## Glossary of mathematical terms for $5^{\text {th }} / 6^{\text {th }}$ class in primary and Junior Cycle

## Bridging Materials for Mathematics

The following is a glossary of mathematical terms. The glossary is designed to inform students/parents/teachers of the vocabulary and meaning of terms in mathematics that students may have encountered in primary school and will encounter when they transfer to post-primary education. Many of these terms are used throughout the strands in junior cycle, but it is not a comprehensive list for Junior Cert. The definitions and examples here are specifically chosen for use in $5^{\text {th }}$ and $6^{\text {th }}$ classes in primary and junior cycle mathematics in post-primary schools in Ireland.

|  | Term | Diagram, Definition, explanation and example |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| A | abacus | Aelps to perform calculations by sliding beads along rods. <br> acute |



|  |  | 1 2 3 4 5 <br> 2 4 6 8 10 <br> 3 6 9 12 15 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | associativity | This is a property of number operations. The order in which we do operations is important. Multiplication is associative: $(12 \times 3) \times 6=12 \times(3 \times 6)$ <br> Division is not associative $(12 \div 3) \div 6 \neq 12 \div(3 \div 6)$. |
|  | axial symmetry | This is reflection of a plane figure in a line to form an image in a different place. |
|  | axis of symmetry | This is a line drawn through a plane figure, so that one half of the shape can be folded over along the line to fit exactly onto the other. A shape can have more than one axis of symmetry. |
| B | bar chart | A diagram used to display data in rectangular bars. It is used to summarise and display information in a diagram. |


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| bar-line graph | A way to show and compare data by using horizontal or vertical lines. The bars in a bar chart are simply replaced by straight lines. |
| base ten materials | Used for teaching place value and volume. There are ten small cubes in one long, ten longs in one flat, and ten flats in one block. |
| bisector | A line that divides an angle or line into two equal parts. |




|  | 36 has factors 1,2,3,4,6,9,12, 18,36 <br> 1,2 and 4 are the common factors and 4 is the highest common factor. |
| :---: | :---: |
| complementing | As with subtraction. <br> Example: There are 10 stickers in a set. I have 4. How many more do I need to make a full set? |
| complement of a set | Elements not in a set. <br> Example: The set $P=[1,2,3]$ the complement $P^{\prime}=[4,5]$ |
| components of number | The number 4 can be made up of $1+1+1+1,2+2,3+1,1+3$ etc. |
| composite number | A number with more than two factors. Example: 6,12, 51, 65 |
| congruent | 2D shapes that have identical properties and are exactly the same size, shape and measure of angle. |
| conjecture | An unproven statement which appears correct and has not been proven to be true or false. <br> Example: There is no biggest prime number. |
| conservation of number | Numbers can be counted in any order. The set does not need to exhibit uniformity. |
| co-ordinates | These are the numbered pairs used to locate points on the plane. The plane is a flat |


|  |  | surface, often referred to as the Cartesian plane. <br> There are some points shown in the four quadrants of the Cartesian plane. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | cylinder | A three-dimensional shape consisting of two identical circular ends joined by one continuous curved surface. |
| D | data | There are different types of data. (Categorical, numerical, ordinal, discrete and continuous). <br> Discrete <br> Continuous |
|  | deducting | As with subtraction. <br> Example: I had 10 sweets, I ate 3. How many have I left? |
|  | denominator | Number below the line in a fraction. |


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| diameter | A chord through the centre of a circle. It is twice the radius in length. |
| difference | Means subtraction. <br> Example: The difference between two numbers such as 22 and 17 is $22-17=5$. 5 is the difference. |
| digit | The individual symbols used to build up numerals in a numeration system. $0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8$, and 9 . |
| direct proportion | When two sets are connected by a constant multiplier. $A=\{12,24,36\} \quad B=\{3,6,9)$. Set $A$ is in direct proportion to set $B$ and the constant multiplier is 4. |
| discount | A reduction (usually a percentage). This is associated with money. <br> $20 \%$ OFF |
| distributive | This is a property of number operations. <br> It describes how two operators can be used together when linked in a certain way. It does not always work. $5(4+3)=5(7)=35$ and this equals $5(4)+5(3)=20+15=35$, i.e. multiplication is distributive over addition. <br> $5(20 \div 5)=5(4)=20 \neq 5(20) \div 5(5)=100 \div 25=4$, so multiplication is not |


|  |  | distributive over division. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | dividend | A number or quantity to be divided by another number or quantity. Example: $24 \div 6=4,24$ is the dividend. |
|  | divisor | Is the number that does the dividing. $36 \div 9=4$, the number 9 is the divisor. |
| E | edge | The intersection of two surfaces; in particular, the straight line where two faces of a polyhedron meet. |
|  | element | An element is a member of a set. <br> Example: $\mathrm{A}=\{$ dog, fridge, 17, Liverpool\}. There are four elements in the set A ; $\operatorname{dog}$ is one of the elements. |
|  | empty number line | A number line without a scale, used to support mental and informal additions and subtraction. |
|  | equation | A maths statement in symbols that includes an equals sign (equality). Example: $2 \mathrm{~b}+4 \mathrm{c}=34$ |
|  | equivalent | Has the same value as. <br> Example: $1 / 2,0.5$, and $50 \%$ are equivalent. |
|  | estimate | An approximation to an answer. |
|  | expanded form | When the value of each digit in a numeral is written in its entirety. <br> Example: $246=2$ hundreds +4 tens +6 units or $200+40+6$ |
|  | experiment | This is an activity which allows information/data to be collected and recorded (often called the results of the experiment). <br> Example: rolling a pair of dice and recording the total. |


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|  | exponential | This is an expression in which a number is raised to some power. The power is the exponent. (see power) $6^{2}, 8^{3}, 12^{9}$ |
| F | face | One of the plane surfaces of a polyhedron. A cube has six faces. |
|  | factor | A whole number or expression that divides evenly into another number. Example: 24 has eight factors including itself and one;1,2,3,4,6,8,12,24 Prime numbers such as 7,11 , and 23 have exactly two factors. |
|  | foreign exchange rate | Is the value one currency has in relation to another. <br> Example: Foreign exchange rate. $€ 1.00=\$ 1.39$ thus $€ 100=\$ 139$. $\$ 2085=2085 \div 1.39=€ 1500$ |
|  | formula | Is an easy way of expressing information using symbols. Example: Area of a triangle ( $1 / 2 \mathrm{x}$ base x height) $=1 / 2 \mathrm{bh}$ |
|  | frequency | Is the number of times an event occurs in an experiment. Frequencies are often summarised in a table or a histogram. <br> Example: in nine soccer matches played on a school pitch during a tournament the number of goals scored was recorded as $0,1,1,0,2,2,0,2,0$. This information could be summarised in a frequency table: |
|  | friendly numbers | Two numbers that are related to each other in a way that makes a calculation particularly easy. <br> Example:457-257 |
|  | front-end strategy | Estimation that has its strongest application in addition. The left-most digits (frontend) are the most significant in forming an initial estimate and can be used on their own in the earlier stages to establish a rough estimate. <br> Example : $€ 1.54+€ 6.35+€ 0.99+€ 2.51=$ <br> $€ 1+€ 6+€ 2=€ 9$ <br> $54 c+35$ c makes $€ 1$ approx, 99 c is nearly $€ 1$ and 51 c is nearly $50 c$ |


|  |  | Overall estimate is €11.50 ( $¢ 9+$ cent estimate of $€ 2.50$ ) |
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| G | geoboard | Used for learning about co-ordinates as well as making 2D shapes using elastic bands. |
|  | geostrips | Used to construct 2D shapes. |
| H | highest common factor (hcf) | The highest common factor is the largest whole number than divides into two or more whole numbers (see common factor). <br> Example: hcf of 16, 28 and $36=4$ |
|  | histogram | This is a diagram which represents data in rectangles. They have bases of the same width and data is represented by the area of the rectangle. |
|  | hectare | A unit of area equal to 100 ares. |
|  | hexagon | A six-sided polygon. |
| 1 | improper | A fraction in which the number above the line (numerator) is larger than the number |


|  | fraction | below (denominator). <br> Example: $\frac{5}{3}$ |
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|  | index | Often referred to as the power. It is the number of times the number is multiplied by itself. The plural of index is indices. <br> Examples: $2^{3}, 4^{8}, 17^{3}, 20^{2}$ |
|  | integers | Are whole numbers, plus and minus, including zero. The set of integers is represented by the letter $Z$. <br> Examples: -12, -6, 8, 0, 257, - 4398 are integers. |
|  | interest rate | Percentage of total earned on an investment or paid on a loan. <br> Example: €100 invested in a bank for 1 year at an interest rate of $10 \%$ will accumulate to €110. |
|  | intersection | Is the overlap of sets, where we see the elements that are common in two or more sets. The symbol used is $\cap$. <br> Example: <br> B <br> $A \cap B=\{3,4\}$ <br> A <br> B <br> $A \cap B$ |
|  | inverse | In many cases it means 'the opposite'. <br> The inverse of addition is subtraction. The additive inverse of a number is the number you add to it to give zero. The additive inverse of -8 is 8 . The multiplicative inverse is the number you multiply by to give 1 . The multiplicative inverse of 7 is $\frac{1}{7}$. |
|  | inverse proportion | When two numbers or sets of numbers are related and an increase in one corresponds to a decrease in the other. The product of the two numbers remains constant. <br> Example: $A=\{40,24,15\} B=\{3,5,8\}$ as $40 \times 3=120,24 \times 5=120$ and $15 \times 8=120$. |
| J |  |  |
| K | kilogram | Unit of mass (1000 grams) |



|  |  | A shape has line symmetry if one half of the shape can be folded exactly onto the <br> other half. <br> line symmetry <br> common <br> It can be found by listing the multiples of these denominators in increasing order, |
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|  | multiple (Icm) | until a common number is reached. <br> Example:To find what the Icm of 8,9 , and 12 is we could list their multiples: $\begin{array}{\|l} 8,16,24,32,40,48,56,64,72,80,88, \ldots \\ 12,24,36,48,60,72,84,96, \ldots \\ 9,18,24,36,45,54,63,72,81,90, \ldots \end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| M | magnitude | Of anything is the measure of its size. <br> Example: The magnitude of an earthquake is measured on the Richter scale from 0 to 10 . |
|  | mean | This is the simple average of a given set of data. <br> The mean of $8,7,12,0,3=8+7+12+0+3=30 \div 5=6$ |
|  | median | This is the middle value (or two values) of a set of data arranged in order. Example: 18, 3, 7, 8, 16, 2, 3 becomes 2, 3, 3, $\underline{7}, 8,16,18$ and 7 is the median. $-16,2,-7,2,23,-9,100,0$ becomes $-16,-9,-7,0,2,2,23,100 .(0+2) \div 2=1$ |
|  | millilitre | One thousandth of a litre, written as 1 ml . |
|  | millimetre | One thousandth of a metre, written 1 mm . |
|  | minus | This can be an operation or a property. <br> Example: 12-8 = 4 is the operation of minus. -39 is described as negative thirty nine or minus thirty nine and this is a property. |
|  | mixed <br> numbers | Written as a whole number part and a fraction part. Example: $7+\frac{3}{8}=7 \frac{3}{8}$ |
|  | mode | This is the most commonly occurring value in a set of data. |


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|  | multiple | Of a number is made by multiplying it by another number. Example: The multiples of 7 are 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42. |
| N | natural numbers | The set of counting numbers starting at 1 . They are represented by the letter N . Example: $N=\{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots\}$ |
|  | notation board | Used for learning about place value. |
|  | negative | This is a property of a number often referred to as the sign of it. A negative number is less than zero (see minus). <br> Example: - 20 |
|  | net | This is the plan of a 3D object. <br> Example: A cube with the net beside it. |
|  | null set | This is a set that contains no elements. <br> Example: $\mathrm{T}=\{$ The number of Irish people 5 m tall $\}$. $\mathrm{T}=\{ \}$ <br> The symbols used to show the null set are shown below. |
|  | number line | A straight line, on which points are used to represent numbers, emphasising particularly the order of numbers and their position in relation to each other. |
|  | number sentence | An equation or statement of inequality. <br> Examples: $4-x=11,4 x^{2}<12$ or $2+5=7$ |
|  | numerator | Number above the line in a fraction. |


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| P | parallel | A line is parallel to another line if they are an equal distance apart and they never meet. |
|  | perimeter | The sum of the length of the sides of a figure or shape. |
|  | perpendicular | Two lines are perpendicular if they meet at right angles $\left(90^{\circ}\right)$. |
|  | perpendicular bisector | A line that divides another line into two equal parts and is at $90^{\circ}$ to it. |
|  | pictogram | A way of representing discrete data, in which each member of the population is represented by an individual picture or icon arranged in rows or columns. |


| pie chart | A diagram in the shape of a circle or disc that is used to represent data. The $360^{\circ}$ of the disc is divided in ratio into pieces of the pie. |
| :---: | :---: |
| place holder | The role of zero in the place-value system of numeration. <br> Example: In the numeral 507 the 0 holds the tens place to indicate that there are no tens here. |
| place value | The position of a digit in a numeral determines its value. <br> For example, ' 6 ' can represent six, sixty, six hundred, six tenths, and so on, depending on where it is written in the numeral. $\begin{array}{\|llll} 6 & 60 & 600 & 0.6 \end{array}$ |
| plane figure | This is a 2D shape. <br> Examples: |
| plus | This is the operation of addition or a property of a number. <br> Examples: Addition $4+15=19$ <br> or <br> the number plus six +6 , which can be written as 6 |
| polygon | A two-dimensional (2D) closed shape made up entirely of straight edges. It does not have to be regular. <br> Examples: |
| polyhedron | A three-dimensional (3D) shape made up entirely of flat surfaces. It does not have to be regular <br> Examples: |


| prime factor | A factor that is a prime number. There are different methods used to find prime factors. <br> Example: |
| :---: | :---: |
| prime number | A number with exactly two factors, itself and 1. <br> Examples: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, |
| prism | A shape made up of two identical polygons at opposite ends, joined up by parallel lines. |
| probability | This is the study of chance; its value varies between 0 and 1 . Example: The probability of a fair coin landing on heads $=0.5$ |
| product | The result when you multiply two numbers. Example: $21 \times 8=168$ |
| profit | This is the measure of gain in a financial transaction. |
| protractor | A geometric instrument for measuring angles. |
| positive | A positive number is one which is greater than zero. Example: $\sqrt{2}, 51 / 2,7.09,16$ |


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|  | power | This is how often a number is multiplied by itself. It is also known as the index. Example: $3^{4}=3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3=81$ |
| Q | quadrilateral | A shape with four sides. <br> Example: <br> A rhombus is a four-sided shape with all of its sides equal in length. |
|  | quotient | Is the result of a division. <br> Example: $\frac{24}{8}=3$ |
| R | radius | A line joining the centre of a circle to the edge of the circle. It is half the diameter in length. |
|  | range | This is the difference between the smallest and the largest piece of data in a set. Example: The range of four people with heights of $160 \mathrm{~cm}, 155 \mathrm{~cm}, 180 \mathrm{~cm}, 178 \mathrm{~cm}$ is $180-155=25 \mathrm{~cm}$ |
|  | ratio | Is a comparison of two or more quantities. <br> Example: When making concrete you mix 9 parts of gravel with 2 parts cement. <br> The ratio of gravel to cement is 9:2 |
|  | rational numbers | This is a set of numbers which includes whole numbers, minus numbers, zero, fractions and decimals. They are represented by the letter Q . <br> Examples: -97, 128, 0, $\frac{3}{7},-\frac{12}{19}, 0.529,-17.64$ |
|  | ray | Is a line that is finite in one direction but infinite in the other. |



|  | right angle | An angle of $90^{\circ}$. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | rounding | The process of approximating an answer to an appropriate degree of accuracy; this can be done by rounding up or rounding down. <br> Example: $€ 25.37$ rounded up to the nearest ten cent is $€ 25.40$ <br> €24.14 rounded down to the nearest ten cent is €24.10; |
| S | sample space | Is the list of all possible outcomes of an experiment. <br> Example: When tossing two coins the sample space is given in the diagram |
|  | scalene triangle | A triangle with three sides of different length and, therefore, three different-sized angles. |
|  | sequence | A set of numbers written in order according to a rule. Examples: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 62. $1,2,3,5,8,13,21 .$ |
|  | set | A well defined collection of objects. Example: S = \{ dog, cat, elephant, giraffe\} |
|  | set diagram | The simplest picture of a population sorted into subsets; each subset is represented by an enclosed region (such as a circle) with the names of the items of individuals rather than just one. |
|  | side | The straight edges of a closed two-dimensional shape. |




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|  | subset | A subset is set which contains some or all elements of another set. The null set is a subset of every set. <br> Example: Set $A=\{$ Kerry, Tyrone, Dublin, Galway\}, $K$ is a subset of $A$ and could be K= \{Kerry, Tyrone, Galway\}. |
|  | subtraction | An operation in maths when the difference of two numbers is found (see difference). Example: $21-13=8 ; \quad-12-4=-16 ; \quad 63-(-12)=63+12=75$. |
|  | subtrahend | The number to be subtracted from another number. Example: $10-4$ (4 is a subtrahend) |
|  | substitute | To replace a variable with a number in order to calculate the value of an expression or to allow further algebraic manipulation. <br> Example: $x^{2}+3 x+4$, substitute $x=5, x^{2}+3 x+4=5^{2}+3(5)+4=25+15+4=44$ |
|  | survey | A method of collecting data often by asking questions of a population or a sample of a population. |
| T | tally | A tally is made by recording a series of single strokes. Usually every fifth stroke is a bar to the other four for easy counting. |
|  | tangram | A Chinese puzzle made up of seven simple geometric shapes, 2 large triangles, 1 medium triangle, 2 small triangles, 1 square and 1 parallelogram which are capable of being recombined in many different figures. |


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| tessellation | Shapes tessellate if they fit together exactly, form a repeating pattern, and make an angle of 360 at the points of contact. <br> Examples: |
| theorem | This is a statement in geometry that can be proved using previously accepted theorems or axioms. <br> Example: The theorem of Pythagoras |
| transition board | A simple device to aid children's conceptual understanding of addition and subtraction. |
| triangle | A three-sided shape. <br> Example: An equilateral triangle had 3 sides of equal length, an isosceles triangle has 2 equal sides and a scalene triangle has no sides of equal length. |


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| triangular numbers | These are numbers that can be drawn as equilateral triangles. <br> Example: The first of these numbers are $1,3,6,10,15,21 \ldots \ldots$. |
| trapezium | This is a four-sided figure with one set of parallel sides. |
| trend graph | Represents the general movement in the course of time of a statistically detectable change. |


|  | trundle wheel | An instrument for measuring distance by counting the number of clicks as the wheel revolves. The circumference of the wheel is one metre. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| U | union | This is an operation that joins together the elements of two or more sets. The symbol used is $\cup$. |
|  | universal set | The universal set contains all elements of all sets under discussion. The symbol for universal set is $U$. |
| V | variable | A symbol that represents a value in an algebraic expression. Example: y + $7=12$. $Y=5$ |
|  | Value Added <br> Tax (VAT) | A government tax added to most goods or services. It is usually charged as a percentage of the net cost. |
|  | venn diagram | A Venn diagram is a picture of a number of sets together. <br> venn diagram! |
|  | vertex | Is a point or corner on a 3D shape or where two shapes meet. |


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|  | volume | The amount of space taken up by a 3D object. |
| W | weight | The gravitational pull exerted on an object. |
|  | whole numbers | These can sometimes mean the Natural numbers (N) but are better described as the integers $(Z)$. $-5,-3,0,17,213,488$ |
| X | x-axis | In a graph this is the horizontal axis. Drawn on the Cartesian plane it is infinitely long in both directions. |
| Y | $y$-axis | In a graph this is the vertical axis. <br> Drawn on the Cartesian plane it is infinitely long in both directions. |
| Z |  |  |

