



How to read your child's diagnostic

PARENT GUIDE · PASCHAL MATH CLINIC · READ BEFORE YOUR CHILD BEGINS

A short guide for parents. It explains what our placement diagnostic is actually measuring, how to sit with your child while they work through it, and what we do with it afterwards. Reading this first will make the result far more useful to the tutor who eventually looks at it.

START HERE

It is not a test to pass or fail.

This is the hardest thing to believe about a diagnostic, and the most important. There is no pass mark. There is no score we are hoping to see. A child who answers six questions and leaves fourteen blank has given us a more useful document than a child who guesses at all twenty and happens to land eleven.

What we are building is a picture of how your child currently thinks about mathematics - which ideas are solid, which are half-formed, and which are confidently held but wrong. That last category matters most, and it is invisible on a school report card.

WHAT WE LOOK AT

Why the wrong answer is the interesting part

In a well-built diagnostic, the incorrect options are not padding. Each one is the answer a student would reach by following a particular piece of faulty reasoning. So when your child chooses one, they are not simply getting it wrong - they are telling us, precisely, what they currently believe.

Two children can both miss the same question for completely different reasons, and they need completely different teaching as a result. Reading which wrong answer was chosen is how a tutor tells them apart before wasting a term on the wrong repair.

A BLANK MEANS

Your child has not met this idea, or does not recognise it in this form. That is ordinary and useful. It maps the edge of what has been taught.

A WRONG ANSWER MEANS

Your child has met this idea and formed a belief about it. The belief needs correcting. This takes longer to fix than a blank, which is exactly why we want to find it now.

This is why we ask your child to leave questions blank rather than guess. A lucky guess hides a gap; an honest blank reveals one. Please say this to your child in your own words before they start - most children have spent years being taught the opposite.

The three sections, and what each one shows

Section A - Multiple choice (10 questions)

- Quick to answer, and deliberately built so that each wrong option reflects a specific misunderstanding.



- We read the pattern across the section, not the total. Two mistakes that share one cause are a single thing to fix, not two.

Section B - Show your working (6 questions)

- Here the method matters more than the answer. A correct answer with no working tells us very little.
- Rough jottings, crossings-out, drawings and false starts are all welcome. Please do not tidy them away - they are the evidence.
- Some questions ask your child to explain in words. Struggling to explain a method they can perform is itself a finding worth having.

Section C - Error analysis (4 questions)

- Each shows work by an imaginary student containing a mistake. The task is to find the first incorrect step and say what went wrong.
- This is harder than solving the problem, and far more revealing. Spotting someone else's error requires understanding the idea, not just executing a procedure.
- It is also the closest thing on the page to what we actually do in a session.

HOW TO RUN IT

Sitting with your child

- You may read a question aloud if reading is the obstacle. Do not explain the mathematics, suggest a method, or hint that an answer looks wrong.
- Resist the urge to help. It is genuinely difficult, and every prompt removes information we needed.
- There is no meaningful time limit. If your child is tired, stop and finish another day - fatigue produces errors that look like gaps but are not.
- If your child becomes distressed, stop altogether. We would rather have half a sheet and a willing child than a complete sheet and a discouraged one.
- Let them use paper, drawings, fingers, or a number line if they wish. How they get there is what we are reading.

AFTER THE SHEET

What happens next

Bring the completed sheet to your consultation. A tutor reads it alongside a short conversation with your child and any school work you choose to share, and then recommends a level.

No placement is ever decided by a score on its own. Only Paschal or an authorised tutor may place a student, and they place on the whole picture: what the sheet shows, how your child talks about mathematics, and what they are being asked to do at school right now. If we think another level would serve your child better than the one you expected, we will tell you plainly and explain why.

**YOUR PRIVACY****What we will not ask you for**

To teach mathematics well we need to know what your child is working on and where their understanding gives way. That is genuinely all we need.

- We do not ask for school portal passwords, student ID numbers, teacher names, or class schedules.
- We do not ask for diagnoses, medical information, or reports about your child from anyone else.
- We do not ask about other children, and please remove other children's names from anything you share with us.
- Everything your child writes on this sheet stays between your family, the assigned tutor, and the administrator.

One last thing

If your child finishes this sheet feeling that mathematics is something they are bad at, the sheet has done harm rather than good. Please tell them, before and after, that we are looking for what to teach them next - and that not knowing something yet is the ordinary condition of every person who has ever learned anything.