

Singapore Math – Mathematics Curriculum

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When it comes to [teaching](#) mathematics to children, there exist a number of schools of thoughts on what the ideal curriculum ought to be.

There are the conventional models of teaching math, there are harder theory based models and there are the more interesting practical hands-on models.

Among the models that have received wide applaud for developing a strong platform and understanding of basic math that is suitable for propelling the child a long way forward in the longer run, Singapore math is an outstandingly good one.

What is Singapore math?

Singapore math is a method to teach mathematics to children based upon the classical model of teaching mathematics in Singapore.

The national curriculum of Singapore has been great in producing students who understand the basics of mathematics well, and the model has been taken to formalize and internationalize for wider applicability.

As a teacher or as a parent of a homeschooling child, this is definitely one of the models of teaching math that would appeal to your intellect.

Remember that the methods might appear to be innovative at times, but the fundamental basis is time-tested and the instructions have been around for a number of years.

And also, the instructions and materials are written in English. A number of schools in the USA have accepted this model as a standard one and follow this. The state of California had allotted some state funds for the teachers to order Singapore math texts.

What are the characteristics of Singapore math?

Singapore math has some fundamental differences in approach compared to the standard practice of teaching math. The curriculum and study materials are designed to answer fundamental questions of mathematics based upon logical explanations. Unlike many of the mathematics teaching models that are common in many countries including the USA that stress upon rule memorization and expectation upon students to reconstruct mathematical ideas from hands-on experiments, this is a model that believes in digging deep into roots of reason. The math understanding model is designed at every stage such that the child attempts to ask questions pertaining to fundamental understanding of mathematics. They would start asking “why” rather than trying to remember rules and the intelligent design structure of the curriculum would provide the student with the right answer with the right time. No wonder Singapore math teaching model is a favorite among almost every homeschooling parent and teacher.

Singapore math can be characterized by the following factors.

– Spiral approach:

Singapore math is spiral in its structure. It assumes that something that has been taught earlier does not need to be taught again. In fact, when a topic is revised in a subsequent year, the level of discussion starts from the next level of what was taught previously. This is contrary to the USA model, where the topic restarts from scratch next year and then moves forward eventually attaining the desired higher level.

– Sequence of introduction of concepts:

Singapore math has a unique way of introducing the students to novel concepts. It is neither based upon remembering rules, nor is it based upon hoping that the students would be able to almost intelligently deduce formulae simply going by their hands-on experiences that they would be exposed to. The teaching method that Singapore math model follows goes from concrete via pictorial to abstract. The students would learn decimal numbers in forms of addition and subtraction in their second and third grades by concretely adding and subtracting dollars and cents. Then in their fourth grade they would be pictorially introduced to the notion of decimals and their experiences of adding and subtracting dollars would be used for them to learn. At the next level they would start to understand the fundamental theories of how decimals work. Thus, within a few years they will understand all the necessary theory, practical applications and physical interpretation of their concepts. They further learn to actually analyze real situations mathematically in terms of the real mathematical meaning of the situation and do not rely upon intuitions or “clues” which is the buzzword in the US-based mathematics teaching models.

– Intelligent sequence of repetition of previous knowledge:

The amount of repetition is minimal in Singapore mathematics. The way that the entire course is designed targets that the student does not need to go for repetition of what is already learned. The progress is ensured in such a way that much of whatever is learned at one stage is implicitly used in the subsequent stages. This would make sure that the student never loses touch with the fundamental concepts, although the boring repetition is totally eliminated. It keeps the students fresh and hungry for learning further.

– Crisp focus on understanding of core mathematical concepts free from redundancies:

Singapore math is well-known for focusing on the mathematical concepts. Unlike many other models that teach math and end up adding a lot of immaterial details and spices, this model of math learning is strongly based upon the solid concepts of core mathematics. The nature of the study is exploratory, and the child asks and gets answer to the fundamental “why” questions rather than semi-grasping vague ideas without deep knowledge.

Should you go for it?

The verdict is that Singapore math is one of the best models of learning math for a child, be it in a conventional [school](#) or be it in a homeschooling environment. The instructions are loud and clear. The study material is fantastic. As long as your child does not lack average intelligence, this is one of the models that you would strongly favor going for.

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