

MATH PROBLEM SOLVERS THINK STRATEGICALLY

Here are some strategies to solve a math problem.

These strategies begin with Math Practice Standard 1:

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

They all start with read the problem carefully to figure out what it asks.

Read each sentence carefully to make sure you comprehend it.

Decide what the problem includes that you need to use to solve it.

Notice any numbers written as words—be sure you include them in your problem solution.

Look for context--kinds of numbers—money, time, size.

Then use a strategy you know to figure out the answer.

Start by estimating what the size of the answer will be.

Here are some strategies you can use.

- List information you need to use.
- Use a model.
- Use a rule you know.
- Make a table.
- Make a diagram.
- See if it will take just one step to solve it or more steps.
- Choose an operation to start.
- Guess, check, then correct if I need to.
- Look for a pattern.
- Draw a picture so I see what the problem includes.
- Figure out what information I need.
- Underline the information I need and cross out the things I don't need.
- Make a graph.
- Make a list of operations—the steps to take.
- Make a table or chart.
- Work “backwards”.
- Think of two different ways to solve it, then choose the one you think will work better.
- Write it as a number sentence.

Most important: Think carefully and clearly.

Work with precision—make sure you know what the words in the problem mean.

Make sure you are careful to check your work.

That is Math Practice Standard 6. Attend to precision.