Functional Skills Maths: Division

Division is one of the core skills of Functional Skills maths and is assessed at Entry Level 2 to Level 2. It is an area that has caused some concern for examiners and standards verifiers since the Reform Functional Skills were launched in 2019.

The Standards

The standards at each level show how what skills the learners need to demonstrate.

Entry 2

- E2.4 Recognise and interpret the symbols +, –, ×, ÷ and = appropriately
- E2.8 Divide two-digit whole numbers by single-digit whole numbers and express remainders

Entry 3

- E3.3 Divide three-digit whole numbers by single- and double-digit whole numbers and express remainders

Level 1

- 3 Multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100, 1000

Level 2

- 2 Carry out calculations with numbers up to one million including strategies to check answers including estimation and approximation

That being said, division often is needed when solving a range of other problems at Levels 1 and 2.

General Tips

- Learners would greatly benefit from knowing their times tables, allowing them to use them in reverse when dividing. Time should be given to this at all levels.
- Similarly, knowing their number facts would help greatly, so learners should learn, for example:

$$8 \times 7 = 56$$

$$7 \times 8 = 56$$

$$56 \div 7 = 8$$

$$56 \div 8 = 7$$

- Ensure that the learners know synonyms for divide. These could include:

Share

Split into

Fractions (a half of, a quarter of etc.)

- Encourage the learners to write out the times table of a particular number, if needed, so they have something to refer to when doing long division. I often do this myself when dividing by numbers greater than 12 without a calculator.
- Learners need to be able to recognise that they need to divide when solving problems in the assessments. Regular problem-solving activities would help with this.
- Remind learners that there is a decimal point at the end of whole numbers, so they can continue dividing into decimals if need.

Entry Level Tips

- Learners should be encouraged to show their working out at all times.
- Learners need to read the questions and understand what is being asked of them.

With this E3 question learners do not need to show remainders:

The total cost of travel for the holiday is £296.
4 friends share this cost equally.
How much does each friend pay?

(2)

With this question at E2, however, they are specifically being asked to show remainders.

Sam is a football coach.
He has 53 players in his club.
He puts the players into teams of 6.
How many full teams does he have?
Show how many players he has left over.

(3)

Show your working and your answers here

_____full teams
_____ players left over

- Learners at E2 and E3 need to practice doing their long division with remainders and without. Using remainders has been one of the key issues with Entry Level division, especially as they could possibly have move passed this on to decimals in their learning.

Level 1 and 2 Tips

- Learners should be encouraged to show their working out at all times.
- Some questions will ask learners to do a check. This could be in the form of a reverse calculation and might need them to use their division skills.
- Learners will need to use their division skills when problem-solving, so ensure they have practised looking at what a question is asking them.
- Many of the questions involving division will not mention division, so learners need to be aware that division is a fundamental skill in other aspects of maths. These include:
    - Finding the mean
    - Working out percentages

- Working out percentage increase or decrease
- Working with ratios
- Working with fractions
- Converting between currencies
- Converting between measurements

Practice

We have created some practice handouts for learners from Entry 2 to Level 2. These are in the form of assessment style questions. These can be found on our webpage or through the links below.

Entry 2

Entry 3

Level 1

Level 2