

Maths journal review and self-assessment

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

Look back through your maths journal to judge which pieces are strong and what you would do differently now. Choose work that shows a clear method, taught you something new, or makes you proud.

- Comparing an early decimal-line entry with a later ratio task to see how your method got clearer.
- Choosing a journal piece because it shows your working line by line, not just the answer.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

JUDGING ONE EARLY PIECE

- 1 Open the journal at the September page that shows $23 + 45$.
- 2 Notice the digits were not lined up by place value.
- 3 Decide that today you would rewrite it with tens and units in neat columns.
- 4 Write one sentence: I chose this piece because it taught me to line up place values.

LESSON ARC

Open with pupils turning to a September page in their own maths journal and asking what they'd do differently now. Put two contrasting journal pieces on the IWB — an early decimal-line entry beside a later ratio task — and let the class name the method-shown difference. Agree three criteria (clear method, taught you something, proud to show it) and test one piece aloud against all three. Pupils then work silently through their own journals choosing three proudest pieces and one to improve.

TEACHING MOVES

1. **Getting Started.** Give the class a full thirty seconds of silent page-turning back to a September entry before any hands go up. Take two or three honest answers only — you're warming up the idea that their thinking has moved, not hunting a right answer.
2. **Watch and Notice.** Point to the two board pieces — don't read them line by line. Hold out until a pupil names the method-shown difference themselves, then revoice: 'so the later piece lets someone else follow how you got there.' Write the three criteria on the board and leave them up all lesson.
3. **Try It Together.** Ask a volunteer to read out the key working lines from a piece they're happy to share; copy those two or three lines onto the IWB as they speak. Judge that one piece aloud against all three criteria, naming each. If no one volunteers, reuse the ratio example already on the board — no pupil is put on the spot.
4. **Class Challenge.** Keep the room calm — this is a reflection beat, not a race. Circulate and, when a pupil stalls on choosing, point them back to the three criteria on the board. Nudge anyone picking only neat pages toward one that taught them something, even if it's messy.
5. **What Did We Notice?.** Listen for a specific change in method, not 'I got better'. Press a vague answer gently: 'what were you doing before, and what do you do instead now?' Take three or four contributions — no typing.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

⚠ Pupils pick their three pieces purely on neatness — 'this one's my best because it's tidy' — and skip whether the maths taught them anything.

Point back at the three board criteria and ask 'what does this piece show that you couldn't do before?' Steer them toward a messier page where their method actually changed.

⚠ For the improve-it prompt pupils write 'I'd do it neater' or 'make it better' — a vague fix, not a mathematical one.

Push for the exact change: a lined-up decimal point, a labelled diagram, a checked answer. Ask 'which line would you rewrite, and how?' — then have them rewrite that one line in the journal.

DIFFERENTIATION

EMERGING

- Let them choose just one proudest piece first and say why in a single spoken sentence before committing to writing three.
- Sit them near the teacher table and turn the pages with them, reading each criterion aloud against the piece they're holding.

DEVELOPING

- After the three reasons, ask them to order their chosen pieces earliest-to-latest and say what improved between each one.
- For the improve-it piece, have them name two different changes and decide which matters more, and why.

PROFICIENT

- Take the fast finisher's rewrite further at the board: they narrate the improved line to the class and explain, in method terms, why the new version is stronger — a whole-class stretch on the current target.
- Ask them to write the reflection as advice to a September Stage 4 pupil: 'here's the one rule I wish I'd known then.'

✓ **Cross-curricular:** Tie to English writing — the change-my-thinking sentence is a short piece of reflective recount, an authentic reason to write in the first person about their own learning.

ANSWER KEY

Q1: page 45

Q2: May shows clear method/working (every step + place value); September does not.

Q3: any 3 justified choices (p10/p40/p80)

a) Always : One of the three agreed criteria is a clear method.

b) Never : Working must be shown line by line for the method to be clear.

c) Always : The whole point of the review is to spot growth and changes in thinking.

d) Sometimes : Some mistakes come back; many are fixed as you learn, which the review lets you see.

EXTENSION SHEET · STRETCH ANSWERS

S1: 94.393

S4: 17

S2: 99.16

S5: 18

S3: 82.98