

Using Schemas to Teach Students to Solve Word Problems

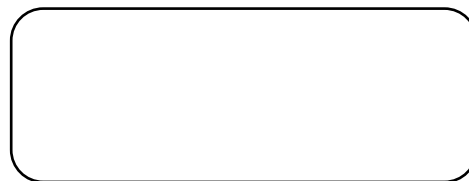
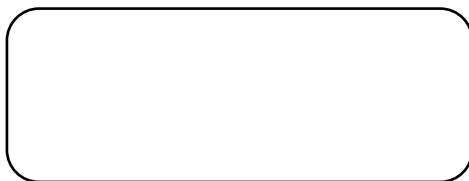
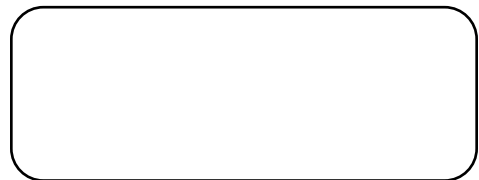
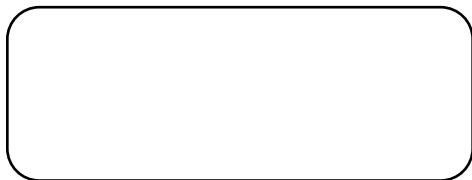
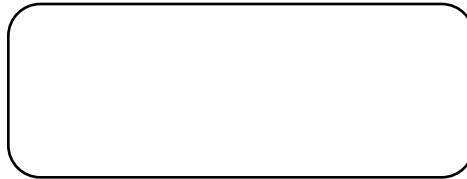
Sarah R. Powell, Ph.D.

srpowell@utexas.edu

[@sarahpowellphd](#)

www.sarahpowellphd.com

Word-Problem Solving



Teaching Problem Solving

Attack Strategy

SOLVE

Study the problem.

Organize the facts.

Line up the plan.

Verify the plan with computation.

Examine the answer.

R-CUBES

Read the problem.

Circle key numbers.

Underline the question.

Box action words.

Evaluate steps.

Solve and check.

UPS✓

UNDERSTAND

Read and explain.

PLAN

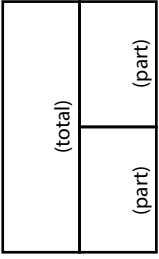
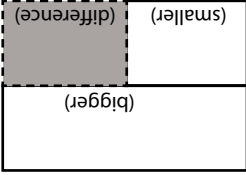
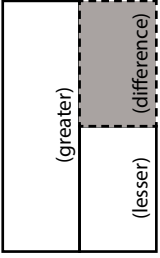
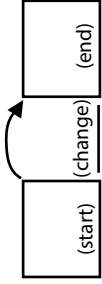
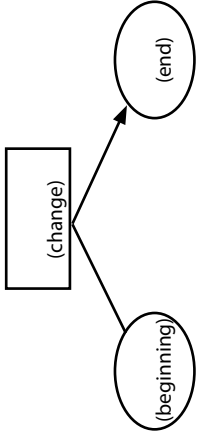
How will you solve the problem?

SOLVE

Set up and do the math!

✓CHECK

Does your answer make sense?

Schema and Definition	Equations and Graphic Organizers	Examples	Variations
<p>Total (Combine; Part-part-whole) Parts combined for a sum</p>	<p>$P1 + P2 = T$ (part + part = total)</p> 	<p>Sum unknown: Lyle has 11 red apples and 18 green apples. How many apples does Lyle have altogether?</p> <p>Part unknown: Lyle has 29 red and green apples. If 11 of the apples are red, how many green apples does Lyle have?</p>	<p>More than two parts: Lyle has 34 apples. Of the apples, 11 are red, 18 are green, and the rest are yellow. How many yellow apples does Lyle have?</p>
<p>Difference (Compare) Sets compared for a difference</p>	<p>$B - s = D$ (bigger - smaller = difference)</p>  <p>$G - L = D$ (greater - less = difference)</p> 	<p>Difference unknown: Sasha wrote 85 words in her essay, and Tabitha wrote 110 words. How many fewer words did Sasha write than Tabitha?</p> <p>Bigger/greater unknown: Tabitha wrote 25 more words than Sasha. If Sasha wrote 85 words, how many words did Tabitha write?</p> <p>Smaller/lesser unknown: Tabitha wrote 110 words in her essay. Sasha wrote 25 words fewer than Tabitha. How many words did Sasha write?</p>	<p>(None)</p>
<p>Change (Join; Separate) An amount that increases or decreases</p>	<p>$ST + / - C = E$ (start +/- change = end)</p>  	<p>End (increase) unknown: Jorge had \$52. Then, he earned \$16 babysitting. How much money does Jorge have now?</p> <p>Change (increase) unknown: Jorge had \$52. Then, he earned some money babysitting. Now, Jorge has \$68. How much did Jorge earn babysitting?</p> <p>End (decrease) unknown: Jorge had \$52. Then, he spent \$29 at the ballpark. How much money does Jorge have now?</p> <p>Change (decrease) unknown: Jorge had some money. Then, he spent \$29 at the ballpark and has \$23 left. How much money did Jorge have before going to the ballpark?</p>	<p>Multiple changes: Jorge had \$78. He stopped and bought a pair of shoes for \$42 and then he spent \$12 at the grocery. How much money does Jorge have now?</p>

Additive Word Problems

A.

Ali delivered 12 boxes of cookies on Friday and 25 boxes of cookies on Saturday. How many boxes of cookies did Ali deliver?

B.

In March and April, it rained a total of 11.4 inches. If it rained 3.9 inches in March, how many inches did it rain in April?

C.

Audrey has 162 wooden beads and 95 glass beads. What is the difference between Audrey's wooden beads and glass beads?

D.

Damian's dog eats $9\frac{1}{2}$ cups of dog food each week. Monte's dog eats $4\frac{1}{4}$ cups less each week than Damian's dog. How much does Monte's dog eat in a week?

Additive Word Problems

E.

A plant was $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall at the beginning of June. By the end of July, the plant was $9\frac{1}{8}$ inches tall. How many inches did the plant grow in 2 months?

F.

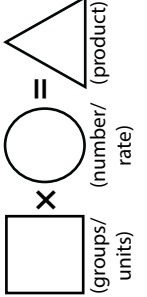
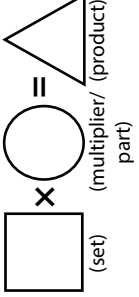
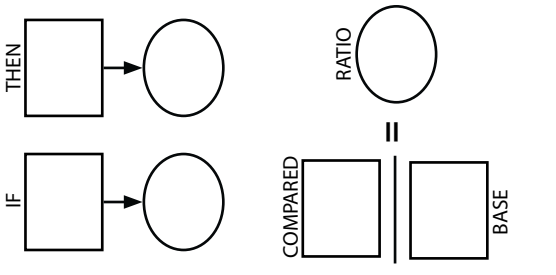
Martina has some money in her bank account. Then, she spent \$135.69 and has a balance of -\$24.80. How much money did Martina have to begin with?

G.

Sam mows lawns and made \$560 last week. She made \$95 on Monday, \$135 on Tuesday, and \$70 on Wednesday. How much did Sam make on Thursday and Friday?

H.

Hui saved \$70 in January. In February, she spent \$64 of the money she saved. She saved \$92 more in March. How much has Hui saved by the end of March?

Schema and Definition	Graphic Organizers	Examples	Variations
<p>Equal Groups (Vary)</p> <p>A number of equal sets or units</p>		<p>Product unknown: Maria bought 5 cartons of eggs with 12 eggs in each carton. How many eggs did Maria buy?</p> <p>Groups unknown: Maria bought 60 eggs. The eggs were sold in cartons with 12 eggs each. How many cartons of eggs did Maria buy?</p>	<p>With rate: Maria bought 5 cartons of eggs. Each carton cost \$2.95. How much did Maria spend on eggs?</p>
<p>Comparison</p> <p>One set as a multiple or part of another set</p>		<p>Product unknown: Malik picked 7 flowers. Danica picked 3 times as many flowers as Malik. If Danica picked 21 flowers, how many flowers did Malik pick?</p> <p>Set unknown: Danica picked 3 times as many flowers as Malik. If Danica picked 21 flowers, how many flowers did Malik pick?</p>	<p>With fraction: Malik picked 25 red and yellow flowers. If 1/5 of the flowers were yellow, how many were red?</p>
<p>Proportions</p>		<p>Subject unknown: Sally typed 56 words in 2 minutes. How many words could Sally type in 7 minutes?</p> <p>Object unknown: Sally typed 56 words in 2 minutes. How many minutes would it take Sally to type 192 words?</p> <p>Base unknown: Justin baked cookies and brownies. The ratio of cookies to brownies was 3:5. If he baked 15 cookies, how many brownies did he bake?</p> <p>Compared unknown: Justin baked 15 cookies and 25 brownies. What's the ratio of cookies to brownies?</p>	<p>With percentage: Watson received an 80% on his science quiz. If the test had 40 questions, how many questions did Watson answer correctly?</p> <p>With unit rate: Paula bought 5 boxes of markers. She spent \$9.75. What is the price of one box of markers?</p>

Material collected from: Jitendra, DiPipi, & Perron-Jones, 2002; Jitendra & Star, 2011; Jitendra et al., 2009; Van de Walle et al., 2013; Xin, Jitendra, & Deatline-Buchman, 2005; Xin & Zhang, 2009.

Multiplicative Word Problems

A.

Lola baked 6 pies. For each pie, Lola used 5 apples. How many apples did Lola use?

B.

Zachary has 3 feet of string. He makes bracelets, and each bracelet needs $5 \frac{1}{4}$ inches of string. How many bracelets could Zachary make?

C.

Enrique has 2 times as many pencils as Ava. Ava has 6 pencils. How many pencils does Enrique have?

D.

Susan has 7 times as many books as Mo. Mo has 18 books. How many books Susan has?