Essential Mental Arithmetic

Entry test instructions

The Entry test procedure is simple and straightforward if you follow these easy steps.

• Print or photocopy the two-page Entry test – one copy for every student in each class or set that you want to test. You can give students the Entry test at any time in the school year. If a new student joins your class in the middle of the school year, it is perfectly acceptable for him or her to sit the test at that point.

• Explain to the students that they are going to take a maths test. The purpose of this test is to make sure that the maths work they do on a daily basis will be at a suitable level. Stress that no-one will know the Entry test scores except the student and you, the teacher.

• Make sure that each student has a pen or a sharp pencil and an eraser to use during the test. Give each student some rough paper, which may be useful for workings out.

• Tell the students that the test is not timed. Explain that the questions are arranged to become increasingly difficult as the students progress through the test, so there will come a point when they are unable to answer any more questions. All students taking the test must understand that this is fine. The students should bring with them to the test a reading book or some other suitable activity, just in case they finish early. Most students are able to make a reasonable attempt at the test within a period of about an hour.

• Encourage the students to do their best. Point out that it is important that they work alone and do not copy anyone else’s answers.

• Hand out the test papers, and tell the students that they may start.

Marking the Entry test

Use the Entry test marking key to mark each student’s completed Entry test. One mark is given for each correct answer. Where a question has two parts (a and b), give half a mark for each part. In the grey box adjoined to the right-hand end of the answer box, make a note of the mark gained for the question. Tot up the marks given for all the questions in each column. When you have marked both pages, add the marks for each column to find the total score.

When you have marked all the tests for your class, make a note of each student’s results on a copy of the Group record sheet. The table overleaf shows you which book to give a student, depending on his or her Entry test score. This table also appears on the Group record sheet.

You will notice that Book 6 does not appear on the table. All those students who score more than 90 on the Entry test should be asked to work on Book 5 for at least a few weeks – so you can ensure that they are comfortable with all the concepts covered. Those whose high scores continue for several weeks should be promoted to Book 6 (grey).

Students scoring 15 marks or less should be given the Schofield & Sims Mental Arithmetic Introductory Book, which you can order separately (ISBN 978 07217 0798 3).
Entry test interpretation table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s score out of 100</th>
<th>Essential Mental Arithmetic student book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–30</td>
<td>Book 1 (dark green)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–50</td>
<td>Book 2 (blue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–70</td>
<td>Book 3 (light green)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–90</td>
<td>Book 4 (dark blue/purple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91+</td>
<td>Book 5 (orange)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acting on the Entry test results

Make sure that you have enough copies of the relevant Essential Mental Arithmetic student books – one for each student. You can use the completed Group record sheet to count the numbers of each book required. You will also need to order sets of Schofield & Sims Mental Arithmetic answer books – either one per student or one per teacher, depending on how you plan to organise the weekly marking sessions. All these books may be ordered direct from Schofield & Sims by telephone (01484 607080), fax (01484 606815), e-mail (sales@schofieldandsims.co.uk) or via the website (www.schofieldandsims.co.uk).

The results of the Entry test should be reported back to individual students. You may decide to show each student his or her test paper. Many students enjoy finding out where they picked up marks and where they made errors – thereby learning for the future.

You should also explain to each student individually which book he or she has been allocated.

Notes on using the books are provided in the section Teacher’s notes.