



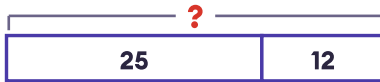
Where's the missing number?

the 4 kinds within 100 • also called story problems • ★ = tricky • no cutting

Add to

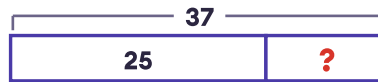
Ava had 25 shells. She found 12 more. Then she had 37.

missing: the end
How many shells now?



$$25 + 12 = ?$$

missing: the middle
How many did she find?



$$25 + ? = 37$$

missing: the start ★
How many at the start?



$$? + 12 = 37$$

Take from

Leo had 48 stickers. He gave 15 away. Then he had 33.

missing: the end
How many are left?



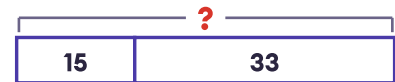
$$48 - 15 = ?$$

missing: the middle
How many did he give away?



$$48 - ? = 33$$

missing: the start ★
How many at the start?

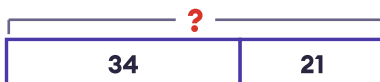


$$? - 15 = 33$$

Put together / take apart parts and total

34 red apples and 21 green apples make 55 apples.

missing: the total
How many apples in all?



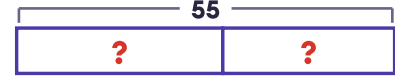
$$34 + 21 = ?$$

missing: one part
55 apples. 34 are red. How many are green?



$$34 + ? = 55$$

missing: both parts
A red bowl and a blue bowl hold 55. How many could be in each?



many answers:
30 and 25, 50 and 5 ...

Compare

Max has 42 cars. Rosa has 27 cars. Max has 15 more than Rosa.

missing: the difference
How many more cars does Max have?

Max

	?
--	---

 42

Rosa

27

$$42 - 27 = ?$$

missing: the bigger one
Rosa has 27. Max has 15 more than Rosa. How many does Max have?

Max

	15	?
--	----	---

Rosa

27

$$27 + 15 = ?$$

missing: the smaller one
Max has 42. Rosa has 15 fewer than Max. How many does Rosa have?

Max

	15
--	----

 42

Rosa

?

$$42 - 15 = ?$$

Tricky ones: "Max has 15 more than Rosa. Max has 42." is solved by subtracting. See page 2.



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Key words can trick you read the whole story • no cutting

Don't trust the key word. Read the story. In each story below, the key word points the wrong way.

sounds like +
Ava has 9 more stickers than Leo. Ava has 15. How many stickers does Leo have?

✗ Sounds like: add (+)

✓ The story needs: subtract (-)

Ava

	9
--	---

 15

Leo

?

$15 - 9 = 6$. Leo has 6 stickers.

sounds like -
Leo has 6 fewer shells than Ava. Leo has 8. How many shells does Ava have?

✗ Sounds like: subtract (-)

✓ The story needs: add (+)

Ava

	6
--	---

 ?

Leo

8

$8 + 6 = 14$. Ava has 14 shells.

Some ducks were in a pond. 5 swam away. 7 are left. How many ducks were there at the start?

✗ Sounds like: subtract (-)

✓ The story needs: add (+)

?	
5	7

$7 + 5 = 12$. There were 12 ducks.

sounds like +
There are 14 cups in all. 9 are red. The rest are blue. How many cups are blue?

✗ Sounds like: add (+)

✓ The story needs: subtract (-)

14	
9	?

$14 - 9 = 5$. 5 cups are blue.

Do this instead

-  **1. Read it 3 times.** What happens? What is the question? Which numbers matter?
-  **2. Draw it.** A bar for each amount. Put ? where the missing number goes.
-  **3. Write the story, then solve.** Answer with a label: "6 stickers".

Based on the U.S. Department of Education's 2021 practice guide on helping children who struggle with math (IES, Recommendation 5).



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Name _____

Addition word problems

solve each one by adding • read it, draw it, solve it

1.

Ava read 34 pages on Monday. She read 25 pages on Tuesday. How many pages did she read in all?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2.

Leo had some marbles. He lost 14. He has 31 left. How many marbles did he have at the start?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

3.

Rosa has 16 fewer stamps than Max. Rosa has 41 stamps. How many stamps does Max have?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

4.

The bus had 38 people on it. 27 more people got on. How many people are on the bus now?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

5.

Max has 47 red blocks and 36 blue blocks. How many blocks does he have?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

6.

Nico has 29 cards. Jess has 17 more cards than Nico. How many cards does Jess have?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$



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Subtraction word problems

Name _____

solve each one by subtracting or counting up · read it, draw it, solve it

1.

There were 68 apples on a tree. 25 fell off. How many apples are on the tree now?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2.

There are 57 kids at the park. 34 are on the swings. The rest are playing tag. How many kids are playing tag?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

3.

Lin scored 79 points. Max scored 52 points. How many more points did Lin score?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

4.

Jess has 18 more books than Nico. Jess has 52 books. How many books does Nico have?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

5.

A shop had 82 balloons. It sold 47 of them. How many balloons are left?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

6.

Gabe had 36 shells. He found some more at the beach. Now he has 61. How many shells did he find?

draw it

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\hspace{1cm}} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$



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Compare word problems two bars: who has more?

Name _____

Milo has 30 cars. Gabe has 20 cars. How many more cars does Milo have?

done for you

Milo 10 30

Gabe

$30 - 20 = 10$. Milo has 10 more cars.

Draw a bar for each name. Who has more? Make that bar longer.

1.

Ava has 45 beads. Leo has 23 beads.
How many more beads does Ava have?

Ava _____

Leo _____

_____ = _____

2.

Max picked 64 berries. Rosa picked 31 berries.
How many fewer berries did Rosa pick?

Max _____

Rosa _____

_____ = _____

3.

Theo has 27 toy cars. Nico has 14 more toy cars than Theo. How many toy cars does Nico have?

Theo _____

Nico _____

_____ = _____

4. ★

Lin has 19 fewer pens than Jess. Lin has 36 pens. How many pens does Jess have?

Lin _____

Jess _____

_____ = _____

5.

Gabe has 72 stickers. Milo has 25 fewer stickers than Gabe. How many stickers does Milo have?

Gabe _____

Milo _____

_____ = _____

6. ★

Jess ran 16 more laps than Max. Jess ran 40 laps. How many laps did Max run?

Jess _____

Max _____

_____ = _____

★ The key word points the wrong way. Ask: who has more?



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Two-step word problems

find step 1, then use it in step 2

Name _____

Ava had 7 shells. She found 5 more. Then she gave 4 to Leo. How many shells does she have now? done for you

Step 1: $7 + 5 = 12$. Step 2: $12 - 4 = 8$. Ava has 8 shells.

1.

A box has 8 pencils. Leo puts in 6 more. Then Jess puts in 3 more. How many pencils are in the box now?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

2.

Theo had 9 grapes. He ate 4. Then his mom gave him 6 more. How many grapes does he have now?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

3.

Lin has 6 crayons. Gabe has 3 more crayons than Lin. How many crayons do they have together?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

4.

A plate had 16 cookies. Max ate 5. Rosa ate 3. How many cookies are left?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

5. big numbers

A class had 24 books. They got 30 more. Then they gave 12 away. How many books do they have now?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

6. big numbers

Nico had 45 stickers. He gave 12 to Lin and 14 to Max. How many stickers does he have left?

Step 1

Step 2

Answer

Big numbers: draw each step.



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Inches, centimeters and cents

Name _____

length and money stories

Same unit in, same unit out: inches stay inches, cents stay cents.

Length

1.

A red ribbon is 45 inches long. A blue ribbon is 28 inches long. How much longer is the red ribbon?



_____ = inches

2.

Ava's pencil is 14 centimeters long. Leo's pencil is 9 centimeters long. How long are they end to end?



_____ = centimeters

3.

A rope was 80 centimeters long. Max cut off 35 centimeters. How long is the rope now?



_____ = centimeters

Money

4.

Rosa has 34¢. She finds a dime and a nickel. How many cents does she have now?



_____ = ¢

5.

Theo has \$50. He buys a game for \$35. How much money does he have left?



_____ = \$

6.

A toy costs 75¢. Nico has 2 quarters. How much more money does he need?



_____ = ¢



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Mixed word problems

Name _____

tick the kind first • cross out the extra number • solve

Tick the kind first, then solve. Two problems have a number you don't need: cross it out.

1. Jess had 52 beads. She got 16 more. How many beads does she have now?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

2. There are 85 kids at the pool. 40 are swimming. The rest are on the slide. How many are on the slide?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

3. Leo had 63 stamps. He gave 21 to his sister. How many stamps does he have now?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

4. Max has 33 marbles. Ava has 58 marbles. How many more marbles does Ava have?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

5. A farm has 26 cows, 18 pigs and 4 dogs. How many cows and pigs are there?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

6. Nico is 7 years old. He has 47 toy cars. He gives 19 away. How many toy cars does he have left?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

7. Rosa has 24 fewer shells than Theo. Rosa has 39 shells. How many shells does Theo have?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out

8. Lin baked 36 muffins. She baked some more. Now she has 50. How many more did she bake?

☐ add to ☐ take from ☐ parts and total ☐ compare

work it out



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Word problem work mat use it with any problem • slide it into a sheet protector

1. What happens? tell it in your own words

2. What is the question?

3. Which numbers matter? cross out the ones you don't need

4. Draw it

Which kind?

- ☐ add to
- ☐ take from
- ☐ parts and total
- ☐ compare

5. Write the story

circle + or -

_____ $\begin{matrix} + & - \end{matrix}$ _____ = _____

6. Two steps?

Step 1

Step 2

7. Answer with a label Does it make sense? Is that what the question asked?

☐

Some classes use CUBES. Circle the numbers and underline the question here too. Instead of boxing key words, say what happens.



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Answer key for grown-ups

Page 3: addition

- p3 · 1. $34 + 25 = ?$, so 59 pages
p3 · 2. $? - 14 = 31$, and $31 + 14 = 45$, so 45 marbles
p3 · 3. $? - 16 = 41$, and $41 + 16 = 57$, so 57 stamps
p3 · 4. $38 + 27 = ?$, so 65 people
p3 · 5. $47 + 36 = ?$, so 83 blocks
p3 · 6. $29 + 17 = ?$, so 46 cards

Page 4: subtraction

- p4 · 1. $68 - 25 = ?$, so 43 apples
p4 · 2. $34 + ? = 57$, and $57 - 34 = 23$, so 23 kids
p4 · 3. $52 + ? = 79$, and $79 - 52 = 27$, so 27 points
p4 · 4. $? + 18 = 52$, and $52 - 18 = 34$, so 34 books
p4 · 5. $82 - 47 = ?$, so 35 balloons
p4 · 6. $36 + ? = 61$, and $61 - 36 = 25$, so 25 shells

Page 5: compare

- p5 · 1. "more" · $23 + ? = 45$, and $45 - 23 = 22$,
so 22 beads
p5 · 2. "fewer" · $31 + ? = 64$, and $64 - 31 = 33$,
so 33 berries
p5 · 3. "more" · $27 + 14 = ?$, so 41 toy cars
p5 · 4. ★ wrong way · $? - 19 = 36$, and $36 + 19 = 55$,
so 55 pens
p5 · 5. "fewer" · $72 - 25 = ?$, so 47 stickers
p5 · 6. ★ wrong way · $? + 16 = 40$, and
 $40 - 16 = 24$, so 24 laps

Page 6: two steps

- p6 · 1. $8 + 6 = 14$, then $14 + 3 = 17$, so 17 pencils
p6 · 2. $9 - 4 = 5$, then $5 + 6 = 11$, so 11 grapes
p6 · 3. $6 + 3 = 9$, then $6 + 9 = 15$, so 15 crayons
p6 · 4. $16 - 5 = 11$, then $11 - 3 = 8$, so 8 cookies
p6 · 5. $24 + 30 = 54$, then $54 - 12 = 42$,
so 42 books
p6 · 6. $45 - 12 = 33$, then $33 - 14 = 19$, so 19 stickers

Page 7: length and money

- p7 · 1. $28 + ? = 45$, and $45 - 28 = 17$, so 17 inches
p7 · 2. $14 + 9 = ?$, so 23 centimeters
p7 · 3. $80 - 35 = ?$, so 45 centimeters
p7 · 4. $34 + 10 + 5 = ?$, so 49¢
p7 · 5. $50 - 35 = ?$, so \$15
p7 · 6. $50 + ? = 75$, and $75 - 50 = 25$, so 25¢

Page 8: mixed

- p8 · 1. add to · $52 + 16 = ?$, so 68 beads
p8 · 2. parts and total · $40 + ? = 85$, and
 $85 - 40 = 45$, so 45 kids
p8 · 3. take from · $63 - 21 = ?$, so 42 stamps
p8 · 4. compare · $33 + ? = 58$, and $58 - 33 = 25$,
so 25 marbles
p8 · 5. parts and total · cross out 4 · $26 + 18 = ?$,
so 44 cows and pigs
p8 · 6. take from · cross out 7 · $47 - 19 = ?$,
so 28 toy cars
p8 · 7. compare · $? - 24 = 39$, and $39 + 24 = 63$,
so 63 shells
p8 · 8. add to · $36 + ? = 50$, and $50 - 36 = 14$,
so 14 muffins

Page 1, both parts: any two numbers that make 55.

Page 2 has its answers on the poster. Page 9 is a blank mat.



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