

#656 Navigating Challenging Word Problems

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Math Champions Professional Development and SingaporeMathSource.com



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TAPE DIAGRAM

A drawing that looks like a segment of tape, used to illustrate number relationships. Also known as a *strip diagram*, *bar model*, *fraction strip*, or *length model*.



PROGRESSIONS DOCUMENTS FOR THE COMMON CORE MATH STANDARDS

<http://ime.math.arizona.edu/progressions/>

Websites for Drawing Models

- Thinking Blocks: MathPlayground.com
- Conceptua Math: ConceptuaMath.com/bar-models-tool
- The Singapore Maths Teacher: thesingaporemaths.com
- ~~Ultimath Modeler~~: ultimath.com
- Houghton-Mifflin: Proprietary with curriculum and iPad

iPad Apps

- Thinking Blocks
- Xyla and Yabu:
- Visual Math Word Problems

Essential Discussions & Questions:

What is the word problem about? What is happening? Can you visualize the story? Can you restate the word problem without any numbers?

What will the answer look like? Can you make an estimate? (Units of measurement, multiple answers, level of accuracy, etc)

How can we draw a picture to solve this problem?

What do the bars represent?

What information do we know? What do we need to find?

Are we given the total? Parts?

How do you find a missing part?

Is the problem asking for the difference between two numbers or are we given the difference?

Are we comparing two amounts?

Is there a more efficient strategy to solve this problem? Are there other approaches that would work?

Can we check the answer?

Word Problems

There were ____ chocolates in a box. After eating some of them, Tara found that she had $\frac{5}{8}$ of the chocolates left. How many chocolates did she eat?

Donna went shopping. She spent $\frac{1}{2}$ of her money on a book, $\frac{1}{2}$ of the remainder on a pen, \$2.65 on a notebook. She had \$3.88 left. How much money did Donna have at first?

Bob's Bikes sold 96 bikes during the week and $\frac{1}{4}$ of what was left on the weekend. After that, Bob still had $\frac{1}{2}$ of his bikes left. How many bikes did Bob have at first?

April bought a bag of sourballs. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sourballs were cherry, $\frac{1}{8}$ were apple and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the remainder were blueberry. If there were ____ blueberry sourballs, how many sourballs did she buy?

The difference between two numbers is 3146. If the larger number is three times the smaller number, find the sum of the two numbers.

The sides of a triangle are in the ratio 4:5:6. If the perimeter of the triangle is 60 cm, find the length of the shortest side.

117 children took part in a track meet. $\frac{2}{7}$ of the girls that participated is equal to $\frac{1}{3}$ the number of boys. How many girls took part in the track meet?

Scott was outfitting his dorm room. He spent $\frac{3}{8}$ of his budget on a stereo system, $\frac{2}{5}$ of his money on a laptop, and \$180 on a bed. If he had \$270 left, how much money did he have at first?

A shopkeeper had 150 lb. of rice in his bag. He sold $\frac{2}{5}$ of it and packed the remainder equally into 5 bags. Find the weight of rice in each bag.

Addition & Subtraction Situations

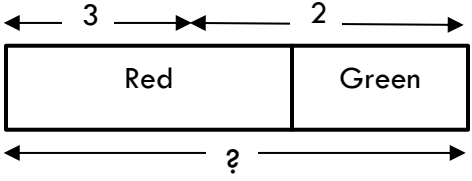
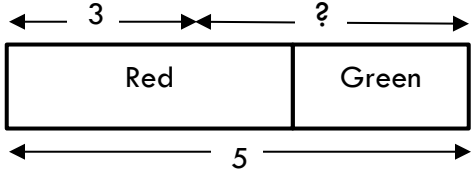
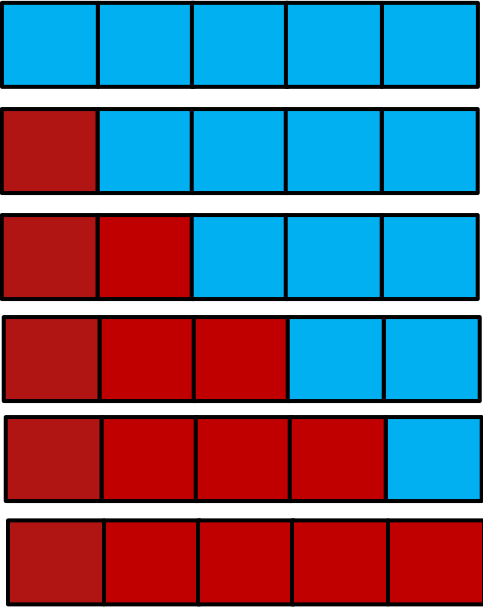
ADD TO:

<p>Result Unknown</p>	<p>Two bunnies sat on the grass. Three more bunnies hopped there. How many bunnies are on the grass now?</p>	
<p>Change Unknown</p>	<p>Two bunnies were sitting on the grass. Some more bunnies hopped there. Then there were five bunnies. How many bunnies hopped over to the first two?</p>	
<p>Start Unknown</p>	<p>Some bunnies were sitting on the grass. Three more bunnies hopped there. Then there were five bunnies. How many bunnies were on the grass before?</p>	

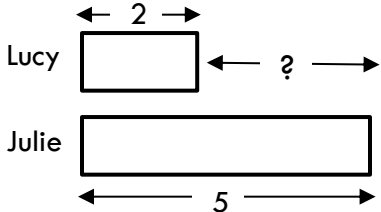
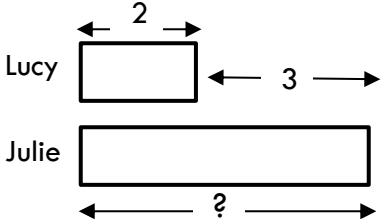
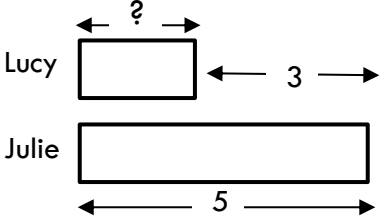
TAKE FROM:

<p>Result Unknown</p>	<p>Five apples were on the table. I ate two apples. How many apples are on the table now?</p>	
<p>Change Unknown</p>	<p>Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?</p>	
<p>Start Unknown</p>	<p>Some apples were on the table. I ate two apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples were on the table before??</p>	

PUT TOGETHER/TAKE APART

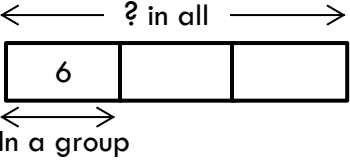
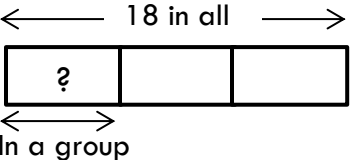
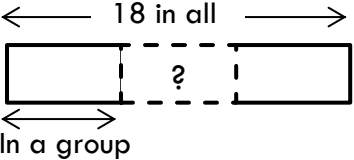
<p>Total Unknown</p>	<p>Three red apples and two green apples are on the table. How many apples are on the table?</p>	
<p>Addend Unknown</p>	<p>Five apples are on the table. Three are red and the rest are green. How many apples are green?</p>	
<p>Both Addends Unknown</p>	<p>Grandma has five flowers. How many can she put in the red vase and how many in her blue vase?</p>	

COMPARE

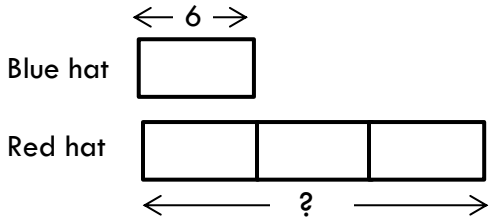
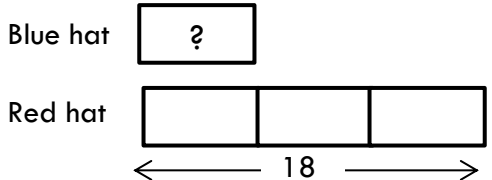
<p>Difference Unknown</p>	<p>Lucy has two apples. Julie has five apples. How many more apples does Julie have than Lucy?</p> <p>OR: Lucy has two apples. Julie has five apples. How many fewer apples does Lucy have than Julie?</p>	 <p>Lucy: A bar with a length of 2 and a question mark above it.</p> <p>Julie: A bar with a length of 5 and a question mark below it.</p>
<p>Bigger Unknown</p>	<p>Julie has three more apples than Lucy. Lucy has two apples. How many apples does Julie have?</p> <p>OR: Lucy has 3 fewer apples than Julie. Julie has five apples. How many apples does Lucy have?</p>	 <p>Lucy: A bar with a length of 2 and a question mark above it.</p> <p>Julie: A bar with a length of 3 and a question mark below it.</p>
<p>Smaller Unknown</p>	<p>Julie has three more apples than Lucy. Julie has five apples. How many apples does Lucy have?</p> <p>OR: Lucy has 3 fewer apples than Julie. Julie has five apples. How many apples does Lucy have?</p>	 <p>Lucy: A bar with a length of 3 and a question mark above it.</p> <p>Julie: A bar with a length of 5 and a question mark below it.</p>

Multiplication & Division Situations

EQUAL GROUPS:

<p>Unknown Product</p>	<p>There are 3 bags with 6 plums in each bag. How many plums are there in all?</p> <p>Measurement example: You need 3 lengths of string, each 6 inches long. How much string will you need altogether?</p>	
<p>Group Size Unknown</p>	<p>If 18 plums are shared equally into 3 bags, then how many plums will be in each bag?</p> <p>Measurement example: You have 18 inches of string, which you will cut into 3 equal pieces. How long will each piece of string be?</p>	
<p>Number of Groups Unknown</p>	<p>If 18 plums are to be packed 6 to a bag, then how many bags are needed?</p> <p>Measurement example: You have 18 inches of string, which you will cut into pieces that are 6 inches long. How many pieces of string will you have?</p>	

COMPARE:

<p>Unknown Product</p>	<p>A blue hat costs \$6. A red hat costs 3 times as much as the blue hat. How much does the red hat cost?</p> <p>Measurement example: A rubber band is 6 cm long. How long will the rubber band be when it is stretched to be 3 times as long?</p>	
<p>Group Size Unknown</p>	<p>A red hat costs \$18 and that is 3 times as much as a blue hat costs. How much does a blue hat cost?</p> <p>Measurement example: A rubber band is stretched to be 18 cm long and that is 3 times as long as it was at first. How long was the rubber band at first?</p>	
<p>Number of Groups Unknown</p>	<p>A red hat costs \$18 and a blue hat costs \$6. How many times as much does the red hat cost as the blue hat?</p> <p>Measurement example: A rubber band was 6 cm long at first. Now it is stretched to be 18 cm long. How many times as long is the rubber band now as it was at first?</p>	