



CLASS 6 MATHS · 2026-27

The first algebra: letters for numbers

Algebra

36

QUESTIONS

25

MINUTES

3

EXERCISES

This belongs to _____ Date _____

WHAT YOU'LL GET GOOD AT

- Writes an expression from a sentence
- Substitutes a value into an expression correctly
- Reads an equation as a statement of balance rather than an instruction

Take your time, and have a go at every one. If you get stuck, look at the orange box — Ollie has already done one for you.

The first algebra: letters for numbers

Algebra · 36 questions · tick each box as you finish

Exercise 1 of 3 · 12 questions Write an expression for each. Use n for the unknown number.



WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

Five more than a number $\rightarrow n + 5$. Careful with 'three less than a number': it is $n - 3$, not $3 - n$. English puts the 3 first and the maths puts it second, and that reversal catches almost every child at least once.

1) Five more than a number

2) Twice a number

3) Three less than a number

4) A number divided by four

5) Two more than three times a number

6) Seven less than half a number

7) Ten more than a number

8) Five times a number

9) A number decreased by nine

10) One third of a number

11) Four more than twice a number

12) Six less than five times a number

Exercise 2 of 3 · 12 questions Find the value when $n = 6$.

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

$4n$ when $n = 6 \rightarrow 4 \times 6 = 24$. The letter simply stands in for 6, so replace it and calculate. Note that $n - 11$ gives -5, which is a perfectly good answer - children often assume they have made a mistake when the result is negative, and that is where the integers work above pays off.

1) $n + 9$

2) $4n$

3) $n - 11$

4) $2n + 3$

5) $3n - 8$

6) $n/2 + 5$

7) $5n - 6$

8) $n \times n$

9) $(n + 4)/2$

10) $10 - n$

11) $2(n + 1)$

12) $n/3 + 7$

Exercise 3 of 3 · 12 questions Find the value of the letter that makes each statement true. ☐

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

$x + 7 = 15$ -> the equals sign means both sides are worth the same. Something plus 7 is 15, so x is 8. Do not teach 'move it across and change the sign' yet - at Class 6 the useful question is 'what would make this true?', and that keeps the balance idea intact for Class 8.

1) $x + 7 = 15$

2) $5y = 40$

3) $a - 9 = 4$

4) $3m + 2 = 17$

5) $p/4 = 6$

6) $x + 13 = 20$

7) $7y = 63$

8) $b - 14 = 6$

9) $4m - 5 = 23$

10) $q/6 = 5$

11) $2k + 9 = 25$

12) $c + 2.5 = 8$

**All done? How did that feel?**

Colour in a star. Three stars means you could teach it to someone else.



Tricky · Getting there · Easy now



Answer key

For grown-ups

The first algebra: letters for numbers · keep this page back until your child has finished.

1. Write an expression for each. Use n for the unknown number.

- 1) $n + 5$
- 2) $2n$
- 3) $n - 3$
- 4) $n \div 4$ or $n/4$
- 5) $3n + 2$
- 6) $n/2 - 7$
- 7) $n + 10$
- 8) $5n$
- 9) $n - 9$
- 10) $n/3$
- 11) $2n + 4$
- 12) $5n - 6$

2. Find the value when $n = 6$.

- 1) 15
- 2) 24
- 3) -5
- 4) 15
- 5) 10
- 6) 8
- 7) 24
- 8) 36
- 9) 5
- 10) 4
- 11) 14
- 12) 9

3. Find the value of the letter that makes each statement true.

- 1) $x = 8$
- 2) $y = 8$
- 3) $a = 13$
- 4) $m = 5$
- 5) $p = 24$
- 6) $x = 7$
- 7) $y = 9$
- 8) $b = 20$
- 9) $m = 7$
- 10) $q = 30$
- 11) $k = 8$
- 12) $c = 5.5$

WHILE YOUR CHILD WORKS

- Never explain $3a + 2a$ as three apples plus two apples. It works for a term and then makes $a \times a = a^2$ impossible to understand.
- 'Three less than a number' is $n - 3$, not $3 - n$. English and maths put the numbers in opposite orders and this reversal catches nearly everyone.
- Read the equals sign aloud as 'is the same as'. It stops a child treating an equation as an instruction to compute.

**Spotted a gap while marking?**

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