Math Word Problems – How To Quickly And Easily Create Your Own

Math word problems are a great way to get
your students to practice using math in everyday situations.
Use these ideas and you will be able to create your own.

Shopping

List the objects and their prices and ask how much the shopper has spent.

"Jake is having a party and plans to buy the following:
6 bags of chips @ $3.00 each
5 bottles of lemonade @ $2.50 each
1 dozen cupcakes @ 50 cents each
1 dozen sausage rolls @ 20 cents each
1 box of birthday candles @ $2.00
and 1 birthday cake @ $10.00
How much will Jake spend?

This type of problem can be easily extended by adding a limit of money.
Jake only has $40. How much more does he need?

It can also be extended by including other people.
Melissa and Adam said that they would help pay for the food. How much will the party food cost each person?

Here are some other shopping subjects to explore:
Clothes -jeans, jumpers, t-shirts, socks, shoes, pajamas, hats
Toys - marbles, yo-yos, balls, blocks, cars, dinosaurs, dolls
Food - vegetables, fruit, party food, barbecue food
Gardening - tools, potting mix, pots, fertilizer, seedlings
Pets - food, bedding, worming tablets, feeding bowl, brush
Hairdresser - haircut, hair dye, shampoo, conditioner, brush
School - pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, books, glue, eraser

Getting paid for work

List the tasks completed and the rate of pay.

Derick mows lawns. This week he mowed Mr Thompson's lawn for $20, Mrs Green's for $30, Mr Jacobson's for $15 and Mr Abbot's for $20. How much did he make?

The problem can be easily extended by adding a goal.

Derick is saving to buy a motorbike. How many weeks will he have to mow lawns to buy a $1000 motorbike?

Here are some other "getting paid for work" subjects to explore.
Delivering newspapers – 3 in James Road, 5 in Queen Street...
Feeding animals – cats $3 per day for 12 days, dog $4 per day
Baby sitting – $8 per hour for 3 hours on Tuesday.......
Fast food restaurant - $15 per hour/20 hours/10% tax

Time

List the tasks that need to be done and the amount of time each one takes.

Andrew has to leave his house and 8:30 am to get to work at 9:00 am.

It takes him

15 minutes to shower,

15 minutes to shave and brush his teeth,

20 minutes to get dressed,

20 minutes to make and eat breakfast,

10 minutes to make lunch and

10 minutes to feed his two dogs.

What time does Andrew need to get up to be ready to leave at 8:30 am

This type of problem can be easily extended by including a delay (late train/traffic jam).

If Andrew's train was 15 minutes late, what time would he get to work?

Here are some other time subjects to explore:

Catching a plane: give keys to neighbor, feed animals, drive to airport, check car in car park, check...

Meeting for the movies: walk home from school/do chores/buy snacks/walk to movies-which session?

Late night out: show finished at 10:30, had coffee, drove Alice home, drove Mick home, bought petrol..

Car repairs: mechanic spent 30 minutes on safety check, 45 minutes grease and oil, 2 hours brake pad..

Exercising: 30 mins Monday, 25 minutes Tuesday, 45 minutes Wednesday, 0 mins Thursday, 15 mins...

Photocopying : It takes 15 seconds to photocopy 1 sheet. How long will it take to do 30? 50? 120?

In Business

List what is being sold, its cost and the numbers sold.

The school cake stall sold 320 cupcakes on the day of the fete. Each cupcake cost $1.20. How much money should they have at the end of the day?

This can be extended by including the issue of cost.

If each cupcake cost 20 cents to produce, how much profit did they make?

Here are some other business subjects to explore:

Bead bracelet - sold 55 bracelets at $4.50/20 beads per bracelet - beads cost 5 cents each - profit?

Sheep Farmer - 22 000 sheep sheared. Shearing costs $5 - Wool sold for $50 per coat - profit?

Pumpkin Farmer - 10 000 (kg or lbs) of pumpkin - sold for $3 per (kg or lbs) - 10% rotten - profit?

Market Stall - sold 50 lots of 3 for $10 (jam) and 22 individual jars for $4 - money taken?

Coconut Farmer - 20 per box-box sold for $10 per box-5000 coconuts - money taken?