

# Problem-Solving Strategy Poster

Follow these four steps every time you face a challenging math problem. Based on Polya's proven method.

**1 UNDERSTAND**  
Read the problem twice. Circle key numbers and information. Underline what you are being asked to find. Restate the question in your own words.

**2 PLAN**  
Choose a strategy: draw a picture, make a list, write an equation, simplify the problem, or guess and check. Estimate what a reasonable answer would be.

**3 SOLVE**  
Show all your work step by step. Label each step clearly. Check your units. Keep your work organized so you can review it later.

**4 REFLECT**  
Does the answer make sense? Is it close to your estimate? Check by substituting your answer back into the original problem.

## Common Strategies Toolbox

**Draw a picture:** Visualize the problem with a diagram or sketch

**Make a table:** Organize data to find patterns

**Look for patterns:** Try small cases and look for a rule

**Work backwards:** Start from the answer and reverse the steps

**Simplify:** Try an easier version of the problem first

Getting stuck is part of learning. The difference between good and great math students is having a strategy when you do not know what to do next.