ACHIEVE 100

Key Stage 2
Year 6

The 2016 National Tests – A Parent's Guide

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

To help parents and carers prepare Year 6 children for the new 2016 National Tests in English and maths

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Introduction

For an increasing number of today's parents and carers, the national curriculum tests are not the entirely unfamiliar concept they once were. However, after many years of familiarity, 2016 sees an overhaul of the tests to match the newly updated national curriculum. This guide helps to explain what you can expect and how you can support your children in the run-up to the tests.

About the tests

The tests take place during the first full teaching week of May each year (i.e. the week after Bank Holiday Monday) and in recent years have been spread across four days. Schools have some flexibility in how they organise pupils for the tests, so some schools may hold exam sessions in the hall, while many schools have children take the tests in their own classrooms. In some cases, individuals or small groups of children who are entitled to additional support, such as a reader or prompt, will take the tests in a separate room; your child's school will probably contact you if they think this may apply to your child.

Over the course of the week, there are three tests altogether covering the various areas of English and mathematics.

The Mathematics test

There are three papers in the mathematics test for Year 6.

Paper 1 – Arithmetic
30 minutes
40 marks

Paper 1 – Arithmetic

The first is an arithmetic paper that will test your child's number and calculation skills. The test has nearly 40 questions and is worth 40 marks, making up just over one-third of the total marks available for mathematics. Some of the questions will require children to know some number facts, such as multiplication tables (and the related division facts); others test the use of calculation methods.

Towards the end of the paper there are some more challenging calculations such as those using fractions, or examples of calculations with larger numbers. For multiplication and division questions, 2 marks are available. If your child's final answer is incorrect, they may still earn 1 mark for showing correct use of the formal long multiplication or long division methods. This 'method mark' is not available, though, if they use any other calculation method than the expected formal one.

Paper 1 – Arithmetic – Example Questions

Starter questions: $979 + 100 =$ $48 \div 6 =$

Challenging questions: $2331 \div 37 =$ $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{7}{8} =$

Papers 2 & 3 – Mathematical Reasoning
30 minutes
40 marks

Papers 2 & 3 – Mathematical Reasoning

The questions on these papers, as with the arithmetic one, are set out in approximate order of difficulty, so children who are less confident with more challenging mathematics may not finish the whole paper. That's fine; nobody expects a perfect score!

The reasoning questions often include some background information, such as solving problems to do with purchasing things in a shop, or dealing with measurements such as weight or area. These test papers cover the wider areas of mathematics such as geometry and statistics, as well as using arithmetic and number knowledge to solve problems.

Several questions are likely to involve more than one step and so will be worth 2 marks. Overall, each reasoning paper is worth 35 marks.

Papers 2 & 3 – Mathematical Reasoning – Example Questions

Starter question: **A pack of paper has 150 sheets.**
4 children each take 7 sheets.
How many sheets of paper are left in the pack?

Challenging question: **One gram of gold costs £32.94**
What is the cost of half a kilogram of gold?

The English tests

There are two tests for English: Reading; and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS). The reading test has one paper and the grammar, punctuation and spelling test has two papers.

The Reading test

Paper 1 – Reading test
60 minutes
50 marks

Paper 1 – Reading test

The reading test lasts for 1 hour. During this time your child will be given around three different texts to read – often a mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry – and a separate booklet of questions to answer about the texts. Your child's teacher will probably teach them strategies for tackling this paper, such as answering the questions about each text one section at a time.

Several of the questions in this test will involve ticking the correct box, or picking out a single word from the text. These often require finding straightforward information directly from the text. However, in more complex questions – such as those asking for an explanation of the author's choices – there will be several lines for free text, and up to 3 marks may be available for more detailed answers which use evidence given in the texts.

Paper 1 – Reading – Example Questions

Retrieval question:	**How much did the first space tourist pay to go into space?**
Explanation question:	**Explain how the descriptions of the iguanodons in this paragraph support the idea that they were both *inoffensive* and *brutes*. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

The Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test

Paper 1 – Grammar, punctuation & vocabulary
45 minutes (approx)
50 marks

Paper 1 – Grammar, punctuation and vocabulary

Paper 1 assesses grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. This is an area that has changed significantly in the new curriculum and questions will refer to both children's knowledge of grammatical terms (such as *pronoun* and *conjunction*) and use of language in the right context. Some questions will also require children to put in the appropriate punctuation marks to clauses or sentences or to use a particular sentence structure.

Paper 1 – Grammar, punctuation and vocabulary – Example Questions

Starter question:	**Write the contracted form of the underlined words:** ***That decision <u>does not</u> seem fair.***
Challenging question:	**Circle all the determiners in the sentence below:** ***Two apple trees screened the open windows on one side.***

Paper 2 – Spelling test
15 minutes (approx)
20 marks

Paper 2 - Spelling test

Paper 2 assesses spelling and requires children to spell 20 words. Each word is read out as part of a sentence that is printed in the answer booklet. Your child will be asked to write the missing word into the gap. The words in the test will be based on the spelling rules taught across Key Stage 2, in increasing difficulty.

There are 70 marks altogether, made up of the scores from both papers to achieve an overall score for grammar, punctuation & spelling.

Spelling Paper – Spelling Examples

Starter words:	Sara wanted to be an explorer and **discover** new lands. The spy was sent on a secret **mission**.
Challenging words:	Omar put the cutlery back in the **drawer**. Ellen's gold bracelet was her most treasured **possession**.

Marking and Results

All of the tests will be carried out in school and organised by your child's teachers. Following this, they will be sent to be marked by a central agency and then returned shortly before the end of the summer term. Once the results are returned to the school, they will be reported to you, often as part of a wider school report at the end of the school year.

The way this is done has changed significantly from the national curriculum levels used in the past. Your child's score will be converted to a scaled score to allow it to be compared to others'. Scaled scores will normally range between 80 and 130. The scale will be set so that reaching a score of **100** will indicate that your child is working at the expected standard for the end of Key Stage 2.

Higher scores indicate more advanced attainment, with lower scores suggesting that your child may need some additional support to catch up with his or her peers.

Scores will be provided for reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Alongside these scores, your child's school will report on other subjects such as science and writing, as well as the more general report comments.

How you can help your child prepare for the tests

During Year 6, your child's class teacher may well flag up areas of learning in which your child would benefit from some extra practice, as well as completing their normal homework such as reading and learning spellings.

It's wise to keep in regular contact with your child's school. Many schools invite parents to meetings or presentations about the Key Stage 2 tests, or will discuss them at parents' evenings. They may also offer additional revision sessions or make suggestions about extra practice or resources you can use at home. And almost all schools will welcome queries from parents about how they can support their child.

Maths support

At home there are some activities that are always useful in preparing children for the tests. The importance of the arithmetic paper means that time spent practising key number facts, such as multiplication tables, is invaluable. Remember, too, to test the inverse facts (e.g. for $4 \times 8 = 32$, knowing that $24 \div 8 = 3$).

You can also help your child to practise the standard written methods of calculation; ask your child's teacher if you're unsure of how this is taught in school. Many schools will provide a maths information evening or a copy of the calculation policy to help parents with this.

English support

For English, every primary teacher will stress the importance of regular reading practice. If your child doesn't enjoy reading aloud to you anymore, suggest that they read independently and then talk with you about their reading.

In addition, spelling is now a significant part of the tests, so practising spelling patterns regularly is useful, as is all discussion about the unusual letter patterns we find in words, e.g. the 'oo' sound is spelt very differently in words like *zoo, glue, blew, flute* and *through*.

Revision and Practice support materials

Rising Stars has been producing revision resources to help prepare children for the National Tests for 13 years. The new *Achieve 100 Revision* and *Practice Questions* range has been carefully written to ensure everything that could be tested is covered, giving children thorough preparation for the tests.

The revision books not only revise the topics that could be tested but provide step-by-step guidance on how to answer the types of questions which will come up in the tests. The practice books provide lots of practice questions. *Achieve 100 PLUS* books focus on the more demanding areas of the tests to help children reach their full potential.

For more information and to order, please contact Customer Services on 0800 091 1602 or visit: www.risingstars-uk.com/achieveks2.

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