



BASIC MATH STRATEGIES: WORD PROBLEMS

If you feel you have difficulty understanding Word Problems, try the following strategies:

- Use a mnemonic device such as “***Read What Facts Will Compute and Check***”. Each of these words is a step toward solving a word problem:

Step One: **Read** the problem for comprehension.

Step Two: **What** specific question do I have to answer?

Step Three: **Facts** given are:

Step Four: **Will** I use addition, subtraction, multiplication or division (or more than one operation)?

Step Five: **Compute** means to work the problem.

Step Six: **Check** the answer.

- **Look for Key Words present in many word problems.** These will give you a clue as to what mathematical operation(s) to use in finding the solution. Listed below are the four basic math operations, their signs, their definitions, and common Key Words:

ADDITION (+) Definition: Find the total amount.

Common Key Words: *Find the SUM*

What is the TOTAL

What is the cost of ALL

SUBTRACTION (-) Definition: Compare two numbers.

Common Key Words: *What is the DIFFERENCE*

How much MORE

How much LESS

How much is LEFT

MULTIPLICATION (x) Definition: Given a small number, find a larger number; find the total amount.

Common Key Words: *If EACH costs...how much will ALL cost*

If ONE costs...how will TEN cost

If the MONTHLY cost is ...find the ANNUAL cost

DIVISION (/) Definition: Given a large number, find a smaller number.

Common Key Words: *If TEN cost \$50, how much will ONE cost*

How much is ONE if TEN cost \$50

How much PER (each)