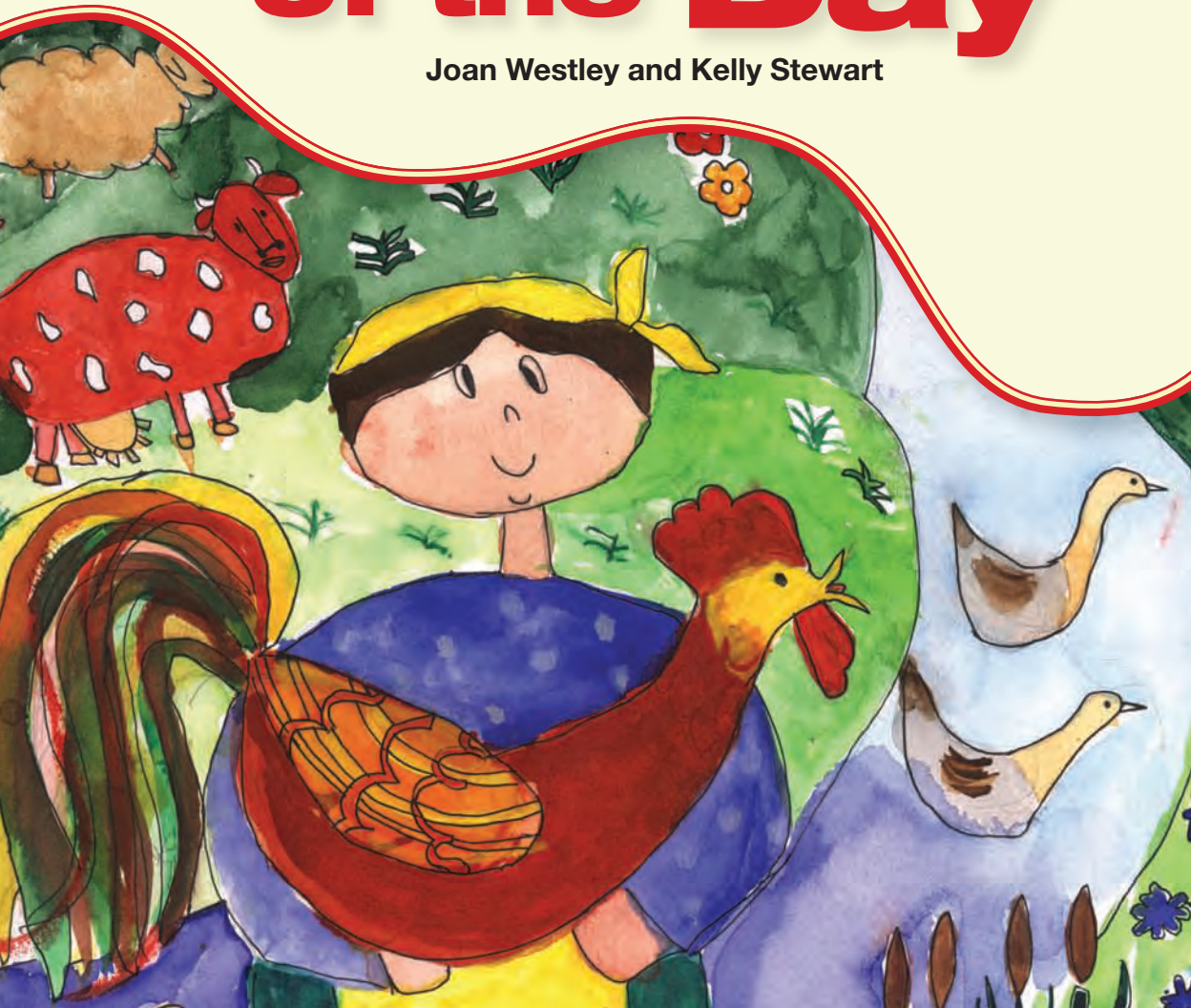


Primary Concepts®

Word Problem of the Day

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Word Problem of the Day

Word problems are a terrific way to build comprehension skills. Teachers have long recognized that when children solve word problems, their biggest stumbling block is often not the math computation but understanding the problem. Learning to understand problems should begin early, as young as kindergarten.

Word Problem of the Day is a unique approach to problem solving because it presents problems that focus on language skills rather than on math skills. The problems follow the typical word problem format, but children need only the most rudimentary math skills to solve them. Unlike many word problems in math texts, children must really listen to the wording of these problems in order to solve them. Simply taking the numbers and performing the operation that they are studying is not sufficient. The focus is exclusively on making meaning from the story. Children must pay careful attention to details, visualize the situation, and solve the problem.

Getting Started

Beginning with the first word problem, introduce a problem a day to your class. All the word problems in the book involve the Wordly family, just an ordinary family that faces ordinary problems that have ordinary solutions. (If you have been using the vocabulary-building series *Word of the Day*, your students are already acquainted with the Wordlys.)

Use questions like those in the Talk About It section to help children understand the problem and relate it to their personal lives and prior knowledge. Clarify any vocabulary words that children are having difficulty understanding. Commonly misunderstood words are italicized. Reread the word problem as necessary.

Then introduce the strategy for solving the problem. The *Word Problem of the Day* strategies, which are listed on the next page, will prove useful for all kinds of comprehension situations. The emphasis is on visualizing the story and making the situation come alive for the children. Again, you will need to reread the word problem as

children use the strategy to solve the problem. On page 90, you will find a list of the pages where each strategy occurs.

Act It Out

Find a Pattern

Make a Model

Show It

Do It

Make a List

Picture It

Use Symbols

After children have settled on a solution, reread the problem one last time, rewording it as necessary and connecting the answer back to the problem.

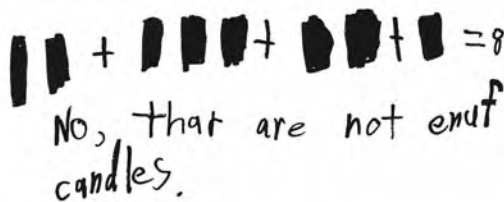
Extending the Learning

Every once in a while, put the book aside and invite the children to make up their own problems. Have the children present their problems to the class to solve. Use the children's problems for the Word Problem of the Day rather than the ones in this book.

Performance Assessment

Scattered throughout the sequence of lessons are performance assessment opportunities. Performance Assessment problems give teachers the chance to monitor how well individual children are progressing. Are they able to solve problems on their own? The problems chosen for Performance Assessment do not involve new vocabulary, and children can solve them in many different ways.

Introduce these word problems in the same way as you do the others, but let the children pick their own problem solving strategies. Have students show their thinking with pictures and words.



Mother's Day

Word Problem

The Wordly children want to make a colorful bouquet for Mother's Day. They pick a red flower. They pick two yellow flowers. They pick a purple flower. They can't find any orange flowers to pick. For green, they find a leaf.

How many flowers do they pick?

Talk About It

- ✦ What is a bouquet?
- ✦ Do the children pick an orange flower? Do they pick a green flower?
- ✦ Are we trying to figure out how many different colors the children use in the colorful bouquet? What question are we trying to answer?

Picture It *Materials: paper and crayons or markers*

Draw a picture of the bouquet. Count the flowers.

Solution

The Wordly children pick four flowers in all (one red flower, two yellow flowers, and one purple flower).

The Penny Jar

Word Problem

The Wordlys decided to keep a *penny* jar. When the jar was full, they would give the money to charity. On the first day, the oldest Wordly boy put in three pennies. Mrs. Wordly put in two pennies. Mr. Wordly had only one penny to put in the jar. No one else had any pennies.

How many pennies were in the penny jar at the end of the first day?

Talk About It

- ✦ Why did the Wordlys have a penny jar?
- ✦ Are we trying to find out how many pennies the Wordlys will give to charity? What are we trying to find out?

Show It *Materials: counters or pennies*

Use counters to show the pennies. Count out three pennies, then two pennies, then one penny. Then count the total.

Solution

There were six pennies in the penny jar at the end of the first day.

A New Friend

Word Problem

A new friend of one of the Wordly boys came over after school one day. Mrs. Wordly introduced herself and asked him his name. He said, “My name has three letters. The *last* letter is *M*. The *first* letter is the *third* letter in the alphabet. The *second* letter is the first letter in the alphabet.” Mrs. Wordly said, “I’ll have to write that down!”

What is the boy’s name?

Talk About It

- ✦ How many letters are in the boy’s name? (three)
- ✦ What is the first letter of the alphabet? second? third?

Do It *Materials: paper and pencil*

Write the letters of the boy’s name.

Solution

The first letter is *C*, the second letter is *A*, and the third letter is *M*. His name is Cam.

Planning a Party

Word Problem

The Wordlys were planning a party. Mrs. Wordly said, “We must invite Grandma Wordly, of course. Uncle Jim can bring her. Let’s invite the *twins*, too.” Mr. Wordly thought about it and said, “I think that’s *too many* people. We have only four extra chairs.”

Are there *enough* chairs?

Talk About It

- ✦ How can we figure out how many guests Mrs. Wordly is inviting?
- ✦ Mrs. Wordly wants to invite the twins. How many is that?
- ✦ How many people would be too many? Why?
- ✦ Could there be more than enough chairs? What does *more than enough* mean?

Use Symbols Materials: paper and pencil

Draw a square to represent each chair. On each chair, mark an X for each guest.



Solution

There are enough chairs. Four guests are coming, and there are four extra chairs.

Mr. Wordly Cleans House

Word Problem

Mr. Wordly was cleaning the house. *First*, he cleaned the living room. *Next*, he cleaned his office. *After* that, he cleaned the bathroom. Then he decided to have lunch in the kitchen. When Mrs. Wordly came home, Mr. Wordly told her he had made a lot of progress.

How many rooms had Mr. Wordly cleaned?

Talk About It

- ✧ How can we keep track of how many rooms Mr. Wordly cleaned?
- ✧ Why did he stop? (for lunch)
- ✧ Did Mr. Wordly clean the kitchen? (no)

Make a List *Materials: paper and pencil*

Make a list of each room Mr. Wordly cleaned. Count the number of rooms.

Solution

Mr. Wordly cleaned three rooms (living room, office, and bathroom).

A Fear of Heights

Word Problem

Mrs. Wordly is afraid of heights. She doesn't like to climb ladders, but one day she decided to try. The ladder she used had only five steps. When she got to the *third* step, she said to herself, "I think I'm *halfway* there."

Is Mrs. Wordly right?

Talk About It

- ✦ What is Mrs. Wordly afraid of?
- ✦ What does *halfway there* mean?
- ✦ If she is halfway to the top, can there be *more* steps *above* her than *below* her?

Picture It *Materials: paper and pencil*

Draw a ladder with five steps. Mark the step that Mrs. Wordly is on. How many steps are above her? How many steps are below her?

Solution

Yes, Mrs. Wordly is halfway to the top.

Line Dancing

Word Problem

One of the Wordly girls is learning how to line dance. In line dancing, the boys and girls need to *pair* up. At one line dancing class, there were seven girls and five boys.

How many *more* girls than boys were there?

Talk About It

- ✦ Are we trying to find out how many boys and girls there were in all? What is the question?
- ✦ If there were the *same* number of girls as boys, how many girls would there be? (five)

Act It Out

Let's count out boys and girls to represent the children in the class. These children can stand in front of the classroom and pair up for line dancing. How many pairs are there? How many girls are left?

Solution

There were two more girls than boys.

Performance Assessment

Word Problem

The youngest Wordly girl collects small, bouncy balls. She keeps her balls in an old peanut butter jar. So far, she has two blue, one red, three green, and two yellow balls. She really wants a glow-in-the dark ball!

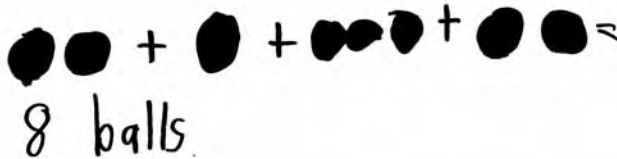
How many bouncy balls does the Wordly girl have?

Talk About It

- ✦ What does the Wordly girl collect? Do you collect anything?
- ✦ Does she have a glow-in-the dark ball?
- ✦ Are we trying to find how many different colors of balls the Wordly girl has? What is the question?

Solve It *Materials: paper and crayons or markers*

Use pictures and words to show your answer.



Solution

The Wordly girl has eight bouncy balls.

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