


What is rounding?

Rounding is a way of **simplifying** numbers. When working with numbers we don't always need to be exact. We round numbers all the time, without even realising it. For example, if a friend asked you how much the bag you bought for **£12.98** cost, you might say, "**it cost about £13**".

More examples of rounding:

58	is nearly 60	 <p>It's almost 12 o'clock</p>
709	is about 700	
£6.99	is roughly £7	
584 grams	is close to 600 grams	
891 metres	is approximately 900 metres	
11.57 am	is almost 12 o'clock	
305 millilitres	is more than 300 millilitres	
98 people	is less than 100 people	
32 years	She's 30-ish years old	

Why do we round numbers?

1. It makes it easier to describe and understand numbers.

The newspaper headline reads: "700 people took part in the fun run."
The actual number was 683, but 700 is easier to understand.

2. It makes it easier to estimate answers to numeracy questions.

Question: How much did you spend on your sister for her birthday?

Answer: I spent roughly £20 on my sister.

You actually spent £10.29 and £9.88 on your sister, but you rounded both of these amounts to £10 to calculate a total of £20.

3. When we don't know the exact amount we can still make a guess.

Question: How long did it take you to come to college today?

Answer: It took me about half an hour to travel to college today.

It actually took 28 minutes and 39 seconds to travel to class, but you didn't time yourself with a stop watch.

Tip

Round is a word with lots of meanings. Other uses include:

- the shape of a circle
- a serving (eg a round of toast)
- a round trip, meaning a return trip, there and back