

Math Problem Solving Strategies

Four Steps to Approach the Problem

These four steps will help you to solve math problems. Only use the steps you need and repeat or reorder the steps to go back and revise your approach.

First: Understand the problem

- What's this problem all about?
- What do they want; what is the "problem giver" looking for?
- What did they give me to solve the problem; do I have the info I really need?
- Did they give me things I don't need? Get rid of that stuff!

Second: Devise a plan

- Which Strategy or Strategies will I use?
- Which one makes the most sense to try and why?
- If that one doesn't fly there's others I can try!

Third: Just Do it!

- You understand the problem and have a plan; solve the problem!

Fourth: Take a look back

- Did I solve it?
- Did I find what the problem giver was looking for?
- Did I use all the info I needed to?
- Did I use a fun, creative (and correct) strategy!

Seven Strategic Solving Strategies

Based on the plan you have devised, pick from the list of problem solving strategies that might help you to solve the problem. It's OK to try a variety of strategies.

- 1. Act out the problem or situation**
- 2. Make a drawing, sketch, or diagram**
- 3. Create a table or chart**
- 4. Look for a Pattern**
- 5. Make it simpler; break it down into an easier set of problems**
- 6. Guess and then check your guesses to find answers**
- 7. sdrawkcaB kroW (Work Backwards)**