Year 5 and 6 mathematics terms

Mathematics Terms

Angles Angles are formed when 2 straight lines meet at a point. They are measured using 'degrees,' and there are 360 degrees in a full circle. The symbol for degrees is a ° after the number.
Different sized angles have different names.

Acute angles are angles smaller than 90 degrees

Right angles are 90 degrees

Obtuse angles are larger than 90 degrees but smaller than 180 degrees.

Reflex angles are larger than 180 degrees but smaller than 360 degrees.

Area This is the amount of surface space in a shape. It's usually a measurement of 'squared centimetres' on a SATS paper, although you can have 'metres squared,' or even 'kilometres squared.' The square bit is a ² after the unit, so cm² or m².

Capacity This is the amount that something can hold, like a kettle or a jug. It can be measured in litres, millilitres or in cubic centimetres. With this measurement the cubic bit is a ³ after the unit. So, cm³ or m³. A useful tip is to remember:

☐ 1000cm³ is the same as 1 litre

☐ There are also 1000 millilitres in 1 litre

Degree The unit of measurement we use for measuring angles and also temperature.

Difference Sometimes you might know this as 'takeaway,' or 'subtract.' Difference means the same thing … to find the difference between 2 numbers, you need to take the smaller number away from the larger one. So, the difference between 12 and 4 is 8.

Equilateral triangle A type of triangle with sides of equal lengths and equal angles.
There are 3 other types of triangles:

Isosceles This is where 2 angles and 2 sides are the same

Scalene Where all the angles and sides are different measurements

Right angle Where one of the angles is a 90° right angle

Factors A factor is a whole number which will divide exactly into another whole number. So, a factor of 12 is the number 3. (Actually 12 has these factors: 1, 2, 3, 4 , 6 and 12. All these numbers will divide exactly into 12.)

Inverse operation This is a question that asks you to calculate the value of a 'missing gap.' The inverse operation is the opposite, so adding is the inverse of subtracting, or multiplying is the inverse of dividing. If you have a calculation with a missing gap, you can use the inverse operation to solve it.
To solve 127 + ? = 200 you could rewrite it as 200 − 127 = 73

Mean This means the same as 'average.' With this type of question you are usually given a set of results, such as:
"John, Paul, Sam and Sue walk to school. John and Sue take 20 minutes, Paul takes 32 minutes, Sam takes 11 minutes, Ranjit takes 16 minutes. Work out the mean

Multiple Multiples are whole numbers that are made by adding lots of a smaller number together. So, 12 is a multiple of 3 (which has been added together 4 times)… or 25 is a multiple of 5.

Parallel Parallel lines are two lines that are always the same distance apart and never touch.

Perpendicular Two lines which meet at a right angle.

Percentages % means 'out of 100.' 40% is the same as 40100.

Perimeter This is the distance around the outside of a shape. Imagine running around the edge of the playground, how far will you run?

Prime numbers are numbers which can only be divided by themselves and 1.
So, the prime numbers are 1,3, 5, 7, 11 and so on (and on, and on… prime numbers can get very large)

Product The product is the answer when numbers are multiplied. The product of 6 and 5 is 30 because 6×5=30.

Reflect A mirror image of a shape, usually across a line.

Scale factor The size of enlargement of a shape. E.g. increase this shape by a scale factor of 2 means that the length of each of the sides will be multiplied by 2.

Square number The total when a number is multiplied by itself. So, 1×1=1, 2×2 = 4, 3×3 = 9 All the square numbers upto 100 are: 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81 and 100

Sum To find the sum of a group of numbers, you add the numbers together.

Translate Translation is a term used in geometry to describe a function that moves a 2D shape on an axis a certain distance. The object is not altered in any other way. It is not rotated, reflected nor re-sized.