



HOW TO READ A MATHS PROBLEM

Look for the information, the question and what to do.



THE IDEA

Maths word problems are texts. They contain important information, not just numbers.

Good readers read the problem carefully to understand the situation, decide what is being asked and choose a strategy.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Model how to read a maths problem step by step.

Highlight key information (numbers, units, important words).

Ask students to identify the question and what it is asking them to find.

Discuss which operation(s) might be needed and why.



1 READ THE WHOLE PROBLEM

Read the problem carefully. Get a general idea of what it is about.

- What is the situation?
- Who is involved?
- What information is given?
- What is the question?

Example

A school is organising a trip. There are 6 buses and each bus can take 45 students. If 248 students sign up, how many more buses are needed?



2 IDENTIFY THE KEY INFORMATION

Look for and highlight the important details.

- Numbers (e.g. 6 buses, 45 students, 248 students)
- Units (e.g. students, buses)
- Important words (e.g. each, more, needed)
- The question (e.g. how many more buses?)

Highlight the key parts

A school is organising a trip. There are 6 buses and each bus can take 45 students. If 248 students sign up, how many more buses are needed?



3 WORK OUT WHAT TO DO

Think about which operation(s) you might need and how to solve it.

- Do you need to add, subtract, multiply or divide?
- Do you need to work in steps?
- Does the answer make sense in the context?

Possible approach

- 1 Find how many students can go on 6 buses.
 $6 \times 45 = 270$
- 2 Compare with 248.
 $270 - 248 = 22$
- 3 So 22 more students can fit, so 0 more buses are needed.



EAL UPGRADE

Pre-teach key maths vocabulary (e.g. total, each, more, less, difference, product, share, divide, remainder).



TRY IT TOMORROW

Choose a real-life maths problem. Ask students to highlight the information, identify the question and explain which operation to use.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"What is this problem about?"
"What information is important?"
"What is the question asking?"
"What operation might you use? Why?"