



Because maths matters!

Welcome to the MEI conference 2026

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Beyond the Numbers:

Empowering Girls in Maths

- Rima Pancholi, Naz Abdullah & Grace Geilinger



NAZ ABDULLAH

London Local Lead
Hubs - Thames and
Southeast



RIMA PANCHOLI

Central England Local Lead
Hubs – East Midlands South and
Origin



GRACE GEILINGER

London Local Lead
Hubs – Central & West and
North-East London



Agenda



1. Setting the Scene

2. What would you do?

3. Strategies

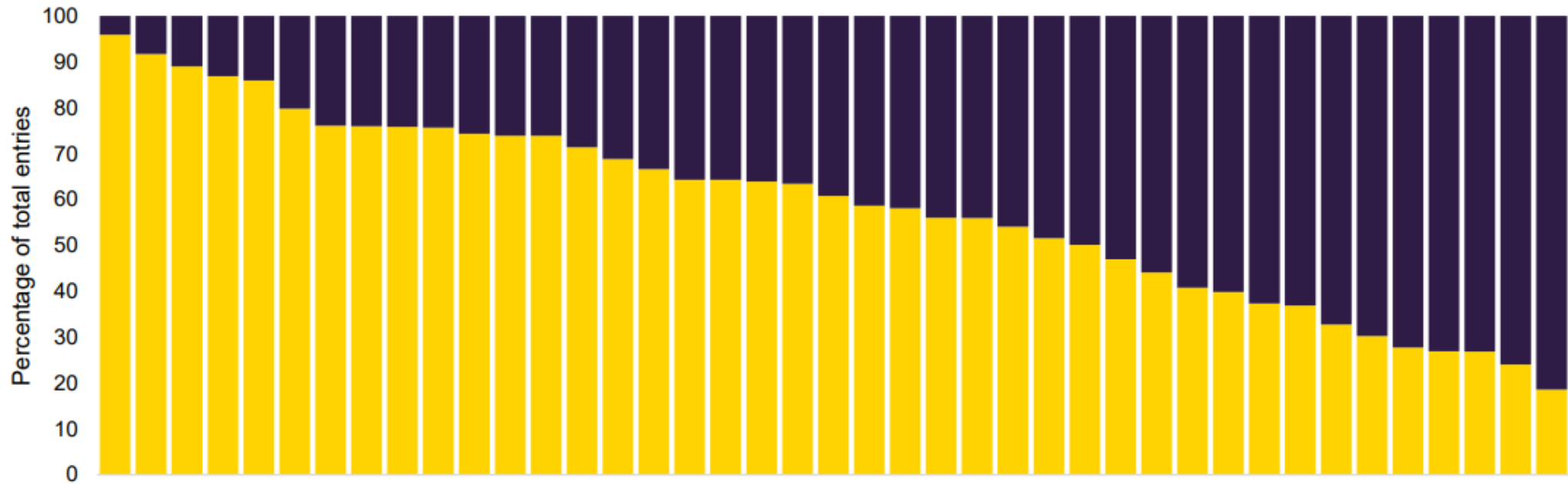
4. Resources

5. Closing Thoughts



Setting the Scene

2025 - Male and female choices at A level for the UK

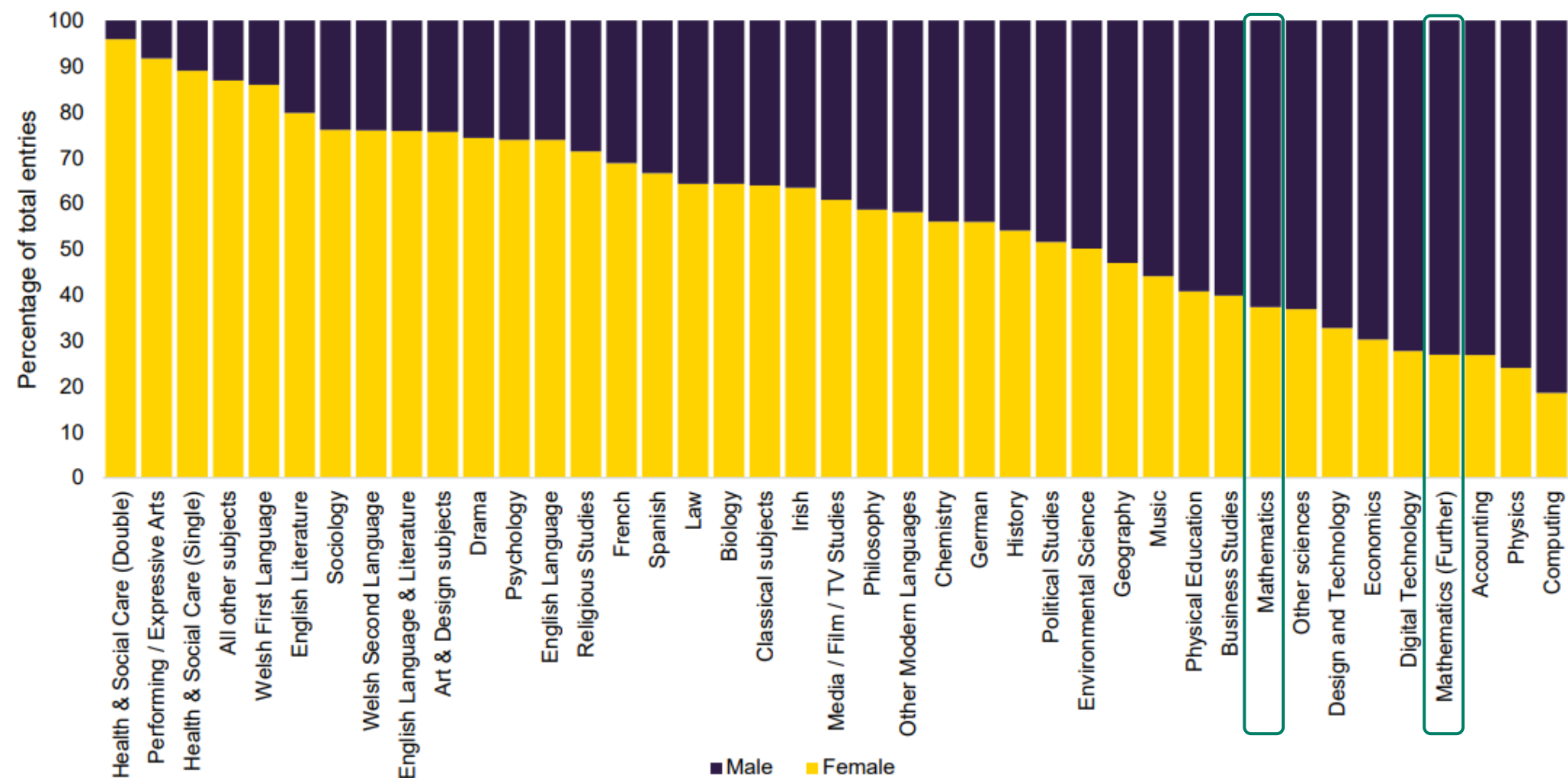


Source data: [A level and Level 3 results - Summer 2025 - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

■ Male ■ Female

Guess which bar represents the gender breakdown in:
a) maths A level, b) further maths A level

2025 - Male and female choices at A level for the UK



Source data: [A level and Level 3 results - Summer 2025 - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)



A level Mathematics and Further Mathematics

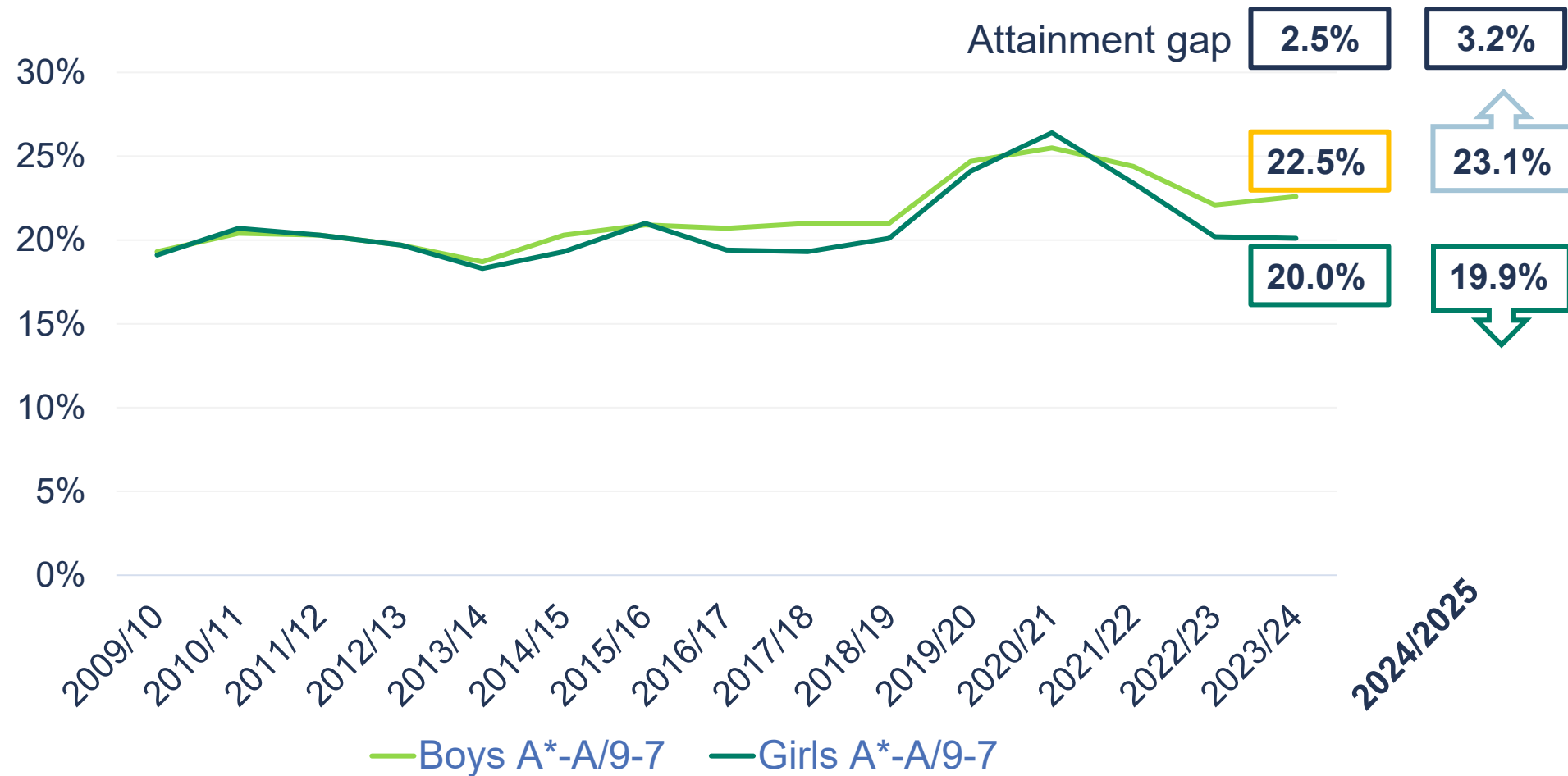


Gender Balance for Level 3 Maths qualifications

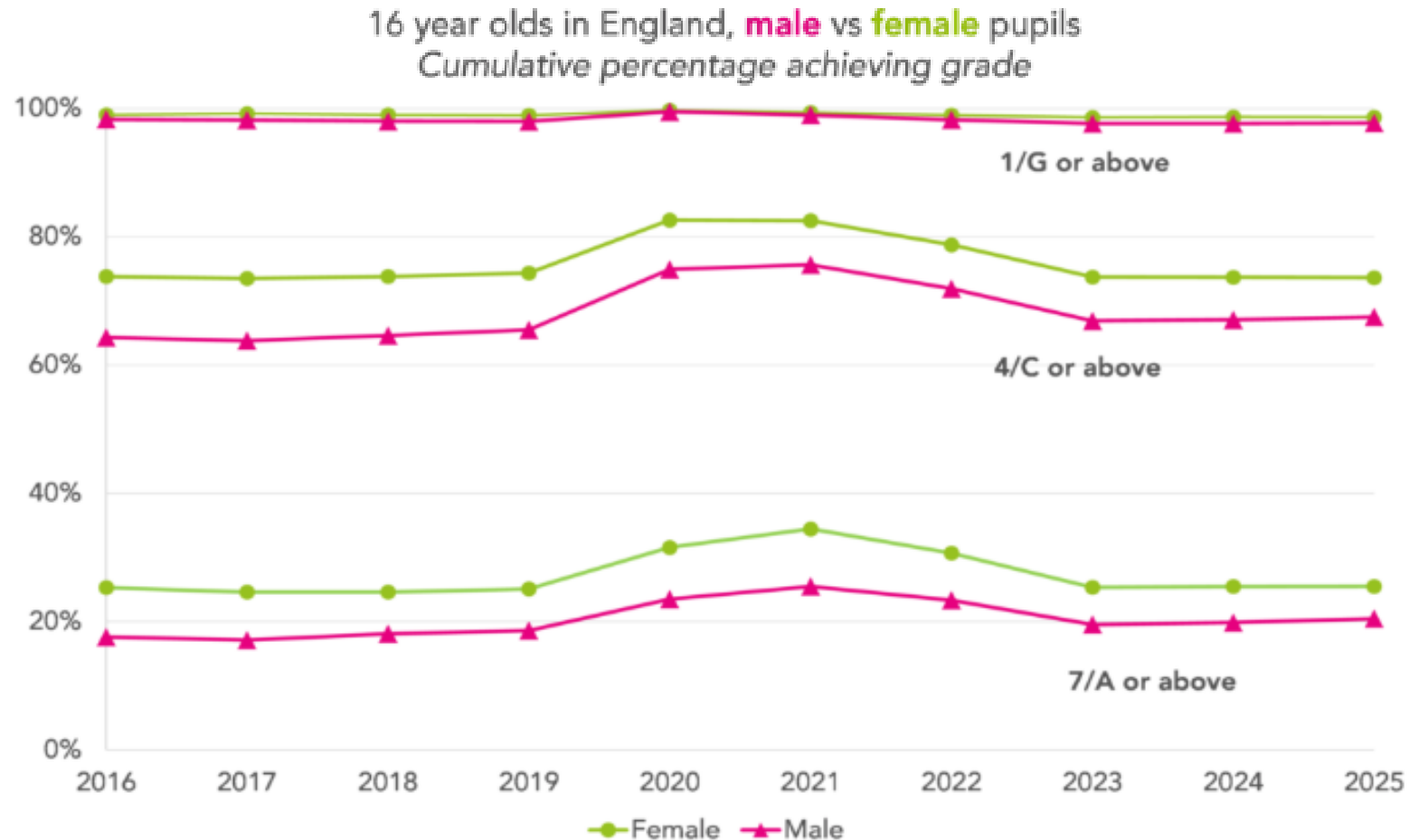
percentage of entries by female students in England



Mathematics GCSE 7 /A and above for 16-year-olds

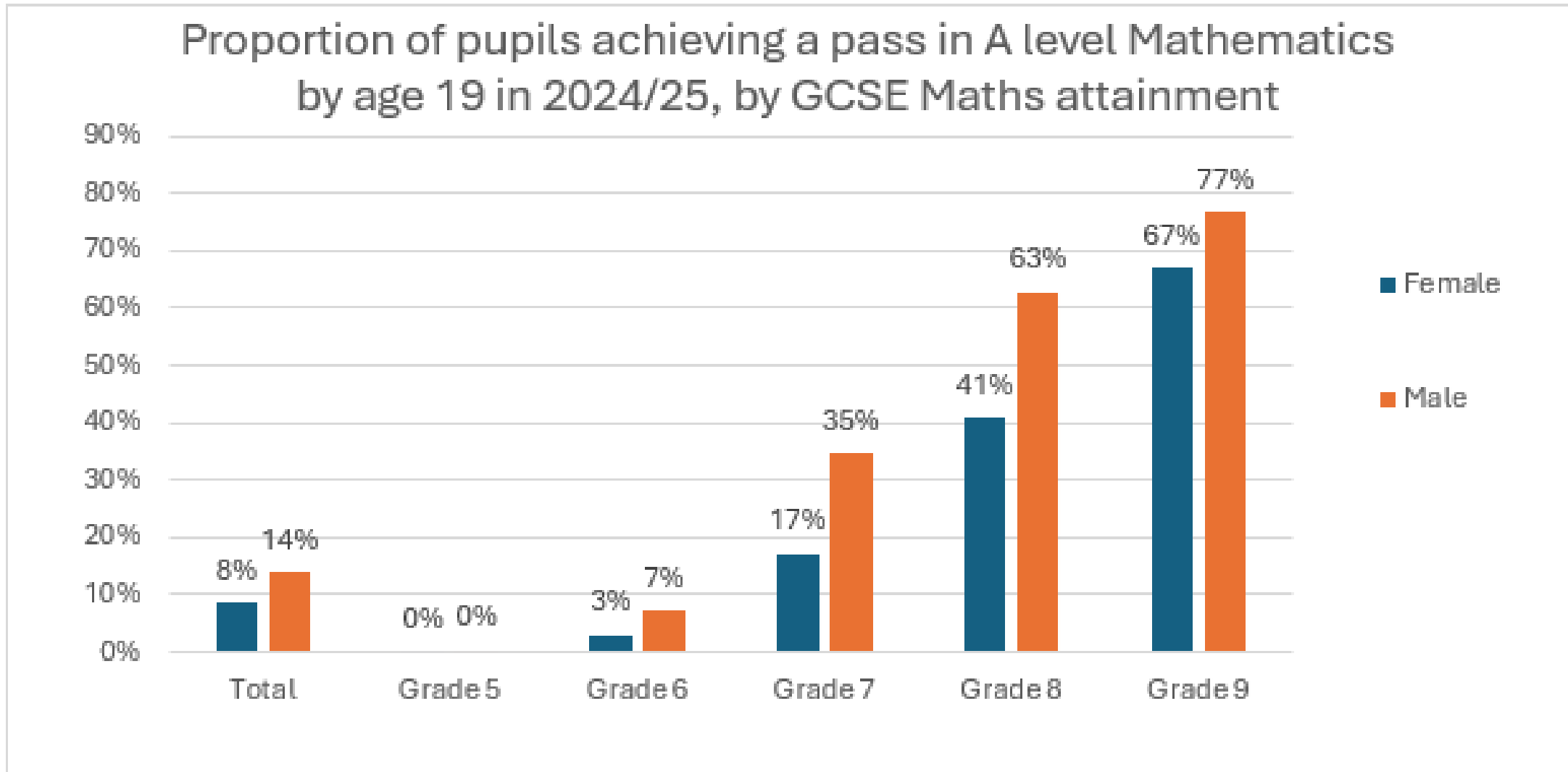


GCSE grades in all subjects, 2016 - 2025



How does this impact uptake of A level maths amongst girls?

What do you notice?





What would you do in this scenario?

What would you do in this scenario?

How would you respond?

Scenario 1

Context

Despite strong GCSE performance, relatively few girls in your school choose A Level Maths or Further Maths. This reflects a national pattern, but the gap appears to be widening in your current Year 11 cohort.

Scenario 4

Context

Some parents' express concerns that A Level Maths or Further Maths is "too stressful" or "too demanding", particularly for girls. Peer conversations reinforce the idea that Maths is only for a small number of exceptional students.

Scenario 2

Context

Several high attaining girls describe themselves as "not maths people" despite strong attainment. They are less likely to volunteer answers, more likely to doubt correct responses, and often compare themselves unfavourably to peers.

Scenario 5

Context

Girls report that most mathematicians they encounter; in lessons, materials, and examples are male. They rarely see women presented as experts or leaders in mathematics.

Scenario 3

Context

During options interviews, some girls explain they don't see where Maths leads beyond GCSE. Many associate Maths with a narrow range of careers and struggle to name women working in maths-related fields.

Scenario 6

Context

In several lessons, boys dominate whole-class discussion. They are more likely to call out, volunteer answers, and speak quickly and confidently. Girls are more likely to wait to be invited to contribute, speak less frequently, or stop contributing after being interrupted.

Instructions

Group chooses one scenario

- 1) Top side will only show **context**
 - What feels familiar?
 - Where do you see this in your classroom?

- 2) Introduce the **Prompt** and **Discussion Focus** (Other side of laminated card)
 - Prompt will give direction and encourage engagement
 - Discussion Focus will guide and maintain relevance

What would you do in this scenario?

How would you respond?

Scenario 1

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Context

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Discussion focus

Scenarios

1- Encouraging Girls into A Level Maths and Further Maths

Context

Despite strong GCSE performance, relatively few girls in your school choose A Level Maths or Further Maths. This reflects a national pattern, but the gap appears to be widening in your current Year 11 cohort.

Some girls report concerns about workload, confidence, or whether Maths is “for them”. Others are unsure how Maths connects to future study or careers. The school is committed to equity of opportunity and informed choice.

Prompt

What would you do to encourage more girls to continue with Maths and Further Maths?

2 - Confidence vs Capability

Context

Several high-attaining girls describe themselves as “not maths people” despite strong attainment. They are less likely to volunteer answers, more likely to doubt correct responses, and often compare themselves unfavourably to peers.

Teachers recognise their ability but notice that confidence drops when work becomes challenging.

Prompt

How would you help pupils develop confidence as well as competence in Maths?

3 - Subject Choice and Careers Awareness

Context

During options interviews, some girls explain they don’t see where Maths leads beyond GCSE. Many associate Maths with a narrow range of careers and struggle to name women working in maths-related fields.

Careers education exists, but Maths-specific pathways are rarely highlighted unless pupils actively seek them out.

Prompt

What would you change to help students see the value and possibilities of Maths?

Discussion focus

Scenarios

4 - Messages from Home and Peers

Context

Some parents express concerns that A Level Maths or Further Maths is “too stressful” or “too demanding”, particularly for girls. Peer conversations reinforce the idea that Maths is only for a small number of exceptional students.

These views are often subtle but influential.

Prompt

How would you address external influences on pupils' subject choices?

5 - Representation and Role Models

Context

Girls report that most mathematicians they encounter — in lessons, materials, and examples — are male. They rarely see women presented as experts or leaders in mathematics.

Some say they struggle to picture themselves studying Maths long-term.

Prompt

What could you do to help pupils “see themselves” in Maths?

6 - Boys Dominating the Classroom

Context

In several lessons, boys dominate whole-class discussion. They are more likely to call out, volunteer answers, and speak quickly and confidently. Girls are more likely to wait to be invited to contribute, speak less frequently, or stop contributing after being interrupted.

Written work and assessments show that many girls understand the content well, but this is not always reflected in classroom talk. Over time, participation patterns appear to influence confidence, visibility, and perceptions of who is “good” at the subject.

Prompt

What would you do to ensure all pupils' voices are heard, valued, and encouraged equally?



Because maths matters!



Strategies

Strategies and resources

Scenarios

1- Encouraging Girls into A Level Maths and Further Maths

[On demand professional development](#)

[AMSP-Girls-participation-WEB.pdf](#)

[Taster Lessons](#)

[Studying maths beyond GCSE Mathematics - Information and support](#)

2 - Confidence vs Capability

[Low stakes confidence scoring](#)

[Transition to A level Mathematics course - AMSP and how teachers have used them with their year 11 students](#) [AMSP-Comments-and-reviews.pdf](#)

[Maths Club Activities - AMSP](#)

3 - Subject Choice and Careers Awareness

[Consider applying for Maths degrees - YouTube](#)

[Why Maths Video Collection - AMSP](#)

[Applications of Mathematics – Mathigon](#)

[Posters and Resources from Maths in a Box - Maths Careers](#)

Strategies and resources

Scenarios

4 - Messages from Home and Peers

[Why study maths? Presentation for students and parents / carers.](#)

[Opening the door to your future leaflet](#)

5 - Representation and Role Models

[Where maths meets... the world of work! - AMSP](#)

[IGB-gender-stereotypes.pdf](#)

[Inspire girls about a career in technology](#)

[Student led STEM enrichment activity](#)

[Welcome to Founders4Schools | founders4schools](#)

[STEM support for secondary teachers](#)

6 - Boys Dominating the Classroom

[Top 10 tips for inclusive teaching](#)

[Gender Inclusive template](#)

[Whole school gender action plan - Exploring bias and language](#)

[Activities & Resources Archives - Gender Action](#)

[Copy of Boys attitudes to Maths Survey - Google Forms](#)

[Copy of Girls attitudes to Maths Survey - Google Forms](#)

Self-Review – Additional Strategies

	Already do this	Could try this	Not right now
B. The case for girls' progression			
1. Raise the profile of gender issues (and current research) in your department by including it at (a) faculty meeting(s).			
2. Analyse departmental data on the proportion of students with different grades (4+) in the GCSE Mathematics who progress to a Level 3 Maths qualification			
3. Create a faculty action plan to embed positive messages throughout the curriculum and across year groups.			
4. Talk with staff responsible for transition. Ensure advice and guidance for students regarding post GCSE maths is up to date.			
5. For Schools with KS5 – ensure the most common subject combinations for girls are possible with maths and FM			
6. Conduct a survey to understand your students' current thoughts around progression to level 3 maths (e.g. is it for them? why/not)			
7. Have a whole school Gender Champion			
C. Interest and enjoyment			
1. Deliver girls-only extra-curricular maths sessions or clubs			
2. Engage girls via team-based activities or projects/competitions without a focus on speed			
3. Deliver in-class enrichment to support students having 'fun' with maths			
D. Perceived competence			
1. Use confidence scoring in the classroom to improve students' self-concept.			
2. Deliver girls-only GCSE extension/revision sessions.			
3. Consider peer mentoring/tutoring scheme with older girls mentoring younger girls.			
4. Include extension material alongside GCSE course material to enable students to experience Level 3 Maths. This can include additional qualifications, such as AQA Level 2 Further Maths.			
5. From KS3 onwards, proactively make contact with parents/carers of girls with the potential to take level 3 maths.			
E. Utility of maths			
1. Make regular explicit links in the classroom between Level 3 Maths and its use in a wide range of future study and career options.			
2. Create displays that show maths is an accessible subject and is open to <i>all</i> students. Aim to ensure equal representation of genders and abilities.			
3. Use real-life encounters with relatable role models to counteract stereotypes.			
4. Collaborate with colleagues in quantitative subjects to re-enforce the benefits of taking Level 3 Maths alongside their subject at A Level.			
5. Inform parents of the explicit links between Level 3 Maths and its use in a wide range of future study and career options.			

- Each **strategy** is grounded in **research** and **evidence** about what **influences students**
- Best to be completed collaboratively with colleagues, allowing for shared insights and a more comprehensive understanding of current practices and future opportunities.



Ideas that other schools have tried

To encourage students to continue studying maths, we featured the

- ‘Where maths meets... **the world of work!**’ videos
- ‘Why maths?’ videos

Focusing on Core Maths

Try being a data detective
Interpreting data

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try working in urban regeneration
Problem solving using number and measurement

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try being a freelance filmmaker
Percentages, ratio and budgeting

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try working for a cause you are passionate about
Critical analysis

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Focusing on A level Mathematics

Try being a climate scientist
Analysing and predicting

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try being an actuary
Risk

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try being a Software Engineer
Geometry and straight line-graphs

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try working in location planning
Sampling and summary statistics

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Focusing on A level Further Mathematics

Try working in orthotics and prosthetics
Angles and forces

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try being a 'Green' Engineer
Proportional reasoning

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try aspiring to be an astronaut
Measuring space and standard form

GO TO RESOURCE >>

Try working in digital media
Analysing data

GO TO RESOURCE >>

When will I ever need this?
How valuable maths is for life and work

VIEW >>

I can't do it!
How to overcome difficulties and challenges when studying maths

VIEW >>

Why go further?
Benefits of studying Further Maths and how you can do it if your school doesn't offer it

VIEW >>

Core Maths, what's it all about?
Benefits of studying Core Maths alongside your other subjects and how it can help you get into university

VIEW >>

Lessons for life
Advice to help you make the most of your education

VIEW >>

Why an apprenticeship?
Is an apprenticeship the right path for you?

VIEW >>

Where can maths take you?
Hear what young people studied after GCSEs and where they have ended up.

VIEW >>

Extended Open Evening video
Content from all videos and info on the different level 3 maths options

VIEW >>





Ideas that other schools have tried

To encourage students to continue studying maths, we featured the

- ‘Where maths meets... **the world of work!**’ videos
- ‘Why maths?’ videos

Focusing on Core Maths



During national careers week we chose the ‘*Try aspiring to be an astronaut*’ video to show in all lessons. We chose this one because Jackie Bell is from Liverpool too! (*Liverpool school*)



Focusing on A level Further Mathematics



Try working in orthotics and prosthetics Angles and forces	Try being a ‘Green’ Engineer Proportional reasoning	Try aspiring to be an astronaut Measuring space and standard form	Try working in digital media Analysing data
GO TO RESOURCE >>	GO TO RESOURCE >>	GO TO RESOURCE >>	GO TO RESOURCE >>



We have mapped our curriculum to careers on a half termly basis... plan is to compile and use slides with good visuals to “guess the job”... and interleave past student profiles, as relatable girl & boy role models, and the AMSP ‘Why Maths’ Videos’.

Lessons for life Advice to help you make the most of your education	Why an apprenticeship? Is an apprenticeship the right path for you?	Where can maths take you? Hear what young people studied after GCSEs and where they have ended up.	Extended Open Evening video Content from all videos and info on the different level 3 maths options
VIEW >>	VIEW >>	VIEW >>	VIEW >>



Ideas that other schools have tried



Demonstrated an engaging contextualised lesson about box plots, which featured the work of Mary Spear

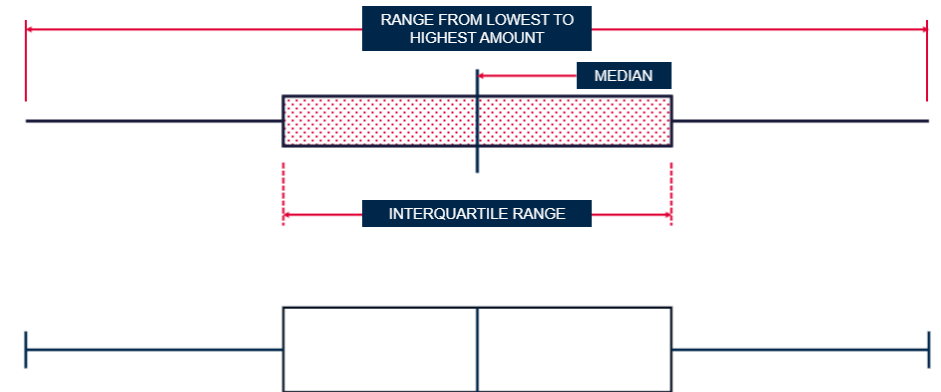


Mary Hunt was born in in 1897 in Indiana. She studied at George Washington University and married Albert Spear in 1921.

Mary then worked as a Visual Information Specialist for many United States Federal Government agencies between the 1920s and 1960s.

Why do you think this was unusual?

In Mary's book, *Charting Statistics*, she introduced what she called the 'range bar'. You can see a recreation of this below.



Ideas that other schools have tried



Demonstrated an engaging contextualised lesson about box plots, which featured the work of Mary Spear



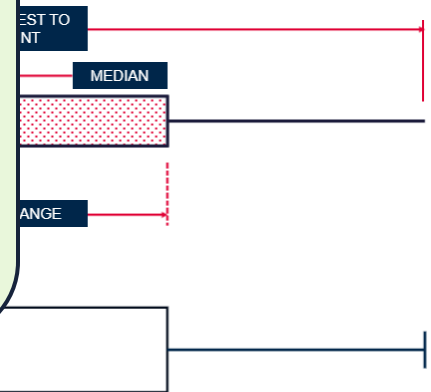
Mary Spear
Indiana
Washington
Albert

Mary Spear
Information
United States
agencies between
1960s.

Why do you think this is unusual?

We will be using the Mary Spear lesson, from Cat Van Saarlos, with our Year 10s in the Autumn term to tie into the scheme of work

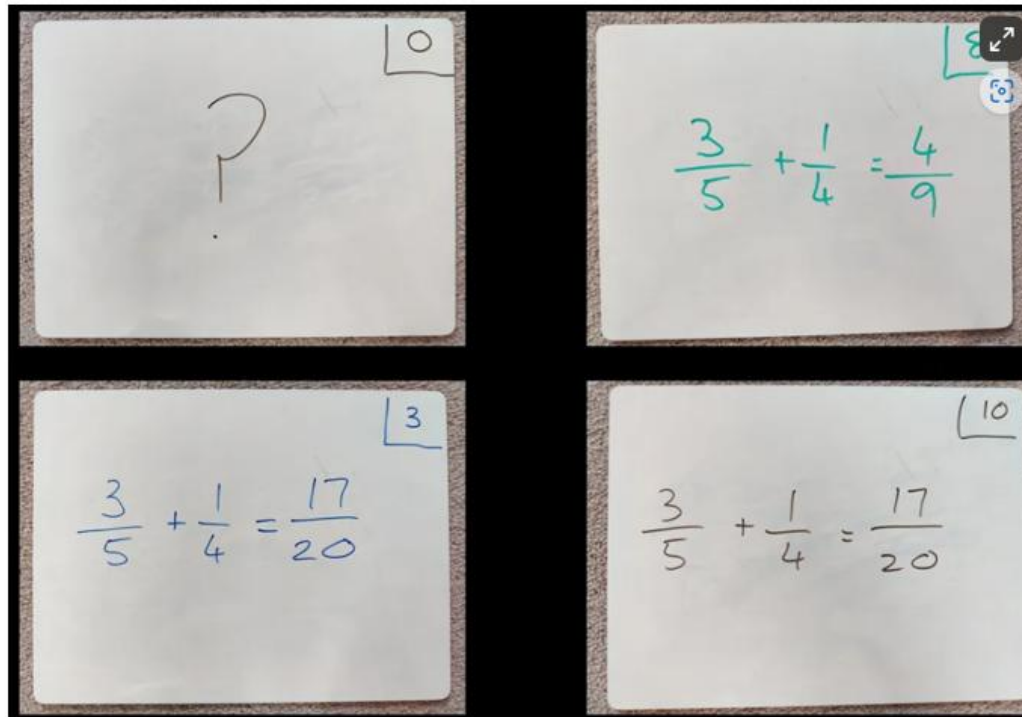
she introduced what she
recreation of this below.





Ideas that other schools have tried

‘What does it mean to be good at maths, and how will I know?’ A maths department discussed the potential impact of confidence scoring for girls and boys in the classroom.



<https://eedi.substack.com/p/how-confidence-scores-can-increase>

Low Stakes Quiz Y10a3-002 B King's Maths Department				
	Question	Working & Answer	Confidence	Check
NUMBER	1 Write down the first five cubic numbers	4, 6, 10, 2, 12 1, 8, 27, 64, 125	CONFIDENCE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	X
	2 Write down the reciprocal of 10	1/10	CONFIDENCE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	✓
CALCULATIONS	3 $(3 \times 4) \times 2 =$	$3 \times 2 = 6$ $6 \times 4 = 24$ ✓	CONFIDENCE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	✓
	4 $5 - 13 + 2 =$	$5 - 13 = -8$ ✓ $-8 + 2 = -6$	CONFIDENCE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	✓
	5 $0.3 \times 0.07 =$	7 \times 3 = 21 $0.3 \times 0.07 = 0.021$	CONFIDENCE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	X

Directed Numbers

For each of the 10 questions below, write the answer in the "Answer" box.

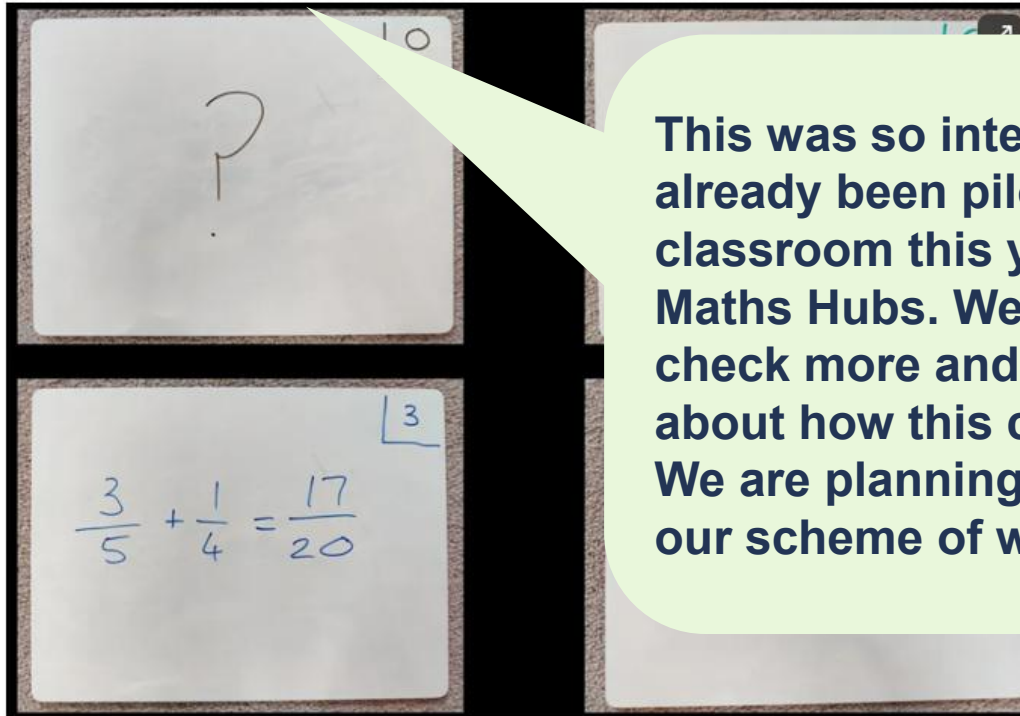
Each time, also write in the "How Sure?" box a whole number from 0 to 10 to indicate how sure you are that your answer is correct. On this scale 0 is "completely unsure" and 10 is "completely certain".

	Question	Answer	Leave Blank	How Sure?
1	5 - 8			
2	-2 + 7			
3	2 x 5			



Ideas that other schools have tried

‘What does it mean to be good at maths, and how will I know?’ A maths department discussed the potential impact of confidence scoring for girls and boys in the classroom.



This was so interesting. One of the team has already been piloting confidence testing in the classroom this year, as part of our work with the Maths Hubs. We wanted to encourage our pupils to check more and ... guess less! But we didn't know about how this could benefit girls' confidence too. We are planning to build it into the unit tests on our scheme of work for next year.

<https://eedi.substack.com/p/how-confidence-scores-can-increase>

answer in the "Answer" box.

Each time, also write in the "How Sure?" box a whole number from 0 to 10 to indicate how sure you are that your answer is correct. On this scale 0 is "completely unsure" and 10 is "completely certain".

	Question	Answer	Leave Blank	How Sure?
1	5 - 8			
2	- 2 + 7			
3	2 x 5			



Because maths matters!



Resources

Self-Review Themes – How the AMSP can support schools

Girls' Progression

Focuses on building departmental awareness and understanding of the factors affecting girls' participation in Level 3 maths, using data, research, student voice, and strategic planning to improve progression.

Interest and Enjoyment

Encourages creating positive and engaging mathematical experiences that help girls see maths as enjoyable, collaborative, and relevant beyond the classroom.

Perceived Competence

Aims to strengthen girls' confidence and self-belief in mathematics through targeted support, enrichment opportunities, mentoring, and positive reinforcement of their abilities.

Utility of Maths

Highlights the value of Level 3 maths by making clear links to future study, careers, and real-world applications, while challenging stereotypes about who can succeed in mathematics.

AMSP Resources supporting Gatsby Benchmarks

GB1 – A stable careers programme

GB2 – Learning from careers and labour market information

GB3 – Addressing the needs of each pupil

GB4 – Linking curriculum learning to careers

GB5 – Encounters with employers and employees

GB6 – Experiences of workplaces

GB7 – Encounters with further and higher education

GB8 – Personal guidance

Self-Review Themes – How the AMSP can support schools

Girls' Progression

GB3, GB4, GB8

Build an informed department:

- AMSP one page of research
- On Demand Student Engagement
- Compare participation rates with national and local

Classroom resources:

- Where maths meets the world of work
- Opening Doors leaflet
- Promotional Posters and Postcards
- Why Study Maths? presentation
- Student Attitudes Survey

The collage features three main posters from the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP):

- Psychology Poster:** Titled "Psychology", it describes a study where 100 volunteers were randomly separated into two groups of equal size and provided with overnight accommodation. One group was woken repeatedly through the night by loud banging noises. The following morning, all 100 volunteers were given the same manual dexterity task. Summary statistics for the time taken to complete the task are shown in the table below:

	Mean completion time (mins)	Standard deviation* (mins)
Undisturbed	15.2	2.3
Woken regularly	15.5	7.7

*Standard deviation is a measure of spread

What conclusions, if any, can be drawn about the ability of people to perform manual dexterity tasks after disturbed sleep? Why would it be important to ensure that the volunteers were randomly allocated to the two groups?
- Student Engagement Leaflet:** Titled "Leads to versatile qualifications well-respected by employers and higher education", it includes the text "To support the study of other subjects E.g. Psychology, Biology, Geography (and others)". It also features the text "Increase knowledge and awareness of mathematical techniques and their applications" and "Stimulating and challenging courses evidenced positive effect on cognitive development".
- Maths Promotional Poster:** Titled "Maths Opening the door to your future", it features a computer monitor displaying various mathematical icons (like a pi symbol, a sine wave, and a graph) and a robotic arm.

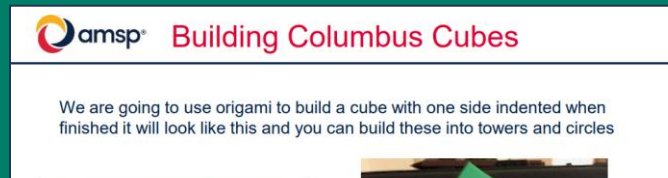
Self-Review Themes – How the AMSP can support schools

Classroom resources:

- [Maths Club Activities](#)
- [Resources for teachers of 11-16 maths](#)
- [Maths Feasts](#)
- [Online Enrichment Event recordings](#)
- [Level 3 Taster lessons](#)

Interest and Enjoyment

GB3, GB4, GB5



Are you psychic?

[VIEW >>](#)

Making a Million

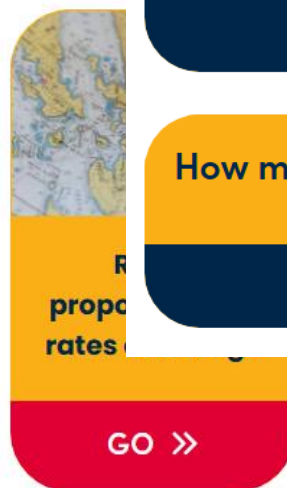
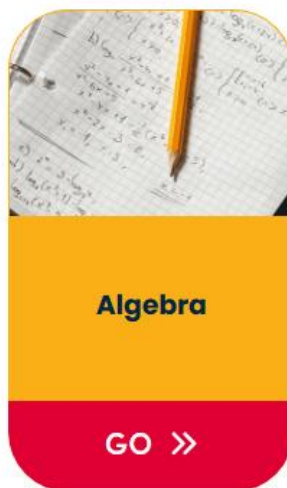
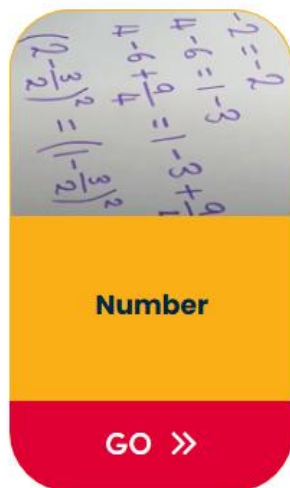
[VIEW >>](#)

How much is too much?

[VIEW >>](#)

Race to the target!

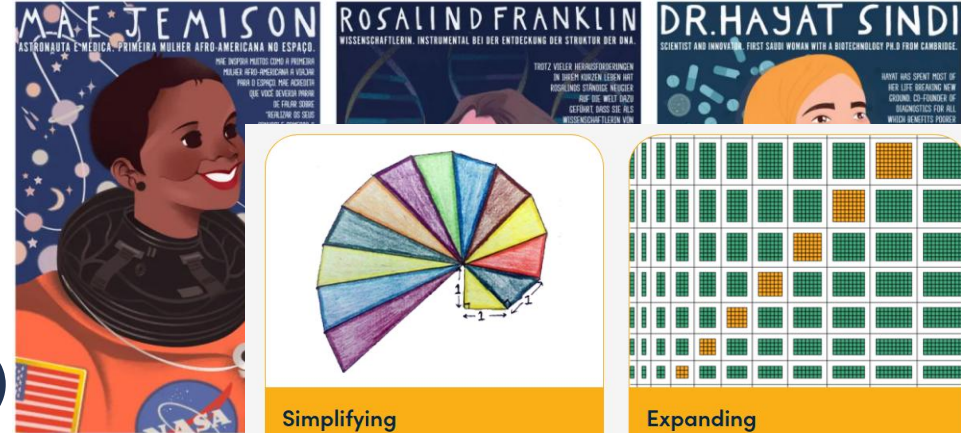
[VIEW >>](#)



Self-Review Themes – How the AMSP can support schools

Classroom Resources:

- Essential Skills
- Level 3 Taster lessons
- GCSE Problem Solving (Integral needed)
- Display materials to promote women in STEM



Perceived Competence

GB3, GB4

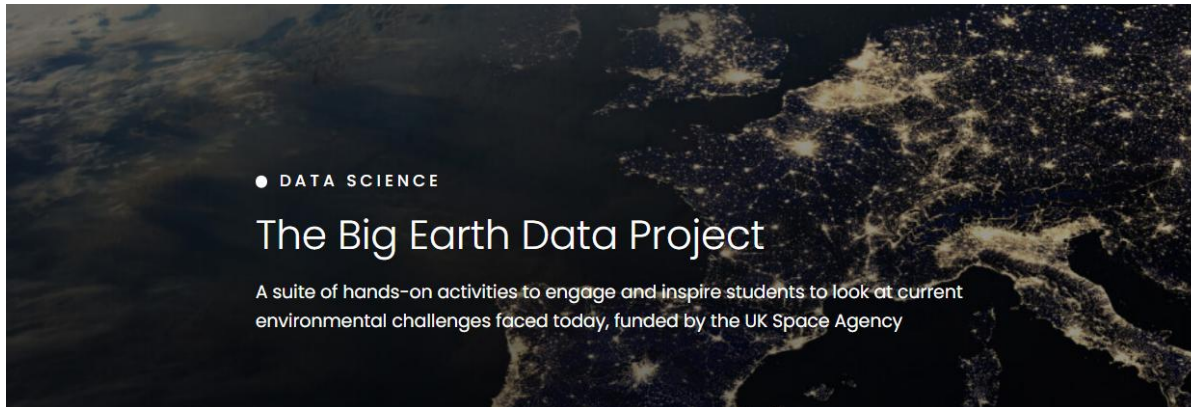
Delivering AQA L2 FM:

- Offering AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics
- SKL | AQA Level 2 Further Maths

Self-Review Themes – How the AMSP can support schools

Classroom resources:

- [Where maths meets the world of work](#)
- [Why study maths?](#)
- [WHY MATHS Video collection](#)
- [Collection of useful external pages](#)
- [Posters and Postcards](#)
- Maths and Climate Change – [1](#) | [2](#)



Try working in urban regeneration

Problem solving using number and measurement

[GO TO RESOURCE >>](#)



Try being a freelance filmmaker

Percentages, ratio and budgeting

[GO TO RESOURCE >>](#)

Utility of Maths GB2, GB4, GB5

Maths is your future

A series of five videos hosted by Matt Parker looking at how having A level maths is important to different careers.

[GO >>](#)

This Is Engineering

A series of short inspirational videos (less than 1 minute long) that contain diverse role models talking about their diverse careers in engineering.

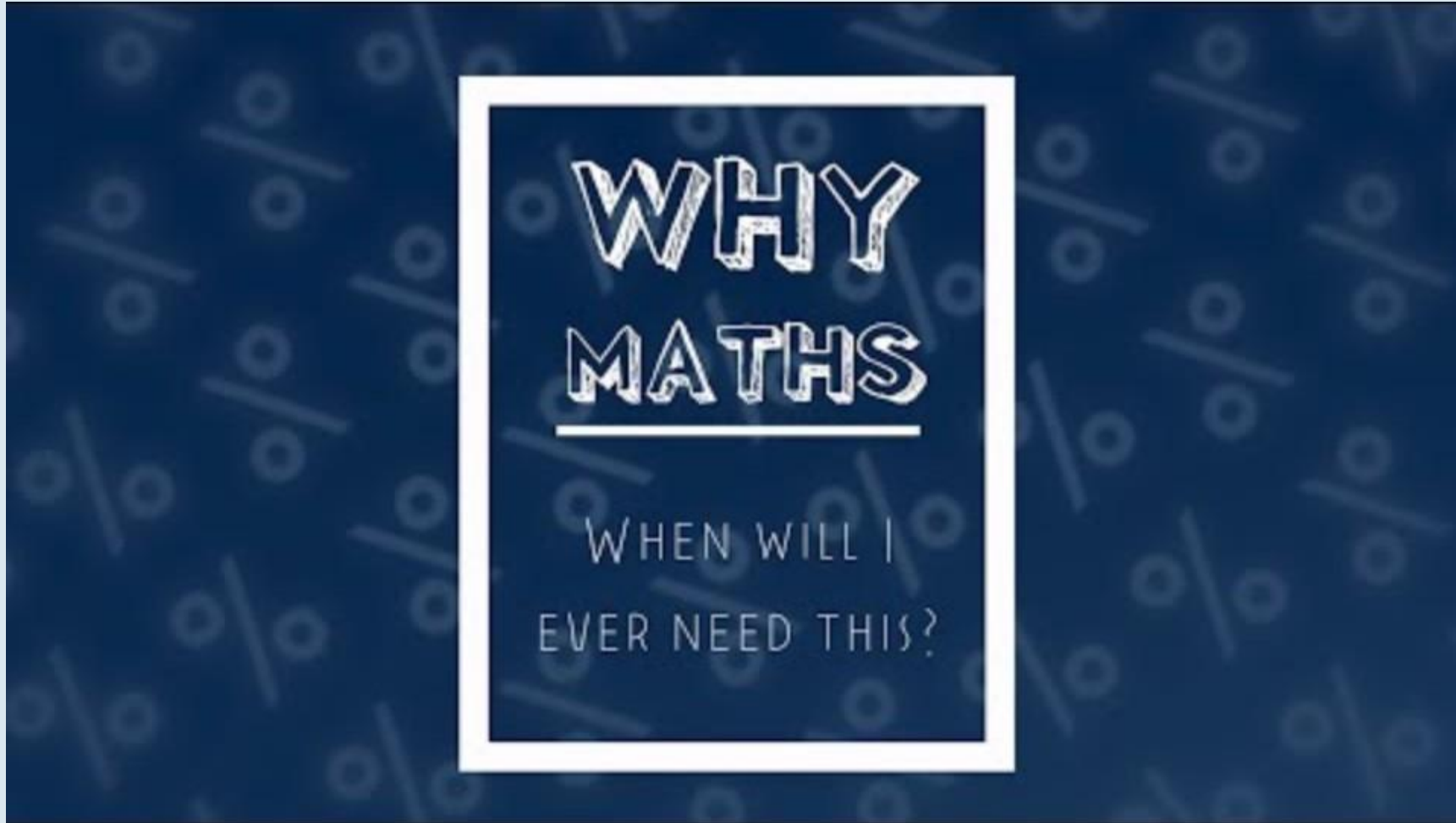
[GO >>](#)

Math can help undercover cancer's secrets

Irina Kavera calls herself a translator – of biology to maths and back again. Nice example linking maths and biology.

[GO >>](#)

WHY MATHS When will I ever need this? 2mins



WHY MATHS When will I ever need this? 2mins



- WHY Maths video
- Roots and Indices Maze
- Building Columbus Cubes
- Opening the door pamphlet
- Poster

In groups, discuss how you would use each of these items

amsp Building Columbus Cubes

We are going to use origami to build a cube with one side indented when finished it will look like this and you can build these into towers and circles

Core Maths with Psychology

100 volunteers were randomly separated into two groups of equal size and provided with overnight accommodation. One group was woken repeatedly through the night by loud banging noises. The following morning, all 100 volunteers were given the same manual dexterity task. Summary statistics for the time taken to complete the task are shown in the table.

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What conclusions, if any, can be drawn about the ability of people to perform manual dexterity tasks after disturbed sleep? Why would it be important to ensure that the volunteers were randomly allocated to the two groups?

Psychology uses maths skills

What is Core Maths?
Core Maths is a group of qualifications, designed for students who have passed GCSE Mathematics at grade 4 or above, but who have not chosen to study A Level Mathematics. These qualifications are equivalent to GCSE level and are designed to help students develop their mathematical skills and prepare for further study or work.

Why should I take Core Maths?
Studying Core Maths helps you develop skills that will support the quantitative aspects of your A Level **Psychology**, such as selecting appropriate statistical techniques, interpreting and exploring data, using diagrams and tables.

For more information on your options for studying maths beyond GCSE, visit amsp.org.uk/students/what-next

amsp Roots and Indices Maze

Can you find the route to the opposite side of the table?

- Begin in the highlighted box
- Move horizontally or vertically one box at a time... no diagonal moves allowed!
- You may only land on boxes which are equivalent in value to the highlighted one

$2^6 \times 2^3$	$3^2 \times 2^3$	$(\sqrt{16})^2$	$(2^3)^3$	$8^3 \div 8$	$4^4 \times 4^{-3}$	$(\sqrt[3]{8})^4$	8×4^2
$\sqrt{8}^3$	$(2^3)^2$	$8^7 \times 8^{-5}$	4^3	$2^{-2} \times 2^7$	64^0	$2^5 \times 2^3$	$4^7 \div 2^3$
$(\sqrt{64})^3$	8^2	$2^2 \times 2^3$	$2^3 \times 2^3$	$(2^3)^3$	$(\sqrt[3]{8})^6$	$4^6 \times 4^{-3}$	$2^2 \times 4^2$
2^6	$(\sqrt{64})^2$	$4^6 \times 4^{-2}$	$(\sqrt{16})^3$	$(2^2)^4$	$8^3 \div 2^3$	$2^{-3} \times 2^7$	$(2^2)^4$
3^5	$2^6 \times 2^1$	8^3	$4^5 \div 2^4$	$(-4)^{-3}$	$(2^2)^3$	$(\sqrt{8})^3$	$4^6 \div 2^6$
$4^3 \times 4^{-3}$	$(2^5)^1$	$(\sqrt[3]{64})^2$	$2^3 \times 8$	$2^{-1} \times 2^7$	$(\frac{1}{4})^{-3}$	16^2	64

Hint: What is the value of 2^6

Advanced Mathematics Support Programme

Maths
Opening the door to your future

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Closing Thoughts

Reflection

- What is one change you could make immediately?
- What might require longer-term cultural or curriculum change?
- Who else needs to be involved to make this successful?

Next Steps

For Yourself

- Sign up to [AMSP Mailing List](#)
- Apply for the [ODPD Student Engagement](#) video series



For Your School

- Complete the [self-review](#) with your department.
- Order classroom posters and pamphlets - [AMSP Literature for students](#)
- Select at least 1 AMSP resource from today and decide when you will use it

Beyond the Numbers:

Empowering Girls in Maths

- Rima Pancholi, Naz Abdullah & Grace Geilinger