

Introduction to EQAO Mathematics

for parents and teachers

THE LANGUAGE OF MATHEMATICS

Some children do poorly on mathematics tests, not so much because they don't know math, but rather because they have trouble with the language of mathematics.

Parents are invited to read the following pages and explain the information to their children.

KEY WORDS

Listed below is a series of key words with definitions and examples. They are placed here, not for the purpose of having children memorize them, but rather as a checklist so that you can ensure that they can understand and properly use them in the questions they will meet in the EQAO testing.

DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN, COMPARE

The words in this first group usually indicate that the student will need to compose an answer rather than choose from a presented list of answers (multiple choice).

The words “describe” and “explain” may sound like synonyms, but each word requires a different kind of answer.

DESCRIBE means “use words to tell about characteristics or key features.”

Example: “Describe this ball.” (with a picture of a ball)

Answer: “The ball is red with white stripes and is 10 cm in diameter.”

EXPLAIN means “tell how you found the answer, or show your work.”

Example: “Which is greater: 3 quarters or 4 dimes? Explain your answer.”

Answer: $3 \text{ quarters} = 25 + 25 + 25 = 75$ (or $25 \times 3 = 75$)

$4 \text{ dimes} = 10 + 10 + 10 + 10 = 40$ (or $10 \times 4 = 40$)

75 is more than 40, so 3 quarters are greater than 4 dimes.

