

# Why We Round Numbers and How to Do It

KS2 MATHS

NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

## What is Rounding?

**Rounding** means changing a number to the nearest **whole number** or to a simpler number that's easier to use. Instead of saying you have **2,847 sweets**, you might round that to **2,850** or even **3,000**. The rounded number isn't exact, but it's close enough for most purposes.

Think of it like measuring your height. If you're **162 centimetres** tall, you might say "I'm about **160 centimetres**" or "I'm roughly **1.6 metres**" — close enough for a conversation!

## Why Do We Round Numbers?

We round numbers for **three main reasons**. First, rounded numbers are much easier to remember and talk about. Second, sometimes we don't need to be super precise — if a shop has sold **4,293 items** this week, saying "about **4,300**" is usually fine. Third, rounding makes **mental maths** faster. It's much quicker to add **3,000 + 5,000** than **2,847 + 4,956!**

## How to Round Numbers: The Simple Rule

Here's the golden rule for rounding: **Look at the digit you want to round to, then look at the digit to its right**. If that digit to the right is **5 or above, round up**. If it's **4 or below, round down**.

Let's try an example. If you want to round **2,847** to the nearest **hundred**, look at the hundreds place (which is **8**) and check the digit to its right (which is **4**). Since **4** is below **5**, you round down, making **2,847** become **2,800**.

Think of it like a ball rolling down a hill. If it's sitting at the number **4**, it rolls down. If it's at **5** or higher, it rolls up to the next level!

## Another Example

Now try rounding **2,856** to the nearest hundred. The digit to the right of **8** is **5**. Since **5 means go up**, **2,856** becomes **2,900**.

You can round to different places: **tens, hundreds, thousands**, or even decimal places. The rule is always the same — check the digit to the right, and decide whether to round up or down!