

## Two-Step Word Problems

A two-step problem needs two operations: do one, write the result, then do the next. The hardest part is figuring out which two operations.

### Key Concepts

1. A **two-step problem** requires you to do two calculations to find the final answer.
2. Decide what *Step 1* is by asking: “What can I figure out from the numbers the problem gives me?”
3. Use the answer to Step 1 as a starting point for Step 2.
4. Write down each step’s result before moving on. Don’t try to keep both numbers in your head.


### Worked Examples

① Sam has 3 bags of 6 apples. He eats 4. How many are left?

 Step 1: total apples to start. Equal groups:  $3 \times 6 = 18$ . Step 2: subtract the eaten ones.  $18 - 4 = 14$ . Sam has 14 apples left.

 **Answer:** 14 apples

② Lily had 25 stickers. She got 15 more, then gave 8 away. How many now?

 Step 1: add what she got.  $25 + 15 = 40$ . Step 2: subtract what she gave away.  $40 - 8 = 32$ . Lily has 32 stickers now.

 **Answer:** 32 stickers

③ There are 4 rows of 7 chairs. 5 more chairs are added. How many in all?

 Step 1: chairs in the rows. Array:  $4 \times 7 = 28$ . Step 2: add the new chairs.  $28 + 5 = 33$ . There are 33 chairs in all.

 **Answer:** 33 chairs

### Practice Problems

Find each answer in two steps.

1. 5 packs of 8, eat 7: left? \_\_\_\_\_

2.  $45 + 30 - 18 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

3. 3 rows of 9, add 6: total? \_\_\_\_\_

4.  $100 - 35 + 12 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

5. 4 bags of 5 plus 15 more: ? \_\_\_\_\_

6.  $60 - 24 + 9 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

7.  $6 \times 7$  then subtract 20: ? \_\_\_\_\_

8.  $50 + 27 - 38 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

9.  $8 \times 4$  then add 13: ? \_\_\_\_\_

10.  $72 - 19 + 25 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

11. 7 groups of 3 minus 5: ? \_\_\_\_\_

12.  $36 + 48 - 29 = ?$  \_\_\_\_\_

**Study Tips**

- 👉 Always write Step 1's answer down before starting Step 2. Re-using numbers from memory is where two-step problems go wrong.
- 👉 If the problem mentions "each" or "rows," that step is usually multiplication. "Add," "more," "gave away," "ate," or "sold" point to addition or subtraction.
- 👉 At the end, re-read the question. Make sure your final answer is what it's actually asking for.

**Word Problems**

1. A class has 30 students. 8 went on a field trip and the rest split into 2 equal teams for a game. How many students are on each team?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Emma bought 4 packs of markers with 6 markers each. She already had 7 markers at home. How many markers does she have now?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Key — with Friendly Explanations****Practice Problems**

1. Step 1:  $5 \times 8 = 40$ . Step 2:  $40 - 7 = 33$ .

 **Answer:** 33

2.  $45 + 30 = 75$ , then  $75 - 18 = 57$ .

 **Answer:** 57

3. Step 1:  $3 \times 9 = 27$ . Step 2:  $27 + 6 = 33$ .

 **Answer:** 33

4.  $100 - 35 = 65$ , then  $65 + 12 = 77$ .

 **Answer:** 77

5. Step 1:  $4 \times 5 = 20$ . Step 2:  $20 + 15 = 35$ .

 **Answer:** 35

6.  $60 - 24 = 36$ , then  $36 + 9 = 45$ .

 **Answer:** 45

7. Step 1:  $6 \times 7 = 42$ . Step 2:  $42 - 20 = 22$ .

 **Answer:** 22

8.  $50 + 27 = 77$ , then  $77 - 38 = 39$ .

 **Answer:** 39

9. Step 1:  $8 \times 4 = 32$ . Step 2:  $32 + 13 = 45$ .

 **Answer:** 45

10.  $72 - 19 = 53$ , then  $53 + 25 = 78$ .

 **Answer:** 78

11. Step 1:  $7 \times 3 = 21$ . Step 2:  $21 - 5 = 16$ .

 **Answer:** 16

12.  $36 + 48 = 84$ , then  $84 - 29 = 55$ .

 **Answer:** 55

**Word Problems**

1.  $30 - 8 = 22$ , then  $22 \div 2 = 11$  per team.

 **Answer:** 11 *students*

2.  $4 \times 6 = 24$ , then  $24 + 7 = 31$ .

 **Answer:** 31 *markers*

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