



How To Solve a Tough Math Problem

Ask yourself these 4 questions:

What do I know?

- ✓ List the facts or information given in the problem.
- ✓ Underline or circle any key words, such as *factor*, *multiple*, *area*, or *perimeter*.
- ✓ Watch out for mixed units!
- ✓ Express the facts in math symbols, if you can.

What do I want?

- ✓ Describe the goal, what the problem is asking you to find.
- ✓ Underline or circle any key words, such as *sum*, *product*, *next*, or *not*. (Small words are easy to miss!)
- ✓ Express the goal in math symbols, if you can.

What can I do?

- ✓ Combine the given facts. Can you get closer to the goal?
- ✓ Try a tool from your **Problem Solving Tool Box**.
- ✓ Do one little step at a time.

Does it make sense?

- ✓ When you get an answer, always look back at the original problem one more time.
- ✓ Does your answer make sense?
- ✓ Do you have the correct units (inches, cm^2 , kg, etc.)?
- ✓ Can you think of a way to confirm that your answer is right?