Why is it important for my child to know the times tables?

When children know their times tables, mental arithmetic becomes easier. Practising times tables also helps children to understand number and number relationships, and to see patterns in numbers. These skills will help them to master key concepts and move quickly through more complex maths problems with confidence. A thorough knowledge of multiplication and division facts will help children succeed in primary school and set them up for success at secondary school. As they grow older, knowing the times tables will help them with everyday activities like shopping, budgeting and cooking.

When does my child need to know their times tables?

In England, children will be expected to know the following in each year at primary school:

- **Year 1**: count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10.
- **Year 2**: be able to remember and use multiplication and division facts for the **2, 5 and 10** multiplication tables, including recognising odd and even numbers.
- **Year 3**: be able to remember and use multiplication and division facts for the **3, 4 and 8** multiplication tables, including recognising odd and even numbers.
- **Year 4**: be able to remember and use multiplication and division facts for the multiplication tables up to **12 x 12**.
- **Year 5**: revision of all multiplication and division facts for the multiplication tables up to **12 x 12**.
- **Year 6**: revision of all multiplication and division facts for the multiplication tables up to **12 x 12**.

Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check

The KS2 Multiplication Test Check (MTC) is a new statutory test that the government are bringing in for Y4 children in 2020.

How can I help my child learn their times tables at home?

Children need to be able to recall any times tables answer within two or three seconds - *preferably in one second*. That leaves no time for counting the way up to the answer from 2x, 3x, 4x etc - the answer must 'pop out of memory' pretty much instantly.

Language and Times Tables

There are many ways to say the tables and they're all correct - but it helps if you're consistent and if you adopt the language your child already uses at school.

For example, we have:

- three times eight is . . .
- three multiplied by
- three eights are . .
- three lots of four are . .

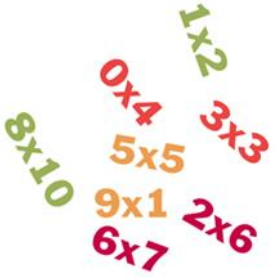
What are the Methods for Learning Tables?

- Stick to one times table at a time to minimise confusion
- Start with chanting and writing them out slowly in order
- Then move on to completing the answers quickly in order - on paper or verbally with your child
- Finally, move on to completing the answers in any order
- Keep reminding your child that 3 x 4 is the same as 4 x 3 - this effectively halves the number of tables facts
- Each times table has a square number 3x3, 7x7 etc
- Talk about the numbers are you encounter them "5 x 8 = 40 that's mummy's age" , "3 x 6 = 18 that's our house number" . . . *this makes more memory hooks*

Mastering the Times Tables

You can know all the times tables without really going on to master them. So, once your child has learned the times tables individually the next stage involves practising recalling them quickly in any random order.

If you are looking for some new ways to help your child learn their multiplication facts, ty these:



Chant the table being learnt over and over, but using a different silly voice each time. Or take it in turns with a partner to say one fact each, again in a silly voice. Or try singing the tables along with your favourite song!

Look at the way the different digits work in the 9 times table. What happens when we add the digits of each answer? Challenge: does this continue even past 12 x 9?

Make a multiplication grid. Use squared paper to create a 13 x 13 grid. Across the top row write the numbers 1 to 12, and down the left hand column write the same numbers. Your challenge is to fill in the squares in the middle by multiplying the number at the far left by the number on top. To make an easier version, use numbers 1 to 3 or 1 to 5, depending on the tables being learnt.

There is a multitude of brilliant interactive games and apps to help with learning tables. Search on the internet and see what you can find.

Play tables bingo. Write the multiplication questions on separate pieces of paper and place in a bowl. Make a 4 by 3 square bingo card each and write 9 of the answer numbers onto it. Take it in turns to draw a question out – if the answer's on your card, cross it off. The winner is the first to cross off all their answers.

Look for patterns in the answers to the different tables. Do any tables have only even answers? Do any share a common digit?

Here's a handy trick for learning the 9x tables using your fingers. Hold all ten fingers up, palms facing you, then lower the finger relating to the number you are multiplying 9 by – for example, for 2 x 9 you would lower the index finger of your left hand. The fingers to the left of the lowered finger are the tens digit of the answer, the fingers to the right of the lowered digit are the units digit. So 2 x 9 = 18 (one finger to the left, 8 fingers to the right).

Make it real. Look for areas in everyday life where we need to use multiplication skills. For example, 'everyone wants three potatoes with dinner so how many potatoes do we need to get ready?'

Have a speed challenge – how many questions can you answer correctly in 30 seconds? Try mixing up the tables you know or throwing in some division questions too.

Once your multiplication grid is completed, used coloured pencils to find number patterns e.g. all numbers ending in a zero, or all even numbers.

Practise saying the table in different ways, e.g. '1 times 3 is 3, 2 times 3 is 6', or 'one 3 is 3, two 3s are 6', or '3, 6, 9 etc'.