

General guidelines in solving math problems

- 1 Read the problem completely first, to gain a general familiarity with it.
- 2 Read it through again, taking note of: **a** what kind of information is given (quantities specified etc.), **b** what information is being asked for, and **c** what process or processes to use.
- 3 Write down all of the important steps, keeping everything neat and legible. If there are any side calculations necessary to complete major steps, keep those together, neatly arranged and legible, in a separate section of your worksheet. Work only as quickly as you can and still keep your handwriting legible – you may have to retrace your steps.
- 4 If you are solving a computational problem involving equations and/or inequalities, neatly copy all of those onto your worksheet first. It can help you to keep track of every symbol being used.
- 5 Read each statement of your solution, rethinking any assumptions you may have made and any conclusions that you may have reached. Check all of your computations carefully – it isn't unheard of, that at some point in the rush of scribbling, that $12 \div 3 = 3$.
- 6 Ask yourself whether your answer makes sense, given the statement of the problem, then work your problem in reverse, substituting your solution(s) into the original problem.
- 7 To solidify your understanding of that type of problem, work as many similar ones as possible, taking note of the similarities in process, special constants that may appear and even the form of the solution.

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