FAMILIARISATION GUIDE

Information for Parents



Helping you reassure your child, and encourage their natural curiosity

This is the Familiarisation Guide for the **Future Stories Community Enterprise (FSCE)** Entrance Test for entry into Year 7. It is designed to help children, their parents and teachers understand the format of our test papers and their corresponding answer sheets.

FSCE's aim is to make Grammar School testing **more accessible for all children**: regardless of their background, their primary school, or any disability. This guide contains background information to help you reassure your child and encourage their natural curiosity.

AUTHENTIC

This guide is the only genuine resource produced for the FSCE Entrance Test.

FREE

There is no charge for this Familiarisation Guide.

THIS GUIDE IS ONE OF THREE

The Explorer's Field Journal and **The Badge Collection** are written for your child. This guide is for you: why the test exists, what happens on the day, and how to support each subject through everyday life at home.

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FAMILIARISATION GUIDE

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HOW TO USE IT You don't need to read this guide in one sitting. Part one is worth reading before the test day. Part two is a menu of ideas: dip into the subjects your child enjoys, and use the badge icons to find the matching page in your child's own Badge Collection.

WHY IS THERE AN ENTRANCE TEST?

Finding the right fit

Grammar Schools exist so that children who really love learning can find a secondary school which inspires their curiosity and nurtures their individual talents – and all the education they provide is free.

01 · Why a test?

Fair to every child

The law requires Grammar Schools to admit children on the basis of **"academic ability"**, so they must test for it. An entrance test lets a school be totally fair about who joins, and welcome children from all backgrounds and communities.

02 · What it means

"Academic ability"

Put simply, it means how good someone is at learning things in school: reading, writing, Maths, History, Music, Science and other subjects. Having academic ability means having strengths in certain subjects, and the potential to get even better and flourish in them.

03 · Every child is different

Many ways to be a learner

Everyone learns in different ways and at their own speed. Some children are wonderful at imagining stories; others shine when conducting experiments, solving Maths problems or designing things. The test is built to notice many kinds of strength, across many subjects.

04 · What a score means

A match, not a ranking

A test score does **not** mean a child is better or worse than other children. It simply suggests whether their academic ability might be a good fit for the kind of learning at the school they are applying to.

FROM THE SCHOOL

We really hope we are a School where your child will feel they belong. We do not want children to join us and then struggle, because that would not make them happy. The entrance test helps us work out whose academic ability might be the best match for the **pace of teaching** and the **range of subjects** covered in our School.



"If your child is curious about the universe and willing to be guided by teachers, they will thrive at whichever secondary school they go to. Please help them not to put pressure on themselves over this one test."

Words that can help at home

"The test is about finding the school that fits you, not about being better than anyone.

"You already know the things you need. Just show how you think.

"Whatever happens, you'll do brilliantly at secondary school.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Calm, curious and confident

FSCE and the Grammar Schools we work with are against any preparation that disrupts a child's usual schooling or creates unnecessary anxiety.

WHAT CHILDREN TOLD US

"stressful"

Surveys show this is the word most commonly used by children who received tutoring. We desperately want to avoid it.

A note about tutoring

Many tutors are expensive, of unreliable quality, and over-teach unnecessary content. Their claims about "exam success rates" are often baseless, too. The test is designed so that there are no extra facts or tricks to learn, and no authorised past or practice papers exist.

INSTEAD We encourage children to...

1 **Be present at school**
Work well at primary school, with maximum attendance and engagement in all areas of school life.

2 **Read widely and deeply**
Develop strong reading habits across many kinds of books.

3 **Use maths every day**
Practise fluency in maths and problem-solving through real-life, day-to-day examples.

4 **Talk and wonder**
Engage in imaginative and critical-thinking discussions around the dinner table.

5 **Stay calm**
Focus on calmness and confidence rather than pressure and stress.

6 **Enjoy learning**
Enjoy a wide range of learning in primary school, and see learning as a lifelong adventure.

7 **Trust what they already know**
Your child already has the knowledge they need to access the questions. The test asks them to apply it, not to memorise more.

REMEMBER

Everything in the test is inspired by the **Key Stage 2 National Curriculum** your child is already following at school. We are interested in how children **apply their learning in new situations**. We will not be testing memory, and there are no "extra" facts or tips that a tutor can help your child remember.

THE THINKING BEHIND THE DESIGN

What is the test like – and why?

The FSCE test is unlike any other 11+ entrance test. Each feature below has a clear reason behind it, and all of them are aimed at fairness for every child.

WHAT IS THE TEST LIKE?	WHY IS IT LIKE THAT?
It tests the **application** of knowledge and skills from KS2 subjects, taught up to and including the Year 5 programme of study.	This is the national curriculum, so it is the fairest way to assess content that all children in all primary schools are taught and have access to.
It is extensively **trialled and consulted upon** with primary school children and teachers.	To make sure all the content is accessible and most likely to have been encountered. Where content is less likely to be familiar, the information needed is given in the test paper, and children apply it to a new situation.
Subjects tested may include any of the following: Art & Design · Computing · Design & Technology · English · Geography · History · Languages · Maths · Music · Physical Education · Science	The Grammar School curriculum is very broad – some schools start with over 20 different subjects in Year 7 – so we want to select children who are interested in a range of subjects. There will usually be **2 to 3** of these subjects, although this can vary, and the subjects will usually change from year to year. Questions are designed to encourage children to interpret information, make connections, reason and solve problems in those particular subjects ("thinking like a geographer, designer" and so on), rather than simply recall facts they have memorised. They will **never** have to recall dates, names or places, and it does not matter which topics within a subject they have studied at primary school.
The type of questions, subjects, content and format **change from year to year**.	So that no tutor, parent or company can claim any knowledge of what the FSCE test will be like. We also want to assess children's ability to think clearly in unexpected situations. The questions are not about remembering facts, so there is no need to memorise, for example, the Kings and Queens of England.
Questions will need children to approach their thinking **creatively**, thinking of different ways to approach problems.	The KS2 National Curriculum mentions creativity numerous times, and we believe creativity is an essential asset for flourishing.
There are **no past papers and no practice papers** authorised by FSCE.	We do not want anybody to have to pay to prepare for the test. And because the format and content change each year, any such material would be immediately out of date.
It is more focused on **application than recall**.	We want to assess resilient thinkers, not robots. **Do NOT get your child to learn or remember lists of facts – they will NOT be useful.**
It is **unlike any other 11+** entrance test.	Grammar Schools are unique, and the test should reflect that.

ON THE DAY

The test day

Test dates are published on the **Admissions page** of the School website.

PACK THE NIGHT BEFORE

What your child can bring

- ☐ **Two black pens** – black biros or black ballpoint pens (Frixion pens are permitted)
- ☐ A small bottle of water in a **clear** plastic bottle
- ☐ Tissues – no box, or only packaging you can see through
- ☐ Glasses, if they wear them

LEAVE AT HOME

What your child cannot bring

- ☒ Felt tips or permanent markers
- ☒ Pens that are **not black**
- ☒ Pencils
- ☒ Dictionaries
- ☒ Rulers or protractors
- ☒ Paper, study notes or scrap paper
- ☒ Stopwatches or timers
- ☒ Calculators (incl. calculator watches)
- ☒ Mobile phones
- ☒ Digital or wrist-worn devices
- ☒ Any other electronic device, such as a camera or recording equipment

IN THE ROOM

What your child can expect

Time is visible

Clocks are clearly displayed in each test room.

Spare pens

Spare pens will be available if one runs out.

Breaks

Closer to the test, the School will tell you if there are any breaks between papers.

Adult supervisors

Supervisors are in the room throughout the test.

SUPERVISORS CAN HELP WITH...

Any question or problem: for example, if your child thinks they have the wrong test paper, or feels unwell. Your child should simply **raise their hand**.

...BUT NOT WITH THE TEST ITSELF

Supervisors cannot read any of the words to your child (unless your child has SEND and specific access arrangements have been pre-agreed), and cannot say whether an answer is correct. It's worth explaining this beforehand so it doesn't feel unkind.

DURING THE TEST

Instructions and answer sheets

AUDIO Instructions come from a voice recording

The instructions before, during and after every part of the test are given by a **voice recording**. Children are first asked to check they can hear it clearly, and they must **listen very carefully**. The recording tells them:

1. When they may open the question booklet
2. The page number to turn to
3. The section and page number
4. How to answer the questions
5. An example question
6. The time allowed for the section
7. When they may start answering
8. Extra instructions at the start of each section
9. Warnings towards the end of each section, so they know time has nearly finished

LISTEN TOGETHER Hear what the recording sounds like with your child: **Sample of Audio Instructions** (vimeo.com/1073565049/acb1d358b3)

ANSWER SHEET Using the answer sheet

At the start of each test, children check that the information printed on the front of their answer sheet is correct. If anything is wrong, **they should not worry** – they simply raise their hand and a supervisor will help.

All answers go on the **answer sheet**, in **black biro or ballpoint pen**. Children should check that the question number on the answer sheet matches the number in the question booklet.

THE TOP OF THE ANSWER SHEET (ILLUSTRATION)

FSCE Entrance Test for Entry into Year 7 · Candidate and Test Details			
Name		Primary School	
Date of birth	Username	Test date & session	Room

No child should doodle or write **below the line** at the bottom of the answer sheet.

PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR CHILD

Don't panic!

- → Try to answer all the questions, but **don't worry** about running out of time.
- → **No marks are lost for incorrect answers.** A guess costs nothing.
- → If unsure, put your best answer and move on to the next question.
- → Time left at the end? Go back to missed or unsure questions – within that section only.

TWO WAYS OF ANSWERING

Answer formats

The test papers use two different answer formats. Your child can practise all of them with the answer sheet in their **Explorer's Field Journal**.

ADVENTURE AND COMPASS PAPERS

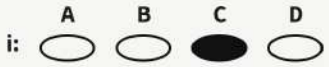
Multiple choice

Children select their answer by **shading one oval** for each question, completely filled in. A horizontal or vertical line is **not** accepted. There is only one correct answer for each question.

Changing an answer: put a cross through the incorrect answer and shade the correct one.

Going back to the original answer: put a cross through the incorrect answer and write the correct letter to the right of the ovals.

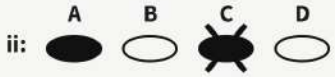
✓ SHADED CORRECTLY



✗ NOT ACCEPTED: A LINE



✓ CHANGING AN ANSWER



✓ GOING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL ANSWER



BEACON PAPER

Short written answers

Numbers: write only **one** digit in each box.

Letters: write only **one** letter in each box, clearly and in **CAPITAL LETTERS**.

Changing an answer: put a cross through the incorrect answer and write the correct answer **above the box**.

✓ ONE DIGIT PER BOX

2	0

✓ CAPITAL LETTERS

E	X	A	M	P	L	E

✓ CHANGING AN ANSWER

					L	E
E	X	A	M	P	~~E~~	~~E~~

AFTERWARDS

After the test

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Go and celebrate! Your child tried their best and gave it a go. A cake or an ice cream is thoroughly deserved.

What happens next



TEST DAY

Your child sits the test papers.

OCTOBER

You find out whether your child is **eligible** for a place.

31 OCTOBER

Deadline for the Common Application Form. You need to submit your genuine order of preferences to your Local Authority by this date.

MARCH

On **National Offer Day** (usually 1st March), everyone finds out from their Local Authority which school they have been allocated. This is done fairly according to each school's oversubscription criteria.

IN THE MONTHS BETWEEN

After sitting Grammar School tests, it is really important that your child **keeps attending primary school every day** and tries their best in every part of primary school life.

Whichever secondary school your child goes to, they will be a fantastic success. Well done to them, and to you.

PART TWO

About the subject guidance

The following pages cover each subject that may appear in the test. They are inspired by the **Key Stage 2 National Curriculum**, and every idea is something you can do in everyday family life. None of it needs special books, courses or paid resources.

What we are looking for

The skills and understanding the test may draw on, taken from the national curriculum your child already follows.

How you can help at home

Simple, low-pressure activities that build curiosity and confidence. Choose the ones that suit your family.



Each subject shows the same badge as your child's **Badge Collection**, so you can work through the matching page together.



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Art and Design

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Creative Maker
Badge Collection p.11

01 What we are looking for

Your child should be able to think critically, evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design, and know how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation. They should be able to:

- Appreciate a wide range of art and design techniques of colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.
- Have an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design.
- Understand the differences and similarities in practices and disciplines between different artists, craft makers and designers.

02 How you can help at home

Explore "why" and "how" in art

When your child looks at a painting or sculpture, ask "Why do you think the artist chose these colours?" or "How does the texture make you feel?" Help them use art vocabulary – line, shape, pattern – to describe what they see and form their own opinions.

Share and discuss diverse artworks

Look at art from different times and cultures: classical Greek pottery, Japanese woodblock prints, modern street art. Talk about what's similar or different in style, materials and purpose, so your child builds awareness of a wide range of techniques.

Create a hands-on "technique corner"

Set aside simple supplies – watercolours, collage paper, clay, fabric scraps – and invite your child to experiment with colour mixing, patterns, texture rubbing and 3D form. Encourage them to notice how each material behaves and talk about their discoveries.

Compare artists' approaches

Pick two artists or makers, perhaps a sculptor and a textile designer. Ask your child to identify similarities (pattern, shape) and differences (materials, function), and to explain which techniques they'd like to try and why.

Build simple critique into drawing time

After a sketch or craft, ask your child to point out one part they love (colour choice, composition) and one part they'd change next time. This habit of evaluation helps them think critically and use the language of art.

Celebrate creativity across disciplines

Explore connections between art, craft and design: how a fashion designer uses pattern like a painter, or how a ceramicist thinks about form like a sculptor. Discuss how these practices overlap and contribute to culture, and even to industry.



TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.11**, your child plays "Gallery Detective", deciding which two paintings might share an artist. Ask them to explain their choice using art words, then share your own view.



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Computing

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Code Cracker
Badge Collection p.7

01 What we are looking for

Children who use computational thinking and creativity to understand and change the world, gaining insights into both natural and artificial systems. They should be able to:

- Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science.
- Analyse problems in computational terms.
- Evaluate and apply information technology, including new or unfamiliar technologies, analytically to solve problems.
- Use logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work to accomplish specific goals, and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs.

02 How you can help at home

Be curious about how technology shapes the world

Talk about everyday systems – traffic lights, online maps, video games – and ask, "How do you think this works?" or "What would you change to make it better?"

Explore core concepts through play

Use "unplugged" activities: have your child act as a robot following your precise instructions (an algorithm) to reach a toy, then refine the steps when it goes wrong (debugging).

Break problems into steps

When planning a simple board game or organising chores, ask your child to list each action in order, spot where it might fail and propose fixes – mirroring decomposition and debugging.

Experiment with new tools together

Try a simple coding environment (Scratch, Code.org) or an unfamiliar app. Let your child explore, solve a small task (make a sprite move, create a digital story) and reflect on how the tool helped.

Link coding to real-world goals

Challenge your child to write a short program or flowchart that solves a daily problem – turning on a lamp at a set time, sorting toys by colour – and discuss how the algorithm achieves the goal.

Encourage "what if" testing

When they create a sequence of commands, have them change one instruction at a time to see different outcomes, showing how algorithms respond to inputs and how to spot errors.

Discuss technology choices analytically

Compare two ways of doing a task, such as writing a story by hand or typing it in a word processor. Ask: "Which is faster? Which catches mistakes? Why might you choose one over the other?"



TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.7**, your child writes jam-sandwich instructions for you to follow **exactly**. Play the literal-minded robot and enjoy the debugging that follows.

SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Design and Technology

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Innovation Engineer
Badge Collection p.10

01 What we are looking for

Using creativity and imagination, children design and make products that solve real and relevant problems in a variety of contexts, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. They learn to take risks, becoming resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable citizens. Through evaluating past and present design and technology, they develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world.

Designing and evaluating

- Critique, evaluate and test their ideas and products, and the work of others.
- Engage in an iterative process of designing and making within a range of relevant contexts.
- Use design criteria to inform and evaluate the design of purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other particular users, considering the views of others to improve their work.
- Communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock-ups and, where appropriate, information and communication technology.
- Explore and evaluate a range of existing products.

Making

- Select from a wide range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks.
- Select from a wide range of materials and components according to their functional and aesthetic characteristics.
- Explore how complex structures can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable.
- Explore and understand the use of mechanical and electrical systems in products.
- Apply their understanding of computing to program, monitor and control products.

Food, and design in the wider world

- Understand and apply the principles of nutrition.
- Understand where food comes from, seasonality, and where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed.
- Understand how key events and individuals in design and technology have helped shape the world.

02 · HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME

Encourage hands-on problem solving and creative thinking.

Turn everyday moments into mini design challenges that build your child's confidence, resourcefulness and understanding of how design affects our world. Ten ideas follow overleaf.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY · CONTINUED

How you can help at home

02 Ten everyday design challenges

Everyday product critiques

At breakfast, ask what your child likes or would improve about a cereal box, a toaster or a lunchbox. Encourage one change – shape, material, colour – that would make it more functional or fun.

Re-use and recycle projects

Give your child scrap materials (cardboard tubes, fabric offcuts, bottle caps). Challenge them to design and build something useful – a phone stand, pencil holder or bird feeder – testing ways to make it strong and stable.

Sketching and prototyping

Provide plain paper, tracing paper and modelling clay. Prompt several thumbnail sketches of an idea (such as a new backpack clip), then choose one and build a quick mock-up to test its shape and function.

Material choice conversations

When crafting, talk through why they chose cardboard or plastic, fabric or paper. Ask how each material's qualities – flexibility, strength, texture – affect the final product's look and use.

Study designers and inventions

Read short stories about famous inventors, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Ada Lovelace or local innovators. Discuss how their designs changed daily life, and imagine a modern problem your child could solve in the same way.

Cooking as design and nutrition

Plan and prepare a simple meal together. Discuss the design criteria (taste, colour, health), where each ingredient came from, why seasonality matters, and how the recipe could be healthier or more appealing.

User-centred design discussions

When your child makes something, ask "Who will use this? What do they need?" Encourage them to gather a friend's or sibling's feedback, then modify the design based on that input.

Tool exploration sessions

Let your child experiment with cutting, joining and shaping materials, noticing which tools work best for each task.

Reverse-engineer everyday items

Take apart a simple broken gadget (an old radio or toy) to see gears, pulleys or circuits. Discuss how the parts work together, then brainstorm how to redesign it to be better.

Integrate computing and control

Use a simple microcontroller kit or coding app to program LED lights or a small motor. Challenge your child to build a model (a robotic arm, an automatic door) that responds to code.

TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.10**, your child sketches and labels a lunchbox for an explorer. Be the "user": give them honest feedback, and see how they improve the design.

SUBJECT GUIDANCE

English

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Reading Detective
Badge Collection pp.2–3

01 What we are looking for

Children with a strong command of the written word, who can read easily, fluently and with good understanding. Through an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage, children have:

- a wide vocabulary that lets them understand sophisticated nuance and depth of meaning in texts;
- an explicit understanding of grammar that gives them more conscious control and choice when interpreting complex language;
- knowledge of linguistic conventions that ensures clarity and understanding of reading.

REMEMBER English can be used across **all** KS2 curriculum subjects, so these skills may appear in any question.

02 The sorts of skills we will be testing (1 of 2)

	SKILL	EXAMPLE
1	**Tense.** Correct and consistent use of present and past tense keeps time references clear, so readers can follow events in a logical sequence without confusion.	*"He walked to school yesterday" (past) vs "He walks to school every day" (present).*
2	**Progressive verbs.** The progressive form (present or past) marks actions in progress, adding depth and detail to storytelling by emphasising duration.	*"She was running across the field" (happening over time) vs "She ran across the field" (just says it happened).*
3	**Word families.** Identifying similar or opposite words shows a broad vocabulary and an understanding of how words relate, which aids comprehension.	*"Happy" – similar: joyful, cheerful; opposite: sad.*
4	**Inverted commas and punctuation.** Recognising how these help interpret meaning, emphasis, tone and the speaker's intention.	*He said, "I'm excited!" shows he's really happy. Without speech marks, it's hard to know who said it.*
5	**Apostrophes.** Telling apart apostrophes for singular and plural possession, to avoid ambiguity about who owns what.	*"The girl's book" – one girl owns it. "The girls' book" – a group of girls own it.*
6	**Fronted adverbials.** A comma after a fronted adverbial makes a sentence clearer, signalling an introductory phrase so readers pause appropriately.	*"Before lunch, we went to the park." The comma shows when the action happened.*

Skills 7–15 continue overleaf →

ENGLISH · CONTINUED

The sorts of skills we will be testing (2 of 2)

	SKILL	EXAMPLE
7	**Paragraphs.** Appreciating how paragraphs organise ideas around a theme, structure information logically and signal shifts in ideas or arguments.	–
8	**Cohesion.** Identifying how sentences or paragraphs are linked in a logical flow, for example with adverbials of time, place and number.	*"First, we packed our bags. Then, we went to the beach. After that, we had ice cream."*
9	**Pronouns and nouns.** Spotting the right choice of pronoun or noun for cohesion, a clear subject and avoiding repetition.	*"Lucy was tired. She went to bed early." "She" avoids repeating "Lucy".*
10	**Expanded noun phrases.** Understanding how adjectives, nouns and prepositional phrases add imagery and detail.	*"The small, fluffy puppy with a red collar" paints a clearer picture than "puppy".*
11	**Prefixes and suffixes.** How prefixes (dis-, de-, mis-, over-, re-, super-, anti-, auto-) change words, and how suffixes (-ate, -ise, -ify) turn nouns and adjectives into verbs.	*"Disagree" means not agree. "Beautify" means to make something beautiful.*
12	**Relative clauses.** Clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose or that add detail without needing a new sentence.	*"The boy who won the race is my friend."*
13	**Modal verbs and adverbs.** How these show degrees of possibility, uncertainty, probability or obligation.	*"He might come to the party" (maybe). "You must do your homework" (you have to).*
14	**Connecting ideas.** How time, place and cause are linked with conjunctions, adverbs or prepositions.	*"We stayed inside because it was raining." "We'll go swimming after lunch."*
15	**Homophones.** Telling apart homophones and near-homophones to avoid confusion and understand a text correctly.	*"There", "their" and "they're" sound the same but mean different things.*

03 How you can help at home

- Develop a love of literature through plenty of reading for enjoyment.
- Read actively: notice how authors use grammar, vocabulary and punctuation on purpose.
- Keep a diary, aiming to use particular devices in each entry.
- Learn and apply grammar through reading, writing and speaking, rather than separately from them.
- Read from a variety of genres, so skills transfer between them.
- Play free language games such as Taboo, Word Association, 20 Questions, Categories or story chains.
- Share a high-quality, wide variety of spoken and written language at home.
- Help your child carry the more complex language they already use in speech into their writing.

TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection pp.2–3**, your child works out tricky words from clues and sorts facts from inferences. Ask "Which words told you that?" whenever you read together.

SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Geography

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
World Explorer
Badge Collection p.9

01 What we are looking for

An understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the dynamic formation and use of landscapes and environments over time.

02 How you can help at home

Be curious about the world
Discuss news stories, documentaries or YouTube clips about different places and environments.

Explore maps together
Use paper or online maps, pointing out key features, symbols and compass directions in everyday contexts.

Play map-based games
Try treasure hunts using grid references, or "spot the feature" on Google Earth, to make reading coordinates fun.

Do simple fieldwork
At home or nearby: observe the weather, sketch the garden or local street, tally birds or plants – then talk through the findings.

Compare two places
Home and a holiday spot, or city and countryside: list similarities and differences in climate, land use, buildings and transport.

Read your photo albums
Use family holiday photos to identify physical features (rivers, hills) and human features (roads, houses), and discuss how each came to be.

Look at change over time
Compare "then and now" photos – old family snaps, or the Google Street View time slider – and talk about why changes happened.

Spot real-world geography
Point out latitude and longitude (finding locations on a GPS app) and time zones (calling relatives abroad at a sensible time).

Use compass directions on walks
"The shop is north of the park." Regular use builds an automatic sense of north, south, east and west.

TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.9**, your child decides which fieldwork methods would really measure a new road's impact. Plan a mini fieldwork trip to your own street using the same thinking.

SUBJECT GUIDANCE

History

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
History Hunter
Badge Collection p.8

01 What we are looking for

Children who ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps children understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time. Children should:

- gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms;
- understand history as a coherent, chronological narrative;
- understand the significance of aspects of the history of the wider world;
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses;
- understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources;
- understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed;
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts: the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

02 How you can help at home

Encourage curious questioning

At dinnertime, ask "Why do you think people in Victorian times used coal for fuel?" or "What might have happened if the Romans never built roads?"

Prompt them to explain their ideas and consider other possibilities ("How else could they have travelled?"), building critical thinking and perspective.

Discuss "why it matters" (significance)

When reading or watching anything historical, ask "Which invention changed people's lives the most – the printing press, the steam engine or the telephone? Why?"

Encourage them to pick one, explain their choice, and compare it with yours to appreciate different viewpoints.

Build and talk through timelines

Draw a simple timeline on a long piece of paper: key personal events (birth, first day at school) alongside a few historical ones (the Great Fire of London, the first moon landing).

Chat about the order ("Which came first?"), so history becomes a connected, chronological story.

Then and now (continuity and change)

Take an everyday object, such as a bicycle, and talk about how it looked and worked 100 years ago versus today.

Ask your child to list similarities and differences, helping them grasp how societies and technology evolve over time.

Five more ideas overleaf →



HISTORY · CONTINUED

How you can help at home

Weigh evidence from different sources

Read two short accounts of the same event – for instance, an evacuee's diary and a history textbook summary.

Ask: "What clues tell us this diary is personal? How does it differ from the textbook? Which would you trust more for details – and why?"

Use historical vocabulary in real talk

Introduce words such as "civilisation", "empire", "revolution" or "culture" when you meet them in stories or documentaries.

Encourage your child to use them in sentences – "The Mayan civilisation built pyramids" – so they deploy abstract terms naturally.

Frame and answer "historically valid" questions

Teach your child to ask questions like "What caused the Romans to leave Britain?" or "What were the consequences of the steam engine?"

Help them structure a short answer: start with the cause, describe the event, then explain one or two consequences.

Construct evidence-based stories

Give your child a small pile of "sources" – a newspaper clipping, a family photo, a map – and ask them to piece together what happened, in writing or aloud.

Discuss how each source helps us understand the past, and why some sources might conflict.

Highlight long- and short-term perspectives

When discussing any historical change, such as the introduction of electricity, talk about immediate effects ("homes had light at night") and long-term effects ("industries grew, towns got bigger").

Encourage your child to think: "What changed at once, and what changed gradually over decades?"

Each of these actions turns everyday moments into history lessons – helping your child question, connect, and build a rich, evidence-based understanding of the past.

QUESTIONS THAT BUILD HISTORICAL THINKING

- **Continuity and change.** "What changed, and what stayed the same?"
- **Consequence.** "What happened as a result – straight away, and later?"
- **Evidence.** "How do we know? Who wrote this, and why?"
- **Cause.** "Why do you think that happened?"
- **Similarity and difference.** "How was life different for rich and poor people?"
- **Significance.** "Why do people still remember this today?"



TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.8**, your child decides which source would be least useful to Karan, who is researching an event from long ago. Next time you find an old photo or object, ask together: "Who made this, when, and can we trust it?"



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Languages

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Language Lover
Badge Collection p.14

01 What we are looking for

A liberation from insularity: fostering children's curiosity and teaching new ways of thinking. Learning a language should enable children to understand and communicate ideas, facts and feelings about familiar and routine matters, using their knowledge of phonology, grammatical structures and vocabulary. Children should:

- explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes, and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words;
- read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing;
- broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words introduced into familiar written material;
- adapt phrases to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly;
- understand key features and patterns of the language, how to apply these (for instance, to build sentences), and how these differ from or are similar to English.

PLEASE NOTE

There is **no particular language** that will be tested, so no child will ever be at a disadvantage. Your child should have met a language at school, so practise with that one – it does not matter which.

02 How you can help at home

Use the language every day

Label items (mirror, door, fridge) with sticky notes in the target language, so your child sees the words daily.

Prompt simple phrases at routine times – "¿Cómo estás?" at breakfast, "Merci" when you pass something.

Sing songs and learn rhymes

Sing along to catchy children's songs or nursery rhymes in the language – this links spelling, sound and meaning naturally.

Read simple stories together

Choose picture books with parallel translations; help your child spot familiar words and infer new ones from context.

Ask questions in both languages: "What is the cat doing? ¿Qué hace el gato?"

Adapt and create sentences

Give a model sentence ("J'aime les pommes" / "Me gustan las manzanas") and ask your child to swap in new words.

Make it a game: take turns changing one word at a time to build silly sentences.

Compare the grammar with English

Write side-by-side examples of a new structure (adjective placement, verb endings) in English and the target language.

Ask your child to explain the rule back: "In French, adjectives come after the noun."

Bring in the culture

Cook a simple recipe from a country that speaks the language, using key vocabulary as you go.

Watch a short cartoon or read a folk tale from that culture, then discuss new words and patterns.

SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Maths

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Number Pathfinder
Badge Collection pp.4–5

01 What we are looking for

Children whose fluency in the fundamentals of mathematics means they can focus on grappling effectively with increasingly complex problems in context, and with increasingly large integers. They will therefore be able to:

- solve problems by efficiently applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking problems down into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions;
- make rich connections across mathematical ideas to develop reasoning and competence in solving increasingly sophisticated problems through written and mental methods of calculation (**no calculators**), and apply their mathematical knowledge to science and other subjects.

02 The sorts of skills we will be testing

	SKILL	EXAMPLE
1	**Place value.** Solve number and practical problems that require reading, writing, ordering, rounding and comparing numbers (including negative numbers) up to and over 1,000,000.	*Is −5 colder than 3 degrees? Yes! Which is bigger – 1,234,567 or 1,234,765?*
2	**Addition and subtraction.** Solve multi-step problems in context with increasingly large numbers, deciding which operations and methods to use and why, including rounding to check accuracy.	*A zoo had 345,217 visitors last year and 289,128 this year. How many fewer came this year? Round to check: 345,000 − 289,000 = ?*
3	**All four operations.** Use multiples and (prime) factors, (non-)prime, square and cube numbers. Use long multiplication and short division, including remainders. Multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals, including scaling by simple fractions and simple rates.	*Sofia shares 96 sweets equally between 12 boxes: 96 ÷ 12 = 8 per box. Prime factors of 96: halve five times (48, 24, 12, 6, 3), then 3 ÷ 3 = 1. So 96 = $2^5 \times 3$.*
4	**Fractions, decimals and percentages.** Convert, order, round, add, subtract and multiply equivalent fractions, (im)proper fractions, mixed numbers, decimals and percentages.	*Which is bigger, ¾ or 0.6? (¾ = 0.75.) What is 25% of 40? That's 10!*
5	**Measure.** Use all four operations to solve problems involving measure, converting between units and using approximate equivalences. Measure, calculate, estimate and compare perimeters, volumes, areas and capacity of (ir)regular shapes.	*A rectangle is 4 m long and 3 m wide. Its area is 4 × 3 = 12 m^2.*

Skills 6–7 and how to help continue overleaf →

MATHS · CONTINUED

Skills, and how you can help

	SKILL	EXAMPLE
6	**Geometry.** Solve problems in degrees including 2D and 3D cubes and cuboids. Estimate, measure and compare acute, obtuse and reflex angles, at a point and at multiples of 90°. Use properties of rectangles to find missing lengths and angles, and reason about (ir)regular polygons.	*A cuboid 10 cm × 4 cm × 6 cm has 6 faces. Surface area = 2 × (10×4 + 10×6 + 4×6) = 2 × 124 = 248 cm².*
7	**Statistics.** Solve comparison, sum and difference problems using a line graph. Complete, read and interpret tables, including timetables.	*A train leaves at 10:15 and arrives at 11:45. The trip took 1 hour 30 minutes.*

03 How you can help at home

- **Secure the basics.** Make sure your child has a strong grasp of basic concepts, such as arithmetic, geometry and early algebra.
- **Play.** Logic puzzles, games and competitions build fluency and stamina.
- **Working backwards.** Start from the desired answer and trace the steps back.
- **Logical deduction.** Use step-by-step reasoning to eliminate wrong answers.
- **Draw it.** Use diagrams, charts or visual aids to simplify understanding.
- **Use real-world scenarios.** Budgeting, shopping, cooking and measuring all give maths a purpose.
- **Trial and error.** If stuck, test a different approach.
- **Pattern recognition.** Look for recurring sequences or structures.
- **Break it down.** Split complex problems into smaller, manageable steps.
- **More than one way.** Think of multiple approaches to the same problem – and use one to check the other.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE YOUR CHILD WORKS

- "What is the question actually asking?"
- "Does your answer make sense?"
- "What units should the answer be in?"
- "Can you estimate the answer first?"
- "Is there another way to check it?"
- "Which step could you break this into?"

TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection pp.4–5**, your child works out Max's change from £20 and compares Pip's ¾ of a pizza with Dash's ⅝. Next time you shop, let them estimate the total and the change before you pay.



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Music

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Sound Explorer
Badge Collection p.12

01 What we are looking for

A critical engagement with music, allowing children to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon. Children should:

- listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions;
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations;
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music, and recall sounds with increasing aural memory;
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music for a range of purposes.

PLEASE NOTE We are **not** assessing ability on any particular instrument. A child will not be disadvantaged if they do not play a musical instrument.

02 How you can help at home

Share and discuss diverse music

Play pieces from different times and places – Baroque, jazz, pop, world music. Ask which your child likes best and why, using words like "bright", "smooth" or "energetic".

Compare two pieces: "How is the tempo different?" "Which has louder sections?"

Explore the building blocks

Pick one dimension each week – pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo – and clap, sing or play games spotting it in songs you know.

Use pots, spoons and rubber bands to experiment with timbre and texture.

Attend or watch performances

Before a school concert or online recital, discuss what to listen for (a melody, a drumbeat, a solo) and which instruments they can hear: can they pick out the violin, drums or trumpet? Afterwards, ask for one moment they remember.

Aural memory game: play a short phrase, pause, and have your child hum or clap it back.

Make music at home

With a keyboard, recorder, percussion or an app, challenge your child to create a short tune using two pitches and two rhythms.

Compose a "sound story" for a storm at sea: loud thunder (dynamics), fast wind (tempo), rattling (timbre).

Record and review

Let your child record themselves singing or playing, then listen back: what went well, and one thing to try next time.

Frame it positively: "I loved how steady your beat was – what if you tried that part a little softer?"

Connect to other subjects and cultures

Link music to a historical period, e.g. Handel's *Water Music* for the Baroque, and discuss how it reflects its time.

Explore songs from other countries: how do melody, rhythm and instruments give clues to the culture?



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Physical Education

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Movement Maestro
Badge Collection p.13

01 What we are looking for

Opportunities for children to become physically confident in a way which supports their health and fitness. Opportunities to compete in sport and other activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect. Children should:

- develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities;
- understand the skills of running, jumping, throwing and catching, in isolation and in combination;
- apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending in competitive games;
- recognise flexibility, strength, technique, control and balance;
- compare their performances with previous ones and explore how to improve.

PLEASE NOTE — This is **not** a test of practical sporting ability. No child gains an advantage from their individual sporting ability, including in a particular sport, beyond what is in the National Curriculum.

02 How you can help at home

Analyse attack-and-defend games

Set up cone goals in the garden. Take turns trying to dribble or run past each other to score (attacking), then swap roles (defending). Talk through fair ways to block and tag.

Build body awareness

Balance challenges (one leg, heel-to-toe), strength moves (wall push-ups, chair-supported squats) and stretches (toe touches, arm circles) make a fun "challenge of the day".

Compare defending and attacking principles

Explain "space" and "marking" with a game of keep-away using a soft ball: the attacker tries to dodge, the defender stays close without pushing.

Evaluate short clips

Video a 10 m sprint or a series of jumps. Watch together, praise good technique ("nice straight arms!"), then pick one small tweak ("bend your knees more on landing").

Set improvement goals

Keep a simple chart – date, activity (e.g. standing long jump), result (distance or count) – and celebrate each new personal best.

Emphasise fairness and respect

After any game, ask "How did you show respect to your opponent?" or "What fair-play choice did you make today?" Character matters more than winning.



TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.13**, your child decides what matters most at a relay baton changeover, then works out the best way for Amir to check whether his long jump is improving. Try it together: measure a standing jump the same way each week, see if they beat their personal best – and talk about what helped them get better.



SUBJECT GUIDANCE

Science

YOUR CHILD'S BADGE
Experiment Investigator
Badge Collection p.6

01 What we are looking for

Children should develop a broad and deep scientific view of the world around them. They should do this through exploring, testing and developing ideas about everyday phenomena and the relationships between living things and familiar environments, and by beginning to analyse functions, relationships and interactions through controlling variables. They should ask their own questions about what they observe and make some decisions about which types of scientific enquiry are likely to be the most appropriate ways of answering them – including measuring accurately, observing changes over different periods of time, noticing patterns, grouping and classifying things by similarities and differences, carrying out comparative and fair tests, and presenting data in a variety of ways. They should draw conclusions, suggest improvements including repeat readings, use evidence to justify their ideas, and use some scientific language to understand and predict how the world operates.

02 The topics children should know about (1 of 2)

Living things

- recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways, including classification keys
- understand the differences in the life cycles and reproduction of a variety of plants and animals
- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things
- explore the functions of different parts of flowering plants and how their requirements for life and growth vary from plant to plant
- construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey, and understand that animals get nutrition from what they eat
- identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement
- recognise the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system and teeth in humans

Properties and changes of materials

- compare and group together different materials or rocks according to their properties
- observe that some materials change state when heated or cooled, and identify the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle
- recognise that some materials dissolve in liquid to form a solution, and describe how to recover a substance from a solution
- use knowledge of solids, liquids and gases to decide how mixtures might be separated
- give reasons, based on evidence from comparative and fair tests, for the particular uses of everyday materials
- demonstrate that dissolving, mixing and changes of state are reversible, but that some changes form new materials and are not usually reversible

Light and sound, forces and magnets, electricity, and Earth and space continue overleaf →

SCIENCE · CONTINUED

More topics children should know about

Light and sound

- recognise that we need light to see things, that dark is the absence of light, and that light is reflected from surfaces
- recognise that shadows form when light from a source is blocked by an opaque object, and find patterns in how shadow size changes
- recognise that sounds are made by vibrations which travel through a medium to the ear, and get fainter with distance from the source
- find patterns between the pitch of a sound and features of the object that produced it
- find patterns between the volume of a sound and the strength of the vibrations that produced it

Electricity

- recognise how a simple series circuit works, including the interaction of wiring, lamps, switches and batteries
- recognise some common conductors and insulators, and associate metals with being good conductors

Forces and magnets

- compare how things move on different surfaces
- notice that some forces need contact between two objects, but magnetic forces can act at a distance
- describe magnets as having two poles, and observe how they attract or repel depending on which poles face each other
- compare and group everyday materials by whether they are attracted to a magnet, and identify some magnetic materials
- explain that unsupported objects fall towards the Earth because of gravity acting between the Earth and the falling object
- identify the effects of air resistance, water resistance and friction acting between moving surfaces
- recognise that some mechanisms, including levers, pulleys and gears, allow a smaller force to have a greater effect

Earth and space

- recognise the movement of the Earth, Moon and other planets relative to the Sun in the solar system
- use the idea of the Earth's rotation to explain day and night and the apparent movement of the sun across the sky

QUESTIONS THAT BUILD SCIENTIFIC THINKING

- **Predicting.** "What do you think will happen – and why?"
- **Measuring.** "How will you measure it accurately?"
- **Concluding.** "What does your evidence show?"
- **Fair testing.** "What will you change, and what will you keep the same?"
- **Patterns.** "What do you notice? Is there a pattern?"
- **Improving.** "How could you make the test better? Should you repeat it?"

SCIENCE · CONTINUED

How you can help at home

03 Twelve everyday investigations

Encourage "wonder questions"

When your child notices something – a snail on the path, steam on a window – prompt them to ask "why?" or "how?", then plan a tiny experiment to find out ("What if we put the snail somewhere warmer?").

Create classification games

Sort leaves, rocks or even LEGO bricks by size, colour or texture. Introduce a "key" – a simple yes/no flowchart – to decide which group each item belongs to.

Build and analyse food chains

Photograph or draw plants and animals from the garden or park and link them ("grass → rabbit → fox"). What happens if one link disappears?

Explore light and shadows

In a dark room, shine a torch on a toy. Move it closer to and further from the light, and sketch how the shadow's size changes.

Build simple circuits safely

With a small battery, wires and a bulb or LED, make a circuit. Test which materials conduct (foil, paperclip, plastic) and record the results.

Stargaze and discuss Earth's movement

Spot the Moon and stars; explain that Earth's rotation makes day and night. Over a week, sketch how the Moon's shape (phase) changes.

Turn the kitchen into a mini-lab

Use water, sugar, salt and oil to explore dissolving, mixing and changing state. Let your child predict, observe carefully, then draw or photograph the results.

Observe life cycles in real time

Rear caterpillars, grow beans in a jar or keep tadpoles in a tank. Keep a diary of daily changes, with drawings of each stage.

Experiment with forces and motion

Roll toy cars on wood, carpet and grass, and measure how far they go. Why do some surfaces slow the car more? (Friction and resistance.)

Investigate sound vibrations

Stretch rubber bands over an open box to make a "guitar". Which bands sound high-pitched or low-pitched – and why?

Track the water cycle

Tape a clear plastic bag with a little water to a sunny window and watch evaporation and condensation over several days. Where do drops form, and why?

Use simple charts to compare results

Whenever your child runs a test, help them make a bar chart or table, then ask "Which was fastest? Which grew most?" to draw conclusions.

TRY IT TOGETHER

In **Badge Collection p.6**, your child chooses the right instructions for Untar's shadow experiment – changing only the distance from the light. Try it with a torch and a toy, and ask: "What did we keep the same to make it fair?"