responses from question 26 (continued)

Teija: 1 mark



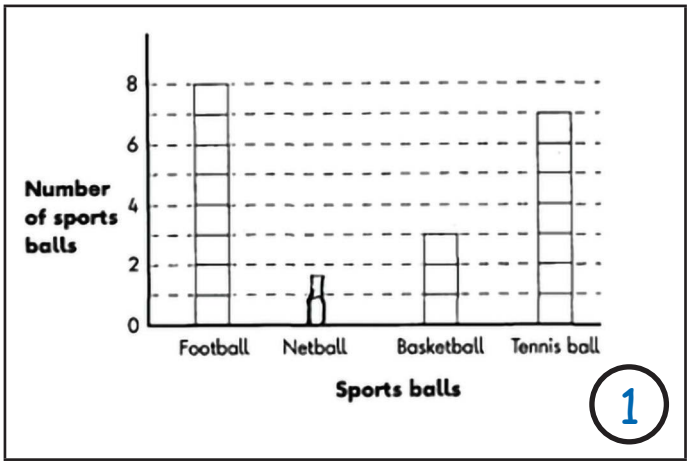
Marcus: 0 marks



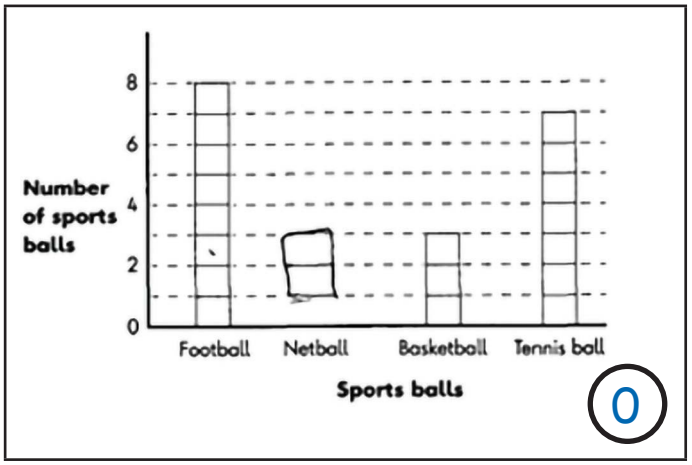
Teija and Marcus have provided two different responses. Instead of drawing two blocks, Teija has drawn a bar that represents two netballs. This is an equivalent correct answer, and Teija is awarded **ONE** mark.

In comparison, Marcus has drawn an incorrect representation of two blocks because the second block drawn goes beyond the tolerance permitted within the scale. Therefore, Marcus is awarded **no marks**.

Nathan: 1 mark



Maquita: 0 marks

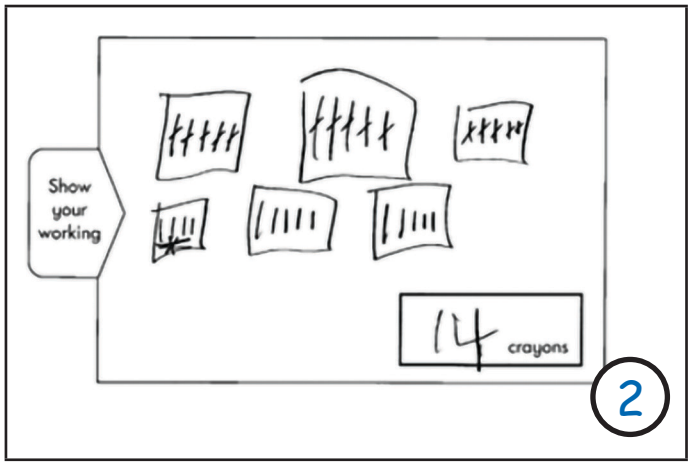


Nathan has drawn two blocks with different widths in the expected place. Although the two blocks have different widths, his response is unambiguously correct. Nathan is awarded **ONE** mark.

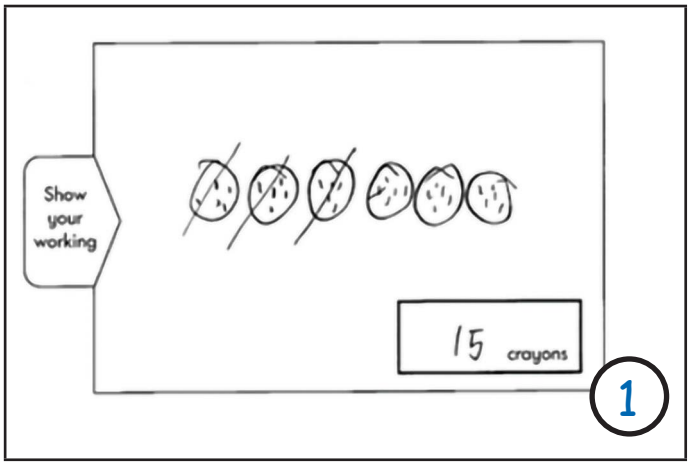
In drawing her response, Maquita has not drawn the two blocks correctly on the chart. Maquita's response is ambiguous, therefore **no marks** can be awarded.

9.2 Examples of responses from question 28

Grace: 2 marks



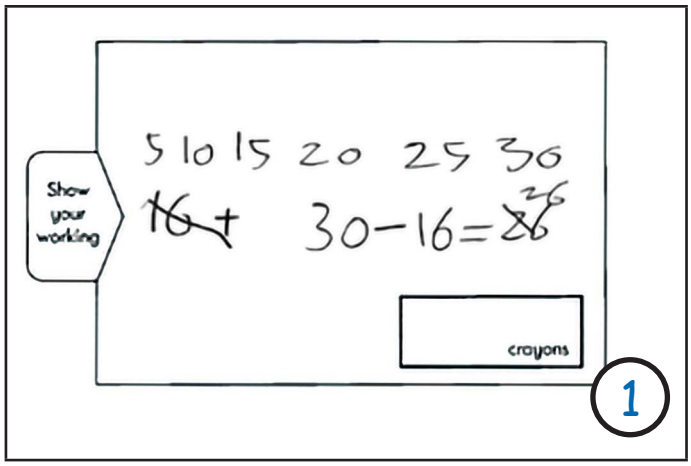
Jenny: 1 mark



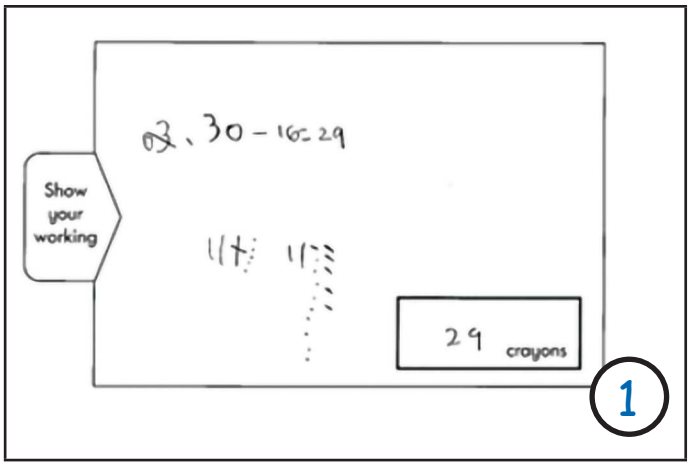
Grace has provided a correct answer and a pictorial method. Grace is awarded **TWO** marks for the correct answer regardless of the method being correct or incorrect.

In comparison, Jenny has also drawn a complete and correct pictorial method to represent 6 boxes of 5 crayons. Jenny has correctly crossed off 16 crayons. However, her final answer is incorrect due to a counting error in her final step. Therefore, Jenny is awarded **ONE** mark for a complete, correct method, with one arithmetic error.

Keira: 1 mark



George: 1 mark



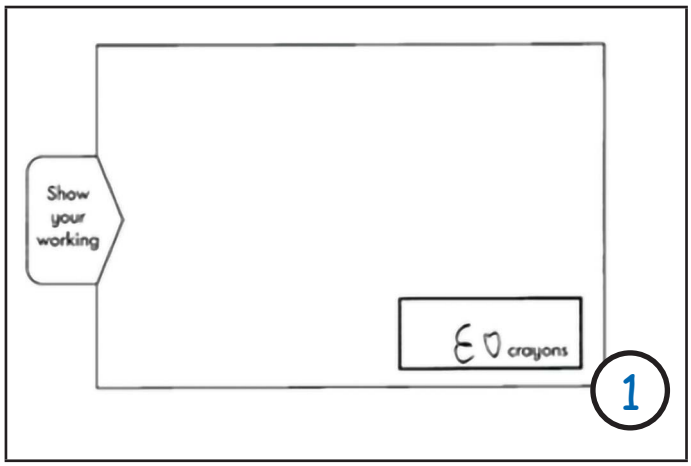
Keira has counted in multiples of 5 to get to 30 crayons correctly. In her second step, Keira has shown her intention to subtract 16 but has made an arithmetic error. Keira is awarded **ONE** mark for a complete, correct method, with one arithmetic error.

George also has an incorrect final answer. In George's method, his first step, 5 × 6, is unseen but he has evaluated it correctly. In his second step, he has made an arithmetic error with an answer of 29. George is awarded **ONE** mark for a complete, correct method.

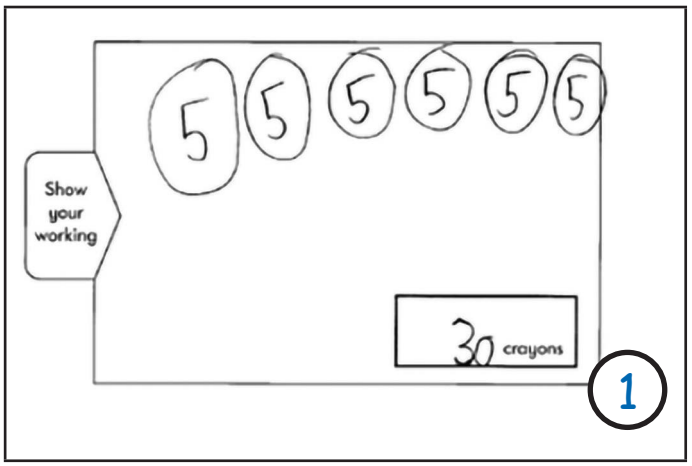
Note: If Keira and George's methods were not complete and correct, they both would have been awarded **ONE** mark for sight of 30 as evidence of a partial step completed correctly.

9.2 Examples of responses from question 28 (continued)

Anna: 1 mark



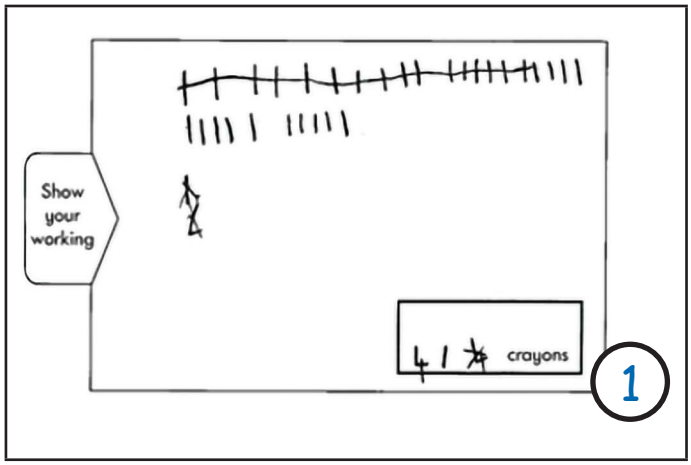
Harry: 1 mark



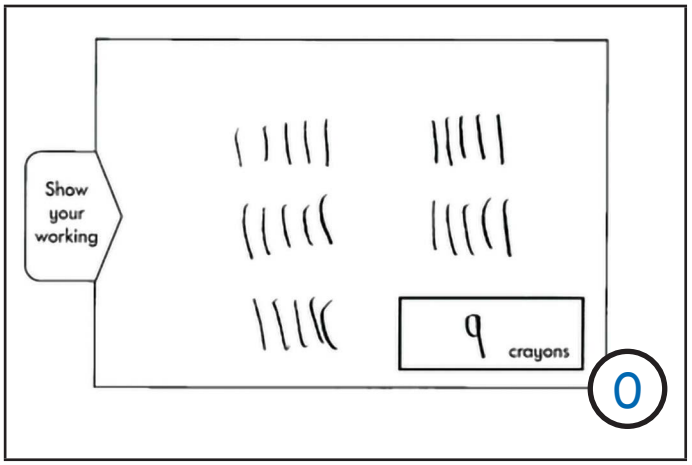
Both Anna and Harry are awarded **ONE** mark for sight of 30. Anna has not provided any evidence of a method but has provided evidence of an unseen partial step completed correctly. Although Anna has reversed the digit 3 in her final answer, the number can clearly be recognised as 30.

Harry has also provided a final answer of 30. Harry has shown how he worked out the first step of a correct method, by counting six lots of five. Harry is also awarded **ONE** mark for sight of 30.

Helena: 1 mark



Jamie: 0 marks

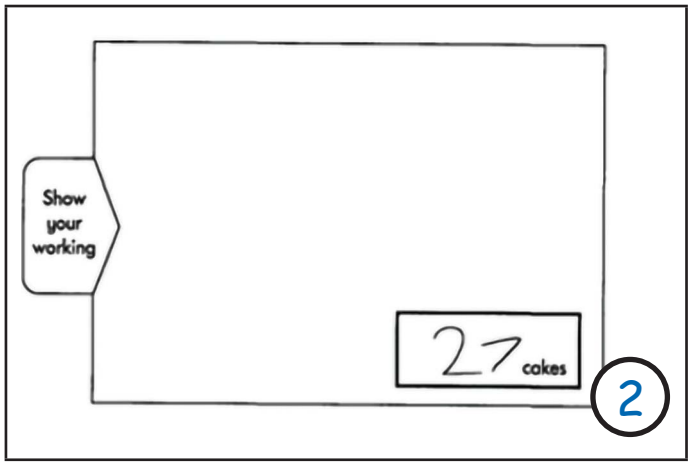


Helena and Jamie have both provided pictorial methods with an incorrect answer. Helena has drawn 30 tallies to show her answer to 5 × 6 which is correct. She continues to subtract 16 crayons but when writing her answer in the final answer box she has written 41 which is an incorrect answer. Helena is awarded **ONE** mark for a correct method.

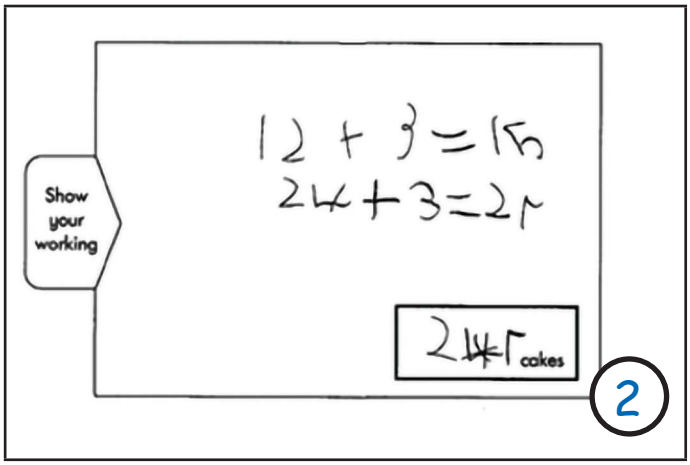
Similarly, Jamie has attempted to draw tallies to show how he worked out 5 × 6 but he has made an error and only drawn 25 tallies instead of 30. Although it is an unseen step, Jamie has subtracted 16 from 25 and provided the answer of 9 which is an incorrect final answer. Jamie is awarded **no marks** as the method is not correct.

9.3 Examples of responses from question 31

Lily: 2 marks



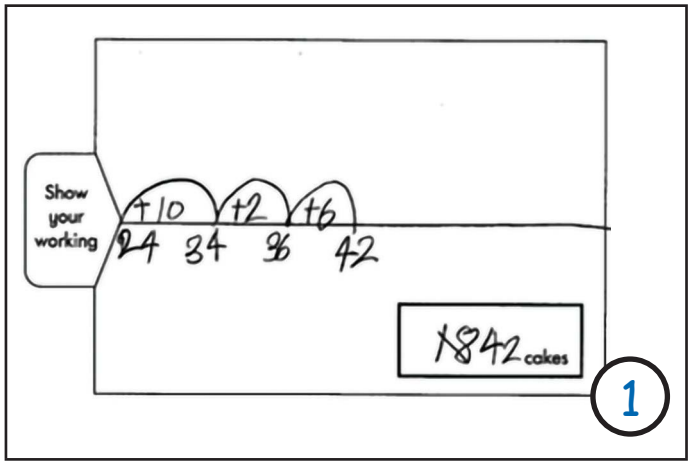
Gavin: 2 marks



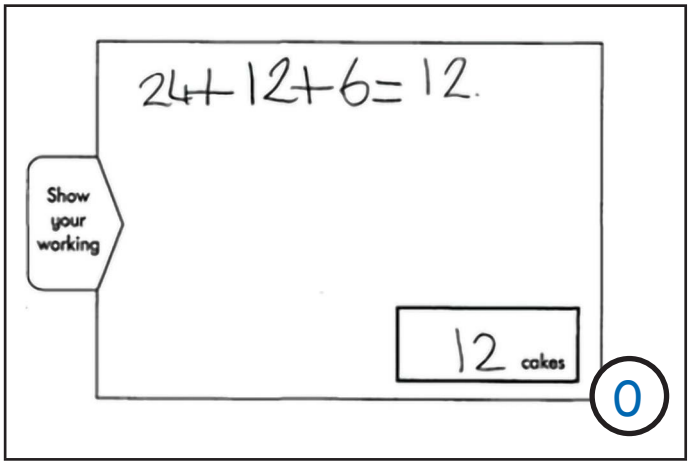
Both Lily and Gavin reached a correct final answer. Lily has written 27 in the answer box. Despite no evidence of a method, the final answer is correct and Lily is awarded **TWO** marks.

Gavin has provided a method with an unseen step, with a correct answer. His final answer can be clearly read as 27 even though the 7 is reversed. Gavin is awarded **TWO** marks for a final correct answer.

Mia: 1 mark



Leo: 0 marks

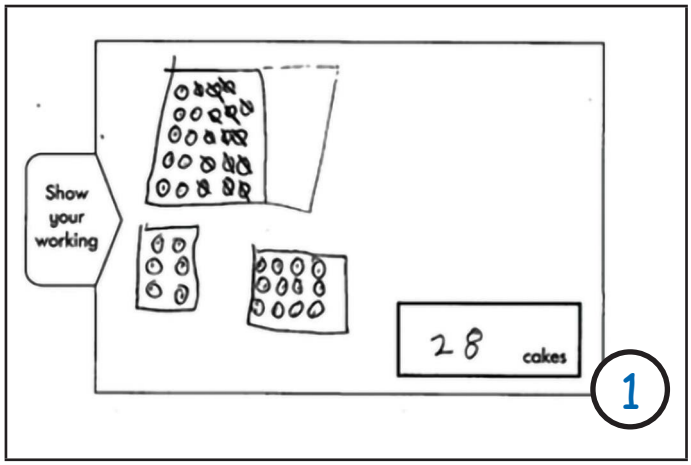


Mia and Leo have both provided partial methods. Mia has used a number line to calculate a partial method correctly. Therefore, Mia is awarded **ONE** mark.

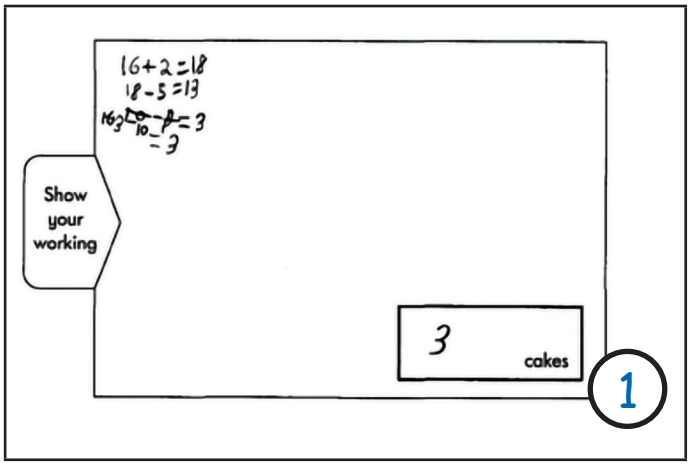
Similarly, Leo has attempted to complete a partial step, but has made an arithmetic error. With no further working to complete the method, nor evidence of a correct partial method value, **no marks** are awarded.

9.3 Examples of responses from question 31 (continued)

Aston: 1 mark



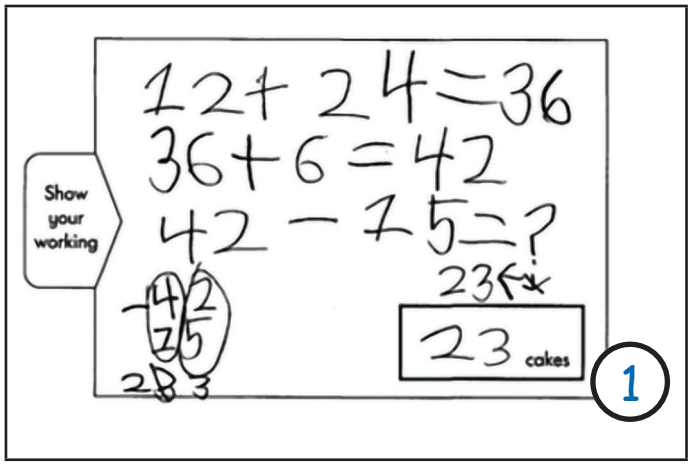
Eliza: 1 mark



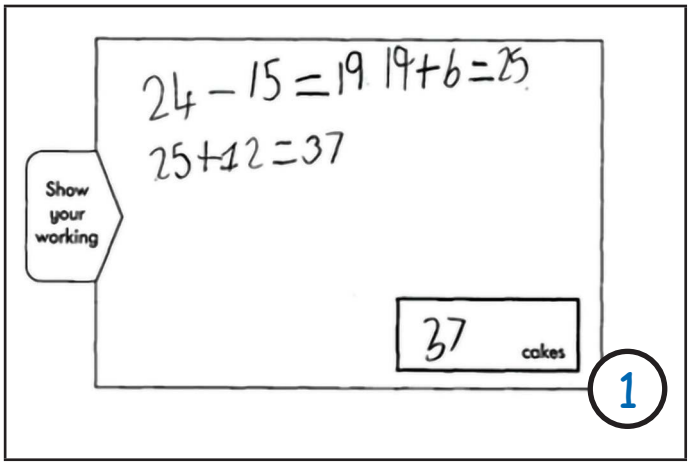
Aston and Eliza have both used different methods to calculate their final answer. Aston has drawn the trays with the correct number of 'cakes'. He has crossed off 15 and made a counting error. Despite this, Aston's pictorial method is complete and correct, therefore Aston is awarded **ONE** mark.

Unlike Aston, Eliza has not provided a complete method. However, her working does show a partial method correctly evaluated. Eliza is awarded **ONE** mark for sight of 3.

Sophie: 1 mark



Luca: 1 mark



Sophie and Luca have both been awarded **ONE** mark for evidence of a complete, correct method. In Sophie's working, she has evaluated her first and second step correctly. Her final step is appropriate, but she has made an arithmetic error. Although her final answer is incorrect, Sophie is awarded **ONE** mark for a correct method.

Luca has made an arithmetic error in his first step with an incorrect answer of 19. However, he continues to use the answer of 19 correctly in his next two steps which is a complete, correct method. His final answer of 37 is incorrect but Luca is awarded **ONE** mark for his method.

Note: If Sophie's method was not complete and correct, she would have been awarded **ONE** mark for sight of 42.

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