

Lower 5 explore trigonometry



Lower 5 have studied trigonometry for any triangle, not necessarily those with a right angle. This has allowed them to understand and apply the Sine and Cosine Rules and to find the area of a triangle using the trigonometric formula. We talked about the origins of trigonometry and the pupils found the history really interesting.

While the pupils have used their Classwiz calculators to find numerical values we should remember that the history of trigonometry is long and interesting. The ancient Egyptians made reference to problems involving the *seked*, which has been understood to mean the slope of an incline, in the Rhind Papyrus, dating from approximately 1800BCE.

There is evidence of the ancient Greek, Hipparchus (190 - 120 BCE), using trigonometry in his study of astronomy and further major contributions came from Aryabhata I (c475-550) in India with the modern sine function that we recognise still.

The final development of classical trigonometry has been attributed to the Scot, John Napier (1555-1617), for tables of logarithms and trigonometric values that might bring back fond memories for those of us who remember using them during our own studies before classroom calculators became commonplace!

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