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A Parent's Guide to the Year 4 Times Tables Test – The Multiplication Check Explained

“What is the Year 4 Times Tables Test?” is a question many parents have been asking of late

First announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in September 2017, the details of how the times tables test will be laid out was announced on Tuesday 13th November 2018.

Last year, the children in the current Y5 at Leighswood took part in the Multiplication Tables Check trail which gave us an insight into how we can support your child this year.

All primary school-aged children are expected to know their times tables up to 12 x 12 by heart. In fact, they are expected to have mastered their times tables by the end of Year 4.

Until now, there had been no formal measure to judge whether children in England had learnt their times tables or not – with a formal judgement only somewhat made from a child's Year 6 Maths SATs performance. So the idea is, for the Multiplication Tables Check to be taken towards the end of Year 4 to make sure children are meeting the benchmark of memorising their times tables up to 12 x 12 before moving up to Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and Year 6).

Who will take the times tables test?

Your child will sit the new times tables test in the week beginning 8th June 2020. This is a mandatory test and all children in Y4 have to take it during the three weeks in June.

To ensure your child feels confident and at ease, they will have the opportunity to 'try it out' before then. The children will work in small groups with Mrs Pearson, and adjustments will be made if necessary to ensure your child's needs are met.

The children will use the ipad to access the test and questions will appear in this format on the screen.

$$2 \times 2 = \boxed{4}$$

The times tables test will be timed, with the entire assessment lasting approximately 5 minutes in total. The children will be set a handful of practice questions to begin with. Following the practice questions, the test itself will comprise of 25 questions, all formatted, for example, as $2 \times 5 =$ with the child required to input the product or result, which in the example we've provided would mean inputting the answer 10.

Children will be given six seconds to answer each of the questions, with a three second blank gap between each question.

The questions will be randomly selected by the testing programme from 121 different options, ranging from 2×2 up to 12×12 . The test's software has been programmed to show children more questions from the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 times tables, as these are trickier times tables focused on more in Years 3 and 4. (The 2s, 5s and 10s are more of a focus in Years 1 and 2.)

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| Multiplication Table | Minimum number of items in each form | Maximum number of items in each form |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 8 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 |
| 10 | 0 | 2 |
| 11 | 1 | 3 |
| 12 | 2 | 4 |

Another point to note is that if children are shown a multiplication one way round, for example, 6×7 , they will not be later tested on the multiplication inverted – so, with the example provided the child **would not** be asked 7×6 later on in their set of 25 questions.

How will the Year 4 times tables test scores be reported?

Each child's result will be passed on to their school, and the DfE will create a report on overall results across all schools in England to measure whether national times tables results improve over the coming years.

No child will fail the times tables test as no pass mark has been set. It is also important to note that, all children will be tested on is their times tables knowledge – with no problem solving skills being assessed and not even a single division question being asked!

Children in Year 4 will only be asked times tables questions, like $3 \times 3 = 9$.

We would recommend a number of strategies to support your child in the run-up to and aftermath of the times tables test including:

- Times tables chanting: “6, 12, 18, 24...”;
- Times tables chanting in reverse order: “108, 99, 90, 81...”;
- Using times tables songs, like Schoolhouse Rock's ‘3 is A Magic Number’;
- Using apps, like the one by ks2timestables.co.uk, Times Tables Rock Stars or Hit the Button
- Using free online games, like those on Maths Frame;
- Asking your child multiplication calculations out of order, like: “What is 4×7 ? What is 9×5 ? What is 6×11 ?”;
- Using pasta pieces or pebbles to show groups of numbers representing times tables, e.g. four groups of three pasta shells to show $3 \times 4 = 12$;

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask your child's class teacher or Mrs Pearson.