MATHEMATICS · GRADES 4-6

Estimating answers

Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 4-6

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Overview of the concept

This is how you check whether an exact answer is sensible before you trust it. A quick total while shopping tells you whether the till total is in the right ballpark, and if it is not, you know something went wrong. Estimation does not replace the exact answer, it guards it. It is the habit that catches a misplaced decimal before it costs you money.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Estimate $48 + 31$.

SOLUTION

This is an estimate, so round each number to the nearest ten first: the exact answer does not matter, a close answer does.

48 rounds to 50, and 31 rounds to 30.

50 + 30 = 80, so 48 + 31 is about 80

EXAMPLE 2

Q Estimate 297×3.

SOLUTION

Round 297 to a number that is easy to multiply: 297 is close to 300.

300 × 3 = 900

So 297 × 3 is about 900

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Practice questions

1 A shop sells 52 notebooks in the morning and 38 in the afternoon. Estimate how many notebooks it sells in all by rounding each number to the nearest ten.

- **A** About 80
- **B** About 90
- **C** About 100
- **D** About 110

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2 A library has 503 books. It lends out 198 books. Estimate how many books are left by rounding each number to the nearest ten.

- **A** About 200
- **B** About 300
- **C** About 400
- **D** About 500

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3 Estimate 47 × 6 by rounding 47 to the nearest ten.

- **A** About 240
- **B** About 300
- **C** About 360
- **D** About 420

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4 Estimate 612 ÷ 6 by rounding 612 to the nearest hundred.

- **A** About 60
- **B** About 100
- **C** About 120
- **D** About 200

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5 A hall has 21 rows with 38 seats in each row. Estimate how many seats there are by rounding each number to the nearest ten.

- **A** About 600
- **B** About 700
- **C** About 800
- **D** About 900

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6 Estimate 803 - 297 by rounding each number to the nearest hundred.

- **A** About 400
- **B** About 500
- **C** About 600
- **D** About 700

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7 Estimate 88 ÷ 9 by rounding 88 to a compatible number.

- **A** About 8
- **B** About 9
- **C** About 10
- **D** About 12

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8 A calculator says $48 \times 21 = 10{,}008$. Your estimate is about 1,000. What should you suspect?

- **A** A slip, such as an extra zero
- **B** The calculator is broken
- **C** Your estimate is too low
- **D** 48×21 really is 10,008

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9 Estimate 52×48 by rounding each number to the nearest ten.

- **A** About 2000
- **B** About 2500
- **C** About 3000
- **D** About 3500

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10

Estimate 49 + 49 + 49 by rounding each number to the nearest ten.

A About 120

B About 150

C About 180

D About 200

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ANSWER KEY

1. About 90

2. About 300

3. About 300

4. About 100

5. About 800

6. About 500

7. About 10

8. A slip, such as an extra zero

9. About 2500

10. About 150

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