



Weather for Schools

What are the Maximum and Minimum temperatures?

In a lot of measuring work it is important to know and use the right terms. In temperature studies scientists use the key words, maximum temperature, minimum temperature and the current temperature.

In temperature work what do these words mean-

- the maximum is the highest number. This shows the warmest temperature since the last reading.
- the minimum temperature is the lowest number. This shows the coldest it has been since the last reading.
- the current temperature. This reading will usually be somewhere in between the other two readings. It could be the same number as one of the other readings.



Rules to guide the observer

There are rules about how the terms maximum, minimum and current temperature work together to tell the scientist about temperature. In most cases sets of readings from a thermometer follow these rules-

- The maximum must always be more than the minimum and usually higher than the current temperature.
- The minimum is lower than the maximum and usually lower than the current temperature.
- The current temperature is usually between the minimum and the maximum.
- Occasionally two of the temperatures are the same. This happens when the current temperature is read at the time when it is hottest or coldest.

The main thing to remember is that you need to think about the temperature numbers and ask yourself does this data make sense. Does it follow the rules?

See more about this on the [Sixes Page](#).

