

Calculator Use Policy in the Elementary and Middle Grades

NCTM Position

"Calculators in the elementary grades serve as aids in advancing student understanding without replacing the need for other calculation methods. Calculator use can promote the higher-order thinking and reasoning needed for problem-solving in our information and technology-based society. Their use can also assist teachers and students in increasing student understanding of and fluency with arithmetic operations, algorithms, and numerical relationships and enhancing student motivation. Strategic calculator use can aid students in recognizing and extending numeric, algebraic, and geometric patterns and relationships." [NCTM Position](#)

Additional Guidance and Calculator Recommendations

- Starting in grade 4 students should have access to calculators when solving word problems.
- Students should be explicitly taught how and when to use a calculator.
- Calculators should be available to students during all classroom tests and quizzes for use on word problems.
- Note that calculators should be used strategically to enhance the student's understanding of mathematical ideas. We do not recommend using calculators for numerical reasoning and computational fluency.

Calculator Recommendations

The table below lists the recommended calculators by grade band.

Grades	Calculator Type	Comments
3 - 5	TI-10 and TI-15 Explorer	Both the TI-10 and TI-15 Explorer are good elementary-level models. They allow for exploring place value and basic algebra. Both are solar- and battery-powered.
6 - 8	TI-15 Explorer TI-34 MultiView	The TI-34 MultiView (MV) is ideal for laying a foundation for using calculators in the TI-84 Plus family in later years. The TI-15 Explorer is a good elementary-level model. It allows for exploring place value and basic algebra.