Helping Your Child with Bar Models in Year 2 Maths

Key points

- A bar model is a simple drawing that helps children see a maths problem as a picture before they try to solve it.
- It is a visual tool used in Year 2 (children aged 6-7) to help them understand addition and subtraction word problems.
- The bar helps children figure out if they need to add or subtract to find a missing number.
- It acts as a stepping stone between reading a story and writing the final sum.
- Different schools may use slightly different styles of drawing, so it is always a good idea to ask your child's teacher for their preferred method.

Things to try at home

- Use a piece of string or a strip of paper to represent a 'whole' amount and cut it into pieces to show parts of a total.
- Draw a simple rectangle together and split it into sections to show how many pieces of fruit are in a bowl.
- Use colourful blocks or Lego bricks to build a physical 'bar' before drawing it on paper.
- Create a tiny story about your favourite toys and draw a quick bar to show who has more or fewer.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's maths lead.
- The official GOV.UK guidance on the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 (children aged 5-7).