



# Estimating and rounding

## Introduction

This resource sheet draws on materials developed by Alder Travel, Trident Training and PSNTO as part of their Key Skills Support Programme development project.

## Estimates

It's helpful to have a rough idea in your head of the total amount of something so that you can check your *actual* calculations when you do them.

### Example

An estate agent can use estimates when showing prospective buyers round a property. For example, it is possible to estimate roughly the floor space available for furniture or the garden sizes of different properties.

There is no miracle method for estimating: you simply need to give it a go and be prepared to check your estimates in the early days.

Here are some guidelines that you may find useful when estimating:

- Round up or round down to the nearest whole number or number divisible by 5 or 10. This makes numbers easier to manage and easier to remember. See below for more detail about how to do this.
- Always have an approximate answer (to the nearest 10 if using low numbers or 100 if using higher amounts) in mind before using a calculator.
- Practise estimating. Do this *before* you measure up, then use your actual measurements as a comparison. You will gradually improve over time.
- Use something you know the size of already to help you estimate the total, as in this example.

### Example

For example, if the garden is 3 fence panels long, and you know that one fence panel measures 6 feet, you know the garden must be 18 feet long. Door widths are usually 2' 6", so you can use this to estimate the size of an interior room.

# Rounding

To the nearest 10: look at the last digit. If it is less than 5 round down; otherwise round up.

- 643 round down to 640
- 38266 round up to 38270
- 598,115 round up to 598,120

To the nearest 100: look at the last 2 digits. If they are less than 50 round down; otherwise round up.

- 3346 round down to 640
- 38266 round up to 38270
- 598,115 round up to 598,120

## Rounding decimals

If a decimal is less than 0.5 or a half round down; otherwise round up.

- 3.42 round down to 3.0
- 4.6 round up to 5.0
- 7.5 round up to 8.0

### Examples

Number	Rounded to 2 decimal places	Rounded to 1 decimal place	Rounded to whole number	Rounded to nearest ten
58.7431	58.74	58.7	59	60
16.7812	16.78	16.8	17	20
14.3987	14.40	14.4	14	10
2873.348	2873.35	2873.3	2873	2870

## Take care

If you round a number up and then use that number in further calculations you may get an answer that is not appropriate.

### Example

Rounding up the cost of employing a part-time member of staff over 12 months from £57.50 per week to £60.00 would increase your end calculation from £2990 to £3120 which may influence your decision to employ somebody.