



# Teaching The Fundamentals | Level 1 & 2 | The Basics

Chris Briggs  
Product Manager Post 16 English, Maths and Digital Skills



# The Basics

Many learners struggle to complete calculations without relying on a calculator, particularly when dealing with division and decimals. While it is apparent that they understand the question and can identify the correct operations, manual calculations are still proving challenging to many learners. The place value and positioning of the decimal point when arranging calculations are often confused and when borrowing and carrying is involved some learners lack accuracy.

Conversely, there is evidence that learners neglect to use calculators in the calculator section of the paper, as the buildup method is frequently employed there, which often consists of many steps and leads to inaccuracies.

# The Basics

It is concerning to see many learners miss out on the final decision mark and the check mark. Many learners show clear understanding of the question and perform all necessary calculations to find figures to compare but then either do not make a decision or make an incorrect one. This could be attributed to lapses in concentration or a lack of comprehension of the question.

Similarly, when asked to show an explicit check of their answer many learners show the reverse calculation, and encouragingly some use estimation, but they often forget to show the result of those calculations, which is required to gain this mark.

# The Basics

## Performing A Check - What the learners need to do

In the assessments, learners will be asked to perform a check of their answers for certain questions.

This question can be asked in different ways:

- We can ask them to perform a simple check with no restrictions.
- We can ask them to perform a reverse calculation.
- We can ask them to use estimation.
- We can ask them to check a specific part of your working out.

# The Basics

## Performing A Check - What the learners do do

- Often the learners miss out these questions.
- They often repeat a step from the original question.
- They do the wrong kind of check.
- They don't provide an answer to their check.
- They get the answer wrong.
- They have no working out to check.

It is always important to check the sense of an answer. Learners should look at final answers to problems and check their answer is sensible. For example, the price of a sofa is very unlikely to be £4.50 but may be £450 so a place value issue may have occurred. An answer which seems too cheap or too expensive should be checked for arithmetic errors.

# The Basics

- **Why present working?**
- We have already seen from the previous section that learners cannot get a check mark without presenting their working.
- They would greatly benefit from showing working on all other questions too:
  - It helps the spot their own errors.
  - It can help them gain marks.
  - For some questions the learners must show their working out.

The Pearson logo is displayed in white against a dark blue background. It features a stylized icon on the left consisting of three curved, overlapping shapes that resemble a book or a stylized 'P'. To the right of this icon, the word "Pearson" is written in a bold, sans-serif typeface.

**Pearson**