



Academic Support Center

Strategies for Solving Math Word Problems

Math word problems can be tricky and difficult to solve. Using the SQRQCQ method can make solving math word problems easier and less intimidating. SQRQCQ is an abbreviation for Survey, Question, Read, Question, Compute, and Question.

Strategies for Solving Math Word Problems

1. Survey the Math Problem

The first step to solving a math word problem is reading it in its entirety to understand what you are being asked to solve. After you read it, you can decide the most necessary aspects of the problem that need to be solved and what aspects are not necessary to find the correct answer.

2. Question

Once you have an idea of what you're attempting to solve, you now need to determine what formulas, steps, or equations you must use in order to find the correct answer. It is impossible to find an answer if you can't determine what needs to be solved.

3. Read

Now that you've determined what needs to be solved, reread the problem and pay close attention to specific details. After this is done, determine which aspects of the problem are interrelated. You then want to determine what units the final answer will be in, whether it is miles per hours, liters, square feet, inches, etc.

4. Question

Now that you're familiar with specific details and how different figures within the problem are interrelated, you must again determine what formulas or equations must be used or set-up to solve the problem. Be sure to write down what steps or operations you will use for easy reference.

5. Compute

The next step is to complete the calculations. Be sure to follow the steps you outlined while setting up an equation or using a formula. As you complete each step, check it off your list.

6. Question

Once you've completed the calculations, review the final answer and make sure it is correct or seems logical. If it does not appear logical, review the steps you took to find the answer and look for calculation or set-up errors. Recalculate the numbers or make other changes until you get a logical final answer.