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# Multiplication Tables Check: a parents' guide

All Y4 children in England have their multiplication skills formally tested in the summer term. We explain what parents need to know.



**P**rimary-school children are expected to know all their times tables up to  $12 \times 12$ . Under the current National Curriculum, children are supposed to know their times tables by the end of Y4, but, in the past, they weren't formally tested on them other than through multiplication questions in the Y6 maths SATs.

## The Multiplication Tables Check: who takes it?

The check has been introduced in English schools only. It is taken by children in Year 4, in the summer term (in June). The Multiplication Tables Check

(MTC) was voluntary in 2019, then cancelled because of COVID-19; it is now compulsory for all English schools. Schools will administer the MTC in the three-week period starting Monday 5 June 2023.

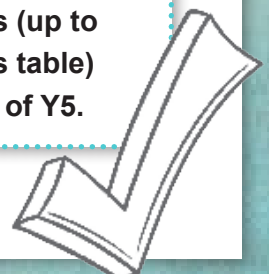
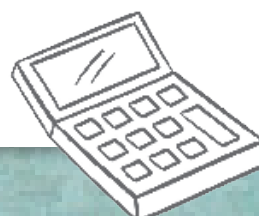
## How will the test work?

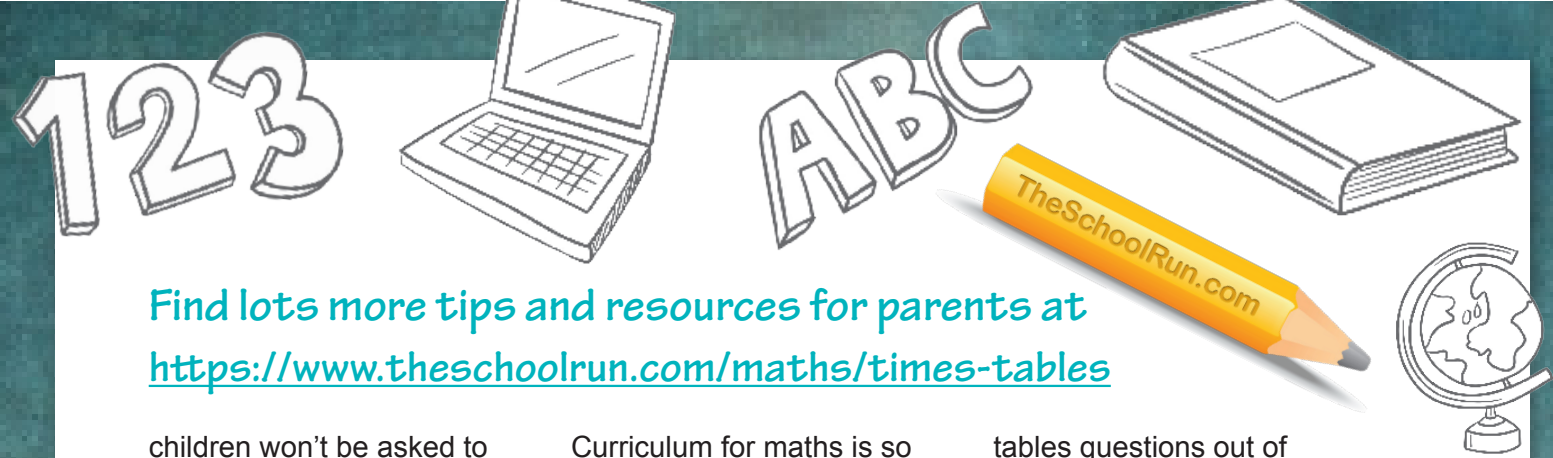
Children will answer multiplication questions against the clock on a computer or tablet, with 6 seconds to answer each one-mark question in a series of 25. The test will last no longer than 5 minutes and will be marked instantly. Each question will be presented in this format:  $n1 \times n2 = \underline{\quad}$ . Questions will be selected from the 121 number facts that make up the multiplication tables from 2 to 12, with a particular focus on the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 times tables as they are considered to be the most challenging. Each question will only appear once in any 25-question series, and

## Times tables learning in primary school

- Year 1 children are taught counting up in 2s, 5s and 10s (the simplest form of multiplication).
- Year 2 children are introduced to multiplication, division facts and repeated addition for numbers 2, 5 and 10.
- Year 3 is a crucial year for times tables learning. Children learn multiplication facts for the 3, 4 and 8 times tables.
- Year 4 is a 'completing' year for all multiplication facts up to  $12 \times 12$ .
- Children are expected to be really confident in all their times tables (up to the 12 times table) by the start of Y5.

Year 5 children are expected to be confident in all multiplication tables up to  $12 \times 12$





Find lots more tips and resources for parents at <https://www.theschoolrun.com/maths/times-tables>

children won't be asked to answer question reversals (so if they've answered  $3 \times 4$  they won't be asked about  $4 \times 3$ ). Multiplication facts will be the only things tested (there will be no problem solving or division facts in the check). Children will practise the test format before the official check begins.

### What if a child doesn't do well in the MTC?

There will be no "pass mark" and no child will "fail" the test. The DfE says the purpose of the check is to help teachers identify which children are falling behind. School-level results won't be made publicly available or be used in league tables.

### Help your child with times tables practice

Because the National

Curriculum for maths is so extensive, there is an expectation that parents will help their children learn their times tables at home and not rely exclusively on schools to bring them up to speed. Some of the techniques you can use include:

- Practising times tables by rote (old-fashioned chanting of each multiplication table).
- Asking your child times

tables questions out of order, such as 'What's  $11 \times 12$ ? What's  $5 \times 6$ ?'

- Asking your child the related division facts: 'What's  $8 \div 4$ ? What's  $9 \div 3$ ?'
- Using arrays to help your child memorise times tables – you can use fun objects like Smarties or Lego bricks to make it more entertaining.
- Using apps and games to help build speed.



### Why do we learn times tables?

In primary school, times tables knowledge is vital for quick mental maths calculations and problem solving, as well as for many of the topics children learn in KS2 (division, fractions, percentages). In secondary school, good multiplication skills are a great help when starting to learn algebra, as well as chemistry, physics, biology and computing, all of which depend heavily on maths knowledge.

[www.theschoolrun.com](https://www.theschoolrun.com)

- Singing times tables songs (there are loads online).

### Will all children take the MTC?

It is now compulsory in English schools, but teachers are likely to administer it in a very low-key way, as part of lessons. Some children won't even be aware they've taken an official test!

