MATHEMATICS · KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

Patterns and repeating sequences

Difficulty level: Easy

Mathematics: Kindergarten to Grade 3

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Overview of the concept

This is how you predict what comes next in a repeating pattern, like the colours in a beaded bracelet or the tiles in a kitchen backsplash. A beader knows which bead comes next without counting from the start, and a tiler knows which tile goes in the next spot by the pattern, not by guessing. Wallpaper, fence pickets, and knitted scarves all repeat the same way. Once you can name the part that repeats, you can carry the pattern as far as it needs to go.



Rule

A repeating pattern is made of one unit that repeats in the same order.

Find the unit first, check that it repeats, then continue it to find what comes next.

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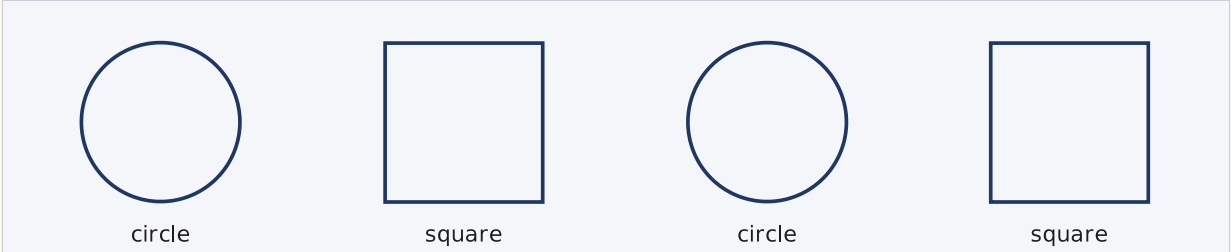
Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q What comes next: circle, square, circle, square, ?



SOLUTION

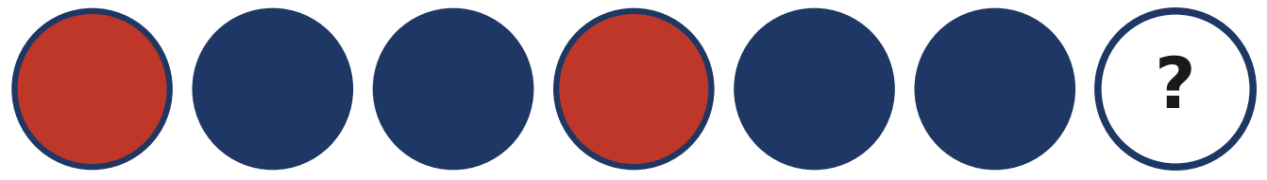
Find the repeating unit: circle, square

Check it repeats: circle, square, circle, square

After a square comes a circle, so the next shape is a circle.

EXAMPLE 2

Q What comes next: red, blue, blue, red, blue, blue, ?



SOLUTION

Pattern unit: red, blue, blue

Find the repeating unit: red, blue, blue

Check it repeats: red, blue, blue, red, blue, blue

After blue, blue comes red, so the next colour is red.

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Practice questions

1 What comes next: square, circle, square, circle, ? Write the next shape.

- **A** square
- **B** circle
- **C** triangle
- **D** star

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2 What comes next: A, B, A, B, ? Write the next letter.

- **A** A
- **B** B
- **C** C
- **D** D

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3 A bracelet pattern is star, circle, star, circle, star, circle, star, circle. How many stars are in the first 8 terms?

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4 What comes next 1, 2, 1, 2, ?

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5 A scarf pattern is red, green, red, green. What is the repeating unit? Write the unit.

A. red, green

B. green, red

C. red, red

D. green, green

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6 **What comes next: big, small, big, small, ? Write the next word.**

A small

B big

C tall

D short

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7 **What comes next: triangle, circle, triangle, circle, ? Write the next shape.**

A circle

B square

C triangle

D star

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8 What is the 6th term in 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, ?

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9 What is the repeating unit in: jump, hop, hop, jump, hop, hop? Write the unit.

A. hop, jump, hop

B. jump, jump, hop

C. hop, hop, jump

D. jump, hop, hop

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10 **What comes next to finish the unit: red, yellow, green, red, yellow, ? Write the next colour.**

A red

B yellow

C green

D blue

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ANSWER KEY

1. square

2. A

3. 4

4. 1

5. red, green

6. big

7. triangle

8. 30

9. jump, hop, hop

10. green

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