Perimeter and Area Are Two Different Measurements

KS2 MATHS GEOMETRY MEASUREMENT Ages 10-12 ⏰ 3 min read

What is Perimeter?

Perimeter is the distance all the way around the outside of a shape. Imagine you're walking around the edge of a rectangular garden. If you walk along all four sides and come back to where you started, the total distance you've walked is the perimeter.

To find the perimeter, you add up the lengths of all the sides. A square with sides of **5 metres** has a perimeter of **20 metres** (5 + 5 + 5 + 5). Perimeter is measured in units like metres, centimetres, or kilometres—units of length.

Think of it like the fence around your garden. If you want to build a fence, you need to know how much fencing material to buy. That's the perimeter!

What is Area?

Area is the amount of space inside a shape. It measures how much surface the shape covers. If you have a rectangular garden, the area tells you how much ground you have to plant flowers or grass.

To find the area of a rectangle, you multiply the length by the width. A garden that is **5 metres long and 4 metres wide** has an area of **20 square metres** (5 × 4). Notice that area is measured in square units like square metres or square centimetres—not just metres.

Think of it like paint on a wall. If you want to paint your bedroom wall, you need to know how much paint to buy. That depends on the area of the wall, not how far around it goes!

Why the Difference Matters

Here's something that surprises many people: two shapes can have the same perimeter but different areas, or the same area but different perimeters!

For example, a **10 × 1 rectangle** has a perimeter of **22 metres** and an area of **10 square metres**. But a **6 × 5 rectangle** also has a perimeter of **22 metres**, yet its area is **30 square metres**. Same perimeter, different areas!

This is why we need both measurements. When builders construct a house, they care about perimeter for things like fencing and roof edges. They care about area for flooring, carpet, and wall paint. Understanding the difference helps us solve real problems in the real world.