Primary maths

Vocabulary progression document

September 2025

White Rose MATHS

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.

© White Rose Education 2024

Place value

White Rose MATHS

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

White Rose MATHS

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)

White Rose MATHS

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)

White Rose MATHS

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)

White Rose MATHS

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

White Rose MATHS

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

White Rose MATHS

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

White Rose MATHS

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

White Rose MATHS

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				