

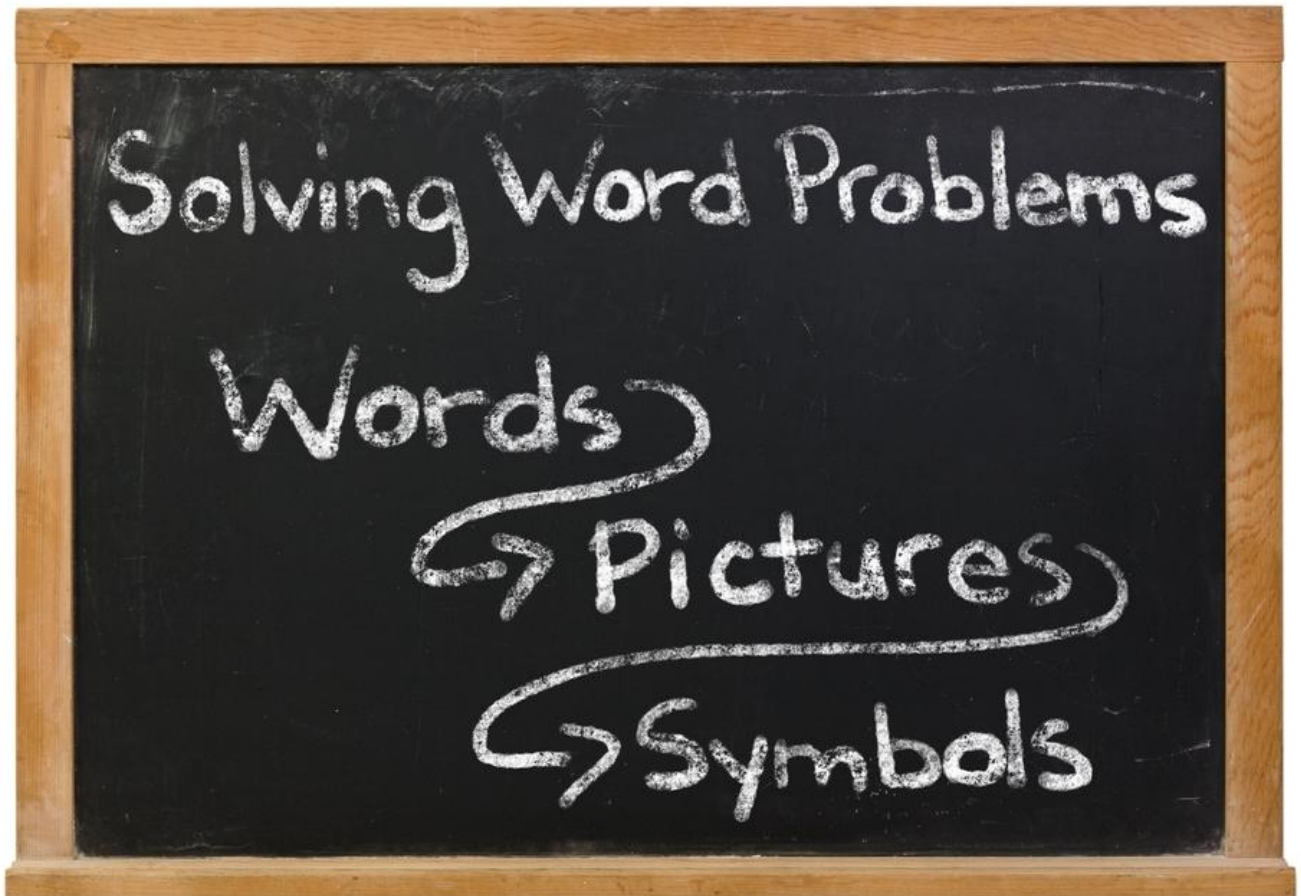


6 Tips for Teaching Kids to Solve Word Problems in Math

www.kidsacademy.mobi

For many kids, math word problems are painful, and often looked upon as drudgery that kids dread in math class. Word problems are challenging for kids because they mix math with literacy, and special thinking skills are needed to break down a word problem in order to solve it.

Let us take some of the pain out of solving word problems by exploring some strategies for making this difficult, but necessary math task easier to work with and solve.



Find Key Phrases in Word Problems

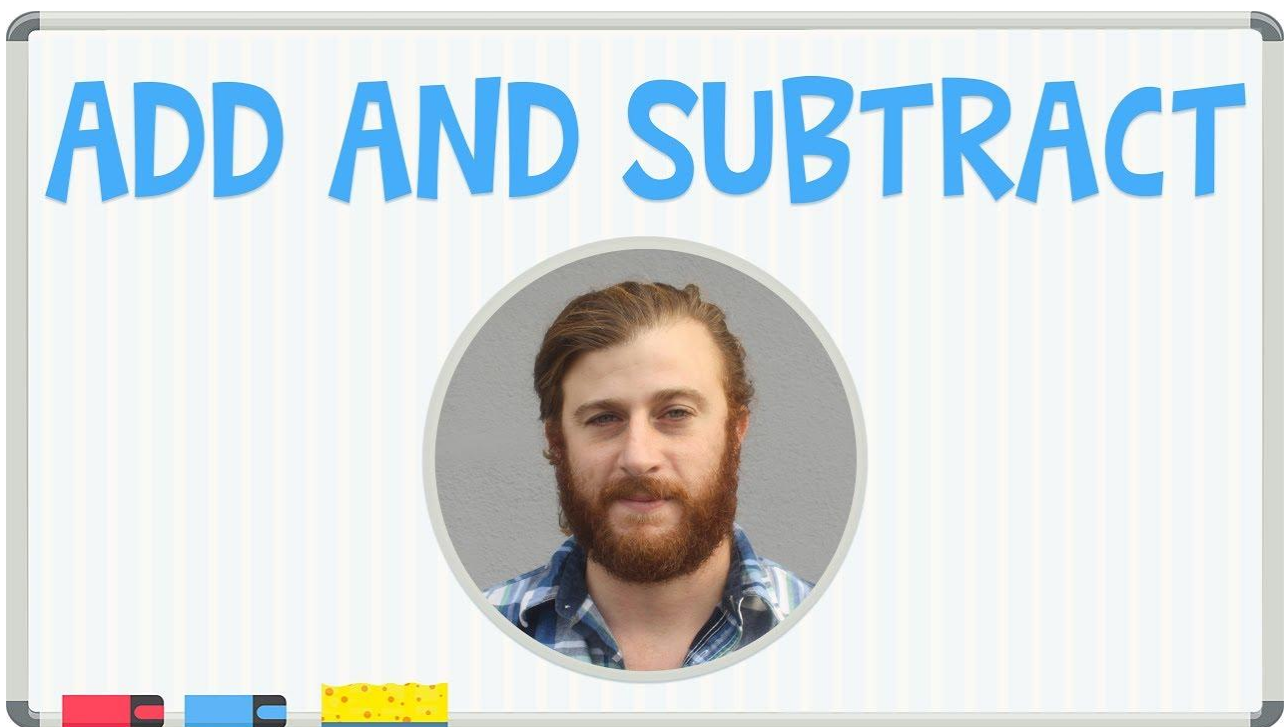
To start, kids and parents alike need to understand what the word problem is asking. To do this, the first step is to look for common words often used in word problems. Certain key words and phrases indicate the type of operation to be used in the problem.

To help your child further, create flashcards or a chart of commonly used words by operation. On the flashcards or on a chart, break up the keywords by operation: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Add or Subtract, Divide or Multiply?

As mentioned above, be on the lookout for words that indicate which operation should be used to solve the problem. Certain words and phrases, like: “sum”, “all together”, “total”, or “both” indicate that the problem is an addition problem. Other words, like “half”, or “percent” tell students to use division.

After creating a chart or flashcards, help your child with the problem at hand. Read the problem together and look for the words to determine which operation your child should use to solve that problem.



Watch on [YouTube](#)

Identify the Type of Word Problem

The next step is to determine what type of word problem is in front of your child. This is different from the operation used to solve the problem. Word problems come in four main types:

- [Join problems](#)
- Part-part-whole problems
- Separate, and [compare problems](#).

All of these word problem types have their own unique sub-types. Certain types, like join problems, are usually used as addition problems. With loads of information and tips and tricks online to master each type, study the different categories to help your child differentiate between problems.

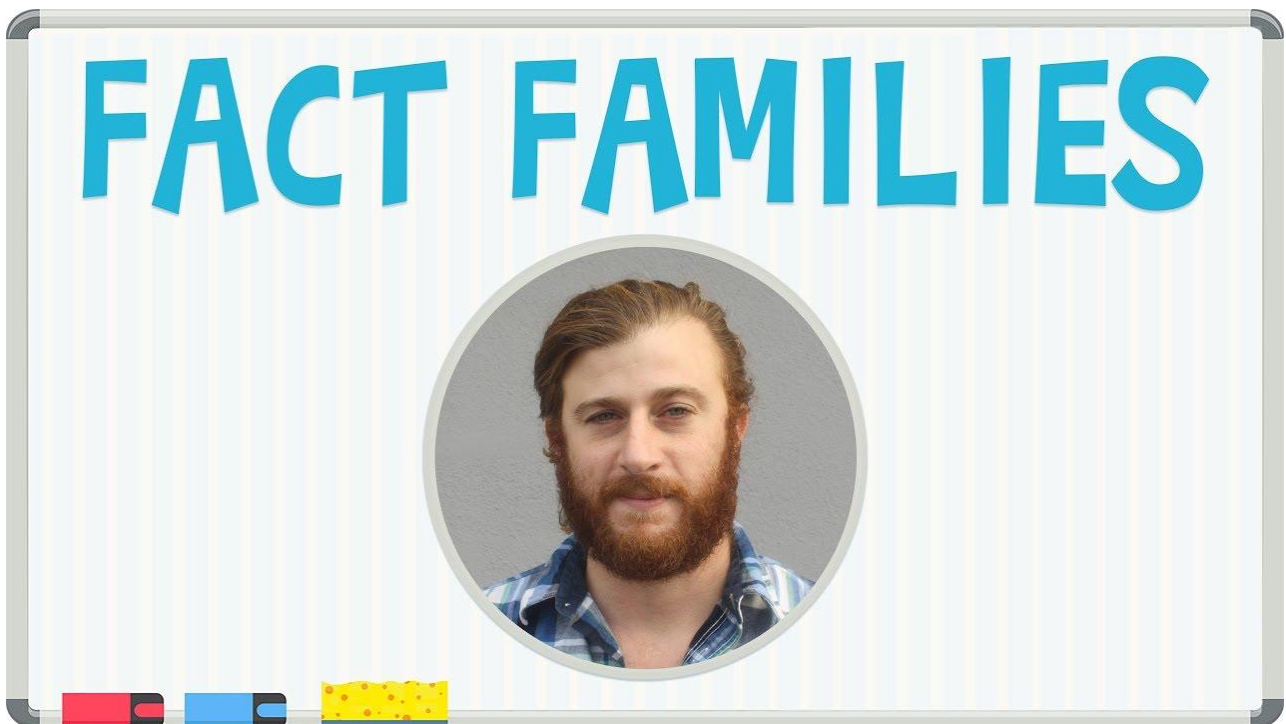
Break Down Math Problem

Problems are easier to solve when they're broken up into small, manageable parts. One way to do this is to distinguish between the facts that are given in the problem, and the facts that are not. Help your child to identify what facts are known before attempting to solve a word problem. Additionally, make sure that your child knows what each word in the problem means, and define any word as necessary.

Visualize Elements of the Problem

Many kids are visual learners, and are able to solve a tricky problem when they can see it laid out before them. For this technique, simply help your child to draw out the items and amounts listed in the problems. They can draw the pictures that are described in the problem itself, or they can use dots or counters to serve as a visual while they work.

After practicing math word problems using pictures enough times, students will eventually train their brains to visualize the facts of the problem in their heads. As kids grow older and gain the necessary cognitive skills and practice, kids will be able to visualize parts of word problems in their mind quickly, and without the need of paper.



Watch on [YouTube](#)

Repeated Exposure to Word Problems

You've probably heard the familiar expression that "practice makes perfect!" While word problems are difficult for many children, the only way to increase competence is through repeated exposure. With a plethora of online resources, it's easy to find printable math worksheets on the web!

PDF worksheets are great because they're widely available and easily accessible, even over school breaks and weekends. Regardless of the homework your child is bringing home on a daily basis, if your child needs more practice with word problems, they are easily found online.

Word problems are tough, and has caused many kids to become frustrated! But never fear, with enough practice and the right techniques, your child can [master math word problems](#) to hone their problem-solving skills! Be sure to work at your child's own pace, and allow for breaks and variety in their studies.

