

ENGLISH · Y6 / GRADE 6

Y6 SATs Question Stems

30 question types, 30 strategies

How to use these flashcards

Reading paper stems (15)

Stem	Strategy
Find and copy ONE word that means...	Single word from text. Copy exactly.
Find and copy a phrase that...	Phrase, not full sentence. Copy exactly.
What does the word X mean in this sentence?	Re-read sentence; pick context-specific meaning.
Why did the character...	Inference. Quote evidence + explain.
How do you know X...	Find evidence. Quote it.
What did X think when Y happened?	Inference. Often a feeling or motivation.
Look at paragraph 2. Find...	Stay IN that paragraph. Don't search elsewhere.
List two ways...	Need TWO distinct points. Not one repeated.
How does the author build tension?	Name technique. Quote example. Explain effect.



Stem	Strategy
Why is X repeated?	For emphasis / pattern. Always explain effect.
What is the main idea of...	Whole-text understanding. One sentence.
Why has the author used X?	Authorial purpose. Effect on reader.
Tick TWO statements that are true.	Tick exactly two. Not three.
Number these in the order they happen.	Sequence. Re-read text in order.
Give a reason why...	ONE reason. Don't give two if not asked.

Maths reasoning stems (10)

Stem	Strategy
Show your working.	Show every step. Working marks may be available.
What is the difference between...	Subtraction. Bigger minus smaller.
How many more X than Y?	Subtraction. $X - Y$.
Calculate / Find the value of...	Calculation. Show working.
Round to the nearest...	Identify place value; check the digit after.
Estimate...	Round numbers first, then calculate.
Explain why / how / your answer.	Words required. 'Because...'
Compare X and Y.	Note similarity AND difference.
Order the numbers from smallest to largest.	Re-read direction (smallest to largest, or reverse).
Tick the box that...	Tick ONE box only unless told otherwise.

SPaG stems (5)

Stem	Strategy
Tick the [word class] in this sentence.	Identify only that one word class.
Add punctuation to make this sentence correct.	Apply ALL needed marks (capital, full stop, comma, etc.)



Stem	Strategy
Rewrite this sentence in [tense / passive voice / etc.].	Change the verb structure as instructed.
Underline the subordinate clause.	Find the part that depends on a main clause.
Spell the word read by your teacher.	Listen carefully. Write neatly. Don't second-guess.

Why this matters

Recognition saves time	Children who instantly recognise stems answer 40% faster than children reading them fresh
Many marks lost to misreading	Up to 15% of SATs marks lost to children answering the wrong question type
Paired practice works best	Flashcard partners covering each other's blind spots embeds recognition
Don't drill in March-only	Recognition takes practice over weeks. Start in January, light touch.
Real exam papers use these stems	Past SATs papers (DfE published) use the same question-stem language year after year

