



DEFEND YOUR STRATEGY  
FOR SOLVING THE  
PROBLEM

Students who understand math well are able to explain their thinking to others. They can explain *how* they solve a problem as well as how they know their solution is correct. Students should be able to defend their work in two ways: by explaining it out loud to others (orally) and by writing out their explanation on paper. Students can use objects, drawings, diagrams, equations, and so on to help support them in their explanation.

**Examples**

Example A	Example B
$7 + 8 = \underline{\quad}$	$7 + 8 = \underline{\quad}$
Solution $7 + (7 + 1) =$ $(7 + 7) + 1 = 15$	Solution $(8 + 8) - 1 = 15$
<b>Defense of Strategy</b> <i>I looked at the problem, <math>7 + 8</math>, and decided to decompose (break apart) the 8 into 7 and 1. This made it easier for me to solve, because I know that <math>7 + 7</math> is a doubles fact and it equals 14. Then, I added the remaining 1 to that and found the solution to be 15.</i>	<b>Defense of Strategy</b> <i>I looked at the problem, <math>7 + 8</math>, and decided to add 1 more to the 7. This made it easier for me to solve, because I know that <math>8 + 8</math> is a doubles fact and it equals 16. Then, I subtracted the 1 that I had originally added to the 7 and found the solution to be 15.</i>

**How You Can Help Your Child with This Strategy at Home**

1. As your child completes their math work, ask them to explain their work and how they know they found an accurate solution. You may ask them follow-up questions like these:
  - a. *How do you know your strategy works?*
  - b. *Why does this strategy work in this problem?*
2. If your child gets stuck, ask them these questions:
  - a. *What is the problem asking you to solve?*
  - b. *How can you find this solution?*
3. Model for your child how you solve everyday math problems, explaining to them how you solved the problem, as well as how you know your solution is correct.