

# PREVIEW

## S.T.E.P.S.

for solving word problems

Follow the **S.T.E.P.S.** to Solve Word Problems

**S-** Study the question. What are you being asked to do?

**T-** Take a key

**E-** Eliminate

**P-** Pick the

**S-** Check

Pick a Strategy to Solve Word Problems

Choose an Operation	Use Objects	Visualize
Solve a Similar, Easier Problem	Look for Practical Applications	Find a Pattern
Make a Table, Chart, or Graph	Make an Organized List	Work Backwards
Use Logical Reasoning		



**Key Words** to unlock word problems

**Addition**

- added to
- all
- altogether
- increased by
- more
- perimeter

**Word Problem Strategies**

Use Objects: Use blocks or counters to build the problem. This can help you visualize what you're trying to solve.

Choose and Operation: Recognize certain key words and key concepts in the problem that could help you choose the operation you should use to solve the problem.

Look for Practical Applications: Think about how you can apply the problem to a real-world situation that comes into the problem.

**SENSE**

Does your answer make sense?  
Check your answer!



# The Problems with Word Problems

Word problems.

Those two little words used to send shivers down my spine. I was *terrible* at word problems as a young child. Why do letters and words belong in math anyway, right? You probably teach a learner or two that struggle with word problems. I'm here to help!

Let's explore a few problems with word problems as well as what you can do about.

## The Problems with Word Problems:

**1. Learners do not understand the math concept well enough to apply it.**  
If learners do not have a firm grasp of the math concept itself, they are not going to know when they should use one strategy over another, or when they should use a formula.

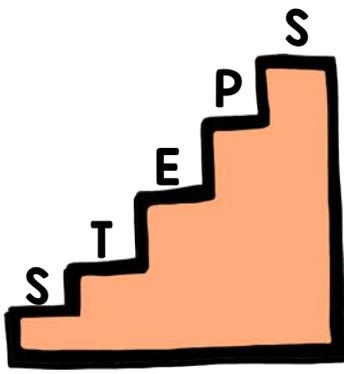
**2. Learners do not struggle with reading and/or understanding comprehension.**  
Word problems require reading and comprehension. Therefore, if your learner(s) struggle with reading and comprehension, word problems are also going to be a struggle.

**3. Learners can get lost in all the steps involved with solving a word problem.**  
Solving word problems is a multi-step process. To make matters even more complicated, sometimes there are multiple strategies that must be used to solve a problem. This can feel overwhelming, and learners can freeze up because they are not sure where to even start.

## What You Can Do About It:

**1. Teach math concepts using explicit instruction then follow it up with guided practice.**  
When teaching and modeling math concepts, be sure to answer the questions: *When* do you use it? *What* is it *not*? *When* do you use it? *When* do you *not* use it? *What* do you use it for? *When* do you *not* use it? *How* do you use it? *How* do you *not* use it? Give examples and non-examples as a model and teach. **Do not** assume your learners understand either one or the other. You might feel as if you are communicating, but you're not. Once you have modeled the concept by modeling, ask them to work with your assistance and guidance, with your knowledge of guided practice.  
<https://www.thisreadingmama.com/importance-guided-practice/>

**2. Teach math concepts in a systematic order.**  
Order and organization matter when teaching math concepts. Build on what learners already know to help them learn new concepts. For example, revisit multiplication when teaching division. Revisit fractions when teaching decimals. This helps learners use their background knowledge to build new knowledge and reduces the chances of them developing holes in their understanding.



# Follow the **S.T.E.P.S.** to Solve Word Problems

**S-** **Study** the question. What are you being asked to do?

**T-** **Take time** to carefully read the problem. Look for **key words and** key concepts.

**E-** **Evaluate** the strategies and steps needed to solve the problem. **Eliminate** any extra information.

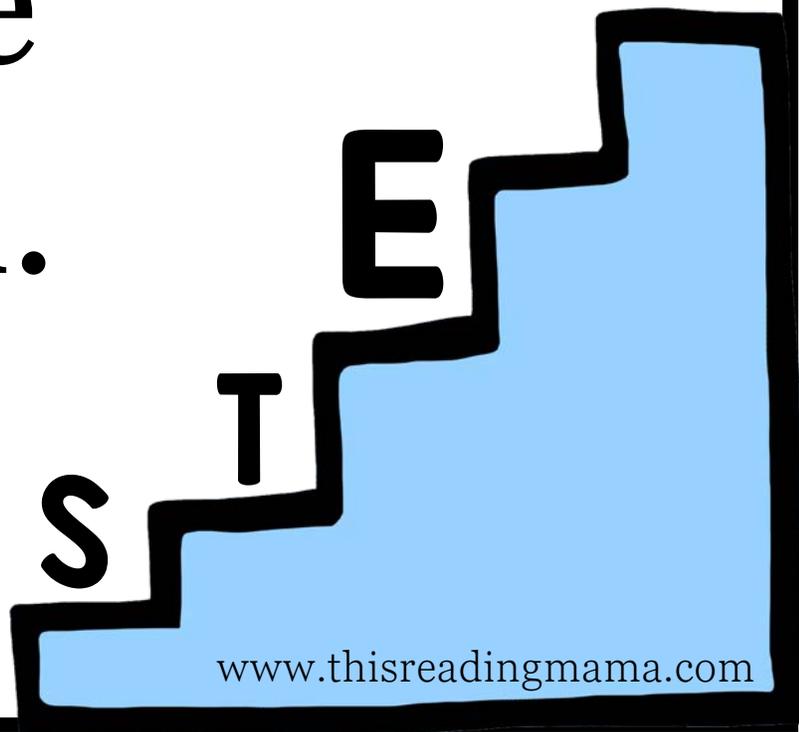
**P-** **Pick** and try a strategy to solve the problem.

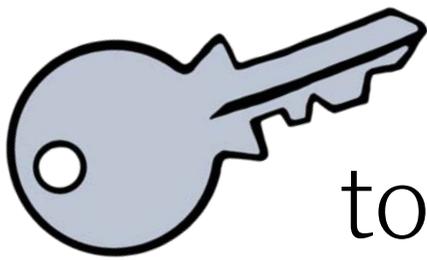
**S-** Does your answer make **sense**?  
Check your answer!

# EVALUATE

Evaluate the  
strategies and  
steps needed to  
solve the  
problem.

**PREVIEW**





# Key Words

to unlock word problems

+

## Addition

+

- added to
- all
- altogether
- both
- combined
- in all

- increased by
- more
- plus
- sum
- together
- total

**PREVIEW**

-

## Subtraction

-

- are not
- change
- difference
- fewer
- fewer than
- how many more

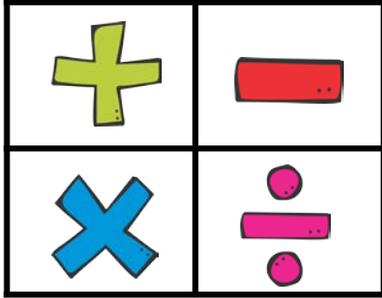
- left over
- less than
- minus
- reduce
- subtract
- take away

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# Pick a Strategy

## to Solve Word Problems



Choose an Operation



Use Objects

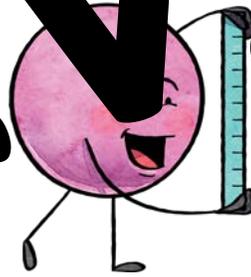


Visualize

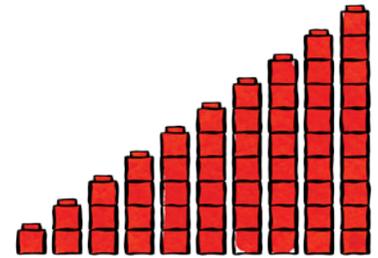
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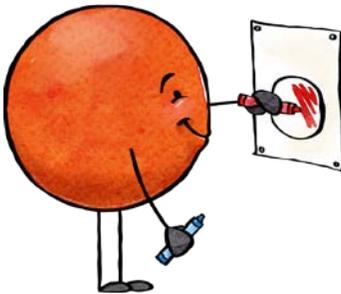
Solve a Similar, Easier Problem



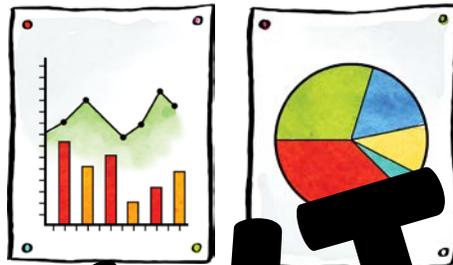
Look for Practical Applications



Find a Pattern



Draw a Picture or Diagram



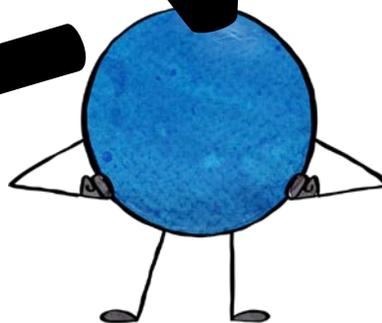
Make a Table, Chart, or Graph



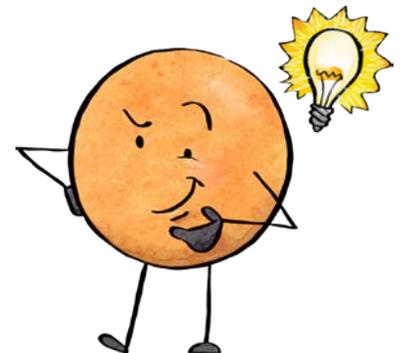
Make an Organized List



Guess, Check, & Revise



Work Backwards



Use Logical Reasoning

**PREVIEW**



# Pick a Strategy

to Solve Word Problems

Use Objects

Visualize the Story

Look for Practical Applications

Solve a Similar, Easier Problem

Find a Pattern

Draw a Picture or Diagram

Make a Table or Graph

Make an Organized List

Guess, Check, and Revise

Work Backwards

Use Logical Reasoning

**PREVIEW**