

Maths for life

Last week, we asked our readers: "Can you describe a time when you used mathematics to solve a problem outside the classroom?" From buying lunch to taking public transport, here's what they said

1 I use maths to figure out my age. I was born in 2009 and this is 2023. So I am 14 years old. Who says maths is difficult?
Jordan Bilasa Lyjah, 13, Ho Yu College and Primary School
(Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen)

5 One day I was late for a competition and had to rush through a park. The map on my phone showed a right-angled path skirting around the area. But then I realised I could travel diagonally through the park, according to the Pythagorean theorem taught in maths class. I arrived on time because of this smart decision.
Catherine Cao, 14, St Paul's Co-educational College

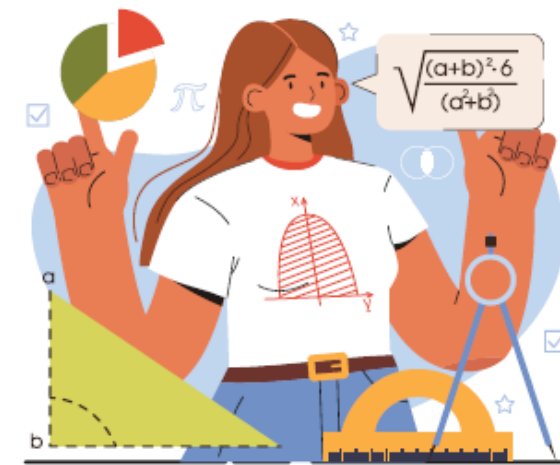
7 My mathematical skills were once put to use at a revision gathering. Having done all the exercises, we were starving, so we ordered a mouth-watering pizza. However, the portion was not big enough because there were several classmates there. So I took out my ruler and calculator and sliced the pizza evenly. We all enjoyed it! It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.
Suri Chan Tin-wing, 17, Yan Chai Hospital Law Chan Chor Si College

2 This sounds obvious, but I use maths for doing my maths homework, which is usually done outside the classroom! It is a very difficult subject and there is a lot of homework to be done. I can't do all of it in school so I finish it at home.
Tam Hau-yin, 13, Ho Yu College and Primary School (Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen)

6 It's very easy to overlook how often we use maths in our daily lives. For example, my family recently moved to a new home. Before we moved, we went shopping for furniture. I measured the items in my head to decide which would fit the space. I gauged the weight of the bedside table, desk, and cabinets by looking at their shapes and sizes. That helped me figure out if I could easily move them if I wanted to change the arrangement a year later.
Noga Maria Andrea, 14, St Joan of Arc Secondary School

8 I use mathematics when I am in a hurry. If I have to take public transport, I'll check when trains or buses will arrive and how long it will take to reach my destination. Also, I will calculate how fast I can walk to the bus stop or railway station. For example, I count how long the lift will take and when I will arrive at the bus stop. Then, if I cannot reach the bus stop on time, I may choose to go by train.
Tim Chen, 14, King Ling College

3 I work as a "courier" for my mother during weekends and holidays and buy lunch for her. One day, I gave the cashier the money, quickly calculated the balance, and told him the exact amount I should receive. When I got home, my mum gave me a tip for my fast delivery.
Karson Chan Ka-chun, 15, The Hong Kong Management Association KS Lo College



9 Have you noticed how often you use maths while preparing food? You measure the ingredients and set a temperature and timer for cooking. These units will make cooking easier, and without them in recipes, everything could go wrong.
Chloe Yeung Wai-ying, 12, Maryknoll Fathers' School

4 I go swimming with my sister and cousins every Saturday. My coach tells me to swim halfway across the pool, so I have to breathe between strokes and kicks. Sometimes, the coach asks us to kick six times per stroke, but it can be hard to keep track when the water is cold and I am struggling to breathe. I often forget to keep count, so my coach makes me swim extra laps whenever it happens.
Rex Kwong Yat-long, 13, CCC Kung Lee College

The Hang Lung Mathematics Awards (HLMA) encourages secondary students to unleash their creativity in mathematics and ignite their passion for intellectual discovery. We are asking a total of five questions to inspire you to think deeply about the power of mathematics, the importance of integrity and the pursuit of excellence. Unleash your potential to make an impact on the world!



10 While walking to school, I often mentally calculate the shortest route to save time. Once, I was almost late for school, and using my mathematics skills, I understood it would be less time-consuming to walk along a straight line instead of a curve. This shows that mathematics can help you solve problems, even trivial ones, outside the classroom.
Valerie Chiu Wing-ye, 13, St Mary's Canossian College

This week's question: How could you use maths to change the community around you?

Scan the QR code to submit your response, or email us at yp@ncpp.com.hk by 1:59pm on May 7

