

Math with Your Fifth Grader

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As your child finishes elementary school and moves on to middle- and high-school math, you may find it more challenging to help with homework—for example, because you can't remember the math or because it is more difficult for you and your preteen to work together productively. Above all else, you can help your child be successful by communicating that you think math is useful, important, accessible, and interesting.

Math in Family Life

By the end of fifth grade, children should be able to compute with larger numbers, make good estimates, add and subtract decimals and fractions, and interpret tables and graphs. The examples below might give you some ideas about how to practice these and other important skills with your fifth grader as you go about your daily life.

At Home

- Cook with your child. Ask him or her to measure ingredients and help you halve or double a recipe. Ask him or her to think about conversions. (*This bottle holds 16.9 fluid ounces of oil and it's about half full. We'll need a cup of oil to make bread and a half-cup for our sauce. Do we have enough oil?*)
- Open a savings account with your child and help him or her think of ways to earn and save money.
- Sewing, building, and other household projects can involve lots of math. For example, ask your child to help calculate how many gallons of paint or yards of fabric are needed for your project.
- Talk about how you and other adults you know use math in your jobs, or talk about how math is involved in jobs your child is interested in.

At the Store

- With small shopping trips, tell your child how much money you want to spend and then ask him or her to keep track of what you are buying to make sure you stay within budget.
- Ask your child to estimate or calculate the new price for sale items or the amount of money you will save.
- Ask your child to compare different brands. Which one is a better buy?
- Ask your child to figure prices based on cost per pound. (*This meat is \$3.99 per pound. If we get 3 pounds, how much will it cost?*)

On the Go

- Ask your child to read the schedule to see when the next bus or train should come. Ask other questions about the schedule that involve figuring elapsed time. (*How frequently does this bus come? or Our bus is scheduled to come at 3:17 and to get downtown at 4:08. How long is that bus ride?*)
- Ask your child to calculate with gas prices. (*I only want to spend \$20 on gas today. It's \$3.87 per gallon. About how many gallons will we be able to get?*)

Math Materials to Have at Home

Keep these items in your home and help your child use them.

- calculator
- ruler
- measuring tape
- clock with hands
- measuring cups
- measuring spoons
- protractor
- drawing compass

Games That Use Math

Playing games together is a relaxed and effective way to improve students' basic skills. The following board games are appropriate for fifth graders.

- Mancala
- Monopoly
- chess
- Risk
- Senet
- Stratego
- Yahtzee
- Go

