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# User Guide

Note: You can also find the information that follows online, at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/userguides/> .

## Basic principles in using Math Mammoth Complete Curriculum

Math Mammoth is mastery-based, which means it concentrates on a few major topics at a time, in order to study them in depth. The two books (parts A and B) are like a “framework”, but you still have a lot of liberty in planning your child’s studies. You can even use it in a *spiral* manner, if you prefer. Simply have your student study in 2-3 chapters simultaneously. In second grade, the addition and subtraction topics are best studied in the order they are presented, but feel free to go through the chapters on geometry, measurement, clock and money in any order you like.

Math Mammoth is not a scripted curriculum. In other words, it is not spelling out in exact detail what the teacher is to do or say. Instead, Math Mammoth gives you, the teacher, various tools for teaching:

- **The two student worktexts** (parts A and B) contain all the lesson material and exercises. They include the explanations of the concepts (the teaching part) in blue boxes. The worktexts also contain some advice for the teacher in the introduction of each chapter.

The teacher can read the teaching part of each lesson before the lesson, or read and study it together with the student in the lesson, or let the student read and study on his own. If you are a classroom teacher, you can copy the examples from the “blue teaching boxes” to the board and go through them on the board.

- There are a lot of **videos** matched to the curriculum available at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/videos/> . There isn’t a video for every lesson, but there are dozens of videos for each grade level. You can simply have the author teach your child or student!
- Don’t automatically assign all the exercises. Use your judgement, trying to assign just enough for your student’s needs. You can use the skipped exercises later for revision. For most students, I recommend to start out by assigning about half of the available exercises. Adjust as necessary.
- Each chapter introduction includes a **link list to various free online games** and activities, matched to the topics of that chapter. These games can be used to supplement the lessons, for learning maths facts or just for some fun.
- The student books contain some **mixed revision lessons**, and the curriculum also provides you with additional **cumulative revision lessons**.
- There is a **chapter test** for each chapter of the curriculum, and a comprehensive end-of-year test.
- The **worksheet maker** allows you to make additional worksheets for most calculation-type topics in the curriculum. You will need Internet access to be able to use it. In the digital version, the worksheet maker is found in the folder titled “For revision”. In the print version, a link to it is found in the introduction just before the cumulative revisions.
- You can use the free online exercises at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/practice/>  
This is an expanding section of the site, so check often to see what new topics we are adding to it!
- Some grade levels have **cut-outs**, such as to make fraction manipulatives or geometric solids.
- And of course there are answer keys to everything.

## How to get started

Have ready the first lesson from the student worktext. Go over the first teaching part (within the blue boxes) together with your child. Go through a few of the first exercises together, and then assign some problems for your child to do on their own.

Repeat this if the lesson has other blue teaching boxes. Naturally, you can also use the videos at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/videos/>

Many children can eventually study the lessons completely on their own — the curriculum becomes self-teaching. However, children definitely vary in how much they need someone to be there to actually teach them.

## Pacing the curriculum

Each chapter introduction contains a suggested pacing guide for that chapter. You will see a summary on the right. (This summary does not include time for optional tests.)

The 2-page lessons are intended for one day. The lessons that are 3-4 pages can be covered in two days.

It can also be helpful to calculate a general guideline as to how many pages per week the student should cover in in order to go through the curriculum in one school year.

The table below lists how many pages there are for the student to finish in this particular grade level, and gives you a guideline for how many pages per day to finish, assuming a 175-day (35-week) school year.

Example:

Grade level	School days	Days for tests and revisions	Lesson pages	Days for the student book	Pages to study per day	Pages to study per week
1-A	82	6	121	76	1.6	8
1-B	93	10	127	83	1.5	7.7
Grade 1 total	175	16	248	159	1.6	7.8

Worktext 1-A	
Chapter 1	27 days
Chapter 2	21 days
Chapter 3	19 days
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67 days</b>

Worktext 1-B	
Chapter 4	14 days
Chapter 5	9 days
Chapter 6	15 days
Chapter 7	25 days
Chapter 8	9 days
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72 days</b>

The table below is for you to fill in. Allow several days for tests and additional revision before tests — I suggest at least twice the number of chapters in the curriculum. Then, to get a count of “pages to study per day”, **divide the number of lesson pages by the number of days for the student book**. Lastly, multiply this number by 5 to get the approximate page count to cover in a week.

Grade level	School days	Days for tests and revisions	Lesson pages	Days for the student book	Pages to study per day	Pages to study per week
1-A			121			
1-B			128			
Grade 1 total			249			

Now, something important. Whenever the curriculum has lots of similar practice problems (a large set of problems), feel free to **only assign 1/2 or 2/3 of those problems**. If your student gets it with less amount of exercises, then that is perfect! If not, you can always assign the rest of the problems for some other day. In fact, you could even use these unassigned problems the next week or next month for some additional revision.

In general, 1st-2nd graders might spend 25-40 minutes a day on maths. Third-fourth graders might spend 30-60 minutes a day. Fifth-sixth graders might spend 45-75 minutes a day. If your student finds maths enjoyable, they can of course spend more time with it! However, it is not good to drag out the lessons on a regular basis, because that can then affect the student's attitude towards maths.

## Working space, the usage of additional paper and mental maths

The curriculum generally includes working space directly on the page for students to work out the problems. However, feel free to let your students to use extra paper when necessary. They can use it, not only for the “long” algorithms (where you line up numbers to add, subtract, multiply, and divide), but also to draw diagrams and pictures to help organize their thoughts. Some students won't need the additional space (and may resist the thought of extra paper), while some will benefit from it. Use your discretion.

Some exercises don't have any working space, but just an empty line for the answer (e.g.  $200 + \underline{\quad} = 1000$ ). Typically, I have intended that such exercises to be done using MENTAL MATHS.

However, there are some students who struggle with mental maths (often this is because of not having studied and used it in the past). As always, the teacher has the final say (not me!) as to how to approach the exercises and how to use the curriculum. We do want to prevent extreme frustration (to the point of tears). The goal is always to provide SOME challenge, but not too much, and to let students experience success enough so that they can continue enjoying learning maths.

Students struggling with mental maths will probably benefit from studying the basic principles of mental calculations from the earlier levels of Math Mammoth curriculum. To do so, look for lessons that list mental maths strategies. They are taught in the chapters about addition, subtraction, place value, multiplication, and division. My article at [https://www.mathmammoth.com/lessons/practical\\_tips\\_mental\\_math](https://www.mathmammoth.com/lessons/practical_tips_mental_math) also gives you a summary of some of those principles.

## Using tests

For each chapter, there is a **chapter test**, which can be administered right after studying the chapter. **The tests are optional.** Some families might prefer not to give tests at all. The main reason for the tests is for diagnostic purposes, and for record keeping. These tests are not aligned or matched to any standards.

In the digital version of the curriculum, the tests are provided both as PDF files and as html files. Normally, you would use the PDF files. The html files are included so you can edit them (in a word processor such as Word or LibreOffice), in case you want your student to take the test a second time. Remember to save the edited file under a different file name, or you will lose the original.

The end-of-year test is best administered as a diagnostic or assessment test, which will tell you how well the student remembers and has mastered the mathematics content of the entire grade level.

## Using the cumulative revisions and the worksheet maker

The student books contain mixed revision lessons which revise concepts from earlier chapters. The curriculum also comes with additional cumulative revision lessons, which are just like the mixed revisions in the student books, with a mix of problems covering various topics. These are found in their own folder in the digital version, and in the Tests & Cumulative Revisions book in the print version.

The cumulative revisions are optional; use them as needed. They are named indicating which chapters of the main curriculum the problems in the revision come from. For example, “Cumulative Revision, Chapter 4” includes problems that cover topics from chapters 1-4.

Both the mixed and cumulative revisions allow you to spot areas that the student has not grasped well or has forgotten. When you find such a topic or concept, you have several options:

1. Check if the worksheet maker lets you make worksheets for that topic.
2. Check for any online games and resources in the Introduction part of the particular chapter in which this topic or concept was taught.
3. If you have the digital version, you could simply reprint the lesson from the student worktext, and have the student restudy that.
4. Perhaps you only assigned 1/2 or 2/3 of the exercise sets in the student book at first, and can now use the remaining exercises.
5. Check if our online practice area at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/practice/> has something for that topic.
6. Khan Academy has free online exercises, articles, and videos for most any maths topic imaginable.

## Concerning challenging word problems and puzzles

While this is not absolutely necessary, I heartily recommend supplementing Math Mammoth with challenging word problems and puzzles. You could do that once a month, for example, or more often if the student enjoys it.

The goal of challenging story problems and puzzles is to **develop the student's logical and abstract thinking and mental discipline**. I recommend starting these in fourth grade, at the latest. Then, students are able to read the problems on their own and have developed mathematical knowledge in many different areas. Of course I am not discouraging students from doing such in earlier grades, either.

Math Mammoth curriculum does contain a lot of word problems. Even so, the problems I have created are usually tied to a specific concept or concepts. I feel students can benefit from solving problems and puzzles that require them to think “out of the box” or are just different from the ones I have written.

I recommend Math Stars problem-solving newsletters (free) as a main resource for challenging problems: <https://www.homeschoolmath.net/teaching/math-stars.php>

I have also compiled a list of other resources for problem solving practice, which you can access at this link: <https://l.mathmammoth.com/challengingproblems>

Another idea: search online for “brain puzzles for kids,” “logic puzzles for kids” or “brain teasers for kids.”

## Frequently asked questions and contacting us

If you have more questions, please first check the FAQ at <https://www.mathmammoth.com/faq-lightblue>

Additionally, you can contact us using the contact form at the Math Mammoth.com website.