

Key Words for Calculations

Overview

Words to do with arithmetic such as add, multiply, subtract, divide are not often used in ordinary conversation. As a result many people, especially those from other language backgrounds, have not acquired this vocabulary and are confused in mathematical learning situations.

This activity promotes discussion of the arithmetic related words, practice at hearing and speaking them and relating them to the appropriate symbols and calculator keys.

Skills and Knowledge

Language of basic operations (+ - × ÷ =).

Use of calculator for basic operations

Preparation and Materials

Photocopy *Activity Sheets 1 & 3* (1 per pair of students)

Photocopy *Activity Sheet 2: Key Words* onto stiff paper or card, cut them into small cards and place in labelled envelopes (1 for each pair of students).

Calculators (1 per pair).

Suggested Procedure

Introducing Key Words

Distribute calculators (1 per pair of students)

Distribute Activity Sheet 1: *What Operation?*

Explain:

- *Look at the pictures*
- *Work out your answers any way you like*
- *You can use calculators, but you don't have to*
- *Write your answers in the space provided next to 'How much'*

Go through the illustrations one by one.

Ask:

- *What answer did you get?*
- *What did you do?*
- *What language did you think in?*
- *What were the words that you used in your first language?*

It is a good idea to discuss some of the words students were 'thinking'; ask for volunteers to write their own language on the board. Spend some time on discussion and comparison of words before continuing with the activity.

This introduction allows students to show the simple arithmetical calculations they can already do before focusing on language & symbols.



Now refer students to the empty calculator button and for each illustration ask:

- *What is the sign or symbol that will go on this calculator button?*
- *What sign or symbol do we use instead of these words*

For each illustration the class should:

- Agree on the arithmetic answer
- Briefly discuss the words
- Agree on the symbol to place in the empty calculator button.

'Symbol' is an important mathematical word to spend some time discussing.

Key word sorting

Distribute envelopes of cut up symbols and words (one to each pair of students). If appropriate, you could pair people of similar language backgrounds.

Explain:

- *You are to work in pairs*
- *Use one copy of Activity Sheet 1 between you*
- *Arrange the words and symbols beside the correct picture*

After 5 or so minutes to discuss their results and see if all agree on which words and symbols go together.

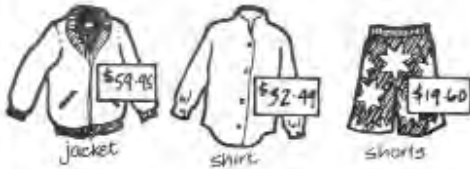



Distribute the *Key Words Summary Sheet*. Allow time for students to write in the blank spaces any other key words they used in English or their own language.

Explain:

- *Take this home and put it on your fridge or similar to help you learn the words.*

Practice Sheet 1 is a reinforcement of this activity. It could be used now or as a revision in a later session.



| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Jacket \$59.98 Shirt \$32.49 Shorts \$19.60</p> <p>How much? <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> |  <p>\$2.59 each</p> <p>How much? <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> |
|  <p>193 cm 140.5 cm ?</p> <p>How much? <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> |  <p>\$119.10? share between 3 people?</p> <p>How much? <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> |



Key Words

Activity Sheet 2

 Copy onto card and cut.

| | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|
| and | from | add |
| multiply | plus | times |
| take away | by | subtract |
| divide | minus | into |
| is | makes | equals |
| + | — | × |
| ÷ | = | total |





add
plus
total
and

Your words:



times
multiply
by

Your words:



take away
minus
subtract
from

Your words:



divide
into

Your words:



equals
makes
is

Your words:



Calculator Symbols

Write the symbol from your calculator in each square.

add



zero



subtract



times



multiply



is



minus



take away



plus



by



divide



makes



equals



into



from



and



total



point

