



Critical thinking and problem solving

Mathseeds encourages children to solve problems and use higher level thinking throughout the program. These critical thinking and problem solving worksheets provide a growing toolkit of different strategies, using a simple structure that helps children grow in skills and confidence. The more experience children have with higher-level thinking, the more confidence they will gain to think logically, take risks, ask questions and apply reason. In turn, this will encourage them to communicate, explain and justify their mathematical reasoning.

Children should tackle each problem using this simple structure.

I. Read the question

Encourage children to read the question carefully.

2. Underline the question

What is the question asking them to do? In turn, children can ask their own questions such as: Is this an addition problem? Do I need to draw a shape? Am I being asked to measure something?

3. Circle the facts

Focus on the important facts needed to solve the problem. These might be numbers, words or phrases that are key to understanding and interpreting the problem.

4. Use a strategy to solve the problem

Many of these activities will guide children in the use of a specific strategy. Some activities are openended where children will need to choose a strategy.

5. Evaluate

Encourage children to think about how they solved the problem; to check their answer and to share their solutions with a partner. Consider other ways or strategies they could have used to find a solution. This encourages children to reflect, to analyse, to ask questions and to explore alternate options.

The strategy used in this lesson is:

Use a number line

Lesson 51 • Toy Cars

Using a number line acts as a visual prompt when tackling number problems. It allows children to think and count systematically and to predict solutions to problems. Encouraging children to select a different way to solve a problem demonstrates how they are thinking and what strategies they prefer to use.

Children will need pencils or crayons.

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CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

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