



# YEAR-BY-YEAR MATHS BOOK GUIDE (K-3)

Stop wasting money  
on random workbooks

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The fastest way to waste money is to buy:

- 7 different workbooks per year
- use 10–15 pages from each
- then feel guilty about the stack

Instead, for each year (K–3), aim for:

**ONE main curriculum book**

**ONE daily mentals / fluency book (start from Year 1)**

**ONE challenge series (optional, for kids at the top of the cohort)**

*That's it.*

Use them front-to-back over the year instead of hopping around.

# QUICK SUMMARY (CHEAT SHEET)

## Kindergarten (K)

### Core curriculum (pick ONE):

- NSW Targeting Maths – Kindergarten Student Book (Pascal Press)
- Maths Plus NSW – Student & Assessment Book K Value Pack (Oxford)

### Daily fluency:

Not essential at K. Use simple counting games, number songs, and very short teacher-made drills.

### Optional challenge:

Singapore Primary Mathematics 1A (only for very advanced K kids who are already solid on number 0–20).

## Year 1

### Core curriculum (pick ONE):

- NSW Targeting Maths – Year 1 Student Book
- Maths Plus NSW – Student & Assessment Book 1 Value Pack

### Daily fluency:

- New Wave Mental Maths – Book A (Year 1)

### Optional challenge:

- Singapore Primary Mathematics 1A/1B
- OR "Time for New Maths Australia – Year 1" for extra Australian-aligned practice.

## Year 2

### Core curriculum (pick ONE):

- NSW Targeting Maths – Year 2 Student Book
- Maths Plus NSW – Student & Assessment Book 2 Value Pack
- Excel Basic Skills – Mathematics Year 2 (Pascal Press)

### Daily fluency:

- New Wave Mental Maths – Book B (Year 2)
- OR Excel Basic Skills – Mental Maths Strategies Year 2 for more structured strategy teaching.

### Optional challenge:

- Singapore Primary Mathematics 2A/2B
- OR Excel Basic Skills – Money, Time and Fractions Years 1–2 (for strong fundamentals).

## Year 3

### Core curriculum (pick ONE):

- NSW Targeting Maths – Year 3 Student Book (NSW edition)
- Maths Plus NSW – Student & Assessment Book 3 Value Pack
- Excel Basic Skills – Mathematics Year 3 (if you like the Excel style and used Year 2).

### Daily fluency:

- New Wave Mental Maths – Book C (Year 3) – same series, next level.

### Optional challenge:

- Singapore Primary Mathematics 3A/3B
- Beast Academy Level 2 (for very strong Year 3s – wide spread of difficulty).

*Below is the deeper commentary year by year (the "why" behind each pick).*

# KINDERGARTEN (FOUNDATION YEAR)

At K, your main job is:

- making numbers friendly,
- building counting and number sense,
- NOT grinding worksheets for hours.

## 1. Core Curriculum Text (choose ONE)

### Option A – NSW Targeting Maths Kindergarten (Pascal Press)

- Fully updated for the new K–2 NSW curriculum.
- Strong visual layout, lots of concrete / pictorial tasks.
- Emphasis on problem solving and explaining answers, not just circling pictures.

**Best if:** you want something closely matched to NSW outcomes and likely similar to what schools use.

### Option B – Maths Plus NSW K Student + Assessment Book Value Pack (Oxford)

- Spiral "practice to mastery" structure – same ideas revisited and extended all year.
- Student book for main practice + assessment book for checkpoint reviews.
- Very school-friendly; lots of NSW schools already use this series.

**Best if:** you want a steady drip of practice and like the idea of a built-in assessment book.

*You do not need both Targeting Maths AND Maths Plus. Pick the style you prefer and commit to it.*

## 2. Daily Fluency at K

You do not need a formal mentals book yet. Instead:

- Practise counting forwards/backwards (0–10, then 0–20).

- Compare "which is bigger/smaller?" with toys, snacks, Lego.
- Use simple number games and number songs.

If you really want a workbook, choose the core text only and keep extra sheets to a few pages per week.

### 3. Optional Challenge (for very advanced K kids)

If your K child can:

- confidently add/subtract within 20,
- recognise numbers beyond 50,
- and is already "bored" by K content,

then you might gently introduce:

**Singapore Primary Mathematics 1A** – very strong on concrete → pictorial → abstract thinking; widely used by homeschoolers for deep conceptual grounding.

*Use it slowly, as enrichment, not as a race.*

# YEAR 1

In Year 1 you're cementing:

- addition/subtraction within 20–50,
- early place value,
- simple word problems.

## 1. Core Curriculum Text (pick ONE)

### **NSW Targeting Maths – Year 1**

- NSW-aligned, colourful student book.
- Mix of basic skills and short problem-solving tasks.
- Good for parents who like a clear progression and engaging layout.

### **Maths Plus NSW – Year 1 Student & Assessment Pack**

- Spiral program; little and often.
- Assessment book lets you see clearly if concepts have stuck.

Either is fine; just stay consistent with one.

## 2. Daily Fluency / Mentals

### **New Wave Mental Maths – Book A (Year 1)**

- Fully aligned to Australian Curriculum v9.0 and strand-based.
- One short column per day; ideal for 5–10 minutes of daily mentals.
- Very efficient for building automaticity with facts and simple word problems.

Use this as:

- breakfast or after-school 5-minute routine

- OR warm-up before starting the core book.

### 3. Optional Challenge

For strong Year 1 students:

- **Singapore Primary Mathematics 1A/1B** – for deeper concept practice and bar-model style word problems.

If you prefer to stay local:

- **Time for New Maths Australia – Year 1** – extra Australian-aligned practice across four strands (number, measurement, chance/data, space).

*Only add a challenge series once the core book + mentals are tracking well.*

# YEAR 2

Year 2 is where a lot of kids either:

- quietly fall behind on basics, or
- quietly move ahead of the pack.

## **Big goals:**

- solid two- and three-digit addition/subtraction,
- beginnings of multiplication/division,
- stronger fractions/time/money sense.

## **1. Core Curriculum (pick ONE)**

**Option A – NSW Targeting Maths Year 2**

**Option B – Maths Plus NSW Student & Assessment Book 2**

**Option C – Excel Basic Skills: Mathematics Year 2 (Pascal Press)**

- Focuses strongly on basic skills, with very consistent unit format.
- Progressively more difficult questions as student moves through the book.

If you want one book to ensure basics are rock-solid, Excel Year 2 is a strong choice; if you want NSW-school match, pick Targeting Maths or Maths Plus.

## **2. Daily Fluency / Mentals**

You have two excellent options; either is fine:

**New Wave Mental Maths – Book B (Year 2)**

- Revised 2024 edition; covers all strands with fewer but better questions.

## **Excel Basic Skills – Mental Maths Strategies Year 2**

- 32 units (one per week); each unit broken into 4 sets A–D.
- Focus on explicit mental strategies, not just answers.

Pick the format your child tolerates better (short daily vs weekly units).

## **3. Optional Challenge / Enrichment**

For mathematically strong Year 2s:

- **Excel Basic Skills – Money, Time and Fractions Years 1–2** – plugs three key concept areas that often become selective bottlenecks later.
- **Singapore Primary Mathematics 2A/2B** – excellent for step-by-step fraction and problem-solving development.

Introduce these only once:

- main Year 2 book is 50%+ done, and
- mentals are consistent.

# YEAR 3

Year 3 is the bridge into more formal multiplication/division, stronger fractions/decimals, and multi-step word problems. Perfect time to set up for later selective success.

## 1. Core Curriculum Text (pick ONE)

### **NSW Targeting Maths – Year 3**

- NSW aligned, strong visual explanations + problem solving.

### **Maths Plus NSW – Year 3 Student & Assessment Pack**

- Spiral approach; highly regarded for "little-and-often" practice and concept revisiting.

### **Excel Basic Skills – Mathematics Year 3 (if you liked Year 2 Excel)**

Choose whichever matches your child + their school:

- If school uses Targeting Maths, that's a good home match.
- If school uses Maths Plus, that's also a good home match.
- If you homeschoo / self-direct and care about drill consistency, Excel works well.

## 2. Daily Fluency / Mentals

### **New Wave Mental Maths – Book C (Year 3)**

- Short daily columns; spiral coverage of all strands.
- Great "muscle" builder for facts, time, money, fractions, quick reasoning.

If a child finds Book C too easy, you can:

- finish it early and start sampling Book D (Year 4), but don't skip the harder later weeks of C.

### 3. Optional Challenge (for top 10–20% kids)

At Year 3 you finally get good ROI from high-quality challenge:

#### **Option A – Singapore Primary Mathematics 3A/3B**

- Excellent bar-model word problems, multi-step reasoning, very clean structure.

#### **Option B – Beast Academy Level 2 (2A–2D)**

- A full comic-style curriculum from Art of Problem Solving, aimed at ages ~7–9.
- Level 2 books cover:
  - place value, comparing, addition (2A)
  - subtraction, expressions, problem solving (2B)
  - measurement, strategies, odds & evens (2C)
  - big numbers, algorithms, problem solving (2D).

This is not necessary for everyone. It's for kids who:

- already find Year 3 schoolwork easy,
- enjoy puzzles and challenge,
- and are candidates for future selective / maths competitions.

# **GENERAL BUYING RULES (TO AVOID WASTING MONEY)**

## **Rule 1 – One main text per year**

- Pick either Targeting Maths, Maths Plus, or Excel Maths – not all three.
- If switching series, do it at the start of a school year, not mid-term.

## **Rule 2 – One mentals series only**

- If you use New Wave Mental Maths, you don't also need a second mentals book.
- If you love Excel Mental Maths Strategies, stick with that across the year.

## **Rule 3 – Challenge books are a bonus, not a crutch**

Only add Singapore / Beast Academy / extra Excel if:

- core book is progressing,
- daily mentals are consistent,
- and the child is not overloaded.

## **Rule 4 – Always finish at least one book front-to-back**

Stacks of half-finished books = a feeling of "We're failing".

One fully completed core book per year:

- gives you clear coverage,
- shows your child they can finish long projects,
- makes it easy to track progress.

# LITTLE SCRIPT FOR PARENTS TO SHARE WITH KIDS

You can say something like:

*"We're not going to buy ten different maths books and only use a little bit of each.*

*Each year, we'll have:*

- one main maths book,*
- one small daily practice book,*
- and maybe one challenge book if you're enjoying maths and want more.*

*If we just keep moving through those, slowly and steadily, you'll end up very far ahead without hours and hours of extra worksheets."*