3.2 CUSTOMISATION

Mindspark offers teachers and schools an enormous amount of flexibility in planning the weekly lessons. It is true that concepts/topics taught across primary and middle school remain uniform across Boards/Curriculums; however, it is also true that there are shades of variation in the curriculum across Boards, schools. The good news is that Mindspark supports this variation and acts as an effective tool to the teacher while developing and executing her lesson plans. This feature of Mindspark called Customisation allows the teacher to map specific learning units of the Topic which she wants her students to access and work upon while teaching.

What is customisation?

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- **Tool for teachers to stream line and synchronize the Mindspark Topics to the curriculum planned for his/her grade. With Customisation teachers can remove specific learning unit/learning units that he/she is not covering for the grade but is otherwise done in Mindspark.**
- **Teacher may use Customisation as an effective tool to revise parts of a topic which were covered in the previous grade year. This is possible as the teacher is not only able to view the entire topic (including the learning units) but is also empowered to create a topic to facilitate revision in the topic. This may be done by creating a New Topic (or customized topic) which would include learning units (related to the Topic) covered in the previous grade. This proves to be a very powerful tool for the teachers as it provides a pertinent picture of the readiness of the students to move ahead in the topic in the current year.**

Illustration of Customisation

Teacher X teaching Math in class 3 of an ICSE school plans to teach the **Topic – Shapes & Spaces.** Let's look at what Mindspark covers in the Topic for class 3.

Step I – Select "See/Customise" from the list of Topics available for activation (Figure 3.2.1)

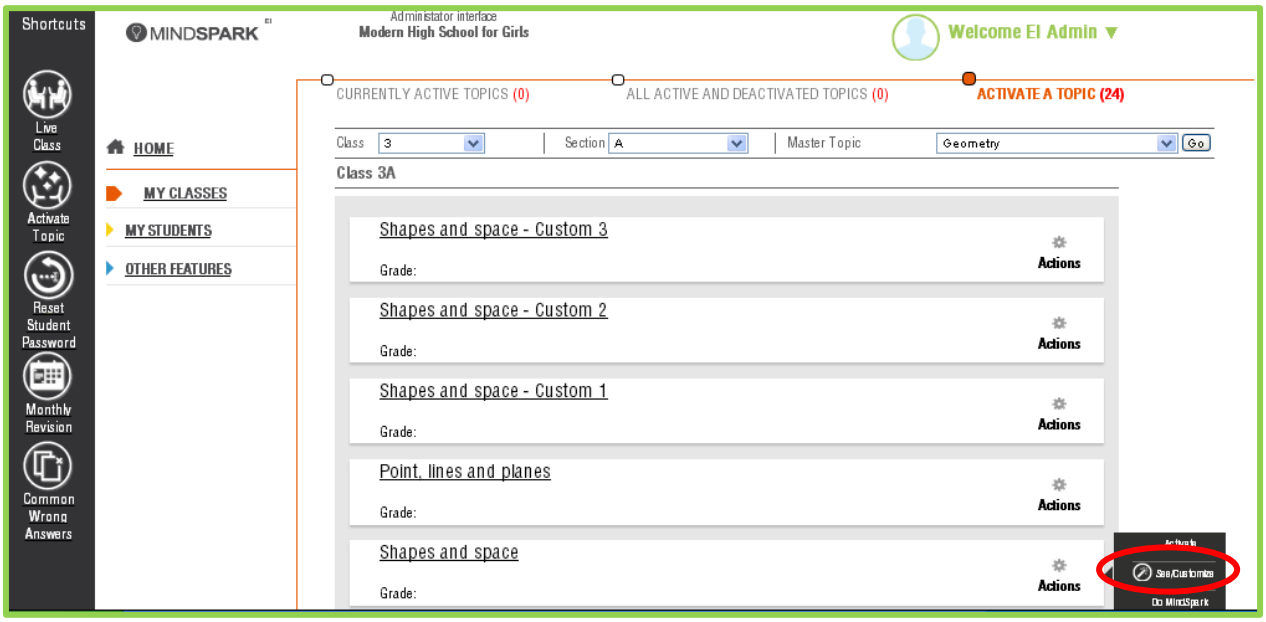
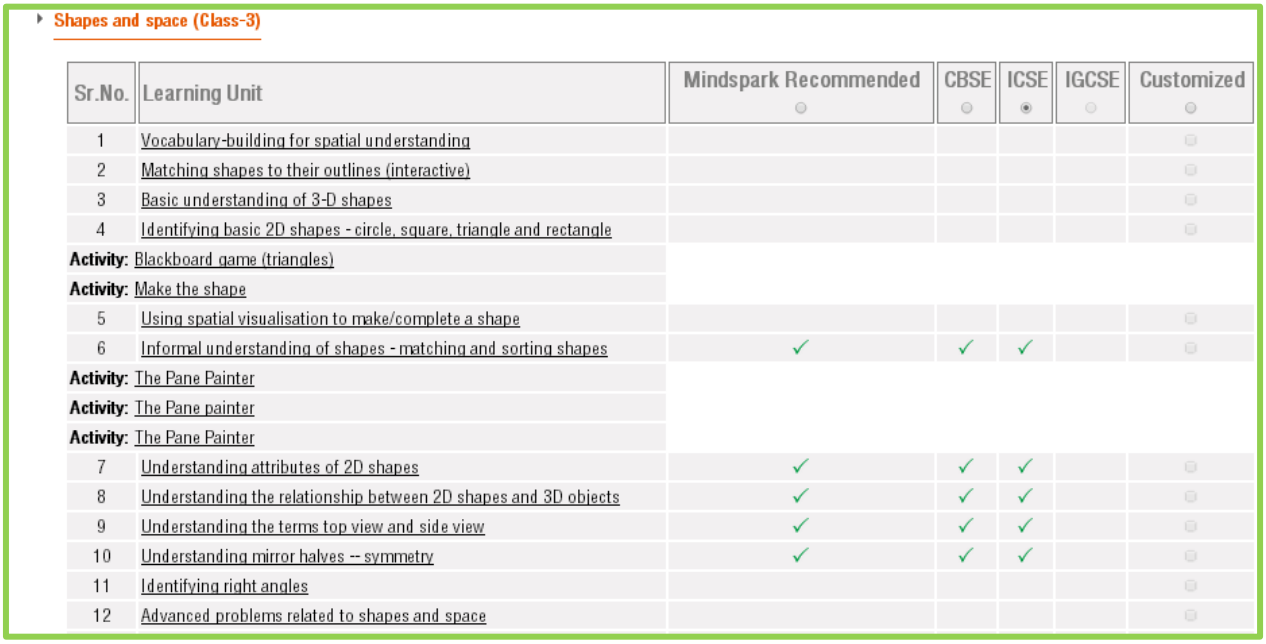


Figure 3.2.1: Topic Activation Page

The page opens showing the learning units covered in the topic at the class level (Figure 3.2.2)



Shapes and space (Class-3)

Sr.No.	Learning Unit	Mindspark Recommended	CBSE	ICSE	IGCSE	Customized
1	Vocabulary-building for spatial understanding					
2	Matching shapes to their outlines (interactive)					
3	Basic understanding of 3-D shapes					
4	Identifying basic 2D shapes - circle, square, triangle and rectangle					
Activity:	Blackboard game (triangles)					
Activity:	Make the shape					
5	Using spatial visualisation to make/complete a shape					
6	Informal understanding of shapes - matching and sorting shapes	✓	✓	✓		
Activity:	The Pane Painter					
Activity:	The Pane painter					
Activity:	The Pane Painter					
7	Understanding attributes of 2D shapes	✓	✓	✓		
8	Understanding the relationship between 2D shapes and 3D objects	✓	✓	✓		
9	Understanding the terms top view and side view	✓	✓	✓		
10	Understanding mirror halves -- symmetry	✓	✓	✓		
11	Identifying right angles					
12	Advanced problems related to shapes and space					

Figure 3.2.2: Topic composition at class level

In the topic Shapes and Space in Mindspark, at a Class 3 level,

- students would start with learning unit 6 -Informal understanding of shapes – matching and sorting shapes, then
- move through the following higher learning units –
  learning unit 7 –Understanding attributes of 2D shapes
  learning unit 8 - Understanding the relationship between 2D shapes and 3D objects
  learning unit 9 - Understanding the terms top view and side view
  learning unit 10 - Understanding mirror halves

But, the Teacher's lesson plan for Week 1 is –

Week 1	Curriculum Plan	Time	Mindspark Teacher Topic
Monday	Mindspark Session - Revision	30 minutes	Learning unit 4 - Identifying basic 2D shapes –circle, square, triangle and rectangle Learning unit 5 - Using Spatial visualization to make/complete a shape
Tuesday	Classroom Instruction	30 minutes	
Wednesday	Classroom Instruction	30 minutes	
Thursday	Mindspark Session	30 minutes	Learning unit 6 -Informal understanding of shapes – matching and sorting shapes Learning unit 7 –Understanding attributes of 2D shapes
Friday	Classroom Instruction	30 minutes	

Note: *In this example, the school is not covering all the learning units that are normally covered in ICSE at a class 3 level. This is a situation where the teacher needs to customize Mindspark with her curriculum plan.*

The process for customising learning units 4 and 5 (for Class period 1) would involve the following steps –

Step 1 – Activate the radio button under "Customised" (Figure 3.2.3)

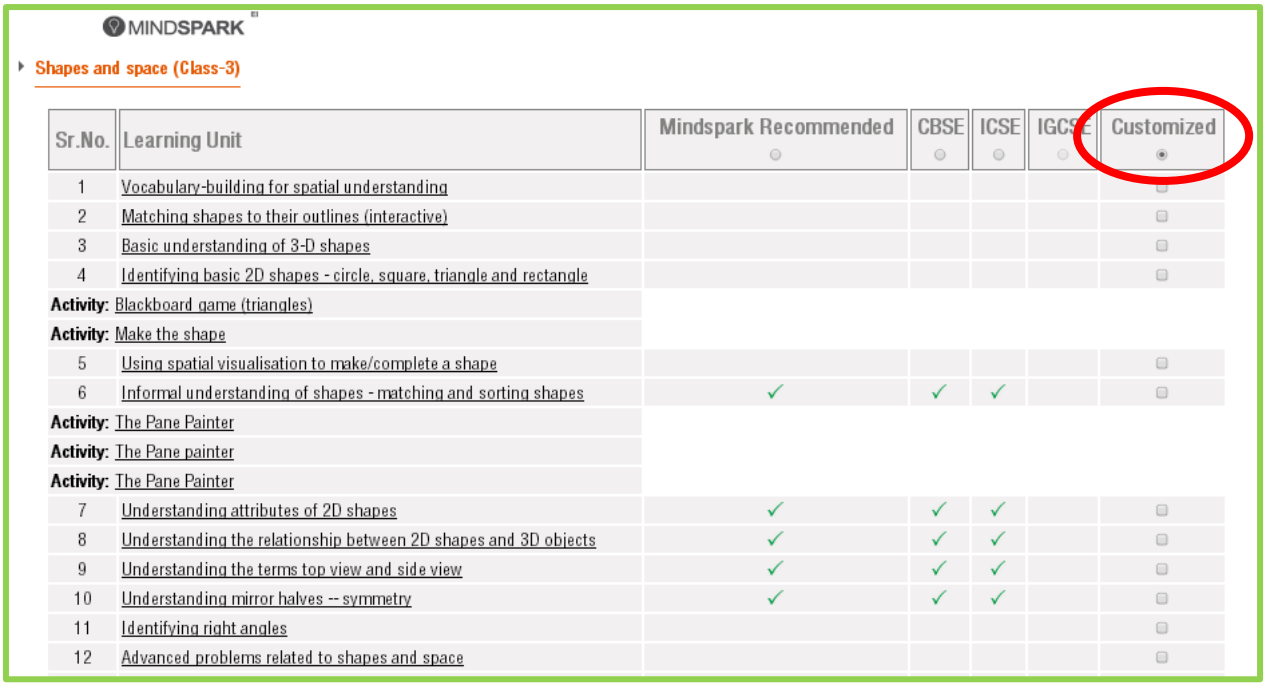


Figure 3.2.3: Choosing "Customised" curriculum

By choosing "Customised", the teacher is initiating a flow, different from the normal ICSE flow.

Step 2 - Teacher selects learning units 4 & 5 for the first Mindspark Session on Shapes and space, (even before the start of the class 3 content) (Figure 3.2.4)

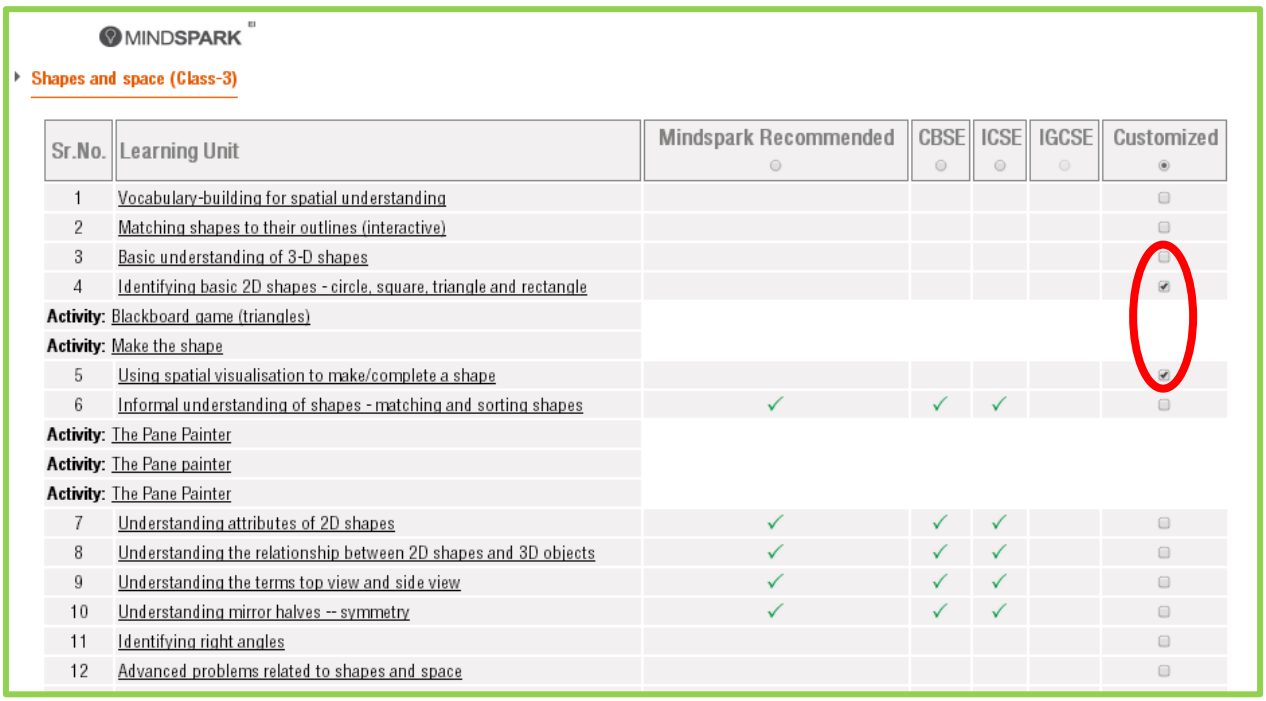
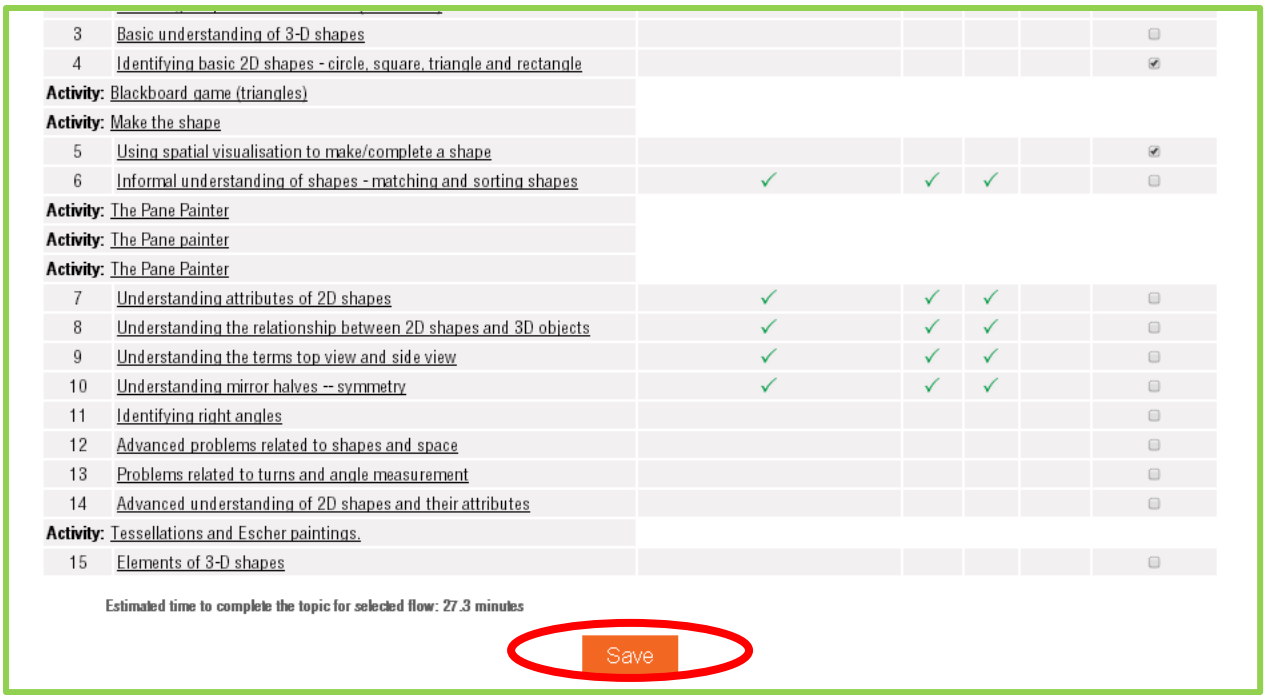


Figure 3.2.4: Selecting learning units for customised curriculum

Step 3 – For Mindspark to register this change in the curriculum, the teacher needs to click/tap on "Save" (at the end of the page) (Figure 3.2.5)

Figure 3.2.5: Save the customised version of the teacher topic



Step 4 – Click/Tap on the pop-up window requesting permission for customising. Remember, every attempt at customising results in a new topic (Figure 3.2.6)

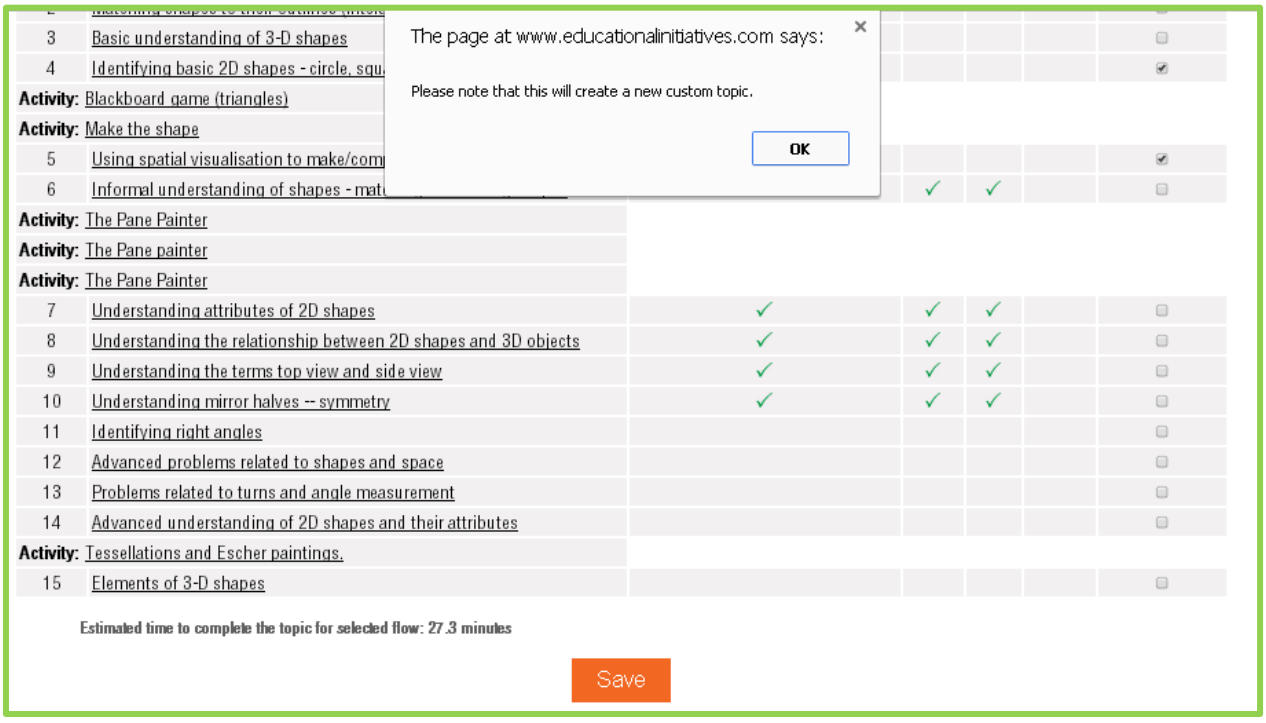


Figure 3.2.6

In this case, customising the topic “Shapes and space” to include only learning units 4 & 5 has resulted in a new topic – “Shapes and space – Custom 1” (Figure 3.2.7)

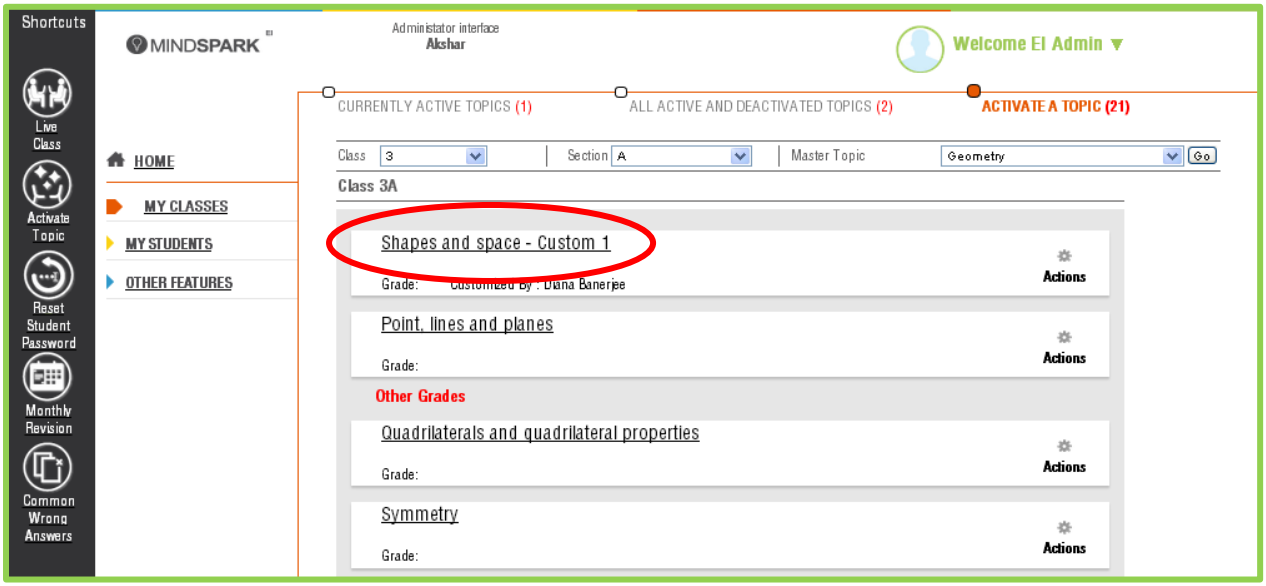


Figure 3.2.7: Customised teacher topic in the list of topic available for activation

Step 5 - To make this “customised topic” available to the student, it needs to be activated (Figure 3.2.8)

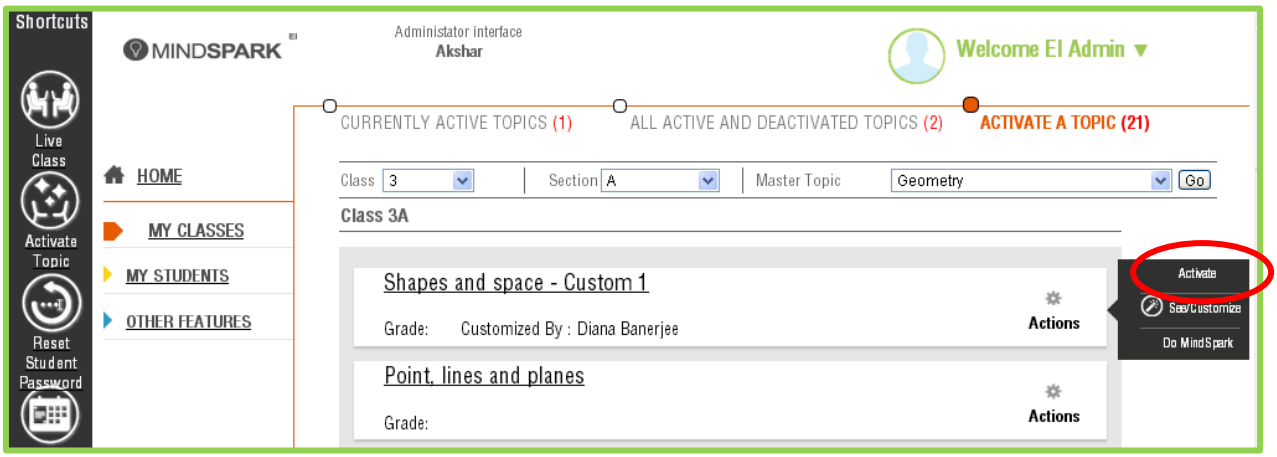


Figure 3.2.8: Activate the customised topic

Step 6 – Customising further as the curriculum gathers pace.

Any of the following two processes could be used.

Process I

Step 6A – Click/tap on "See/Customize" against Shapes and space – Custom 1 (Figure 3.2.9)

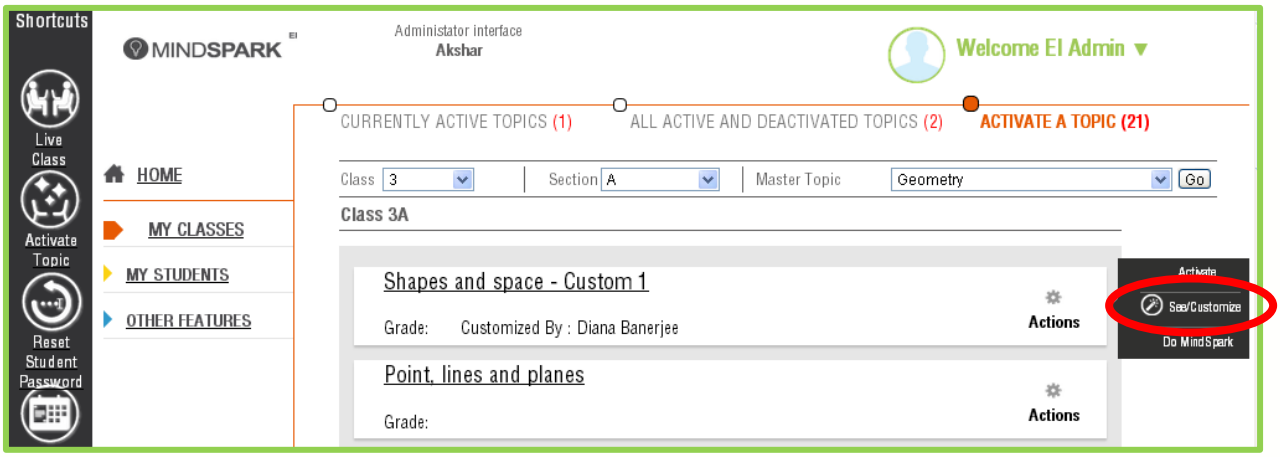


Figure 3.2.9: Recustomising

Step 6AA – Scroll down to the end of the page that opens. Click/Tap on "Click here to re-customize the topic" (Figure 3.2.10)

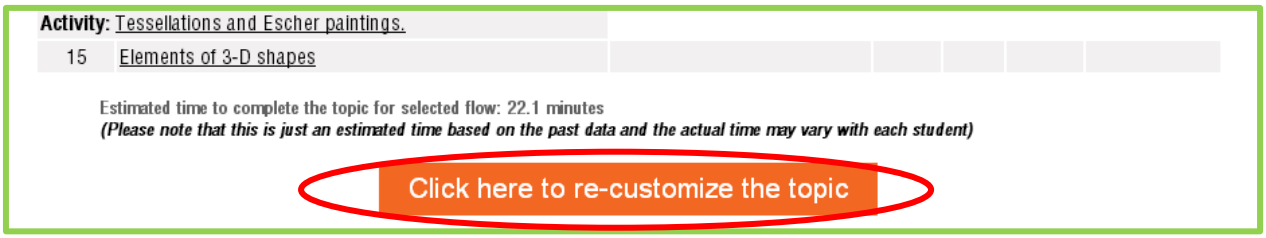


Figure 3.2.10

The page opens to show the composition of the topic "Shapes and Space" (Figure 3.2.11)

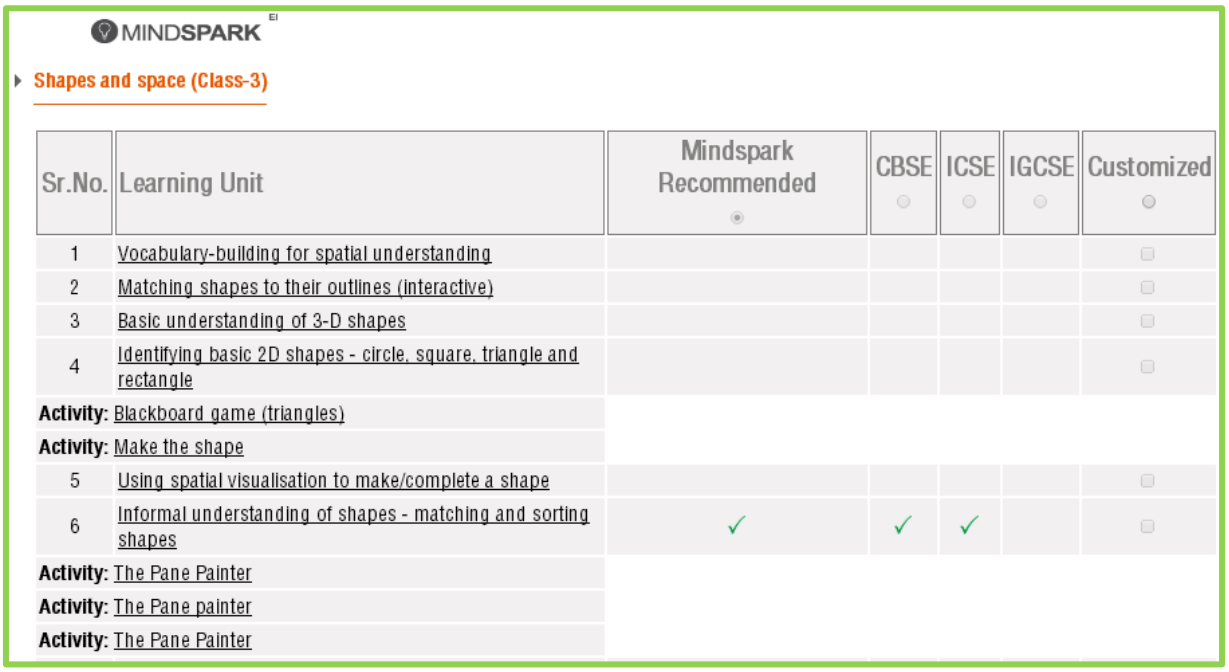


Figure 3.2.11: Composition of topic at class level

Follow Steps 1 to 4 to customize again (actually recustomise). The "re-customised" topic appears as "Shapes and space – Custom 2"

Observe that the Topic Activation page now shows the original Mindspark Topic (Shapes and space", the Topic after first customisation – "Shapes and space – Custom 1" and the Topic after second customisation – "Shapes and space – Custom 2"

So, every customisation leads to a creation of a new Topic which needs activation/deactivation.

Process II

Step 6B – Click/Tap "See/Customise" against Shapes and Space

Follow Steps 1 to 4 to customize again (actually re-customize!). The "re-customised" topic appears as "Shapes and space – Custom 2"

Note: Different customised versions of the same topic, which are active, cannot have a common learning unit or learning units included therein. In our example, learning units 4 and 5 can't be included (either or both) in another customised version of Shapes and Space and be kept active simultaneously. The reason for this being, repeated inclusion of learning units while customizing a topic leads to repetition of questions in Mindspark

Dos and Don'ts for effective customisation

Dos	Why?
Teacher to look at the sample questions in the Topic	Gives an idea about the type of questions and their difficulty levels
Teacher to study the Learning Units within a Topic	To understand 1. Coverage of the topic at the class level 2. Movement of this coverage – Mindspark moves in an ascending order. In our illustration, Mindspark would start with learning Units 6 and move towards Learning Unit 10, if the Topic is not customised
Teacher to benefit from "Do Mindspark as a student"	Gets a feel of a student session and also gets to understand how Mindspark adapts itself to the student's level. It is advised that a teacher should try to emulate the student's approach while attempting the questions in "Do Mindspark as a student"

Don'ts	Why?
Activate the original Topic and then customize	Would expose to the students to learning units which may not be pertinent to the curriculum

Note – Topic progress of a student in a customized topic would be a measure of the completion status of the child in the customised topic, would be calculated in the same manner as is calculated in a non-customised (or original) topic. Therefore, a student doing Mindspark in a customized topic may be taken to a higher/lower learning unit (beyond the scope of the customized topic). This would be indicated with a green (when the student is taken to a higher learning unit) or a red star (when the student has been taken to a lower learning unit). Ideally, if the teacher customizes with the objective of controlled practice in the learning units that he/she is currently teaching and is not in favour of students moving to higher learning units, the student must be instructed to choose the "NO" option when the pop-up window appears after successful completion of the customised topic.