Qualification Specification

NCFE Entry Level 1 Functional Skills Qualifications in Mathematics
QN: 603/5057/X
NCFE Entry Level 2 Functional Skills Qualifications in Mathematics
QN: 603/5053/2
NCFE Entry Level 3 Functional Skills Qualifications in Mathematics
QN: 603/5061/1

Contents

Qualification summary

Qualification titles	Entry Level 1 Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics Entry Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics Entry Level 3 Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics
Qualification numbers (QN)	603/5057/X 603/5053/2 603/5061/1
Aim references	6035057X 60350532 60350611
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	61
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	55
Minimum age	There is no minimum age requirement for registration.
Qualification purpose	In line with the Department for Education's (DfE's) Maths Functional Skills: subject content, Functional Skills mathematics qualifications should enable the learner to gain confidence in using mathematics, provide a foundation for progression into employment or further technical education and develop skills for everyday life, where the skills gained can be applied to solve mathematical problems. The purpose of Entry Level Functional Skills Mathematics qualifications are to demonstrate a sound grasp of the underpinning skills and basics of mathematical skills appropriate to the level, and the ability to apply mathematical thinking to solve simple problems in familiar situations.
Aims and objectives	In line with the Department for Education's (DfE's) Maths Functional Skills: subject content, Functional Skills mathematics qualifications at these levels should enable learners to become confident in their use of fundamental mathematical knowledge and skills, as described through the content. They should also enable learners to demonstrate their understanding by applying their knowledge and skills to solve simple mathematical problems or carry out simple tasks.
Grading	Pass/Fail
Resits	Resits are available
Assessment method	These qualifications are assessed via one externally set controlled assessment which is task-based and taken in a controlled environment. It is then internally assessed, internally quality assured and externally quality assured. Each assessment has been designed so that the tasks are realistic and relatable to everyday context.

Additional assessment requirements	The assessment is divided into two sections. • Section A: the non-calculator section, which is first in the assessment, and contains 25% of the total marks. • Section B: the calculator section, which follows Section A, and contains 75% of the total marks. The pass mark is a combination of marks from both sections. A range of assessments are available for selection.
Staffing requirements	Entry Level Mathematics 1, 2, and 3 do not have additional staffing requirements. Please refer to the NCFE Support Handbook for guidance on staffing requirements.
NCFE support	Support with Functional Skills delivery includes: • sample papers and exemplar materials – automated feedback for reading and writing assessments • opportunity to access NCFE Skills Assessment initial and diagnostic assessment tools • Provider Development webinars and events, in which advice and guidance is provided to assist with the delivery of Functional Skills
Progression	Learners who achieve these qualifications could progress to: • NCFE Level 1 Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics (603/5055/6) • NCFE Level 1 Certificate in Essential Maths in Everyday Life (610/0647/6)
Regulation information	These are regulated qualifications. The regulated numbers for these qualifications are 603/5057/X, 603/5053/2 and 603/5061/1.
Funding	These qualifications may be eligible for funding. You can find out if any NCFE qualification is eligible for funding from the DfE.

Section 1: about these qualifications

This Qualification Specification contains details of all the sections and assessments required to complete these qualifications.

To ensure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this Qualification Specification, please check the version number and date in the page footer against that of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

If you advertise these qualifications using a different or shortened name, you must ensure that learners are aware that their final certificate will state the full regulated qualification title.

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The resources and materials used in the delivery of these qualifications must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the support handbook.

Direct Claim Status (DCS)

These qualifications are eligible for DCS.

For more information, including DCS criteria and how to meet the required quality standards, please visit the NCFE website.

Entry guidance

These qualifications are designed for learners who want to improve their everyday mathematics abilities in preparation for life and work.

There are no specific recommended prior learning requirements for these qualifications.

Registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation, and should be made on the Portal.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that these qualifications are appropriate for the age and ability of learners.

Skills Assessment initial and diagnostic assessments will assist in determining what level a learner is working towards. Each learner will then receive an individual skills plan to help progress to that level. NCFE recommends delivering the Skills Assessment initial and diagnostic assessments to learners prior to registration.

Learners registered on these qualifications should not undertake another qualification at the same level with the same or a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

Achieving these qualifications

Functional Skills mathematics qualifications at Entry Levels 1 to 3 are comprised of one mandatory controlled assessment per level.

Please refer to the subject content information in Section 2 for further information on the mathematics covered by these qualifications.

For a learner to achieve the qualification and be awarded their certificate, that learner must obtain a pass grade in the assessment.

How the qualifications are assessed

These qualifications are externally set, internally assessed and externally quality assured.

Each level consists of one controlled assessment, designed and provided by NCFE and delivered to the learner under controlled assessment conditions. The completed assessments are internally marked.

Unless stated otherwise in this Qualification Specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.

Controlled assessment

Each learner is required to undertake one controlled assessment at the appropriate level.

NCFE provides the assessment, Mark Schemes and any source materials that learners will need to use during their assessments.

Controlled assessments are administered under specified assessment conditions, and last for the durations shown in the table below.

	Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3
Section A – Non-calculator	20 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes
Section B – Calculator	60 minutes	75 minutes	75 minutes
Total Time	80 minutes	100 minutes	105 minutes

Controlled assessments must be attempted within controlled conditions, under supervision of an assessor, as per the Regulations for the Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessments.

Sections A and B can be attempted on separate sittings, at the centre's discretion.

Learners **must** sit sections that are from the same question paper. **It is not permitted for learners to sit the Section A of one question paper, and then sit the Section B of a different question paper. Each paper has a fixed duration. Centres must not carry forward any time from one question paper to another.**

The centre may choose the date, time and location of the controlled assessment. Centres will need to book the controlled assessment within six weeks of the assessment via the Portal to access the assessment material. Guidance on making a booking can be located in the Portal User Guide.

Following completion of the assessment, the assessor is to mark all learner responses using the Mark Schemes provided, in line with any Mark Scheme instructions.

Any work submitted for controlled assessment must be completed during scheduled assessment hours and must be authenticated and attributable to the learner. All work produced must be the learner's own.

In practice, this means that the assessment will be completed in normal class time within scheduled assessment hours and kept separate from any teaching and learning hours.

Accessing assessment materials

Assessments are downloadable via the NCFE website, where materials are hosted and contained within password locked files.

Instructions on how to obtain file passwords and access the live controlled assessment materials can be found on the NCFE website.

Assessments must be stored securely until the date of assessment and must not be shared with learners, as per the Regulations for the Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessments.

Contextualisation

Centres may contextualise (amend) NCFE set tasks in order to make the scenarios more relevant and engaging for their learners.

Functional Skills mathematics controlled assessments at each entry level can be contextualised.

The act of contextualising is completed by the centre, by submitting the request form on the NCFE website. This must be approved by NCFE in advance of the assessment.

Controlled assessment retirement cycle

When new assessments are made available, the oldest assessments are retired. **From the retirement date, new attempts for that assessment are not permitted**. The Regulations for the Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessments, available on the NCFE website, provides further detail on this cycle.

Section 2: subject content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of these qualifications.

The Functional Skills subject content is provided by the Department for Education (DfE). Awarding organisations must develop Functional Skills qualifications that rigidly adhere to this content.

The mathematics subject content can be accessed directly from the DfE on their Maths Functional Skills: subject content webpage.

Referencing for the subject content uses the following coding:

EL1	Entry Level 1
EL2	Entry Level 2
EL3	Entry Level 3
N	Using numbers and the number system
M	Using common measures, shape and space
H	Handling information and data

For assessment delivery instructions and guidance, please refer to the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) and the Regulations for the Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessments on the NCFE website.

Mathematics Entry Level 1 subject content

Entry Level 1 - using numbers and the number system – whole numbers

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL1.N1	Read, write, order and compare numbers up to 20	30 to 40%
EL1.N2	Use whole numbers to count up to 20 items including zero	
EL1.N3	Add numbers which total up to 20, and subtract numbers from numbers up to 20	
EL1.N4	Recognise and interpret the symbols +, – and = appropriately	

Entry Level 1 - using common measures, shape and space

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL1.M5	Recognise coins and notes and write them in numbers with the correct symbols (£ & p), where these involve numbers up to 20	40 to 50%
EL1.M6	Read 12-hour digital and analogue clocks in hours	
EL1.M7	Know the number of days in a week, and months and seasons in a year. Be able to name and sequence	
EL1.M8	Describe and make comparisons in words between measures of items including size, length, width, height, weight and capacity	
EL1.M9	Identify and recognise common 2-D and 3-D shapes including circle, cube, rectangle (incl. square) and triangle	
EL1.M10	Use everyday positional vocabulary to describe position and direction including left, right, in front, behind, under and above	

Entry Level 1 - handling information and data

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL1.H11	Read numerical information from lists	15 to 25%
EL1.H12	Sort and classify objects using a single criterion	
EL1.H13	Read and draw simple charts and diagrams including a tally chart, block diagram/graph	

Entry Level 1: solving mathematical problems and decision making

Learners are expected to use the knowledge and skills listed in the **subject content statement** tables for Entry Level 1 to recognise a simple mathematical problem and obtain a solution. A simple mathematical problem is one which requires working through one step or process.

At Entry Level 1, it is expected that learners will be able to address individual problems which draw upon knowledge and/or skills from one mathematical content area (for example, number and the number system; common measures, shape and space; information and data).

Entry Level 1 learners are expected to be able to:

- use given mathematical information and recognise and use simple mathematical terms appropriate to Entry Level 1
- use the methods given to produce, check and present results that make sense
- provide a simple explanation for those results

The context for simple problems at this level should be familiar to all learners and easily described.

Mathematics Entry Level 2 subject content

Entry Level 2 - using numbers and the number system – whole numbers, fractions and decimals

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL2.N1	Count reliably up to 100 items	40 to 50%
EL2.N2	Read, write, order and compare numbers up to 200	
EL2.N3	Recognise and sequence odd and even numbers up to 100	
EL2.N4	Recognise and interpret the symbols +, – , x, ÷ and = appropriately	
EL2.N5	Add and subtract 2-digit numbers	
EL2.N6	Multiply whole numbers in the range 0 x 0 to 12 x 12 (times tables)	
EL2.N7	Know the number of hours in a day and weeks in a year. Be able to name and sequence	
EL2.N8	Divide 2-digit whole numbers by single-digit whole numbers and express remainders	
EL2.N9	Approximate by rounding to the nearest 10, and use this rounded answer to check results	
EL2.N10	Recognise simple fractions (halves, quarters and tenths) of whole numbers and shapes	
EL2.N11	Read, write and use decimals to one decimal place	

Entry Level 2 - using common measures, shape and space

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL2.M12	Calculate money in pence up to one pound and in whole pounds of multiple items and write with the correct symbols (£ or p)	30 to 40%
EL2.M13	Read and record time in common date formats, and read time displayed on analogue clocks in hours, half hours and quarter hours, and understand hours from a 24-hour digital clock	
EL2.M14	Use metric measures of length including millimetres, centimetres, metres and kilometres	
EL2.M15	Use measures of weight including grams and kilograms	
EL2.M16	Use measures of capacity including millilitres and litres	

EL2.M17	Read and compare positive temperatures	
EL2.M18	Read and use simple scales to the nearest labelled division	
EL2.M19	Recognise and name 2-D and 3-D shapes including pentagons, hexagons, cylinders, cuboids, pyramids and spheres	
EL2.M20	Describe the properties of common 2-D and 3-D shapes including numbers of sides, corners, edges, faces, angles and base	
EL2.M21	Use appropriate positional vocabulary to describe position and direction including between, inside, outside, middle, below, on top, forwards and backwards	

Entry Level 2 - handling information and data

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL2.H22	Extract information from lists, tables, diagrams and bar charts	15 to 25%
EL2.H23	Make numerical comparisons from bar charts	
EL2.H24	Sort and classify objects using 2 criteria	
EL2.H25	Take information from one format and represent the information in another format including use of bar charts	

Entry Level 2: solving mathematical problems and decision making

Learners are expected to use the knowledge and skills listed in the subject content statement tables for Entry Level 2, to recognise a simple problem and obtain a solution. A simple problem is one which requires working through one step or process.

At Entry Level 2, it is expected that learners will be able to address individual problems, each of which draw upon knowledge and/or skills from one mathematical content area (for example, number and the number system; common measures, shape and space; information and data).

Entry Level 2 learners are expected to be able to:

- use given mathematical information including numbers, symbols, simple diagrams and charts
- recognise, understand and use simple mathematical terms appropriate to Entry Level 2
- use the methods given to produce, check and present results that make sense
- present appropriate explanations using numbers, measures, simple diagrams, simple charts and symbols appropriate to Entry Level 2

The context for simple problems at this level should be familiar to all learners and easily described.

Mathematics Entry Level 3 subject content

Entry Level 3 - using numbers and the number system – whole numbers, fractions and decimals

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL3.N1	Count, read, write, order and compare numbers up to 1000	30 to 40%
EL3.N2	Add and subtract using 3-digit whole numbers	
EL3.N3	Divide 3-digit whole numbers by single- and double-digit whole numbers and express remainders	
EL3.N4	Multiply 2-digit whole numbers by single- and double-digit whole numbers	
EL3.N5	Approximate by rounding numbers less than 1000 to the nearest 10 or 100 and use this rounded answer to check results	
EL3.N6	Recognise and continue linear sequences of numbers up to 100	
EL3.N7	Read, write and understand thirds, quarters, fifths and tenths including equivalent forms	
EL3.N8	Read, write and use decimals up to 2 decimal places	
EL3.N9	Recognise and continue sequences that involve decimals	

Entry Level 3 - using common measures, shape and space

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL3.M10	Calculate with money using decimal notation and express money correctly in writing in pounds and pence	40 to 50%
EL3.M11	Round amounts of money to the nearest £1 or 10p	
EL3.M12	Read, measure and record time using am and pm	
EL3.M13	Read time from analogue and 24-hour digital clocks in hours and minutes	
EL3.M14	Use and compare measures of length, capacity, weight and temperature using metric or imperial units to the nearest labelled or unlabelled division	
EL3.M15	Compare metric measures of length including millimetres, centimetres, metres and kilometres	
EL3.M16	Compare measures of weight including grams and kilograms	

EL3.M17	Compare measures of capacity including millilitres and litres	
EL3.M18	Use a suitable instrument to measure mass and length	
EL3.M19	Sort 2-D and 3-D shapes using properties including lines of symmetry, length, right angles, angles including in rectangles and triangles	
EL3.M20	Use appropriate positional vocabulary to describe position and direction including eight compass points and including full/half/quarter turns	

Entry Level 3 - handling information and data

Reference	Subject content statement	Assessment weighting (approx.)
EL3.H21	Extract information from lists, tables, diagrams and charts and create frequency tables	15 to 25%
EL3.H22	Interpret information, to make comparisons and record changes, from different formats including bar charts and simple line graphs	
EL3.H23	Organise and represent information in appropriate ways including tables, diagrams, simple line graphs and bar charts	

Entry Level 3: solving mathematical problems and decision making

Learners are expected to be able to use the knowledge and skills listed in the subject content statement tables for Entry Level 3, to recognise a simple problem and obtain a solution. A simple problem is one which requires working through one step or process. At Entry Level 3, it is expected that learners will be able to address individual problems each of which draw upon knowledge and/or skills from one mathematical content area (for example, number and the number system; common measures, shape and space; information and data).

Entry Level 3 learners are expected to be able to:

- use given mathematical information including numbers, symbols, simple diagrams and charts
- recognise, understand and use simple mathematical terms appropriate to Entry Level 3
- use the methods given to produce, check and present results that make sense to an appropriate level of accuracy
- present results with appropriate and reasoned explanation using numbers, measures, simple diagrams, charts and symbols appropriate to Entry Level 3

The context for simple problems at this level should be familiar to all learners.

Mathematics Entry Level assessment

At each level, the activities are comprised of multiple tasks. Each of the four problem solving (PS) activities within the assessment will be based on a different aspect of one overall contextual theme for the assessment. Underpinning skills (UPS) activities will be written with very limited or no context.

Entry Level 1 assessment

	UPS marks	PS marks	Activity content	Total marks	Duration
Section A	3	3	**Non-calculator** The tasks in this section are designed to be completed without a calculator. Calculators are not permitted.	6	20 minutes
Section B	3	15	**Calculator** The use of a calculator is permitted in this section.	18	60 minutes
				24	80 minutes

Entry Level 2 assessment

	UPS marks	PS marks	Activity content	Total marks	Duration
Section A	4	4	**Non-calculator** The tasks in this section are designed to be completed without a calculator. Calculators are not permitted.	8	25 minutes
Section B	4	20	**Calculator** The use of a calculator is permitted in this section.	24	75 minutes
				32	100 minutes

Entry Level 3 assessment

	UPS marks	PS marks	Activity content	Total marks	Duration
Section A	4	6	**Non-calculator** The tasks in this section are designed to be completed without a calculator. Calculators are not permitted.	10	30 minutes
Section B	6	24	**Calculator** The use of a calculator is permitted in this section.	30	75 minutes
				40	105 minutes

Non-calculator section

For more details on the invigilation instructions, including the circumstances in which learners can progress from Section A to Section B, please refer to the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) and the Regulations for the Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessments.

Marks

The non-calculator section will cover the subject content statements to ensure that learners can demonstrate manual calculations without the use of a calculator (using at least two and up to four maths operations).

25% of marks are allocated to tasks which assess UPS. The subject content states that UPS are defined as ‘the ability to do maths when not as part of a problem’. In these assessments, all UPS tasks approach the relevant subject content statement directly, and target only one of the three subject content areas.

The remaining 75% of marks are allocated to items which assess PS. The subject content states that these qualifications must assess learners’ ‘ability to apply mathematical thinking to solve problems in familiar situations’.

Evidence requirements

At each Entry Level, the following types of evidence will be sampled by the external quality assurer (EQA) during a quality assurance visit.

Across all Entry Levels, evidence **must** include:

- completed question papers
- completed learner mark sheets

Section 3: additional information and customer support

Resource requirements

For controlled assessment, learners should have access to:

- a pen with blue or black ink
- calculator
- pencil and eraser
- 30 cm ruler

Learners are expected to have a calculator for 'Question Paper: Section B' at all levels.

The minimum requirement for the calculator is detailed below:

- four operations
- **Entry Level 1 and 2** – minimum of two decimal places on the display
- **Entry Level 3** – minimum of three decimal places on the display (some basic calculators only provide two decimal places)

Learners must be informed of the below regulations for calculators before the controlled assessment sitting.

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Calculators must not:

• be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
  ○ language translators
  ○ symbolic algebra manipulation
  ○ symbolic differentiation or integration
  ○ communication with other machines or the internet
• be borrowed from another learner during an examination for any reason*
• have retrievable information stored in them, this includes:
  ○ databanks
  ○ dictionaries
  ○ mathematical formulae
  ○ text</td>
<td>Calculators must be:

• of a size suitable for use on the desk
• either battery or solar powered
• free of lids, cases and covers that include printed instructions or formulae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner is responsible for the following:

• the calculator's power supply
• the calculator's working condition
• clearing anything stored in the calculator</td>
</tr>
</table>

Note: an invigilator/supervisor may give a learner a replacement calculator.

Learners are permitted to use personal physical calculators, provided instructions specified in the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) and the Regulations for Conduct of Functional Skills Controlled Assessment are adhered to.

Sample and exemplar materials

These are available to download on the NCFE website.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Learners who require reasonable adjustments or special considerations, including British Sign Language (BSL) and sign-supported English, should discuss their requirements with their tutors.

For more information on the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, please visit the NCFE website.

Skills Assessment

Skills Assessment provides a comprehensive e-learning solution for Functional Skills that incorporates Ofsted and Department for Education (DfE) compliant assessments, detailed skills diagnostics, video tutorials, progression tracking and innovative resources to aid skills development and workforce productivity.

Skills Assessment boasts a range of additional market-leading products:

- One Assessment is a revolutionary initial assessment that will assess a learner's levels in both English and mathematics in under 30 minutes.
- SkillsPortfolio is a bespoke digital portfolio that manages the complete end-to-end learner journey allowing the tutor to assess remotely, monitor learning progress, create dashboard reports and manage your quality assurance.
- SkillsWork is an employability assessment with supporting resources, that embed the Gatsby Career Benchmark and are mapped to the key skills identified by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).

Further information can be obtained from the NCFE website.

Provider Development

The Provider Development team provides dedicated support to centres approved to deliver Functional Skills. The purpose of this support is to assist with the teaching of the Functional Skills subject content, and to support understanding of the qualification's delivery.

Provider Development activities include:

- upfront centre support via Microsoft Teams, phone or email
- Functional Skills delivery events
- on-demand videos

The Functional Skills delivery support page on the NCFE website is regularly updated and will keep centres informed on new curriculum guidance.

NCFE Functional Skills news and updates

Sign up to the NCFE Functional Skills news and updates mailing list on the NCFE website in order to receive regular information regarding NCFE's Functional Skills service.

Learning resources

We offer a wide range of learning resources and materials to support the delivery of our qualifications. Please check the qualifications page on the NCFE website for more information and to view available resources.

Contact us

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Information in this Qualification Specification is correct at the time of publishing but may be subject to change.

NCFE is a registered charity (Registered Charity No. 1034808) and a company limited by guarantee (Company No. 2896700).

To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

Change History Record

This section summarises the changes to this Qualification Specification since the last version (Version 2.0 August 2024).

Version	Publication date	Summary of amendments
v1.0	**October 2019**	**First publication**
v1.1	January 2020	p.5, information regarding the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners added to Section 1.
v1.2	March 2022	p.9, change to assessment statement.
v1.3	June 2022	Further information added to the how the qualifications are assessed section to confirm that unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English. Information added to the entry guidance section to advise that registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the Portal. Information added to the support handbook section about how to access support handbooks.
v1.4	October 2023	The following sections of this document have been updated to provide further clarity for centres: • NCFE support • Contextualisation • Provider Development
v1.5	June 2024	Wording mistakenly copied from E2.N5 – 'Add and subtract 2-digit numbers' – removed from E3.N5.
v2.0	August 2024	Changed coding of criteria references from 'E' to 'EL' to align with FS English coding and all current resources. (Section 2 pages 13–19) Removed references to Skills Forward page 8 and 24 as this has been replaced with Skills Assessment.
v3.0	August 2025	Amendments made throughout to update the document layout, including renaming the summary of changes section to Change History Record. Section heading full pages removed. Changes were made to section 2 to improve the clarity of how UPS/PS questions are written and how they relate to the use and non-use of a calculator.