

Which Is Longer? A Year 1 Measurement Detective Challenge

Key points

- The Department for Education's Year 1 maths curriculum includes comparing lengths, describing them and beginning to measure and record them.
- Talk about 'longer', 'shorter' and 'the same length', lining up one end of both objects to help compare them.
- Equal-sized paper squares are non-standard units: matching pieces used to measure instead of centimetres.
- Start at the object's edge and place the squares in a straight row along its length, with no gaps or overlaps.
- Use the same-sized squares for both objects so you can compare the measurements fairly.
- Schools organise learning differently, so ask your child's teacher how this activity fits with their maths lessons.

Things to try at home

- Invite your child to be a measurement detective: choose two everyday objects, such as a book and a spoon, and predict which is longer.
- Prepare matching paper squares together, then line them up beside each object and count them, helping with placement if needed.
- Choose objects whose ends match a square's edge at first; if an end falls partway along a square, talk about it rather than forcing a whole-square answer.
- Ask 'What did you find?' and let your child explain by speaking, pointing, signing or using their home language, while you introduce the English words alongside.
- Keep it short and playful, taking turns to find something longer or shorter and stopping when your child has had enough; ask the teacher about adaptations for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Find out more

- Department for Education: [National curriculum in England: mathematics programmes of study — see Year 1, Measurement](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study>).
- Department for Education: [Teaching mathematics in primary schools — includes Year 1 guidance](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-mathematics-in-primary-schools>).
- Your child's teacher: ask which measurement words the class uses and how to make the activity comfortable and accessible for your child.