



LOOK FOR SYMBOLS OR PATTERNS TO HELP BREAK DOWN THE PROBLEM

It is critical for children to learn how to analyze and make sense of a problem. Doing so not only helps them become successful at math, but helps them understand how a problem is organized, recognize any patterns, and/or find the math language and symbols that are helpful and necessary to solve the particular problem at hand.

Consider the following example:

Joe earned \$25 per week for taking care of the neighbor's dog. He took care of the dog for three weeks total. His parents told him they would double what he earned. How much money does Joe have in all?

Possible student response:

Notice the underlined important information and the student-friendly short definitions written above them.

Joe earned \$25 per week for watching the neighbor's dog. He watched the dog for three weeks total. His parents told him they would double what he earned. How much money does Joe have in all?

each (with arrow pointing to "per week")

altogether (with arrow pointing to "three weeks total")

Multiply by 2 (two times as much) (with arrow pointing to "double")

Step 1: Find how much Joe earned from three weeks of dog sitting.

$$\$25 \times 3 \text{ weeks} = \$75.00$$

Step 2: Double the amount earned from dog sitting.

$$\$75 \text{ earned} \times 2 \text{ (double)} = \$150.00$$

Final answer: Joe has \$150 altogether.

How You Can Help Your Child with This Strategy at Home

1. As your child works on math, help them identify math symbols and patterns within a math problem that will support them in finding a solution.
2. As opportunities arise, discuss everyday math language and symbols as well as their definitions with your child.
3. Give your child opportunities to show YOU how they study a problem and find important symbols and patterns. Have them explain why the parts they identified are important and how they will help them find a solution to the problem.