



The New National Curriculum

a guide for Y6 Parents

The new curriculum came into schools in September 2014. However, for children in Year 2 and Year 6, the new curriculum won't become statutory until September 2015. This is because these children are in the last year of the Key Stages. At this age, children are formally assessed to judge their progress against the requirements of the curriculum. Because the 2014 curriculum will only have been in place for nine months, these children will be assessed against the requirements of the old curriculum in the National Curriculum Tests. New tests will be produced for the summer of 2016 to assess work from the new curriculum.

What's changed?

English, Maths and Science remain very important and are considered the core subjects in both primary and secondary education. The National Curriculum sets out in some detail what must be taught in each of these subjects, and they will take up a substantial part of your child's learning week.

Alongside these are the familiar foundation subjects: Art, Computing, Design & Technology, Foreign Languages (age 7+ only), Geography, History, Music, and Physical Education. For these foundation subjects, the details in the curriculum are significantly briefer: schools have much more flexibility regarding what they cover in these subjects.

Much of the publicity about the changes to the curriculum has focussed on **'higher expectations'** in various subjects, and it is certainly the case that in some areas the content of the new primary curriculum is significantly more demanding than in the past. For example, in mathematics there is now much greater focus on the skills of arithmetic and also on working with fractions. In science, a new unit of work on evolution is introduced for Year 6; work which would have previously been studied in secondary school. In English lessons there will now be more attention paid to the study of grammar and spelling; an area which was far less notable in previous curriculums.

High Achievers

If your child is achieving well, rather than moving on to the following year group's work we will encourage more in-depth and investigative work to allow a greater mastery and understanding of concepts and ideas.

Tests your child will take

Lots of schools use tests at all stages of their work. For the most part, these are part of a normal classroom routine, and support teachers' assessment. However, at certain stages of schooling there are also national tests which must be taken by all children in state schools. Often informally known as 'SATS', the National Curriculum Tests are compulsory for children at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children in these year groups will undertake tests in Reading, Mathematics, and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling. The Year 6 tests will be sent away for marking, and results will be reported to schools and parents at the end of the year.

Where previously these tests – and other teacher assessments – were graded in levels (between 1 and 6) from 2016 the tests will be reported as a scaled score, with a score of 100 representing the expected level for each age group.

Mathematics in Year 6

By the end of Year 6, children are expected to be confident with the use of all four standard methods for written calculations, and to have secured their knowledge of the key number facts for the four operations. Their work will focus more on fractions, ratio, proportion and the introduction of algebra.

In May of Year 6, children will take an arithmetic test of 30 minutes and two broader mathematics tests of 40 minutes each. These will be sent away for marking, with the results coming back before the end of the year. Your child's teacher will also make an assessment of whether or not your child has reached the expected standard by the end of the Key Stage.

Number and Place Value

- ◆ Work with numbers up to 10 million (10,000,000) including negative numbers
- ◆ Round any number to any required number of digits or magnitude

Parent Tip

Playing traditional games such as battleships or even draughts and chess, is great for exploring coordinates and movements across the coordinate grid.

Calculations

- ◆ Use the standard method of long multiplication for calculations of four-digit numbers by two-digit numbers
- ◆ Use the standard method of long division for calculations of four-digit numbers by two-digit numbers
- ◆ Identify common factors, common multiples and prime numbers
- ◆ Carry out complex calculations according to the mathematical order of operations
- ◆ Solve complex problems using all four operations

The mathematical order of operations requires that where calculations are written out in long statements, first calculations in brackets are completed, then any multiplication or division calculations, and finally any addition or subtraction. So, for example, the calculation $4 + 3 \times (6 + 1)$ has a solution of 25, not 43 or 49.

Ratio and Proportion

- ◆ Find percentages of quantities, such as 15% of £360
- ◆ Use ratio to explain relationships and solve problems
- ◆ Use simple scale factors for drawings, shapes or diagrams

Fractions and Decimals

- ◆ Use common factors to simplify fractions, or to add fractions with different denominators
- ◆ Place any group of fractions into size order
- ◆ Multiply pairs of fractions together
- ◆ Divide fractions by whole numbers, for example $1/3 \div 2 = 1/6$
- ◆ Use division to calculate the decimal equivalent of a fraction
- ◆ Know and use common equivalences between fractions, decimals and percentages, such as $1/2 = 0.5 = 50\%$

Are expected to know all their times tables up to 12 x 12 by Y6

English in Year 6

In upper Key Stage 2 your child will increasingly meet a wider range of texts and types of writing, and will be encouraged to use their skills in a broader range of contexts. Their knowledge of grammar will also increase as they prepare for the National Curriculum Tests to be taken in the summer term of Year 6. Year 6 children will take a reading test of about one hour, a grammar and punctuation test of about forty-five minutes, and a spelling test of twenty words. These will be sent away for marking, with the results coming back before the end of the year. Your child's teacher will also make an assessment of whether or not your child has reached the expected standard by the end of the Key Stage.

Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Years 5 and 6, some focuses may include:

- ◆ speak clearly in a range of contexts, using Standard English where appropriate
- ◆ monitor the reactions of listeners and react accordingly
- ◆ consider different viewpoints, listening to others and responding with relevant views
- ◆ use appropriate language, tone and vocabulary for different purposes

Reading Skills

- ◆ Read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays and reference books
- ◆ Learn a range of poetry by heart
- ◆ Perform plays and poems using tone, volume and intonation to convey meaning
- ◆ Use knowledge of spelling patterns and related words to read aloud and understand new words
- ◆ Make comparisons between different books, or parts of the same book
- ◆ Read a range of modern fiction, classic fiction and books from other cultures and traditions
- ◆ Identify and discuss themes and conventions across a wide range of writing
- ◆ Discuss understanding of texts, including exploring the meaning of words in context
- ◆ Ask questions to improve understanding of texts
- ◆ Summarise ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details
- ◆ Predict future events from details either written in a text or by 'reading between the lines'
- ◆ Identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- ◆ Discuss how authors use language, including figurative language, to affect the reader
- ◆ Make book recommendations, giving reasons for choices
- ◆ Participate in discussions about books, building on and challenging ideas
- ◆ Explain and discuss understanding of reading
- ◆ Participate in formal presentations and debates about reading
- ◆ Provide reasoned justifications for views

Themes & Conventions

As children's experience of a range of texts broadens, they may begin to notice conventions, such as the use of first person for diary-writing, or themes such as heroism or quests.

English in Year 6 *continued...*

Writing skills

- ◆ Write with increasing speed, maintaining legibility and style
- ◆ Spell some words with silent letters, such as knight and solemn
- ◆ Recognise and use spellings for homophones and other often-confused words from the Y5/6 list
- ◆ Use a dictionary to check spelling and meaning
- ◆ Identify the audience and purpose before writing, and adapt accordingly
- ◆ Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary to change or enhance meaning
- ◆ Develop setting, atmosphere and character, including through dialogue
- ◆ Write a summary of longer passages of writing
- ◆ Use a range of cohesive devices
- ◆ Use advanced organisational and presentational devices, such as bullet points
- ◆ Use the correct tense consistently throughout a piece of writing
- ◆ Ensure correct subject and verb agreement
- ◆ Perform compositions using appropriate intonation, volume and movement
- ◆ Use a thesaurus
- ◆ Use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
- ◆ Use modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility
- ◆ Use relative clauses
- ◆ Recognise vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal use
- ◆ Use passive verbs to affect the presentation of information
- ◆ Use the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause
- ◆ Recognise the difference in informal and formal language
- ◆ Use grammatical connections and adverbials for cohesion
- ◆ Use ellipses, commas, brackets and dashes in writing
- ◆ Use hyphens to avoid ambiguity
- ◆ Use semi-colons, colons and dashes between independent clauses
- ◆ Use a colon to introduce a list
- ◆ Punctuate bullet points consistently

Grammar Help

For many parents, the grammatical terminology used in

schools may not be familiar. Here are some useful reminders of some of the terms used:

- ◆ **noun phrase:** a group of words which takes the place of a single noun.
Example: The big brown dog with the fluffy ears.
- ◆ **modal verb:** a verb that indicates possibility. These are often used alongside other verbs. Example: will, may, should, can.
- ◆ **relative clause:** a clause which adds extra information or detail. Example: The boy who was holding the golden ticket won the prize.
- ◆ **passive verb:** a form of verb that implies an action being done to, rather than by, the subject. Example: The boy was bitten by the dog.
- ◆ **perfect form:** a form of verb that implies that an action is completed. Example: The boy has walked home.

Figurative language includes metaphorical phrases such as 'raining cats and dogs' or 'an iron fist', as well as using language to convey meaning, for example by describing the Sun as 'gazing down' upon a scene.

Cohesive devices are words or phrases used to link different parts of writing together. These may be pronouns such as 'he' or 'it' to avoid repeating a name, or phrases such as 'After that...' or 'Meanwhile' to guide the reader through the text.

English in Year 6 *continued...*

Spellings:

1. Accommodate
2. Achieve
3. Aggressive
4. Amateur
5. Ancient
6. Appreciate
7. Awkward
8. Cemetery
9. Committee
10. Communicate
11. Community
12. Conscience
13. Conscious
14. Controversy
15. Convenience
16. Correspond
17. Criticise
18. Disastrous
19. Embarrass
20. Environment
21. Especially
22. Existence
23. Familiar
24. Foreign
25. Government
26. Harass
27. Hindrance
28. Interfere
29. Interrupt
30. Leisure
31. Mischievous
32. Muscle
33. Necessary
34. Neighbour
35. Nuisance
36. Parliament
37. Physical
38. Prejudice
39. Privilege
40. Pronunciation
41. Relevant
42. Soldier
43. Stomach

44. Sufficient

45. Symbol

46. System

47. Temperature

48. Thorough

49. Twelfth

50. Variety

Punctuation

- ◆ Use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
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Parent Tip

As children get older, they will increasingly take responsibility for their own work and homework tasks. That's not to say that parents can't help though. Encourage your child to work independently on their homework, but also take the opportunity to discuss it with them and to have them explain their understanding to you.