

2025 word of the year, gifts and rows

Hello, Tappsters!

The majority of teachers have now officially broken up for the summer – to those already on holiday: we hope the rain isn't ruining your ice cream too much! ■■■■

As for the 39% of Teacher Tappers still in school this week – you've got this! The finish line is in sight, the sun might come out, and that first proper lie-in is calling... ■■

Referrals are GO!

Teacher Tappers ■■ referrals – and last week alone, you helped raise an amazing £715 for Education Support. That means we've now crossed the £1,000 mark in donations to support teacher wellbeing! ■■

Referring is super simple. In the app, you'll find your unique referral code to share with friends. When someone signs up with your code and answers two days of questions, £5 gets donated. You can trigger up to £25 in donations, and the total pot is £5,000 – so let's get moving before it runs out! The campaign runs until July 31st, 2025.

■■ And here's the best bit: if every Teacher Tapper referred just one person, we'd hit our target. Easy peasy. Let's do it! ■■■■

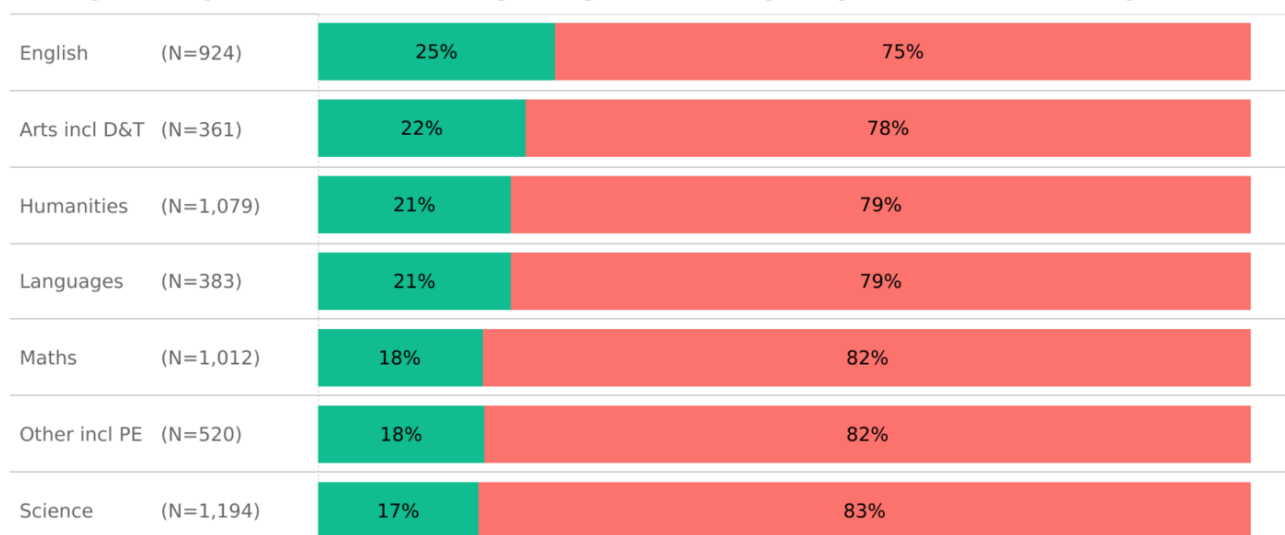
1. Gifts

The end of the school year often means gifts FOR teachers – but what about the gift-giving that goes on between teachers TO their students?

80% of EYFS/KS1 and 71% of KS2 teachers gave a gift – but in secondary this practice was far less common.

English teachers were the most likely to buy gifts (25%) and science teachers were the least likely (17%).

Will you buy or make end-of-year gifts for any of your classes this year?



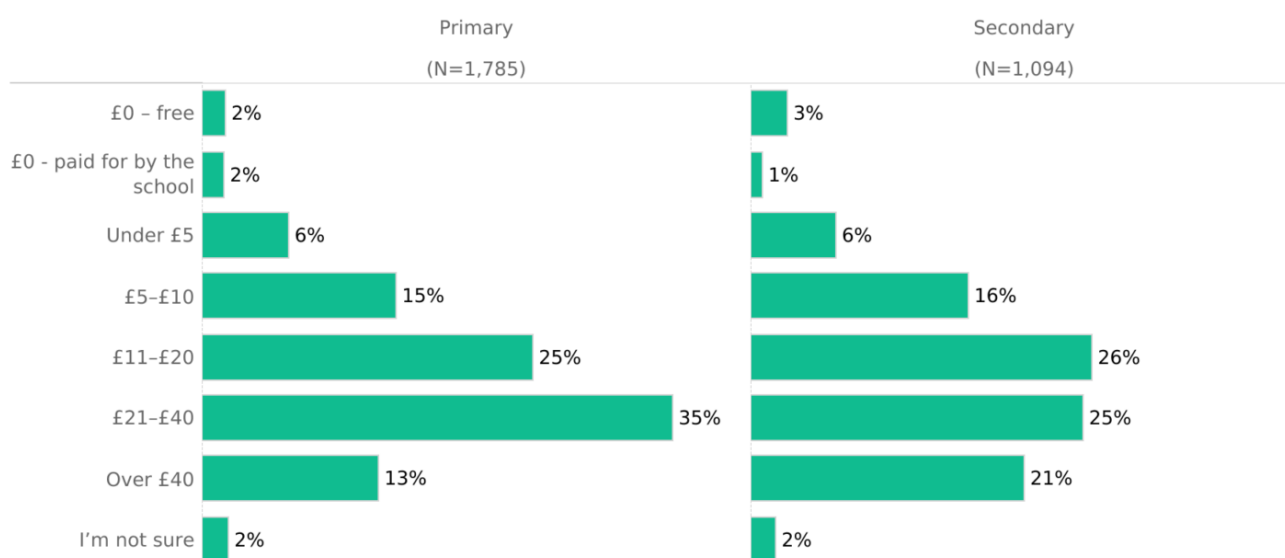
Question answered by **5,473** teachers on 16/07/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Yes
■ No

When it came to the cost of the gifts, more than a third of primary teachers spent between £21-40 on their gifts (35%), whereas only a quarter of secondary school teachers did the same (25%).

However - 21% of secondary teachers were spending more than £40 on their gifts, compared to 13% of primary teachers.

In total, how much money have you personally spent on your end-of-year gifts?



Question answered by 2,879 teachers on 16/07/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Gifts FOR teachers

Of course, we also asked you about the gifts you had received.

It turns out that the best gifts aren't the biggest or fanciest – they're the ones that show students noticed something about you.

Teachers told us about all sorts of memorable presents that stuck in their minds because they were personal. Think Harry Potter socks (for the superfan), a signed photo of James May (yes, really), or a conductor's baton for the steel band teacher. One teacher got a book from their favourite genre, another received a plant they'd once mentioned offhand.

Gifts linked to pets were especially heart-melting. Dog towels with the pup's name stitched on, or a dog bowl because the teacher had talked about getting a puppy. Even tiny things like a mango – because the student saw the teacher snacking on one – or a bottle of Pepsi Max (a classroom staple) meant the world, simply because they showed thought and care.

So if you're wondering what makes a gift truly great? It's not the price tag – it's the fact that someone paid attention. ■■

2. Word of the year 2024-25

We recently asked teachers to pick their word of the year. The results? Let's just say they won't be appearing in a feel-good Christmas ad any time soon.

The most common word by a long way was "exhausting" – mentioned over 600 times – closely followed by other cheery choices like challenging, tiring, hard, long, and relentless. There were a few brighter sparks – rewarding, fun, successful – but they were often paired with a sigh, as in: "exhausting but satisfying".

Teachers painted a picture of a year that felt like running a marathon with no finish line. Many described constant upheaval and instability – chaotic, rollercoaster, intense – often thanks to Ofsted surprises, split sites, budget cuts, or SEND paperwork gone wild. Frustration bubbled up too, especially around staffing shortages, poor leadership, and inconsistent expectations.

And yet, buried under the fatigue, a sliver of pride and purpose shines through. The word rewarding popped up enough to remind us that, even in the hardest moments, teachers still find meaning in their work. It just comes at a serious cost.

3. Row rows

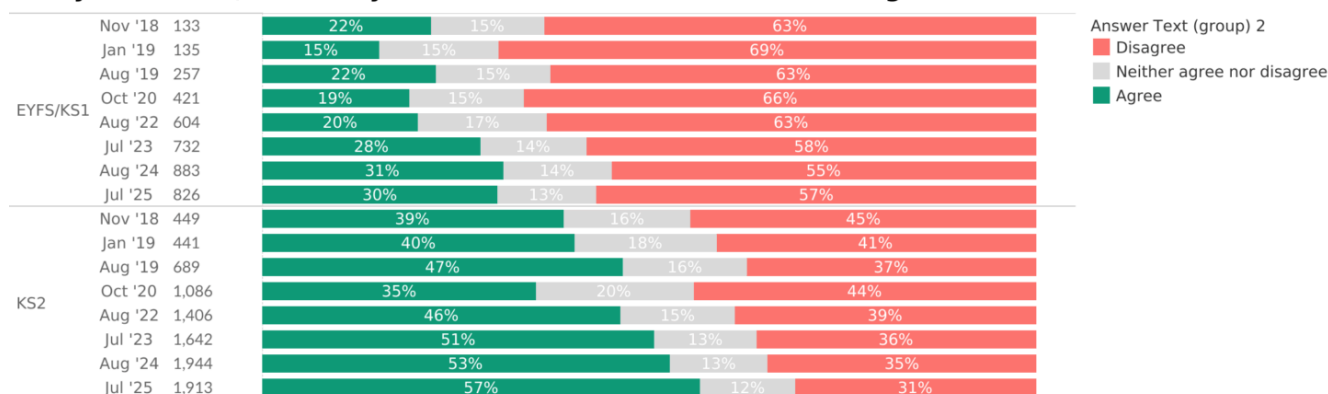
■■ Are you sitting comfortably? And more importantly... in a row?

The popularity of rows in classrooms varies quite a bit across phases. In primary, KS2 teachers are far more in favour than their EYFS/KS1 colleagues – which makes sense, of course. It's a lot easier to herd 10- and 11-year-olds into neat lines than it is a group of wriggly 4- and 5-year-olds.

But here's what's interesting: over time, support for rows has been growing. This is a question we've asked regularly since the early days of Teacher Tapp, and a clear pattern is emerging.

Back in 2018, just 21% of EYFS/KS1 teachers favoured rows. Today, that's jumped to 31%. In KS2, the rise is even steeper – from 39% in 2018 to a whopping 56% now. Rows may not be everyone's cup of tea, but they're definitely having a bit of a moment.

In my classroom, I'd ideally like the students to sit in rows facing the front



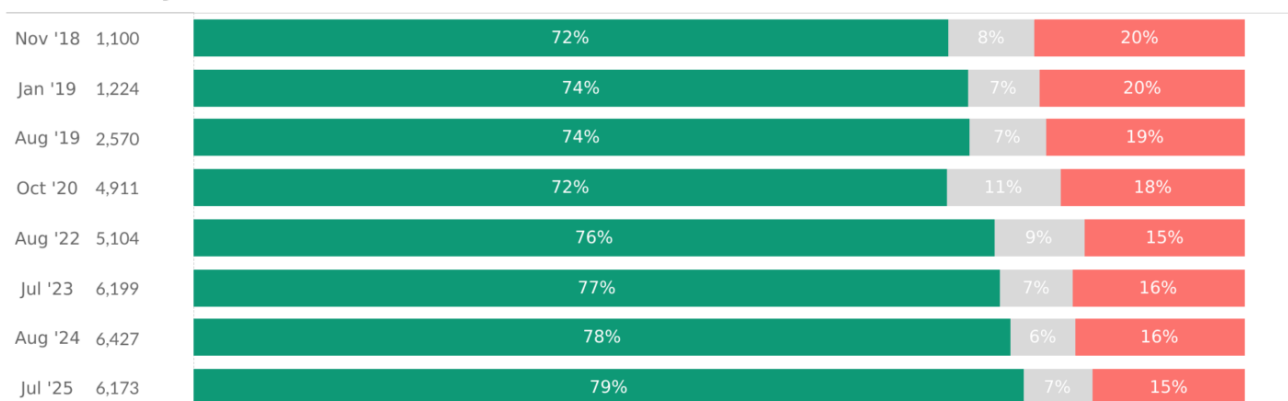
Teacher responses vary from **576 to 2,827**, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Secondary schools: still big fans of rows

Over in secondary, rows were already popular back in 2018 – and they’ve only grown more so. Seven years ago, 72% of secondary teachers agreed that rows were the ideal classroom layout. Today, that’s nudged up to 79%.

But the real story lies in the strength of feeling. In the chart above, we have grouped the responses for 'strongly, slightly and somewhat'. The proportion who strongly agree has jumped from 39% to 49%, suggesting that while overall support hasn't shifted dramatically, those in favour are now even more convinced that rows rule.

In my classroom, I'd ideally like the students to sit in rows facing the front (secondary)



Teacher responses vary from **1,100 to 6,427**, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree

However, despite the popularity in secondary schools, not every subject is equally keen on the

row revolution. Science teachers are leading the charge – a whopping 89% agree that rows are ideal (perhaps it's all those Bunsen burners and careful instructions!).

At the other end of the spectrum, it's the creative crew putting up resistance. Just 64% of art, design, and technology teachers are on board – maybe because group work and working away from your desk is much more common in these subjects.

+ Bonus finding

■ ■ Balancing the books: a mission impossible?

Now that teacher pay rise costs are confirmed, school leaders can finally get to work finalising their budgets. But just how tough is that task this year?

The answer: pretty grim. 37% of leaders told us it's impossible to balance the budget, and another 43% said it's harder than last year. Only 17% think it's about the same – and a minuscule 3% are finding it easier.

In short: red pens are poised, but not for marking...

Daily Reads

Last week it was the seating blog that sparked your interest with the '[elephant in the room](#)' from Teacher Out Loud being clicked by 12% of Teacher Tappers.

Have you seen a great blog you think would make a great daily read? Let us know by emailing england@teachertapp.co.uk and we will check it out!