

Maths Talk: Mathematical Language

How many mathematical words do you think children are expected to know at the end of reception?



It has been estimated that for children to be able to access the KS1 mathematics curriculum fully, they need to be familiar with over 400 mathematical words and phrases!

Plan time to talk!

- When developing planning, remember to focus upon mathematical vocabulary at all stages. In a long-term overview, have some idea of the breadth of vocabulary to be included across the year
- Consider displaying key mathematical vocabulary and possible questions so that all adults can use them..
- Use observations of children's mathematical vocabulary and their interests to inform short-term planning. Ask children to explain the words they use during their mathematical play and support them to describe what they mean. This offers a greater understanding of children's thought processes and identifies which new maths words could be introduced to extend learning.
- Encourage children to explain how they have solved everyday problems. Questioning and discussion prompts can be powerful tools to boost children's mathematical thinking: '*What do you think...?*' '*Why ...?*' '*What will happen*

*if...?' 'What do you notice about...?' 'Can you see a pattern between...?'
'What if we try...?'*

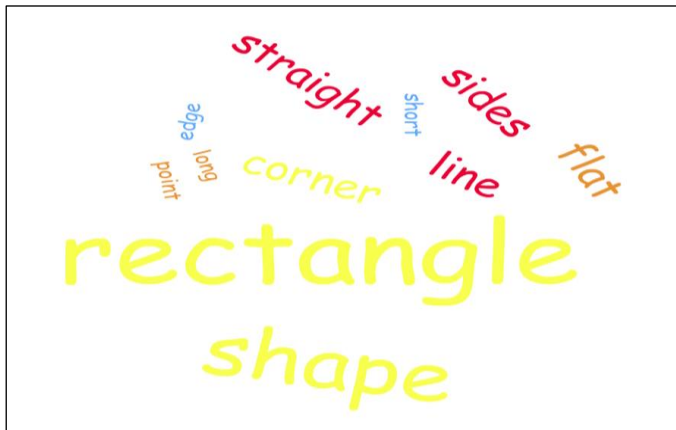
- Look for ways to share the mathematical words with families too. Involve parents and children in contributing to the development of mathematical word clouds for key concepts. These can be created online at www.worditout.com or www.wordle.net and positively influences both mathematical and descriptive vocabulary in children's general conversations.



A word cloud linked to the language of size.

If a word is included four times, it isn't repeated four times in the word cloud but is shown four times bigger.

If lots of children use words like 'small', 'little' and 'tiny' then these words will be bigger in the word cloud, and unique words like 'miniature' or 'petite' would be smaller.



Shape word cloud

A word cloud linked to the mathematical language used to describe a rectangle.

- Incorporate the use of mathematical language within the peer observation process to ensure practitioners are modelling vocabulary frequently and in meaningful contexts. Reflect upon practitioner's attitudes to mathematics to ensure adults are enthusiastic and that this is visible within in their facial expressions, their choice of words and their body language.