

## Walk a Math Trail

A **math trail** is a walk with various stops where you look at math in the world around you and ask questions about it.

Math trails are a great way to stimulate interest in math—especially among students in middle school or high school, when classroom math often becomes more abstract. A math trail helps students see math, touch it, and investigate it on their own.

Get outside and explore geometry (and other math) all around you.

Still not sure how to get started?

Many adults aren't as comfortable with math as they would like to be. Before leading kids on a math trail, try one for yourself. Look for ways to find shapes and numbers in your surroundings and ask yourself questions about them.

To make a geometry math trail, start with questions like these, or make up some of your own:

Find the first letter of your name in your surroundings. (It's especially fun if it's not on a sign.)

Look at the architecture of a building and the different shapes and patterns in its design. Which shapes or patterns give this building its character?

Find an unusual tiling pattern in a floor, a patio, or anywhere else you can find repeating shapes on a flat surface. Ask questions about how the pattern repeats and fits together.

Sit near a street and watch a tire of a slow-moving car. How does the valve on the tire move? Can you trace its path?

Figure out the area or volume of a very large shape in your surroundings. To measure the shape, you can use your own body or whatever else is handy.