



THINK ALOUD

Think Aloud is a simple yet useful strategy that students can use to help them make sense of a math concept or problem. Simply put, students look at a problem and then talk out loud, explaining to themselves what the problem is asking them to do and the steps they will take to arrive at a solution. This strategy is helpful because it helps students visualize the problem in their mind and break it down into bite-size steps.

When students *think aloud*, it helps them

- see the math,
- organize their thinking about how to solve the problem, and
- recognize any mistakes or miscalculations in their thinking.

Example

Consider the following problem and the thinking aloud that follows:

Problem

Alex wants to buy a new computer for school. It costs \$300 but is on sale for 25% off. How much will the computer cost?

Think Aloud

I know that to solve this problem, I need to figure out how much 25% of \$300 is. To do that, I am going to break down (decompose) 25% into (10% + 10% + 5%) because it's easy for me to do in my head. I know that 10% of \$300 is \$30. That means that 20% would be double that, which is \$60. Now that I've figured out what 20% of \$300 is, I can find the last 5%. If 10% is \$30, that means the remaining 5% is \$15. So \$60 + \$15 is \$75. The computer will be \$75 cheaper than regular price, so \$300 – \$75 is \$225. Alex will pay \$225 for the computer.

Things to Remember

Thinking Aloud is just like when you explain your process for solving to a partner, except this time it is to yourself.

How You Can Help Your Child with This Strategy at Home

1. Give your child opportunities to do math in their head. Have them explain how they are finding the solution.
2. Have your child select one or two homework problems. Have them explain how they solved the problem.
3. When you do everyday math, model for your child how you organize the problem in your mind and how you arrive at a solution.