

Effective Math Problem Solving Strategies

In today's classrooms, students are constantly being asked to problem solve when they are faced with challenging word problems. However, many of them are not familiar or never learned how to problem solve in math. I would like to tell you about some effective math problem solving strategies that can help any child become a pro at problem solving.

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A plan or a strategy will help you to understand the problem, decide on a good approach, work out a creative solution, and see if your solution makes sense. In mathematics, you can use a four-step plan to solve any problem.

The Plan

1. Understand- Determine what information is given in the problem and what you need to find. Do you have all the information you need to solve the problem? What do you know? What do you need to find out?
2. Plan- After you understand the problem, select a strategy for solving it. There may be several strategies that you can use. It is usually helpful to make an estimate of what you think the answer should be.
3. Solve- Solve the problem by carrying out your plan. If your plan doesn't work, try another. What is the solution?
4. Look back- Examine your answer carefully. See if it fits the fact given in the problem. Compare it to your estimate. Does your answer make sense? If the answer is not reasonable, make a new plan and start again.

Here is an additional list of math problem solving strategies you can try!

- Draw a picture
- Look for a pattern
- Guess and check
- Use logical reasoning
- Make an organized list
- Make a table

- Solve a simpler problem
- Write an equation
- Work backward