

The Challenge of Maths Vocabulary

Consider teaching key maths terms separately. Provide a dictionary of Maths terminology that may include drawings and examples to illustrate the terms. A useful online maths dictionary can be accessed at <http://www.amathsdictionaryforkids.com/> ; this is animated and interactive with definitions of over 600 common math terms in simple language

It is also important to be aware of the confusion that may present in relation to specific words. The grid below highlights some of the vocabulary that may cause difficulties.

	Number	Shape and Space/Measures	Algebra	Data
Words shared with Everyday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraction • Produce • Power • Prime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure • Similar • Reflection • Acute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable • Function • Origin • Relation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mode • Average • Median
Words shared with Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prism • Altitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power • Degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment
Words used only in Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent • Denominator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isosceles • Hypotenuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Histogram
Words with Multiple Meanings in Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round • Square • Cube • Tangent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square • Cube • Range • Tangent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range
Words which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sum, some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pi, Pie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercept, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf, Leave

sound like others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two, To, Too • Hundreds, Hundredths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plane, Plain • Theorem, Theory 	Intersect	
Words learned in Pairs which may confuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At most, At least • Factor, Multiple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radius, Diameter • Area, Perimeter (Ideally separate the learning of the two terms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain, Range • Horizontal, Vertical • Solve, Simplify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal, Vertical

Adapted from Rubenstein, R.N. (2007) Focused Strategies for Middle-Grades Mathematics Vocabulary Development, *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, Vol. 13(4), p.202