

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part I: Lining Up the Basic Strategies	7
Chapter 1: Getting Comfortable with Math Speak	9
Chapter 2: Planning Your Attack on a Word Problem	21
Chapter 3: Coordinating the Units	29
Chapter 4: Stepping through the Problem	41
Part II: Taking Charge of the Math	51
Chapter 5: Deciding On the Operation	53
Chapter 6: Improving Your Percentages	69
Chapter 7: Making Things Proportional	87
Chapter 8: Figuring the Probability and Odds	101
Chapter 9: Counting Your Coins	117
Chapter 10: Formulating a Plan with Formulas	127
Part III: Tackling Word Problems from Algebra	145
Chapter 11: Solving Basic Number Problems	147
Chapter 12: Charting Consecutive Integers	159
Chapter 13: Writing Equations Using Algebraic Language	173
Chapter 14: Improving the Quality and Quantity of Mixture Problems	187
Chapter 15: Feeling Your Age with Age Problems	201
Chapter 16: Taking the Time to Work on Distance	213
Chapter 17: Being Systematic with Systems of Equations	229
Part IV: Taking the Shape of Geometric Word Problems	249
Chapter 18: Plying Pythagoras	251
Chapter 19: Going around in Circles with Perimeter and Area	265
Chapter 20: Volumizing and Improving Your Surface	287
Part V: The Part of Tens	305
Chapter 21: Ten Classic Brainteasers	307
Chapter 22: Ten Unlikely Mathematicians	315
Index	323

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

About This Book	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
What You're Not to Read	2
Foolish Assumptions	2
How This Book Is Organized	3
Part I: Lining Up the Basic Strategies	3
Part II: Taking Charge of the Math	4
Part III: Tackling Word Problems from Algebra	4
Part IV: Taking the Shape of Geometric Word Problems	4
Part V: The Part of Tens	4
Icons Used in This Book	5
Where to Go from Here	5

Part 1: Lining Up the Basic Strategies 7

Chapter 1: Getting Comfortable with Math Speak 9

Latching onto the Lingo	9
Defining types of numbers	10
Gauging the geometric	11
Formulating financials	13
Interpreting the Operations	14
Naming the results	14
Assigning the variables	15
Aligning symbols and word forms	15
Drawing a Picture	16
Visualizing relationships	16
Labeling accurately	17
Constructing a Table or Chart	18
Finding the values	18
Increasing in steps	19

Chapter 2: Planning Your Attack on a Word Problem 21

Singling Out the Question	21
Wading through the swamp of information	22
Going to the end	23
Organizing the Facts, Ma'am, Just the Facts	23
Eliminating the unneeded	24
Doing the chores in order	24

Estimating an Answer to Check for Sense	26
Guessing an answer	26
Doing a reality check	27
Chapter 3: Coordinating the Units	29
Choosing the Best Measure	29
Using miles instead of inches	30
Working with square feet instead of square yards	31
Converting from One Measure to Another	31
Changing linear measures	32
Adjusting area and volume	33
Keeping It All in English Units	34
Comparing measures with unlikely equivalences	34
Loving you a bushel and a peck	37
Mixing It Up with Measures	38
Matching metric with metric	38
Changing from metric to English	39
Changing from English to metric	40
Chapter 4: Stepping through the Problem	41
Laying Out the Steps to a Solution	41
Step 1: Determine the question	42
Step 2: Organize the information	42
Step 3: Draw a picture or make a chart	44
Step 4: Align the units	45
Step 5: Set up the operations or tasks	46
Solving the Problem	47
Step 6: Perform the operations or solving the equation	47
Step 7: Answer the question	48
Step 8: Check for accuracy and common sense	49
<i>Part II: Taking Charge of the Math</i>	<i>51</i>
Chapter 5: Deciding On the Operation	53
Does It All Add Up?	53
Determining when the sum is needed	53
Adding up two or more	54
What's the Difference — When You Subtract?	55
Deciphering the subtraction lingo	56
Subtracting for the answer	56
How Many Times Do I Have to Tell You?	57
Doing multiplication instead of repeated addition	57
Taking charge of the number of times	59

Dividing and Conquering	61
Using division instead of subtraction	61
Making use of pesky remainders	62
Mixing Up the Operations	64
Doing the operations in the correct order	65
Determining which of the many operations to use	66
Chapter 6: Improving Your Percentages	69
Relating Fractions, Decimals, and Percents	69
Changing from fractions to decimals to percents	70
Changing from percents back to fractions	73
Tackling Basic Percentage Problems	73
Looking At Percent Increase and Percent Decrease	75
Decreasing by percents	76
Making the discount count	78
Determining an increase with percents	78
Tipping the Waitress without Tipping Your Hand	80
Figuring the tip on your bill	80
Taking into account the discount	82
KISS: Keeping It Simple, Silly — with Simple Interest	83
Determining how much interest you've earned	83
Figuring out how much you need to invest	84
Chapter 7: Making Things Proportional	87
Working with the Math of Proportions	87
Solving proportions by multiplying or flipping	88
Going every which way with reducing	88
Dividing Things Up Equitably	90
Splitting things between two people unevenly	90
Figuring each person's share	91
Comparing the proportions for differing amounts of money	92
Comparing Apples and Oranges	94
Determining the amounts in recipes	94
Figuring out weighted averages	96
Computing Medicinal Doses Using Proportions	98
Figuring the tablets for doses	98
Making the weight count	99
Chapter 8: Figuring the Probability and Odds	101
Defining and Computing Probability	101
Counting up parts of things for probability	102
Using probability to determine sums and numbers	105
Predicting the Outcomes	109
Predicting using empirical probabilities	110
Using theoretical probabilities	111

Figuring Out the Odds	113
Changing from probability to odds and back again	114
Making the odds work for you	114
Chapter 9: Counting Your Coins	117
Determining the Total Count	117
Equating different money amounts	117
Adding it all up	118
Working Out the Denominations of Coins	120
Having the total and figuring out the coins	120
Going with choices of coins and bills	123
Figuring Coins from around the World	124
Making change in another country	124
Converting other currency to U.S. dollars	125
Chapter 10: Formulating a Plan with Formulas	127
Solving for the Formula Amount	127
Inserting the values correctly for area and perimeter formulas	128
Using the correct order of operations when simplifying formulas	130
Delving into a Formula and Its Input	132
Taking an answer and finding the question	133
Comparing several inputs resulting in the same output	134
Going the Distance with Formulas	136
Solving for distance traveled	137
Solving for rate or time	140
Testing the Temperature of Your Surroundings	142
Changing from Fahrenheit to Celsius	142
Changing from Celsius to Fahrenheit	143
Cooling off with Newton's Law	143
 Part III: Tackling Word Problems from Algebra	 145
Chapter 11: Solving Basic Number Problems	147
Writing Equations Using Number Manipulations	147
Changing from words to math expressions	148
Solving equations involving one number	148
Comparing Two Numbers in a Problem	150
Looking at the bigger, the smaller, and the multiple	150
Varying the problems with variation	152
Squaring Off Using Quadratic Equations	154
Doubling your pleasure, doubling your fun	155
Disposing of the nonanswers	157

Chapter 12: Charting Consecutive Integers	159
Adding Up Sets of Consecutives	159
Writing the list algebraically	160
Reconstructing a list	161
Writing up sums and solving them	161
Looking At Consecutive Multiples	162
Working with evens and odds	162
Expanding to larger multiples	163
Operating on consecutive integers	164
Finding Sums of Sequences of Integers	166
Setting the stage for the sums	166
Finding the sums of consecutive integers	168
Applying Consecutive Integers	169
Adding up building blocks	169
Finding enough seats	170
Laying bricks for a stairway	171
Chapter 13: Writing Equations Using Algebraic Language	173
Assigning the Variable	174
Getting the answer directly from the variable	174
Adding a step to get the answer	176
Writing Operations and Using Sentence Structure	177
Making the most of addition	178
Subtracting and multiplying solutions	179
Dividing and conquering	180
Tackling an earlier problem	181
Solving for Answers from Algebraic Solutions	181
Comparing the types of algebraic expressions	182
Checking to see if a solution is an answer	185
Chapter 14: Improving the Quality and Quantity of Mixture Problems	187
Standardizing Quality Times Quantity	187
Mixing It Up with Mixtures	188
Improving the concentration of antifreeze	188
Watering down the wine	191
Mixing up insecticide	191
Counting on the Money	192
Determining how many of each denomination	193
Making a marketable mixture of candy	195
Running a concession stand	196
Being Interested in Earning Interest	198
Making your investment work for you	198
Determining how much is needed for the future	200

Chapter 15: Feeling Your Age with Age Problems	201
Doing Age Comparisons	201
Warming up to age	202
Making age an issue	203
Going Back and Forth into the Future and the Past	204
Looking to the future	204
Going back in time	206
Facing Some Challenges of Age	208
Chapter 16: Taking the Time to Work on Distance	213
Summing Up the Distances	213
Meeting somewhere in the middle	214
Making a beeline	216
Equating the Distances Traveled	217
Making it a matter of time	218
Speeding things up a bit	219
Solving for the distance	221
Working It Out with Work Problems	223
Incoming and Outgoing	226
Chapter 17: Being Systematic with Systems of Equations	229
Writing Two Equations and Substituting	229
Solving systems by substitution	230
Working with numbers and amounts of coins	231
Figuring out the purchases of fast food	232
Breaking Even and Making a Profit	234
Finding the break-even point	234
Determining the profit	236
Mixing It Up with Mixture Problems	237
Gassing up at the station	237
Backtracking for all the answers	238
Making Several Comparisons with More Than Two Equations	239
Picking flowers for a bouquet	239
Coming up with a game plan for solving systems of equations	240
Solving Systems of Quadratic Equations	243
Counting on number problems	243
Picking points on circles	245

Part IV: Taking the Shape of Geometric Word Problems **249**

Chapter 18: Plying Pythagoras	251
Finding the Height of an Object	252
Determining the height of a tree	252
Sighting a tower atop a mountain	253
Finding the height of a window	254

Determining Distances between Planes	255
Working with the distance apart	255
Taking into account the wind blowing	256
Figuring Out Where to Land the Boat	256
Conserving distance	257
Considering rate and time	258
Placing Things Fairly and Economically	261
Watching the Tide Drift Away	263

Chapter 19: Going around in Circles with Perimeter and Area . . . 265

Keeping the Cows in the Pasture	265
Working with a set amount of fencing	265
Aiming for a needed area	267
Getting the Most Out of Your Resources	269
Triangulating the area	269
Squaring off with area	270
Taking the hex out with a hexagon	271
Coming full circle with area	272
Putting in a Walk-Around	272
Determining the area around the outside	273
Adding up for the entire area	274
Creating a Poster	275
Starting with a certain amount of print	276
Working with a particular poster size	278
Shedding the Light on a Norman Window	279
Maximizing the amount of light	279
Making the window proportional	280
Fitting a Rectangular Peg into a Round Hole	281
Putting rectangles into circles	281
Working with coordinate axes	283

Chapter 20: Volumizing and Improving Your Surface 287

The Pictures Speak Volumes	287
Boxing up rectangular prisms	288
Venturing out with pyramids	289
Dropping eaves with trapezoidal prisms	291
Mailing triangular prisms	293
Folding Up the Sides for an Open Box	294
Following Postal Regulations	296
Finding the right size	296
Maximizing the possible volume	298
Making the Most of a 12-Ounce Can	299
Filling a cylindrical tank	299
Economizing with the surface area	300
Piling It On with a Conical Sand Pile	302

Part V: The Part of Tens*305*Chapter 21: Ten Classic Brainteasers307**

Three Pirates on an Island	307
Letter Arithmetic	308
Pouring 4 Quarts	309
Magic Square	310
Getting Her Exercise	310
Liar, Liar	311
Weighing Nine Nuggets	311
Where Did the Dollar Go?	312
How Many Weights?	313
Transporting a Fox, a Goose, and Corn	313

Chapter 22: Ten Unlikely Mathematicians315

Pythagoras	315
Napoleon Bonaparte	316
René Descartes	316
President James A. Garfield	317
Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll)	317
M. C. Escher	318
Sir Isaac Newton	318
Marilyn vos Savant	319
Leonardo da Vinci	320
Martin Gardner	320

***Index*323**