Future Stories

Familiarisation Guide

Information for Parents

Entrance Test for Entry into Year 7 (QEGS)

This is the Familiarisation Guide for the Future Stories Community Enterprise (FSCE) Entrance Test for entry into Year 7. It is designed to help children, their parents and teachers understand the format of our test papers and their corresponding answer sheets.

FSCE's aim is to make Grammar School testing more accessible for all children: regardless of their background, their primary school, or any disability.

This section contains some background information for parents to help them reassure their child and encourage natural curiosity.

This guide is the only genuine resource produced for the FSCE Ltd Entrance Test
There is no charge for this Familiarisation Guide

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Guidance for Parents

FSCE and the Grammar Schools we work with are against any preparation that disrupts a child's usual schooling or creates unnecessary anxiety.

Surveys have shown that the word most commonly used by current children who received tutoring was 'stressful' - we desperately want to avoid this.

We also know that lots of tutors are expensive, of unreliable quality and over-teach unnecessary content.

Their claims about 'exam success rates' are often baseless too.

Instead, we encourage children to:

- Work well at primary school, with maximum attendance and engagement in all areas of school life;
- Develop strong reading habits by reading widely and deeply;
- Practise the fluency of their maths and problem-solving skills through real life day to day examples;
- Engage in imaginative and critical thinking discussions around the dinner table;
- Focus on calmness and confidence rather than pressure and stress;
- Enjoy a wide range of learning in primary school, and see learning as a lifelong adventure;
- Trust that they already have the knowledge required to access the questions.

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What is the test like and why?

What is the test like?	Why is it like that?
It tests application of knowledge and skills from KS2 subjects taught up to and including the Year 5 programme of study	This is the national curriculum and therefore is the fairest way to assess the content which all children in all primary schools will be taught and have access to.
The test is extensively trialled and consulted upon with primary school children and teachers.	To ensure that all the content is accessible and most likely to have been encountered. Where content is less likely to have been encountered by all children, the necessary information will be given in the test paper and children will apply this information to a novel situation.
Subjects tested may include any of the following: Art & Design, Computing, Design & Technology, English, Geography, History, Languages, Maths, Music, Physical Education, Science.	Grammar School curriculum is very broad, with some schools starting with over 20 different subjects in Year 7, so we want to select children who are interested in a range of subjects.
The type of questions, subjects, content and format will change from year to year.	This is so that no tutor, parent or company can claim to have any knowledge about what the FSCE entrance test will be like. Equally, we want to assess children's ability to think clearly in unexpected situations. The questions are not about remembering facts, it is therefore not necessary to memorise, for example, Kings and Queens of England.
There are NO past papers and NO practice papers that have been authorised by FSCE.	We do not want anybody to have to pay to prepare for the test, and the test format/content changes from year to year, so any material would be immediately out of date.
More focused on application than recall	We want to assess resilient thinkers, not robots.
Unlike any other 11+ entrance test	Grammar Schools are unique, and the test should reflect that.

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ART AND DESIGN – what we are looking for

Your child should be able to think critically, evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design as well as know how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation.

Appreciate a wide range of art and design techniques of colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.

Have an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design.

Understand the differences and similarities in practices and disciplines between different artists, craft makers and designers.

What you can do to help your child prepare for Art and Design:

Encourage exploration of "why" and "how" in art: When your child looks at a painting or sculpture, ask questions like "Why do you think the artist chose these colours?" or "How does the texture make you feel?" Help them use art vocabulary—line, shape, pattern—to describe what they see and form their own opinions.

Share and discuss diverse artworks together: Look at art from different times and cultures—classical Greek pottery, Japanese woodblock prints, modern street art. Talk about what's similar or different in style, materials, and purpose, so your child builds an awareness of a wide range of art and craft techniques.

Create a hands-on "technique corner" at home: Set aside simple supplies—watercolours, collage paper, clay, fabric scraps—and invite your child to experiment freely with colour mixing, patterns, texture rubbing, and 3D form. Encourage them to notice how each material behaves and to talk about their discoveries.

Compare artists' approaches and spark discussion: Pick two artists or makers—perhaps a sculptor and a textile designer. Show examples of their work and ask your child to identify similarities (use of pattern, shape) and differences (materials, function). Prompt them to explain which techniques they'd like to try and why.

Build simple critique into drawing time: After your child completes a sketch or craft, ask them to point out one part they love (colour choice, composition) and one part they'd change next time. This habit of evaluation helps them think critically and use the language of art to analyse their own work.

Celebrate creativity across disciplines: Encourage your child to explore connections between art, craft and design: for example, how a fashion designer uses pattern like a painter, or how a ceramicist thinks about form like a sculptor. Discuss how these practices overlap and contribute to culture and even to industries.

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COMPUTING – what we are looking for

Use computational thinking and creativity to understand and change the world, provides insights into both natural and artificial systems.

- Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science
- Analyse problems in computational terms
- Evaluate and apply information technology, including new or unfamiliar technologies, analytically to solve problems
- Use logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work to accomplish specific goals and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs.

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Computing:</u>

Encourage curiosity about how technology shapes the world: Talk with your child about everyday systems—traffic lights, online maps, video games—and ask, "How do you think this works?" or "What would you change to make it better?"

Explore core concepts through play: Use unplugged activities to illustrate computing principles—e.g. have your child act as a "robot" following your precise instructions (algorithm) to reach a toy, then refine the steps when it goes wrong (debugging).

Break down problems into steps: When your child faces a challenge (planning a simple board game, organising chores), ask them to list each action in order, identify where it might fail, and propose fixes—mirroring problem decomposition and debugging.

Experiment with new tools together: Introduce a simple coding environment (Scratch, Code.org) or an unfamiliar app. Let your child explore its features, solve a small task (make a sprite move, create a digital story), and reflect on how the tool helped them.

Link coding to real-world goals: Challenge your child to write a short program or flowchart that solves a daily problem—turning on a lamp at a set time, sorting toys by colour—and discuss how the algorithm achieves that goal.

Encourage "what if" testing: When they create a sequence of commands, have them change one instruction at a time to see different outcomes, reinforcing how algorithms respond to inputs and how to spot errors.

Discuss technology choices analytically: Compare two ways of doing a task (e.g. writing a story by hand vs. typing in a word processor). Ask: "Which is faster? Which catches mistakes? Why might you choose one over the other?"

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DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY – what we are looking for

Using creativity and imagination, children design and make products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. Children learn how to take risks, becoming resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable citizens. Through the evaluation of past and present design and technology, they develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world.

- critique, evaluate and test their ideas and products and the work of others
- understand and apply the principles of nutrition
- understand where food comes from, seasonality, and where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed.
- engage in an iterative process of designing and making within a range of relevant contexts
- Use design criteria to inform and evaluate the design of purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other particular users, as well as considering the views of others to improve their work
- Understand how to communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock-ups and, where appropriate, information and communication technology
- Select from a wide range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks
- select from a wide range of materials and components according to their functional and aesthetic characteristics
- explore and evaluate a range of existing products
- exploring how complex structures can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable
- explore and understand the use of mechanical and electrical systems in products
- understand how key events and individuals in design and technology have helped shape the world
- apply their understanding of computing to program, monitor and control products

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Design and Technology:</u>

Encourage hands-on problem solving and creative thinking

Turn everyday moments into mini design challenges that build your child's confidence, resourcefulness, and understanding of how design impacts our world.

Everyday product critiques: At breakfast, ask your child what they like or would improve about a cereal box, a toaster, or a lunchbox. Encourage them to suggest one change—shape, material, colour—that would make it more functional or fun.

Cooking as design and nutrition: Plan and prepare a simple meal together. Discuss the design criteria (taste, colour, health). Talk about where each ingredient came from, why seasonality matters, and how you could change the recipe to be healthier or more appealing.

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Re-use and recycle projects: Give your child scrap materials (cardboard tubes, fabric offcuts, bottle caps). Challenge them to design and build a useful new product—phone stand, pencil holder, bird feeder—testing different ways to make it strong and stable.

User-centred design discussions: When your child makes something, ask "Who will use this? What do they need?" Encourage them to gather a friend's or sibling's feedback and then iterate—modify the design based on that input.

Sketching and prototyping: Provide plain paper, tracing paper, and simple modelling clay. Prompt your child to draw multiple thumbnail sketches of an idea (e.g. a new backpack clip), choose one, then build a quick mock-up to test its shape and function.

Tool exploration sessions: Let your child experiment with cutting, joining, and shaping materials, noticing which tools work best for each task.

Material choice conversations: When crafting, talk through why they chose cardboard vs. plastic, fabric vs. paper. Ask how each material's qualities—flexibility, strength, texture—affect the final product's look and use.

Reverse-engineering everyday items: Take apart a simple broken gadget (old radio, toy) to see gears, pulleys, or circuits. Discuss how mechanical or electrical parts work together, then brainstorm how they might redesign it to be better.

Study designers and inventions: Read short stories about famous inventors (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Ada Lovelace, local innovators). Discuss how their designs changed daily life and ask your child to imagine a modern problem they could solve in the same way.

Integrate computing and control: Use a simple microcontroller kit or coding app to program LED lights or a small motor. Challenge your child to build a model (e.g. robotic arm, automatic door) that responds to code, linking design with digital control.

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ENGLISH – what we are looking for

Remember: English can be used across all KS2 Curriculum subjects

Children with a strong command of the written word, who can read easily, fluently and with good understanding.

Through an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage, children have:

- a wide vocabulary that enables them to understand sophisticated nuance and depth of meaning in texts;
- an explicit understanding of grammar that gives them more conscious control and choice when interpreting complex language;
- knowledge of linguistic conventions that ensures clarity and understanding of reading.

<u>The sorts of skills we will be testing for are:</u>

Correct choice and consistent use of present and past tense ensures clarity in time references, helping readers follow events in a logical sequence and avoid confusion/misinterpretation of actions.
*Example: "He **walked** to school yesterday" (past) vs. "He **walks** to school every day" (present).*

Understanding of the progressive form of verbs (present/past) to mark actions in progress to see depth and detail in storytelling by emphasising duration.
*Example: "She **was running** across the field" (past action happening over time) vs. "She **ran** across the field" (just says it happened).*

Identify similar or opposite word families to demonstrate broad vocabulary and understand the relationships between words that aid comprehension.
Example: "Happy" (similar: joyful, cheerful; opposite: sad).

Recognition of how inverted commas and punctuation help to correctly interpret meaning, emphasis, tone and speaker intention.
*Example: He said, "**I'm excited!**" shows he's really happy. Without the speech marks, it's hard to know who said it.*

Identifying the difference between apostrophes used to mark plural and possession so as to avoid ambiguity in ownership.
*Example: "The **girl's** book" means one girl owns it. "The **girls'** book" means a group of girls own it.*

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Identification of commas after fronted adverbials improves sentence clarity by signalling introductory phrases that help readers pause appropriately.
*Example: "**Before lunch,** we went to the park." The comma shows when the action happened.*

Appreciation of the use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme that enhances readability by structuring information logically and helps convey shifts in ideas or arguments effectively.

Identifying how sentences or paragraphs have been linked together (for example with adverbials of time, place and number) in a logical flow with devices that build cohesion.
*Example: "**First**, we packed our bags. **Then**, we went to the beach. **After that**, we had ice cream."*

Spot appropriate choice of pronoun or noun for cohesion, clarity of subject and avoiding repetition.
*Example: "Lucy was tired. **She** went to bed early." We use "she" instead of repeating "Lucy".*

Understanding of how noun phrases expanded with adjectives, nouns, and prepositional phrases enhance imagery and detail in writing.
*Example: "The **small, fluffy puppy** with a red collar" paints a clearer picture than just "puppy".*

How nouns and verbs use prefixes (dis-, de-, mis-, over-, re-/ super-, anti-, auto-) and how nouns and adjectives have been converted into verbs using suffixes (-ate, -ise, -ify) to allow for comprehension of more expressive, altered or opposite language meaning.
Example: "Disagree" means not agree. "Beautify" means to make something beautiful.

How relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that add extra detail that enhances sentence complexity and fluency without needing a new sentence.
*Example: "The boy **who won the race** is my friend." The extra part tells us more about the boy.*

Comprehend how adverbs or modal verbs indicate degrees of possibility, uncertainty, probability or obligation.
*Example: "He **might** come to the party" (maybe). "You **must** do your homework" (you have to).*

How ideas of time, place, and cause are logically connected using conjunctions, adverbs, or prepositions.
*Example: "We stayed inside **because** it was raining." "We'll go swimming **after** lunch."*

Distinguishing between homophones/near-homophones to prevent confusion and understand a text correctly.
Example: "There," "their," and "they're" sound the same but mean different things.

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What you can do to help your child prepare for English:

Develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment;

Read from a variety of genres to enable transferability;

Read actively to identify how authors use grammar, vocabulary and punctuation purposefully;

Play fun free language games such as Taboo, Word Association, 20 questions, categories or story chains;

Keep a diary, with an aim to use certain devices each time;

Expose children to **high quality and wide variety** of spoken and written language at home;

Learn and apply grammar through reading, writing and speaking rather than separately from it;

Apply the more complex language used already in speech into writing.

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GEOGRAPHY – what we are looking for

Understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the dynamic formation and use of landscapes and environments over time.

What you can do to help your child prepare for Geography:

Encourage curiosity about the world by discussing news stories, documentaries or YouTube clips about different places and environments

Explore maps together (paper or online), pointing out key features, symbols and compass directions in everyday contexts

Play map-based games (e.g. "treasure hunts" with grid references, or "spot the feature" on Google Earth) to make reading coordinates fun

Involve your child in simple "**fieldwork**" at home or nearby—observe weather, sketch the garden or local street, tally birds or plants—and talk through the findings

Compare two places (home vs. holiday spot, city vs. countryside) by listing similarities and differences in climate, land use, buildings and transport

Use photo collections or family holiday albums to identify physical features (rivers, hills) and human features (roads, houses), and discuss how each came to be

Discuss how places change over time—look at "then and now" photos (old family snaps, Google Street View time slider) and talk about why changes happened

Point out real-world uses of latitude/longitude (e.g. finding locations on a GPS app) and time zones (e.g. calling relatives abroad at appropriate times)

Encourage use of compass directions during walks ("The shop is north of the park") to build automatic sense of N, S, E, W

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HISTORY – what we are looking for

Ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps children to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

- gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms
- understand history as a coherent, chronological narrative
- understand significance about aspects of the history of the wider world
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for History:</u>

Encourage curious questioning

At dinnertime, ask your child "Why do you think people in Victorian times used coal for fuel?" or "What might have happened if the Romans never built roads?"
Prompt them to explain their ideas and consider other possibilities ("How else could they have travelled?"), building critical thinking and perspective.

Build and talk through timelines together

Help your child draw a simple timeline on a long piece of paper: mark key personal events (birth, first day at school) alongside a few historical events (Great Fire of London, first moon landing).
Chat about the order of events ("Which came first?"), so they learn history as a connected, chronological story.

Discuss "why it matters" (significance)

When reading or watching anything historical, ask "Which invention changed people's lives the most—printing press, steam engine, or telephone? Why?"

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Encourage them to pick one, explain their choice, and compare with yours to appreciate different viewpoints.

Compare then and now (continuity & change)

Take an everyday object (e.g. a bicycle) and talk about how it looked and worked 100 years ago versus today.
Ask your child to list similarities and differences, helping them grasp how societies and technology evolve over time.

Weigh evidence from different sources

Read two short accounts of the same event (for instance, an evacuee's diary vs. a history textbook summary).
Ask your child: "What clues tell us this diary is personal? How does that differ from the textbook? Which would you trust more for details—and why?"

Use historical vocabulary in real talk

Introduce words such as "civilisation," "empire," "revolution," or "culture" when you come across them in stories or documentaries.
Encourage your child to use these terms in sentences: e.g. "The Mayan civilisation built pyramids." This helps them deploy abstract terms naturally.

Frame and answer "historically valid" questions

Teach your child to ask questions like "What caused the Romans to leave Britain?" or "What were the consequences of the steam engine?"
Help them structure a short answer: start with cause, describe the event, then explain one or two consequences.

Practice constructing evidence-based stories

Give your child a small pile of "sources" (a newspaper clipping, a family photo, a map). Ask them to piece together what happened in a simple past scenario—writing a few sentences or telling you orally.
Discuss how each source helps us understand the past, and why some sources might conflict.

Highlight long- and short-term perspectives

When discussing any historical change (e.g. introduction of electricity), talk about immediate effects ("homes had light at night") and long-term effects ("industries grew, towns got bigger").
Encourage your child to think: "What changed at once, and what changed gradually over decades?"
Each of these actions turns everyday moments into history lessons—helping your child question, connect, and build a rich, evidence-based understanding of the past.

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LANGUAGES – what we are looking for

A liberation from insularity, foster children's curiosity and learn new ways of thinking

- It should enable children to understand and communicate ideas, facts and feelings, focused on familiar and routine matters, using their knowledge of phonology, grammatical structures and vocabulary
- explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words
- read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing
- broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words that are introduced into familiar written material
- adapt phrases to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly
- key features and patterns of the language; how to apply these, for instance, to build sentences; and how these differ from or are similar to English.

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Languages:</u>

There is no particular language that will be tested so no child will ever be at a disadvantage. Your child will have encountered a language at school so practice with that one – it does not matter which one.

Encourage everyday use of the new language

Label common items at home (e.g. mirror, door, fridge) with sticky notes in the target language so your child sees and uses the words daily.
Prompt simple phrases at routine times ("¿Cómo estás?" at breakfast, "Merci" when you pass something) to build confidence in familiar contexts.

Sing songs and learn rhymes together

Find catchy children's songs or nursery rhymes in the language (YouTube or streaming apps) and sing along—this helps link spelling, sounds, and meaning naturally.

Read simple stories and share meaning

Choose picture books or short texts with parallel translations (e.g. English on one page, target language on the other). Read together, helping your child spot familiar words and infer new ones from context.
Ask comprehension questions in English and the target language ("What is the cat doing? ¿Qué hace el gato?") to ensure understanding.

Adapt and create sentences

Give your child a simple model sentence (e.g. "J'aime les pommes" / "Me gustan las manzanas"). Ask them to swap in new words ("J'aime les chiens," "Me gustan los gatos") to express different ideas.
Turn this into a game: take turns changing one word at a time to build silly or surprising sentences.

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Highlight grammar and compare with English

When your child learns a new structure (e.g. adjective placement, verb conjugation), write side-by-side examples in English and the target language to show similarities and differences.

Encourage them to explain the rule back to you in their own words (“In French, adjectives come after the noun”) to reinforce understanding.

Incorporate culture to spark curiosity

Cook a simple recipe from a country that speaks the language, using key vocabulary (ingredients, actions) in that language as you cook together.

Watch a short cartoon or read a folk tale from that culture, then discuss new words and patterns you noticed.

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MATHS – what we are looking for

Children whose fluency in the fundamentals of mathematics means that they are able to focus on grappling effectively with increasingly complex problems in context and with increasingly large integers. They will therefore be able to:

- solve problems by efficiently applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.
- make rich connections across mathematical ideas to develop mathematical reasoning and competence in solving increasingly sophisticated problems through written and mental methods of calculation (no calculators). They should also apply their mathematical knowledge to science and other subjects.

<u>The sorts of skills we will be testing for are:</u>

Solve number problems and practical problems that require reading, writing, ordering, rounding and comparing numbers (including negative numbers) up to and over 1,000,000.
Example: Is -5 colder than 3 degrees? Yes! Or: Which is bigger—1,234,567 or 1,234,765?

Solve addition and subtraction multi-step problems in contexts with increasingly large numbers, deciding which operations and methods to use and why, including rounding to check/determine accuracy.
Example: If a zoo had 345,217 visitors last year and 289,128 this year, how many fewer visitors came this year? Round the numbers to check: 345,000 – 289,000 = ?

Solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and a combination of these. Use multiples and (prime) factors, (non)prime numbers, square and cube numbers. Use long multiplication and short division, including remainders. Multiply and divide both whole numbers and those with decimals, including scaling by simple fractions and problems involving simple rates.
Example: Sofia has 96 sweets and 12 small boxes. She wants to divide the sweets equally among the boxes. How many sweets go into each box? 96 ÷12 = 8 sweets per box; Sofia notices that 96 is a multiple of 12. List all the prime factors of 96: Start by dividing: 96 ÷ 2 = 48, 48 ÷ 2 = 24, 24 ÷ 2 = 12, 12 ÷ 2 = 6, 6 ÷ 2 = 3, 3 ÷ 3 = 1. The prime factors are: ***2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3.*** *That means the prime factorisation is:* $2^5 \times 3$

Solve problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages. Be able to convert, order, round, add, subtract and multiply equivalent fractions, (im)proper fractions, mixed numbers, decimal numbers and percentages.
Example: What's bigger, ¾ or 0.6? (Hint: ¾ = 0.75). Or: What's 25% of 40? That's 10!

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Use all four operations to solve problems involving measure, including converting between different units and using approximate equivalences. Measure, calculate, estimate and compare perimeters, volumes, areas and capacity of (ir)regular shapes.
Example: A rectangle is 4m long and 3m wide. What is its area? 4 × 3 = 12m².

Solve geometry problems in degrees that include 2D/3D cubes and other cuboids. Estimate, measure and compare acute, obtuse and reflex angles at a point and at other multiples of 90 degrees. Use the properties of rectangles to deduce related facts and find missing lengths and angles. Use reasoning to distinguish between (ir)regular polygons.
Example: A cuboid has a length of 10 cm, width of 4 cm, and height of 6 cm. How many faces does a cuboid have? A cuboid has 6 faces. What is the total surface area of the cuboid? Use the formula: 2 × (length × width + length × height + width × height) = 2 × (10×4 + 10×6 + 4×6) = 2 × (40 + 60 + 24) = 2 × 124 = 248 cm²

Solve comparison, sum and difference statistical problems using information presented in a line graph. Complete, read and interpret information in tables, including timetables.
Example: If a train leaves at 10:15 and arrives at 11:45, how long was the trip? 1 hour 30 minutes

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Maths:</u>

- Ensure you have a strong grasp of basic concepts, such as algebra, geometry, and arithmetic.
- Practice with real-world scenarios (e.g., budgeting, measurements).
- Engage in logic puzzles, games, and competitions.
- Trial and Error: Test different approaches if stuck.
- Working Backward: Start from the desired answer and trace the steps back.
- Pattern Recognition: Look for recurring sequences or structures.
- Logical Deduction: Use step-by-step reasoning to eliminate wrong answers.
- Break complex problems into smaller, manageable steps.
- Use diagrams, charts, or visual aids to simplify understanding.
- Think of multiple approaches to the same problem.

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MUSIC – what we are looking for

Develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon.

- listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music, and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music for a range of purposes

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Music:</u>

We are not assessing a child's ability in any particular instrument. A child will not be disadvantaged if they do not play a musical instrument.

Share and discuss diverse music together

Play pieces from different times and places (e.g. Baroque, jazz, pop, world music). Ask your child which they like best and why, helping them use words like "bright," "smooth," or "energetic."

Encourage them to compare two pieces ("How is the tempo different?" "Which has louder sections?") to build critical listening.

Explore the building blocks of music

Pick one dimension each week—pitch (high/low), rhythm (long/short), dynamics (loud/soft), tempo (fast/slow). Clap, sing, or play simple games identifying these in songs you know.

Use household items (pots, spoons, rubber bands) to experiment with timbre and texture. Talk about how different sounds combine.

Attend or watch live and recorded performances

Take your child to a school concert, community band, or watch an online recital. Beforehand, discuss what to listen for (a melody, a drumbeat, a solo). Afterward, ask them to describe one moment they remember.

Build a simple aural memory game: play a short phrase, pause, and have your child hum or clap it back.

Encourage creative music-making at home

Provide simple instruments or apps (keyboard, recorder, percussion). Challenge your child to create a short tune using two different pitches and two rhythms.

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Prompt them to compose a “sound story” for a scene (e.g. a storm at sea) by selecting sounds for dynamics (loud thunder), tempo (fast wind), and timbre (rattling).

Record and review their own performances

Let your child record themselves singing or playing. Listen back together and talk about what they did well and one thing to try differently next time.

Frame feedback positively: “I loved how steady your beat was—what if you tried playing that part a little softer?”

Connect music to other subjects and cultures

Link a piece of music to a historical period you study (e.g. Handel’s “Water Music” for Baroque). Discuss how the music reflects its time.

Explore songs in other languages or from different countries. Talk about how melody, rhythm, and instruments give clues to the culture.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION – what we are looking for

Opportunities for children to become physically confident in a way which supports their health and fitness. Opportunities to compete in sport and other activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect

- develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities
- Understand the skills of running, jumping, throwing and catching in isolation and in combination
- apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending in competitive games
- Recognise flexibility, strength, technique, control and balance
- compare their performances with previous ones and explore improvement

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Physical Education:</u>

This is not a test of practical sporting ability. There is no advantage to any child based on their individual sporting ability, including a particular sport, beyond that which is in the National Curriculum.

Analyse attack-and-defend games

Set up cone goals in the garden. Take turns trying to dribble or run past each other to score (attacking) and then swap roles (defending). Talk through fair ways to block and tag.

Build awareness of body

Do balance challenges (stand on one leg, walk heel-to-toe), strength moves (push-ups against a wall, chair-supported squats) and flexibility stretches (reach-and-touch toes, arm circles), turning them into fun "challenge of the day."

Compare basic defensive and offensive principles

Explain "space" and "marking" by playing "keep-away" with a soft ball: attacker tries to dodge, defender practices staying close without pushing.

Evaluate short clips

Video a 10-m sprint or a series of jumps. Watch together and praise good technique ("nice straight arms!"), then identify one small tweak ("let's bend your knees more on landing").

Suggest improvement goals

Keep a simple chart: date, activity (e.g. standing long jump), result (distance or count). Celebrate when they beat their personal best.

Emphasise fairness and respect in competition

After any game, ask: "How did you show respect to your opponent?" or "What fair play choice did you make today?" Reinforce that character matters more than winning.

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SCIENCE – what we are looking for

Children should develop a broad and deep scientific view of the world around them. They should do this through exploring, testing and developing ideas about everyday phenomena and the relationships between living things and familiar environments, and by beginning to analyse functions, relationships and interactions through controlling variables. They should ask their own questions about what they observe and make some decisions about which types of scientific enquiry are likely to be the most appropriate ways of answering them, including measuring accurately, observing changes over different periods of time, noticing patterns, grouping and classifying things via similarities/differences, carrying out comparative and fair tests and presenting data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions. They should draw conclusions, suggest improvements including repeat readings, use evidence to justify their ideas and use some scientific language to understand and predict how the world operates.

LIVING THINGS

- recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways including classification keys.
- understand the differences in the life cycles and reproduction of a variety of plants and animals.
- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- explore the functions of different parts of flowering plants and how their requirements for life and growth vary from plant to plant.
- construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey, as well as understanding that animals get nutrition from what they eat.
- identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement.
- recognise the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system and teeth in humans.

PROPERTIES AND CHANGES OF MATTER AND MATERIALS

- compare and group together different materials or rocks, according to their properties.
- observe that some materials change state when they are heated or cooled, and identify the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle.
- recognise that some materials will dissolve in liquid to form a solution, and describe how to recover a substance from a solution.
- use knowledge of solids, liquids and gases to decide how mixtures might be separated.
- give reasons, based on evidence from comparative and fair tests, for the particular uses of everyday materials.
- demonstrate that dissolving, mixing and changes of state are reversible changes but that some changes result in the formation of new materials, and that this kind of change is not usually reversible.

LIGHT AND SOUND

- recognise that they need light in order to see things, that dark is the absence of light and notice that light is reflected from surfaces.
- recognise that shadows are formed when the light from a light source is blocked by an opaque object and find patterns in the way that the size of shadows change.

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- recognise how sounds are made as vibrations from sounds travel through a medium to the ear and that sounds get fainter as the distance from the sound source increases.
- find patterns between the pitch of a sound and features of the object that produced it.
- find patterns between the volume of a sound and the strength of the vibrations that produced it.

FORCES AND MAGNETS
- compare how things move on different surfaces.
- notice that some forces need contact between two objects, but magnetic forces can act at a distance.
- describe magnets as having two poles and observe how magnets attract or repel each other depending on which poles are facing.
- compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of whether or not they are attracted to a magnet, and identify some magnetic materials.
- explain that unsupported objects fall towards the Earth because of the force of gravity acting between the Earth and the falling object.
- identify the effects of air resistance, water resistance and friction, that act between moving surfaces.
- recognise that some mechanisms, including levers, pulleys and gears, allow a smaller force to have a greater effect.

ELECTRICITY AND EARTH/SPACE
- recognise the functioning of a simple series electrical circuit, including the interaction of wiring, lamps, switches and batteries.
- recognise some common conductors and insulators, and associate metals with being good conductors.

EARTH AND SPACE
- recognise the movement of the Earth, Moon and other planets, relative to the Sun in the solar system.
- use the idea of the Earth's rotation to explain day and night and the apparent movement of the sun across the sky.

<u>What you can do to help your child prepare for Science:</u>

Encourage "wonder questions" at home

When your child notices something (a snail on the path, steam on a window), prompt them to ask "why?" or "how?" — then help them plan a tiny experiment (e.g. "What if we put the snail somewhere warmer?") to find out.

Turn the garden or kitchen into a mini-lab

Use everyday ingredients (water, sugar, salt, oil) to explore dissolving, mixing and changing state. Let your child predict what will happen, observe carefully, then draw or photograph the results.

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Create simple classification games

Collect leaves, rocks or even LEGO bricks and ask your child to sort them into groups by size, colour or texture. Introduce the idea of a "key" (a simple yes/no flowchart) to decide which group each item belongs to.

Observe life cycles in real time

Rearing caterpillars, beans in a jar or tadpoles in a tank helps your child see stages of growth. Encourage them to keep a diary of what changes each day and draw pictures of each stage.

Build and analyse food chains

Take photos or draw items from your fridge, garden or local park (plants, insects, pets). Help your child link them in a chain ("grass → rabbit → fox"), then talk about what happens if one link disappears.

Experiment with forces and motion

Roll toy cars on different surfaces (wood floor, carpet, grass) and time how far they go. Ask your child to explain why some surfaces slow the car more (introducing friction and resistance).

Explore light and shadows together

In a dark room, shine a torch on toys to cast shadows. Let your child move the toy closer and farther from the light to see how shadow size changes, and sketch the patterns they observe.

Investigate sound vibrations

Stretch rubber bands over an open box to make a homemade "guitar." Pluck different bands and ask your child which sounds are high-pitched or low-pitched, and why.

Build simple circuits safely

Using a small battery, wires and a bulb or LED, show your child how to make a circuit. Encourage them to test which materials conduct electricity (foil, paperclip, plastic) and record the results.

Track the water cycle at home

Fill a clear plastic bag with a little water, tape it to a sunny window, and watch evaporation and condensation over days. Ask your child to note where drops form and why.

Stargaze and discuss Earth's movements

In the evening, spot the Moon and stars. Explain that Earth's rotation makes day and night. Over a week, note how the Moon's shape (phase) changes and encourage your child to sketch it.

Use simple charts to compare results

Whenever your child runs tests—timing car rolls, measuring plant growth, counting dissolving sugar—help them make a bar chart or table. Then ask: "Which was fastest? Which grew most?" to draw conclusions.

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