

Are you stumped by story problems?

Many times there is a word or phrase that may give you a hint as to how to solve the problem. I refer to these as “clue words”. Certain words tell us to add, subtract, multiply or divide. You can make story problems even more enjoyable for students by making the process more fun. Try having the student pretend to be a detective to try and solve the mystery of the story problem by hunting for clues within the problem. Once they have spotted the “clues”, then they can try the operation to solve the problem. Don’t forget that clue words often lead you to the correct operation, but there are always some ways to use a clue word in a tricky way. This doesn’t happen very often, but it does happen. Therefore, it is important to always check to see if your answer makes sense.

Addition	Subtraction	Multiplication	Division	Equals	Variables
Sum	Difference	Product	Quotient	Is	Unknown
Plus	Subtract	Times	Ratio	Becomes	Letter
Added to	Less	Multiply	Divided by	Same as	Variable
Increased	Less than	Twice	Half	Equal to	Some number
Combine	Subtract from	Double	One-third	Was	A number
Gain	Get rid of	Triple	Put into groups	Replaced by	Can change
Expand	Smaller than	For	Divide	Will be	
More than	Remainder	Squared	Divisor	Are	
Grow	Decreased by	Cubed	Dividend	Answer	
In all	Drop	Repeated	Remainder	Means	
Add	How much with a comparison word (how much more, how much less, etc.)	Repeated addition	Goes into	Equivalent	
Total	Taken away from	Of	Average	Even	
And	Minus	Multiple	Share		
Altogether	Lower	Factor	Split		
Together	Eliminate	Per			
Addend	Reduce	Each			
Found	Subtrahend				
Deposit	Minuend				
Credit	Lost				
	Fewer				
	Withdraw				
	Debit				
	Removed				