School holidays

This **practical exploration** asks pupils to consider what factors might affect the choice of dates for school holidays and use these to determine the holiday dates for an alternative school year. They will need to identify constraints and balance conflicting requirements.

Suitability Pupils working in small groups

Time 1 hour upwards

Equipment

List of term dates for school
Year planners, calendars
Internet access
Spreadsheets

Applying Mathematical Processes

Resources

PUPIL STIMULUS

TEACHER SUMMARY

TEACHER GUIDANCE

PROGRESSION TABLE

School holidays

When would you like the school holidays to be next year?

How many terms shall I have?

Is the first term too long?

Will my friends at other schools also be on holiday?

Shall I put half-term near the Bank Holiday?

Will the dates be convenient for my family?

Is the holiday long enough to go away on holiday or stay with friends or relatives?

Will the holidays be at time of year when I could get a holiday job?

There must be **190** school days each year.

Set out your suggestions clearly.
Give reasons for the dates you have chosen.

Nuffield AMP Pupil stimulus 'School holidays'
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School holidays

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School holidays

When do you think the school holidays should be?

Six-term school years
Updated 17 December 2001, 18.33

Are you bored by the end of your summer holiday? Do your school terms seem to drag on forever?

A special report is recommending a new six-term school year. This will mean you'll have shorter holidays but more often.

So tell us what you think about this - should it be final bell for three-term school years?

New Zealand

The New Zealand school year runs from the beginning of February to mid-December, and is divided into four terms. By law, all schools are required to be open for instruction for 380 half-days in a year (388 half-days for schools with only Year 8 students or below), meaning that the start and end of the school year is not nationally fixed to a particular date.

In general, terms run as follows if Easter falls in April:

- **Term 1:** Beginning of February to Maundy Thursday (day before Good Friday)
- **Term 2:** Second Monday following Easter Monday to beginning of July
- **Term 3:** Mid-July to mid-September
- **Term 4:** Early October to mid-December

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School Term Dates

West Berkshire has moved to a Standard School Year from September 2005. The West Berkshire term dates allow for 1 set inset day over and above the 190 pupil days. There are 4 additional inset days which schools are able to decide for themselves and these need to be outside specified pupil days.

For more details of term dates for academic years 2009/10 and 20010/11 see below, or click on the documents listed under the 'Downloads' section on your right.

Term Dates 2009 - 2010

- **Term 1** - Wed 2 September 2009 – Fri 23 October 2009 *(Holiday: Mon 26 October 2009 – Mon 2 November 2009)*
- **Term 2** - Tues 3 November 2009 – Fri 18 December 2009 *(Holiday: Mon 21 December 2009 – Tues 5 January 2010)*
- **Term 3** - Weds 6 January 2010 – Fri 12 February 2010 *(Holiday: Mon 15 February 2010 – Fri 19 February 2010)*
- **Term 4** - Mon 22 February 2010 – Wed 31 March 2010 *(Holiday: Thurs 1 April 2010 – Mon 19 April 2010)*
- **Term 5** - Tues 20 April 2010 – Fri 28 May 2010 *(Holiday: Mon 31 May 2010 – Fri 4 June 2010)*
- **Term 6** - Mon 7 June 2010 – Fri 23 July 2010

In Service Day – Wednesday 2nd September 2009, the first day of Term 1, will be an INSET day for all West Berkshire schools.

▼ Related Pages:
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▼ Offsite Links:
► Adobe Acrobat Reader

▼ Contacts:
► School Support Team shornblow@westberks.gov
Tel: 01635 519727

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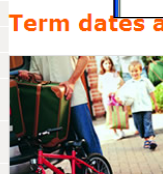
Term dates and school holidays

The dates for school terms and holidays are decided by the local authority or the governing body of a school, or by the school itself for independent schools. It is not normally acceptable to take your child out of school for family holidays during term time.

Find out term dates for schools near you

You can find out school term and holiday dates online. Who sets them depends on the type of school your child attends.

Community and voluntary controlled schools

Term dates and holidays for community and voluntary controlled schools are set by the local authority. For most schools, the current school year is divided into

Find the best route to school whether you're walking or travelling by train, car or bus

► Journey planner

Do it online

► Find schools, childcare and family services and Sure Start Children's Centres

► Find out school term

Information on term dates for schools in England can be found at

http://www.direct.gov.uk/

NUFFIELD APPLYING MATHEMATICAL PROCESSES

TEACHER NOTES School holidays

Activity description

Pupils consider what factors might affect the choice of dates for school holidays, and use these to determine the holiday dates for an alternative school year. They will need to identify constraints and find compromises between conflicting requirements.

Suitability Pupils working in small groups

Time One hour upwards

AMP resources Pupil stimulus

Equipment Lists of term dates for school, year planners, calendars, internet access, spreadsheets

Key mathematical language
Scheduling, data analysis, decision-making

Key processes

Representing Deciding what factors to take into account, identifying variables and associated constraints.

Analysing Working with times and dates, handling data.

Interpreting and evaluating Drawing together needs/preferences/findings to reach a solution.

Communicating and reflecting Giving a clear summary of approach and conclusions; presenting solution clearly.

Teacher guidance

As this activity will involve consideration of climate, culture, religion, and life-style, it might be interesting to explore cross-curricular links with Geography, RS, and PSHE. You may need to be aware of sensitivities within the class.

The activity could be set up as a proposal for change to the school calendar, to be considered by the school council or senior management. Proposed holiday dates need to be justified mathematically. Pupils could present the information in a report, or as if for a website, or they could give a presentation.

Share both pages of the pupil stimulus with pupils. Explain that by law there must usually be a minimum of 190 days per school year in the UK, but there is considerable variation in how the days are scheduled.

Discuss with pupils why they think the dates of school years are as they are. What do they like about the current schedules? What do they think could be improved, and why?

Allow small group then whole class discussion about the holiday dates at your school and in the local area. This discussion could extend to national and international variations.

Encourage pupils to consider a variety of factors, such as parents' views, weather, heating costs, statutory bank holidays, examination times, staff preferences and so on.

During the activity

Throughout the activity, remind pupils to record their decisions and how they reached compromises between conflicting demands.

Interact with each group as they work, encouraging discussion, negotiation and compromise. Encourage pupils to consider the preferences of various groups, for example, teachers, parents and other pupils. Remind pupils that any data collected in surveys will need to be analysed and this must be recorded. You may need to ensure that pupils do not ask intrusive survey questions.

Encourage pupils to think about the most appropriate means of communicating their solution(s). Stress the need to present clear, accessible information for the public.

It might be helpful to discuss some of the mathematical techniques that can be employed in this activity, such as calculating the length of time intervals, analysis of any survey results, weighting of different requirements, identifying variables and conditions they must satisfy.

Probing questions and feedback

- How did you ensure that the number of days of schooling in your solution is at least 190?

- What are the most important factors you are using to make decisions? Why?

- How much flexibility is there in your solution? Would it work in any academic year?

- How would you incorporate parents' views, or the views of other people within the community?

- How will you present your findings? How will the times when pupils are / are not at school be clear to someone else?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of your proposals?

Extensions

- Comparing the number of school days per year in different countries.

- How would altering the distribution or number of working hours in the week, such as an extra hour at school each day, or Saturday morning school, affect the academic year?

Additional information

The sources of information for the material on the second page of the pupil stimulus are

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/chat/your_comments/newsid_1715000/1715720.stm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_term#New_Zealand

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SchoolLife/DG_4016103

http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4314

Progression table

Representing	Analysing	Interpreting and Evaluating	Communicating and reflecting
Choosing relevant factors that affect choice of dates	*Finding appropriate time intervals and accounting for given constraints*	*Drawing together findings to reach a solution; justifying one's choices*	*Clarity of approach and presentation*
Shows minimal understanding of the problem	Checks that the current school year satisfies requirements Attempts to produce dates for school year with required number of school days	Takes more than one factor into account Considers implication of solution for different groups	Presents a list of dates Gives minimal summary of approach to problem
Indentifies several factors that could influence choice of term dates Models problem physically or visually Identifies limits on length of term time and holidays Recognises potential conflicts in requirements	Incorporates several requirements into school year and checks number of school days Attempts to balance conflicting constraints Finds time intervals during which certain holidays must occur	Takes several factors into account Checks validity of model using current school year Compares solutions Considers likelihood of disruption to chosen plan	Uses a timeline or other visual means of presenting solution systematically Comments on analysis
Brings together a range of factors that inform decision-making Represents constraints, needs, and preferences as criteria against which different solutions can be assessed	Gives an accurate solution based on analysis of constraints Produces a number of solutions for comparison	Modifies solution to accommodate additional requirements or to optimise length of holidays/terms	Presents solutions clearly, highlighting key dates and features, and communicates reasons for choices
Identifies a system of variables and associated constraints	Careful analysis of different factors leading to compromises Produces viable solution(s) to problem	Considers flexibility of year plan Contrasts different models	Chooses an efficient and effective means of presentation Gives detailed explanations for choices

P R O G R E S S I O N

Download a Word version of this Progression Table from
www.nuffieldfoundation.org/AMP