

Burwell Village College Primary School

Supporting Your Child with Learning Times Tables

Knowing tables automatically – that is, without having to start at the beginning and count through each item – frees all our attention so that we can focus on whatever mathematical problem we have to solve. Parents play a vital role in this process. However many parents dread times table practice as much as their child does? Here are some tips and tricks that may help to make learning tables at home a little more interesting.

It helps to focus on one times tables at a time and learn it until it is automatic. Spending 5 mins a day rehearsing the facts, rather than a block of 30 mins on a Sunday night, is also much more effective. The key is to rehearse them regularly and to return and recap on facts that may have been forgotten.

Visualize the numbers

Children need to practice counting in sequences before they can really understand times tables.

In class your child's teacher might use connecting cubes which help children make patterns, count and solve mathematical problems. Get your child to make 'sticks' of numbers; for example, if they are learning their 3x table, they will need to make a stick of 3, one of 6, 9, 12 and so on. They can then point at the correct stick as they count up in threes. Seeing the numbers as visual quantities will help to embed the correct sequence in their minds.

As an alternative to mathematical cubes, you can use building blocks or lego (all the same size) or get your child to colour in squares on grid paper.

Colour in a number square

[Print off a hundred number square](#) – basically a 10 by 10 grid with the numbers 1 to 100 on it. If your child is learning the 4x table, get them to count in 4s, colouring each number as they go. This will help them to start memorizing the answers in the 4x table. They will also find that a pattern will 'miraculously' appear!

Chanting

Chanting the whole times table fact (e.g. '5 times 7 is 35' or '5, 7s are 35') in a steady rhythm is still one of the most effective ways for many people to learn their times tables. This can be very hard for many children to master at first and requires regular repetition. Try writing the numbers 1-12 downwards on a piece of paper so the child can point and keep track of the fact they are saying.

Play times tables games

Making matching cards- Using coloured card, you can make simple games to help your child learn their times tables. Cut some card into 24 identical pieces, and write out all the questions for the times table you are learning on 12 of the cards (1x4, 2x4, 3x4, 4x4). Then write the answers on the other 12 cards. Spread them out on a table and see if your child can match them all up correctly. Once they are more confident, time them with a stopwatch. See if they can try to beat their own record each time they do it!

Dice- a ten or twelve sided dice is a brilliant investment. Roll the dice and say the whole fact (4, 6s are 24)

Playing cards- Use one suit of cards to represent the numbers from 1-12. Shuffle them and call out the corresponding fact for their times table (E.g. Jack = 11 so 11 x 6 is 66)

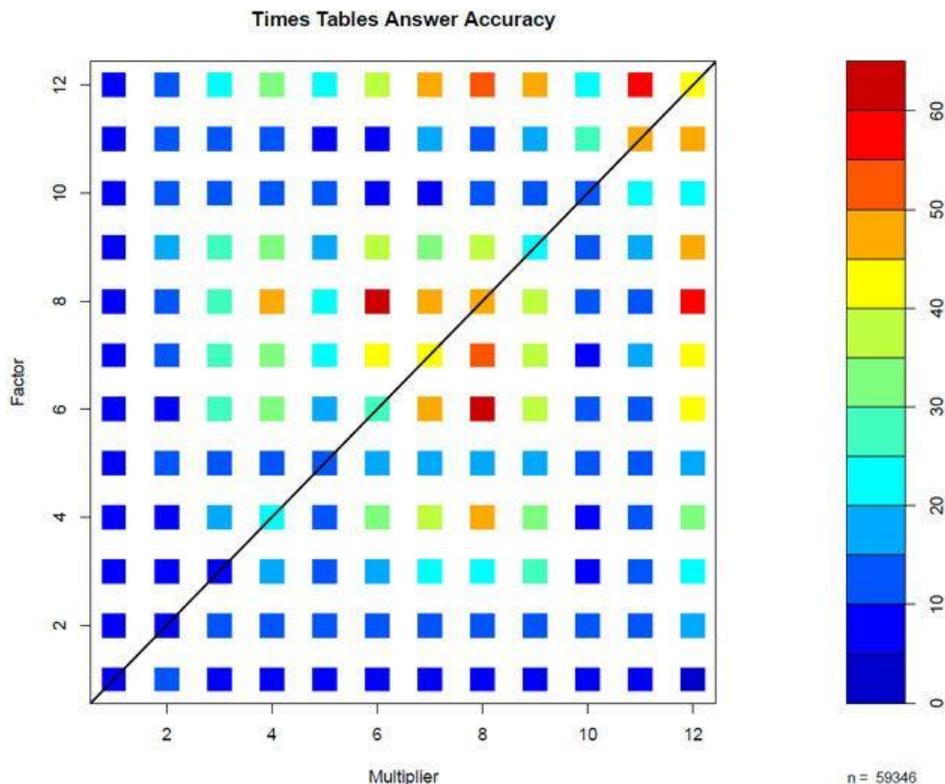
Use speed games on the computer

There are lots of good websites which contain speed games. MyMaths also contains 'Beat the Clock' games. Times Tables Mountain is another useful game that we use on the school computers and can be downloaded as an app at home.

Single out the tricky one!

We all have a few particular times table questions that we get stuck on. Sometimes you just have to remember the answers to the trickiest questions. If your child finds a particular equation difficult, for example $7 \times 8 = 56$, get them to 'single it out' by drawing it in bubble writing with marker pens on a big piece of paper. Stick it up in their room so they see it every time they walk in. You could get them to say it in a silly voice every time they see it or make up an action to go with it (e.g. "5, 6, 7, 8- 56 is 7 x 8" or "I ate and I ate and was sick on the floor- 8, 8s are 64")

The following table shows which times tables are the hardest to remember.



Talk about factors and multiples

Don't forget to **use correct times table vocabulary when you talk to your child** (they will need to know the right language in the SATs).

First of all, show them a times table number sentence, such as $6 \times 4 = 24$. Explain that 6 and 4 are **factors** of 24, and that 24 is a **multiple** of 6 and a multiple of 4.

Another good way to demonstrate this is to show the whole 6x table written out and point to all the answers at the end, explaining that all these numbers are multiples of 6.

Relate them to division

To test your child's understanding (after they have learnt the times table), give them division questions as well. E.g. How many 6s in 36? What is 56 divided by 8? What is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 24?

Remember to praise and reward your child regularly. We all love praise and most of us don't love being criticised. So, praise is most important when learning tables.