

Problem-solving method

When you first look at a number problem it's important that you **read** the question first and then work out if you need to **add**, **subtract**, **multiply** or **divide**.

Here's a method you can run through in your head to help solve problems:

Step 1

Read and understand the problem.

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What is it about?

What are you being asked to do?

Will a diagram help?

Step 2

Work out what calculations you need to do.

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Do you need to add, subtract, multiply, divide?

Have you done a similar problem?

Underline any key words to help you decide.

Step 3

Carry out the calculations and answer the problem.

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Try to find the easiest way of working out the problem - use mental or written methods.

Make sure you do all the steps needed to answer the question.

Step 4

Check that your answer works.

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Have you answered the question?

Use estimation to see if your answer is about right.

Can you use a different method to check your answer (eg working backwards)?

For more information about how to use this method look at other factsheets in this topic.