

ap·prox·i·mate¹

S3 W3 AC

/ə'prɒksɪmət \$ ə'praɪk-/

adjective

APPROXIMATELY an approximate number, amount, or time is close to the exact number, amount etc, but could be a little bit more or less than it

SYN rough

OPP

*What is the approximate number of students in each class?
These percentages are only approximate.*

In everyday English, people usually say **rough** rather than **approximate**:
*Can you give me a **rough** idea of how much it would cost?*

THESAURUS

approximately more or less than a number or amount – used especially in technical or scientific contexts: *The company had total revenues of approximately \$2 million. | The disease affects approximately 10% of the adult population.*

about more or less than a number or amount. 'About' is the usual word to use in everyday English: *It costs about \$30 to get a visa. | There were about 50 people at the meeting.*

roughly /'rʌfli/ about – used when you are trying to give someone a general idea of the size, amount, or number of something: *The two countries are roughly the same size. | Roughly how many miles do you travel a year?*

around about a number or time – used when you are

guessing: *I'll be there around 5 o'clock.* | *The BBC broadcasts around 2,000 radio dramas every year.*

somewhere/ something in the region of
(formal) about – used with very large numbers or amounts: *Last year he earned something in the region of \$60 million.* | *It costs somewhere in the region of £100,000 to train a new doctor.*

OR SO (informal) about – used after a period of time, a number, or an amount: *The journey takes an hour or so.*

circa /'sɜ:kə \$ 'sɜ:r-/ (formal) about – used with dates a long time ago in the past: *The house was built circa 1530.*

or more used after a number or amount, when the total may be a lot more: *A thirty-second commercial can cost £60,000 or more.*

upwards of more than a number or amount: *The aircraft can carry upwards of 400 passengers.*

— **approximately** adv:

The plane will be landing in approximately 20 minutes.

How much do you think it will cost, approximately?

Word origin

Date: 1400–1500

Language: Late Latin

Origin: past participle of *approximare* 'to come near to', from Latin *ad-* 'to' + *proximare* 'to come near'

ap·prox·i·mate² AC

/ə'prɒksɪmət \$ ə'prɔ:k-/

verb [intransitive, linking verb] (formal)

1 APPROXIMATELY to be close to a particular number:

approximate to

This figure approximates to a quarter of the UK's annual consumption.

2 LIKE/SIMILAR to be similar to but not exactly the same as something:

approximate to

Your story only approximates to the real facts.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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