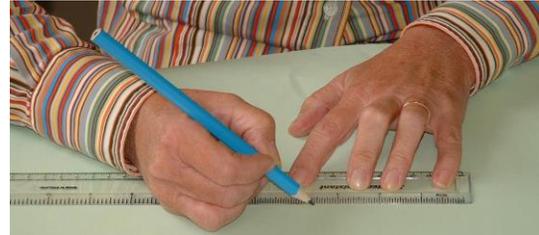


RULERS

Stationery equipment, including rulers are used in many curriculum areas. Rulers are often used to underline important words or headings and to provide straight lines.



Children with physical disabilities or motor difficulties often experience problems with mobility, which may affect their capacity to collect equipment. Some children may have reduced fine motor skills, requiring practice to co-ordinate the use of their hand and finger movements or they may need adapted tools. Children can have problems with visual memory and perceptual skills, which may also have an effect upon their abilities. For a child with a physical difficulty using a ruler can present a problem.

STRATEGIES TO HELP IMPROVE RULER SKILLS

Adults can support children by:

- Demonstrating good ruler techniques, i.e. checking the ends of the ruler are correctly aligned, spreading the fingers in the middle of the ruler to hold it firmly, adjusting the fingers so they do not protrude over the edge, keeping the pencil point touching the ruler.
- Encouraging the child to adopt good organisational skills, e.g. placing the ruler in a pencil case or keeping it in a regular place.
- Making sure the ruler is horizontal, turning the paper if required.
- Placing coloured dots on an ordinary ruler will remind the pupil where to place their fingers when ruling lines.
- Placing Blu-tack on each end of an ordinary ruler enables the child to use both hands to manipulate their pencil and paper or object to be measured.
- Putting a green dot at the beginning of the ruler, indicating the starting point.
- Sticking clear Dycem to the underneath of the ruler to prevent slipping.
- Trying alternative rulers, e.g. a crocodile ruler which incorporates a handle or a junior ruler incorporating two colours which can act as a number line.
- Using a ruler with a raised bar in the middle, e.g. Fingergrasp ruler, to provide something to grip and hold on to when moving the ruler.
- Using exercise books with pre-printed margins, or paper with pre-printed borders to help improve presentation.

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE RULER SKILLS

'Battleships and Cruisers' drawing the grid to form a base of the game.

Drawing **'Boxes'** of differing sizes will help develop ruler skills.

'Completing the Square' activities could be devised using a large grid.

'Curved Stitching' patterns can be made on paper using lines drawn with a ruler.

'Noughts and Crosses' drawing the grid prior to playing the game.

'Dot to dot' exercises using a pencil and ruler to join the dots.

'Measuring Pre-drawn Lines' helps to familiarise the child with measurement and mathematical language, e.g. longer, shorter.

'Planning routes' could incorporate straight lines, e.g. 2cm north, 4cm west.

'Roadways' like motorways can be drawn then cars pushed between the lines, similarly **'Train Lines'** could be drawn and an engine with carriages pulled along.

Using **'Templates'** will help children recognise the importance of pushing their pencil close to the side of the template making a smooth shape.

RULER CHECKLIST

- Align the ruler accurately
- Hold the ruler with the non-preferred hand
- Spread the fingers to hold the ruler
- Move the pencil accurately along the ruler edge
- Draw accurately between two dots or points
- Remove the pencil and ruler from the paper without smudging

RESOURCES

Alligator Easy Grip Ruler



Clear Plastic Ruler – with Dycem on the ends to help it keep still

Fingergrip Ruler

Drawing boards, which have lockable rulers, are also available.

