

What is a formula?

Early algebra did not use the terms **x** and **y** in the ways we use them now. Most problems were expressed in words.

Today the word 'formula' is used in different ways. For example:

- formula 1 in motor racing
- baby-milk formula
- chemical formulas (eg H_2O , CO_2)



In maths **the word 'formula' means a rule for working something out.**

For example: if you share a restaurant bill equally between four people, you could say the rule is that each person pays the total bill divided by four. So:

$$\text{The amount each person pays} = \text{total bill} \div 4.$$

This type of formula is expressed in words rather than by using single letters in the place of numbers.