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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 sixth grade, chapters 1 and 2 should be studied before the other chapters, but you can be flexible with all the other chapters and schedule them earlier or later.

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 hundreds 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 judgment, trying to assign just enough for your student’s needs. You can use the skipped exercises later for review. For most students, I recommend to start out by assigning about half of the available exercises. Adjust as necessary.
- For each chapter, there is a **link list to various free online games** and activities. These games can be used to supplement the math lessons, for learning math facts, or just for some fun. Each chapter introduction (in the student worktext) contains a link to the list corresponding to that chapter.
- The student books contain some **mixed review lessons**, and the curriculum also provides you with additional **cumulative review 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. This is a single html file. You will need Internet access to be able to use it.
- 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** 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

The lessons in Math Mammoth complete curriculum are NOT intended to be done in a single teaching session or class. Sometimes you might be able to go through a whole lesson in one day, but more often, the lesson itself might span 3-5 pages and take 2-3 days or classes to complete.

Therefore, it is not possible to say exactly how many pages a student needs to do in one day. This will vary. However, it is helpful to calculate a general guideline as to how many pages per week you should cover in the student worktext in order to go through the curriculum in one school year (or whatever span of time you want to allot to it).

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 180-day school year.

Example:

Grade level	Lesson pages	Number of school days	Days for tests and reviews	Days for the student book	Pages to study per day	Pages to study per week
6-A	166	92	10	82	2	10
6-B	157	88	10	78	2	10
Grade 6 total	323	180	20	160	2	10

The table below is for you to fill in. First fill in how many days of school you intend to have. Also allow several days for tests and additional review before the test — at least twice the number of chapters in the curriculum. For example, if the particular grade has 8 chapters, allow at least 16 days for tests & additional review. Then, to get a count of “pages/day”, divide the number of pages by the number of available days. Then, multiply this number by 5 to get the approximate page count to cover in a week.

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6-A	166					
6-B	157					
Grade 6 total	323					

Now, let’s assume you determine that you need to study about 2 pages a day, 10 pages a week in order to get through the curriculum. As you study each lesson, keep in mind that sometimes most of the page might be filled with blue teaching boxes and very few exercises. You might be able to cover 3 pages on such a day. Then some other day you might only assign one page of word problems. Also, you might be able to go through the pages quicker in some chapters, for example when studying graphs, because the large pictures fill the page so that one page does not have many problems.

When you have a page or two filled with lots of similar practice problems (“drill”) or large sets of problems, feel free to **only assign 1/2 or 2/3 of those problems**. If your child gets it with less amount of exercises, then that is perfect! If not, you can always assign him/her the rest of the problems some other day. In fact, you could even use these unassigned problems the next week or next month for some additional review.

In general, 1st-2nd graders might spend 25-40 minutes a day on math. Third-fourth graders might spend 30-60 minutes a day. Fifth-sixth graders might spend 45-75 minutes a day. If your child finds math enjoyable, he/she 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 child's attitude towards math.

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

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.  $200 + \underline{\quad} = 1,000$ ). Typically, I have intended that such exercises to be done using MENTAL MATH.

However, there are some students who struggle with mental math (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 math.

Students struggling with mental math 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 math 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 cumulative reviews and the worksheet maker

The student books contain mixed review lessons which review concepts from earlier chapters. The curriculum also comes with additional cumulative review lessons, which are just like the mixed review lessons 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 Reviews book in the print version.

The cumulative reviews are optional; use them as needed. They are named indicating which chapters of the main curriculum the problems in the review come from. For example, "Cumulative Review, Chapter 4" includes problems that cover topics from chapters 1-4.

Both the mixed and cumulative reviews 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 math 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 contains lots of word problems, and they are usually multi-step problems. Several of the lessons utilize a bar model for solving 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 you use the free Math Stars problem-solving newsletters as one of the main resources for puzzles and challenging problems:

#### **Math Stars Problem Solving Newsletter (grades 1-8)**

<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: you can find puzzles online by searching 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>

If the FAQ does not cover your question, you can then contact us using the contact form at the Math Mammoth.com website.