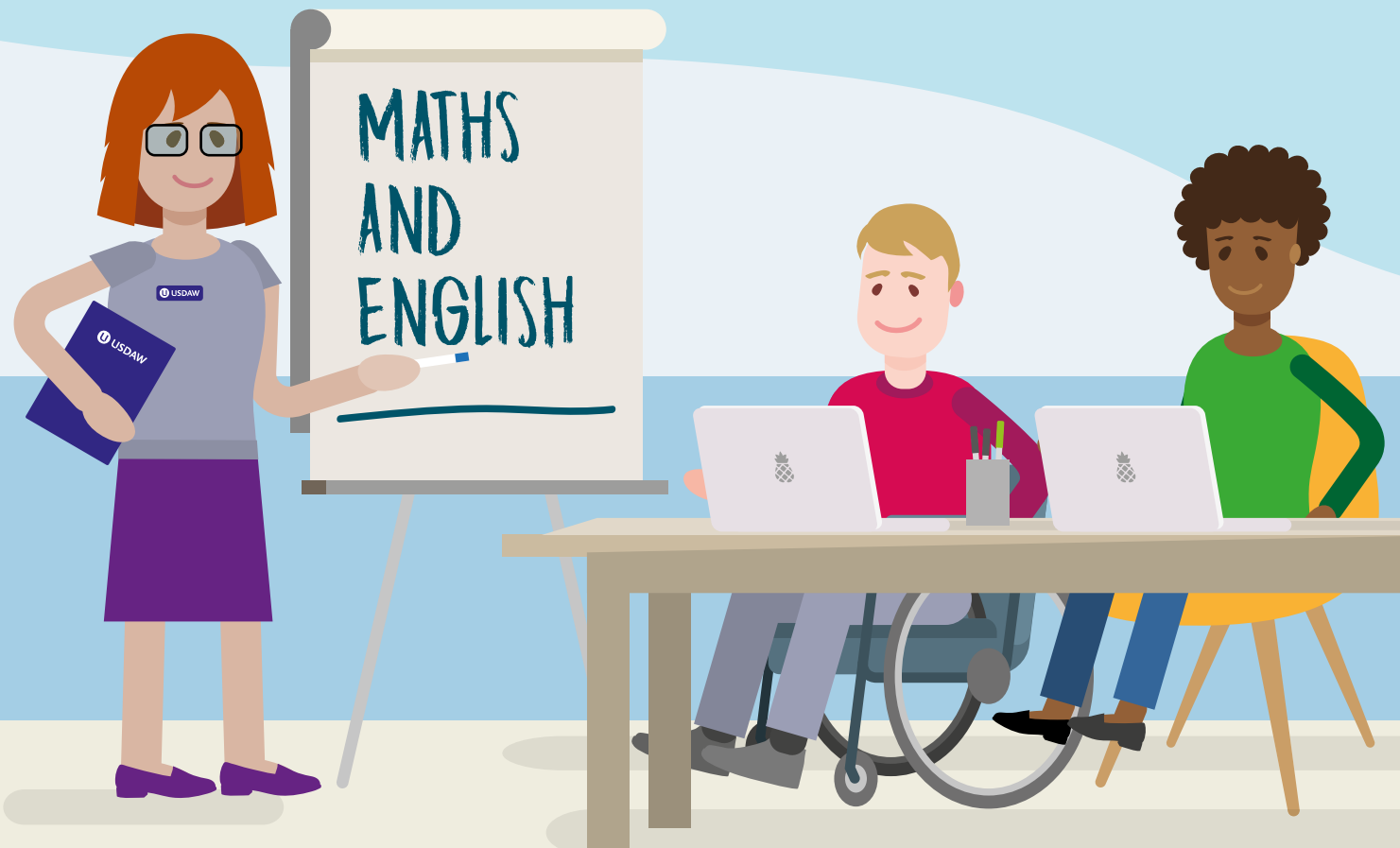


Lifelong Learning

# Getting on with Maths and English



# MATHS AND ENGLISH – THE FOUNDATION OF LEARNING

**Maths and English are the most popular and most important subjects in our learning campaign. Every year Usdaw reps help thousands of members to improve these skills.**

But barriers to learning mean that many members still miss out:

- Shift work and family commitments make it hard to learn.
- Lack of confidence, fear and bad experiences put people off.
- People don't know where or how to get started.

Usdaw reps can tackle these barriers and give everyone a chance to improve their English and Maths skills.

## Why does it matter?

Figures show that around seven million people in Britain need to improve their Maths and English. Sounds like a lot, doesn't it? Many people with low levels of Maths and English seem to manage well enough.

And it's true, people do get by. But it doesn't take much for the learning needs to show. That's because Maths and English provide the foundation to develop other skills.

People without it:

- Struggle to cope when jobs change or new technology is introduced.
- Can't get on apprenticeships or career development programmes.
- Find it more difficult to get new work if they lose their job.
- Get stressed and anxious when their lack of skill may be exposed.
- Lack confidence in themselves and never fulfil their true potential.

When a skills gap threatens a member's job security, promotion prospects and long-term employability it becomes an issue for Usdaw. That's what our Lifelong Learning Campaign is for.

**POOR MATHS AND ENGLISH SKILLS  
COST EMPLOYERS OVER £3 BILLION  
A YEAR.**

## What do we mean by Maths and English skills?

Usdaw's approach is to make sure that Maths and English courses help people develop the practical skills they need at work and in their day-to-day lives. So maths learners might apply their skills to a hobby, to work out their pension, improve at work or help the kids with homework. English learners might want to read more, cope with the demands of the job or write a formal letter.

## Get organised ... get ULRs

ULRs are Usdaw reps that specialise in promoting learning for members and supporting them through their course. Any Usdaw member can become a ULR - enthusiasm for learning is the most important thing. All ULRs get paid time off for training and for ULR activities.

Think about the best way to get started in your workplace – your Project Worker, Area Organiser or Mobile ULR will be happy to help. It's important to get your employer's support, promote Maths and English as practical skills, and tailor your learning methods to your workplace.



**MOST COURSES OFFER THE CHANCE TO GET A NATIONALLY  
RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION AND ARE FREE IF YOU DO  
NOT HAVE A RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION IN THE SUBJECT.**

“ Our ULRs regularly promote Maths and English. We also have ULRs who act as Maths and English champions so they can deal with people’s fears and worries. ”

### Get your employer’s support ...

Improving employee Maths and English skills is beneficial for employers. It helps to manage change, reduces waste, improves productivity and builds morale. There are many ways for employers to support Maths and English learning – everything from joint promotions to giving time off for assessments and learning.

Try Usdaw’s ‘Bite Size’ Maths and English online courses. Each one is just 10 questions, designed to improve confidence. They are fun and easy to access on Usdaw’s Learning Gateway at [www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway)

### People learn in different ways...

- Tutor-led classes.
- Learning online.
- Distance learning courses.

If the preference is for taught courses:

### Find a learning provider ...

Who will deliver learning in or close to the workplace. They can be local colleges or private companies. Good providers will make sure their learning is flexible, can be done at the learner’s own pace and connects with the practical skills people need at work and at home.

### Online distance learning ...

If members prefer to learn online or through distance learning modules, visit Usdaw’s Learning Gateway at [www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway) where there is a wide range of options available.

“ The tutor made the lessons fun. We settled down to spelling and punctuation and the time flew by each week. Some weeks there was more laughter than writing on paper. ”

### Raise awareness ...

A good campaign will be a big help to get people interested in Maths and English. You need to show that Maths and English are practical skills and that learning is fun - that it won’t be like going back to school. It should also break down the barrier to learning and give people the confidence to get involved. You could try running a competition, a roadshow, scratch cards, quizzes - anything that’ll get people talking!

### Start learning ...

As soon as possible. It shows people that something is happening and it will create a real buzz. Use learners to spread the word and promote learning to colleagues. Have a learning celebration and give out certificates. Put photos on the noticeboards. Recruit the next set of learners and encourage the first group to progress to the next level. Now you are in business!

“ Learning adds real value to our operation. Maths and English are particularly important, so I’m happy to give time off to learn whenever we can. ”



MATHS AND ENGLISH ARE ALSO CALLED FUNCTIONAL SKILLS IN ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND EVERYDAY SKILLS IN SCOTLAND.

## Getting started and finding out more

Where you go from here will depend on where you start. The first step is to get Union Learning Reps in place:

- Raise the issue at your next rep team meeting and get their support.
- Choose a rep to be the main contact for learning.
- Contact your Area Organiser or Lifelong Learning Project Worker to get them involved.
- Talk to management to see if they will support a learning campaign.

## Find out more

Have you checked the Usdaw website? It contains lots of links to Maths and English sites and more advice on setting up Maths and English learning. Individual learners can also get advice on how to find learning in their area.

Go to the Lifelong Learning Gateway at [www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway)

## Had some success but learning stalled?

If Maths and English learning has come to a halt, why not try a new approach? Your Project Worker can help you to:

- Emphasise practical skills by linking courses with family learning, computer skills or basing courses around practical subjects, like shopping or DIY.
- Deliver courses in a different way by trying drop-in courses or online learning.
- Get a Maths and English champion to engage with and support members, and encourage existing learners to progress to the next level.
- Refresh your promotions by using tablets for online tests, social media promotions and trying out quizzes and scratch cards to raise awareness.
- Link Maths and English to other campaigns such as Usdaw's Pensions Awareness and Supporting Parents and Carers Campaigns or national campaigns like the Six Book Challenge.

# GET ORGANISED FOR LEARNING

Further details are available direct from your Union Learning Rep or Lifelong Learning Project Worker/Area Organiser via your Regional Office or Usdaw's Education and Training Department:

### South Wales and Western

Cardiff Office  
Tel: 029 2073 1131  
email: [cardiff@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@usdaw.org.uk)

### Eastern

Waltham Cross Office  
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### Midlands

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