

Using the DFE Functional Skills Subject Content in a Home Education Context

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Subject Content

When home educating, there is no requirement to follow a set curriculum or prepare for specific examinations. Nevertheless, I have often found it helpful to use the Department for Education's Functional Skills Subject Content as a guide when teaching children or young people English, Maths and ICT skills at home. This content is focussed on the skills children and young people may need in everyday life and in the workplace. While it is typically used with teenagers, I have found it a helpful resource for children of all ages.

You can find the subject content here:

English: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

Maths: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-mathematics>

ICT: *The subject content for ICT is currently under review. More information about this review can be found here: [Digital functional skills qualifications: subject content - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-functional-skills-qualifications-subject-content)*

Personalisation

The Functional Skills Subject Content lends itself to being personalised to a child or young person's interests. Here are some examples of ways in which you could personalise some of the subject content for Maths to match the child or young person's interests:

Subject Content	Child or young person Interest	Learning Activity
Use whole numbers to count up to 20 items including zero.	Slime	Hide twenty items in slime. Give the child or young person ten seconds to find as many as they can and count the number they find. Repeat with different timings (five seconds, thirty seconds etc.) and count the number they find each time.
Sort and classify objects using two criteria.	Animals	Take photographs of different animals and sort them into tables according to different criteria (four legs, two legs, feathers, fur, beak etc...)
Calculate with money using decimal notation and express money correctly in writing in pounds and pence.	Pop Music	Search shopping websites for prices of different albums, song downloads and merchandise associated with a favourite pop star. Calculate the total cost of all the items.

Calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes including those that are made up of a combination of rectangles	Baking	Use different shaped cookie cutters to make biscuits. Calculate the area and perimeter of all your biscuits and then eat the largest one!
Calculate the median and mode of a set of quantities.	Football	Find out the heights of every member of one football team and calculate the mean and mode of those heights.

Measuring Progress

I have found that measuring progress is easy using the Functional Skills Subject Content as I can simply print off the pages listing the different skills required for each level and tick each one off as the child or young person masters it, writing the date achieved next to the skill. I also keep a photograph of each activity labelled with the skill we were working on for my later reference.

Entry Level 1 - using numbers and the number system – whole numbers	
1. Read, write, order and compare numbers up to 20	✓ 10.01.20
2. Use whole numbers to count up to 20 items including zero	✓ 13.02.21
3. Add numbers which total up to 20, and subtract numbers from numbers up to 20	
4. Recognise and interpret the symbols +, – and = appropriately	

Exams

Young people may choose to sit Functional Skills exams to demonstrate their progress in these areas (but these are not compulsory). Local Further Education Colleges usually offer these exams to their child or young persons and may be prepared to enter private candidates. Some secondary schools also offer them. Functional Skills exams are normally taken at age sixteen or older.

There are five levels (Entry Level One, Entry Level Two, Entry Level Three, Level One and Level Two). A table explaining the different levels and the relationship between these levels and other qualifications can be found here: <https://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/numeracy-for-health-and-social-care/documents>