

Name _____ Date _____

Math Strategies

Strategy #1: Read, Read, Read, and Read Again.

I'm 51 and have taught math for 20 years. Sometimes even I have to read 5th grade word problems 4 or 5 times before they finally sink in.

Strategy #2: Focus on the Question.

Ask yourself, "What am I supposed to do? What do they want?" Don't get side-tracked or over-think the question.



Strategy #3: Visualize

Picture in your mind what the problem is saying.

Strategy #4: Draw a Picture

Example: Mr. Renfro divided his rock collection into 3 equal size groups. Each group has at least 5 rocks. Which could be the total number of rocks in Mr. Renfro's entire collection?

- a. 12
- b. 15
- c. 22
- d. 23



Strategy #5: Think Ratios

Using ratios is a great way to help the brain if it gets stuck.

You are trying to clean something in your house. You heard that a great way to clean your object is to mix water and bleach in a small spray bottle. But how much bleach do you add? Your mom tells you that the ratio of water to bleach is 4:1 (four to one).

Strategy #6: Make it Simple

Sometimes difficult word problems become much easier if you plug in simple numbers for the hard ones.

Strategy #7: Just Do It

If you're confused about a problem, *just do it*.

There are two factors in the problem below, a 3 and a 12. The product of these two factors is 36. What would happen to the product if the second factor was doubled? Explain using words, not numbers.

$$3 \times 12 = 36$$

$$3 \times 24 = 72$$

A number is multiplied by 4, divided by 2 and then multiplied by .5. How does the result compare to the original number?

- a. The result is the same as the original number
- b. The result is $\frac{1}{4}$ the value of the original number
- c. The result is 4 times the value of the original number

Pick a simple number and see what happens: 10

$$10 \times 4 = 40$$

$$40 \div 2 = 20$$

$$20 \times .5 = 10$$

Strategy #8: Does it make Sense?

Does your answer make sense?