

# SATs Preparation Tips

## Parent and Carer Information Sheet

Children in year 6 take national tests in reading, maths and SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar). These tests take place in May, are administered in school and marked externally.

This can be a stressful time for young people but there are ways in which schools and parents, or carers, can work together to make the process positive and ensure all young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

### Support Young People at Home

In the build-up to SATs, young people will spend time at school revising and consolidating their knowledge. As parents, you can support them to continue this revision at home. When a young person is revising, it is important that they have a regular space that is quiet and calm. Ideally, the place where they work should be a happy, positive environment with little distractions. Some young people will benefit from having parents/carers near them to support and encourage them with their work.

### Explain What Revision Is and Share Strategies

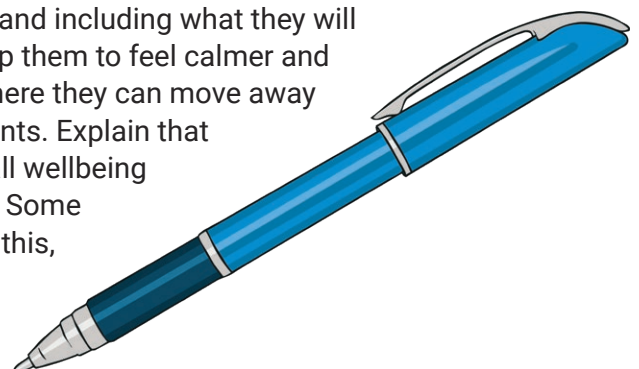
Young people will probably be new to the technique of revision. Revision strategies and timetables may all feel a bit strange at first and may cause the young person to feel worried. It may be helpful to talk to them about what revision actually is and even share how you used to prepare for tests.

Try ideas such as, creating mind maps for certain topics, making flashcards or writing on sticky notes, reading stories, poems and factual writing then answering questions, etc. There are many ways to revise and it is about finding what works for each individual. Time spent practising different strategies now will help them to be more effective and efficient in the future. They will hopefully view revision positively and will feel relaxed about the process.

### Create a Revision Timetable

Again, a revision timetable will probably be new to young people. Some young people benefit from doing a short period of revision such as 10-30 minutes each day whereas others may prefer to do a longer time but only do it on alternate days. Speak to the young person about their preference and, if time allows, why not try both strategies to see which is the most effective.

Creating a timetable that shows when young people will revise, and including what they will revise, will help them to keep track of their progress and will help them to feel calmer and more in control. Always highlight the need for regular breaks where they can move away from revising to relax, take a brain-break or get some refreshments. Explain that these breaks are not only important to the young person's overall wellbeing but they will support them with their academic success as well. Some young people might be tempted to skip these breaks. If they do this, try modelling the behaviour to show the positive impact these breaks have on you as an adult.



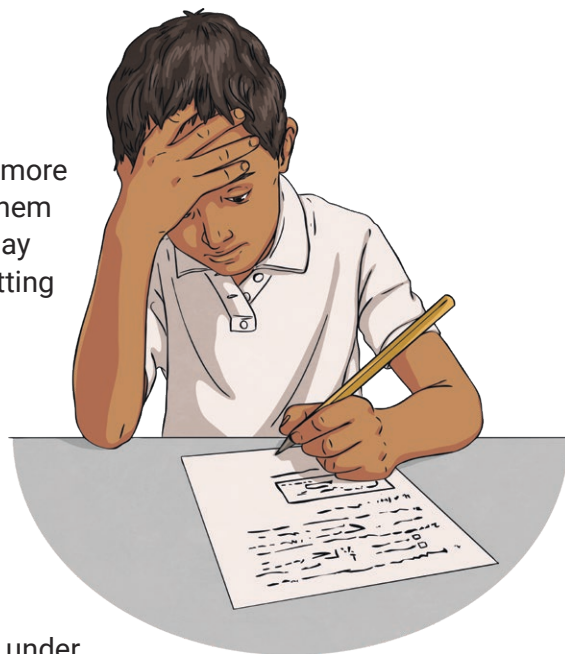
### Make Use of Available Resources

There is an array of available resources to support young people with their SATs. Often, school will do practice tests in the classroom to help familiarise young people with the tests but also the expectations around test conditions. Even seeing a test paper can help reduce worry and help them to feel better prepared.

The style of the SATs papers was changed in 2016 and there are some downloadable past papers online from this date to present. There is also an array of [sample papers](#) at Twinkl which are based on the tests and can be useful as a method of revision. The answers are provided as well to support those young people who learn from marking their own work.

### Encourage Practice to Build Confidence and Independence

When young people practise doing something, they will start to feel more familiar and in control about what is happening. This feeling helps them to build confidence and feel more positive and comfortable. They may want support at first with these tests. This may be a parent/carers sitting with them, helping them to navigate the question or helping them highlight an area that they would like additional support with. Once young people feel comfortable, a parent/carers may take less of an active role to help build the self-confidence and independence of the young person.



### Support Them to Manage Their Own Time

For many young people, school will have prepared them for working under timed conditions. However, the tests are done under strict timed conditions and can leave some young people feeling stressed or even overwhelmed.

Young people may benefit from being supported to practise good time management. This can be done both in terms of tests and for daily life events as well. Parents or carers can try talking to young people about strategies to approach timed tests such as, reading the question, answering it if they feel confident or moving onto the next question if they don't feel they know the answer. Once they have completed all the questions, they can check the answers they have written and then return to the remaining questions if they have enough time. Encourage young people to use every second of the time available.

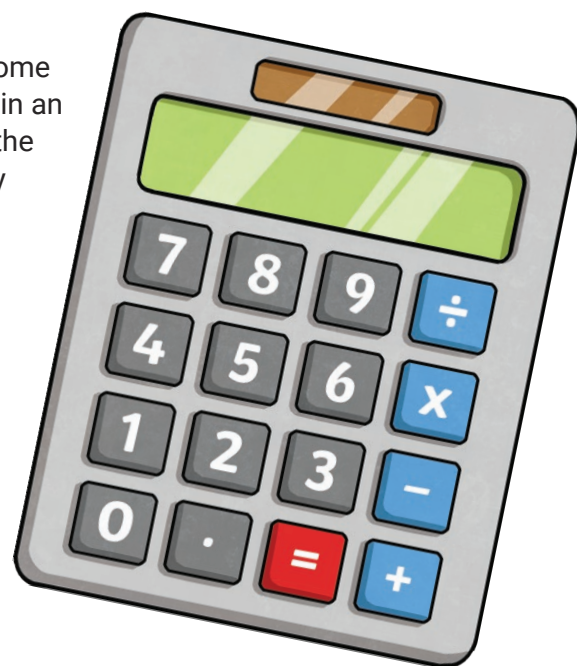
Good time-management skills will be developed again through completing practice papers under timed conditions but also using life examples, such as helping young people to estimate how long they think things take. Parents or carers could ask young people to estimate how long they think it takes to walk to the shop, make dinner, get ready for bed or wash up. These activities will help them to gain a realistic perception of time, which will help them to understand what they can actually achieve within a particular time frame.

### Help Young People to Keep Perspective

Some young people may become intensely focused on their SATs and feel that the results of these tests are vital to their future success. It is important to help them understand that yes, it is important that they work hard and try their best but actually, the results of these tests will have little impact on their overall success in life. By helping them to keep perspective, they can reduce the pressure that they may have put upon themselves. Remind them that life involves a series of tests and that they are not something to be scared of or worried about, they are simply an opportunity to learn and grow.

### Make Learning Relevant to the Real World

Not all work should be done through computers or written papers. Some young people learn much more successfully when they are engaged in an activity. Try bringing maths into real life by asking them to calculate the cost of the shopping and then give them different amounts of money to work out what the change may be. Or, try asking them how much cheaper something would be with a 10% discount in the sale, etc. By making maths applicable to real life, not only will it keep their mental maths up to date, it will help them keep perspective and realise that what they are learning in school will help them to navigate the real world as well. These skills will help them to feel more confident, independent and empowered. These positive feelings will help keep young people motivated and engaged with their learning.



### Read with Your Child

Reading with your child has many benefits. Young people should be encouraged to read aloud to build their confidence to read in front of others. Try asking them questions about what they are reading and work on areas of comprehension such as inference and prediction questions.

Reading with your child will also help their wellbeing. It can be used as a special time together away from siblings and any distractions where they can talk to you about how they are feeling and their effort can be praised on a one-to-one basis. Reading is also a great way to help young people relax before bed.

You may also want to finish the evening by asking a positive question such as, what has been your happiest moment today? Or, when were you proud of yourself today?

### Spellings

Young people, like adults, all learn differently and spellings are no different. Some young people learn spellings through look, say, cover and write, spelling them out loud, writing them in different colours, etc. Encourage young people to try a few techniques and see which works best for them. Ask the teacher about the spellings your child should be focusing on if they don't know and then practise these spellings with them to help them build their confidence and knowledge.

For children who like to be active learners and move around, try making games with spellings and have fun learning them together.

### Praise Young People for Effort and Support Them to Be Positive with Their Learning

It is important to regularly reward the effort of a young person as well as their results. Rewarding their effort as they revise will help keep them motivated and help them acknowledge their hard work and dedication. These qualities will benefit them not only in education but also throughout their personal lives. Encourage young people to use positive affirmations to help reinforce their positive feelings about themselves.

Although the focus will be on their SATs at this time, try and remind them about their amazing talents, qualities and skills. Talk about their academic skills but also their non-academic skills as well. Focus on their qualities, skills and talents that will contribute to their future success. These are just as important in life.

### Talk to Adults at School if You Need Further Support or Advice

If you are concerned about your child either around their academic understanding or their wellbeing, then talk to an adult at your child's school. They will be able to support you and your child to feel reassured, calm and prepared for the tests. By asking a teacher for support, you are modelling positive behaviour and showing that you are willing to ask another adult for help.

### Final Preparations for SATs Week

The best start to SATs week for a young person is to wake up after having a good night's sleep. Try to help your child relax the night before the tests with a good, well-practised sleep routine.

Often, a good way of doing this is to help them feel prepared. Pack their bag with them and get any lunch and water bottles ready for the following day. Turn all devices off in preparation for bedtime. They might even benefit from a shower or bath and listening to some calming music or reading a book.

Set an alarm to give them plenty of time to get ready in the morning. Ideally, they don't want to feel rushed because this can cause feelings of panic and stress.

Encourage them to eat breakfast and have a drink before school. Sometimes, schools offer a SATs breakfast club in the week of the tests. Check if this is an option for your child.

Finally, and most importantly, remind them that they have worked hard for these tests and all they can do now is try their best. Their best is always good enough.

