Calculating the mean

The **mean value** of a set of figures is calculated by adding up the figures to find the total and then dividing by the number of figures in the set.

> **mean value = total amount ÷ number of figures**

So to find the mean value of 5 numbers add them then divide the answer by 5. To find the mean of 20 numbers add them then divide by 20.
Here are two examples:

Example 1
Calculate the mean of 2, 3, and 7.

The total of these numbers is **2 + 3 + 7 = 12.**
There are 3 figures, so divide by 3: **12 ÷ 3 = 4.** So the mean is **4.**

Example 2
Calculate the mean of 16, 13, 21 and 14.

The total of these numbers is **16 + 13 + 21 + 14 = 64.**
There are 4 figures, so divide the total by 4: **64 ÷ 4 = 16.** So the mean is **16.**

Averages in real life
This method works for 'real problems' as well as for figures. Here's an example:

Example

The shoe sizes of a group of 6 students are 5, 6, 8, 8, 9 and 12.

How do you find the mean shoe size of the 6 students?

The total of the students' shoe sizes is **5 + 6 + 8 + 8 + 9 + 12 = 48.**
There are 6 students, so the mean shoe size is **48 ÷ 6 = 8.**