

1950s calculators

Teacher notes

Why use this resource?

This resource is designed to develop a sense of what logarithms are, how they can be used and the sort of values they take. Log tables are used to perform a selection of multiplications and other calculations.

In addition, the resource offers some exercising of other skills such as

- Working with numbers in standard form.
- Using the laws of logs.
- Rounding to significant figures.
- Reading mathematical tables. While log tables are no longer in use, this is a transferable skill that is still useful in many other contexts.

Preparation

Copies of the log tables will be need to be printed for the students.

Possible approach

Show the exam question and ask how students would tackle it without a calculator. How could logarithms help?

Show the simpler sum and ask students to complete step 1 (standard form) possibly as a “show-me” exercise.

Show the videos one by one discussing and bringing out the point after each one (each calculation step).

Key questions

- How do logarithms help make these questions easier?
- What are the limitations? (This can nicely lead into the section on difference tables.)