

GETTING UNSTUCK

What to do next when you don't know what to do next!

Have you ever tried to open a jar but no matter HOW HARD you try, the lid won't budge? When that happens to me, I have certain go-to moves: I run the jar under hot water, I put on a rubber glove for super non-slip grip, or I use the back of a spoon to tap the lid. Well, math is like that jar. There are tricks you can use to pop things open. When I can't figure out how to solve a math problem or go blank on a test, I reach for these tools to get unstuck. Remember, it's normal to feel stumped — that's a part of learning something new. Sometimes all you need is a little nudge to get your math brain loosened up!

#1: Call a friend If you're super stuck on a homework question, help is just a phone call away! Your WHOLE CLASS has to do the same question, so someone will probably know what's going on. Call a friend and ask them to explain things. Talk it out! Sometimes you just need to hear someone else explain it for things to start making sense.

#2: Get the picture Are you the type of person who learns better if you can picture it — like, with an actual picture? A lot of kids are! If that's you, just start drawing stuff. Read what your question is saying and see if you can turn it



into something visual. Make a diagram, sketch a shape or use different colours to organize the info from the question. Being able to visualize things might just make a light bulb go on in your brain!

#3: Be a detective It can feel really frustrating to get stuck on a math question at home. But there's a BIG chance the clues to solving it are somewhere close — like in your backpack! Dig out your textbook, worksheets and notes from class and have a closer look. Usually teachers give you questions based on what they taught in class. The help you need might be RIGHT THERE. Look for a question like the one you're stuck on and see if you can find any hints about how to solve it. You got this, Sherlock!



#4: Make a math sundae Stay with me here! When you make a sundae, first you scoop in the ice cream. Then you put on the hot fudge sauce. Then the nuts and toppings. Then the whipped cream. And THEN the cherry. Without the ice-cream foundation at the bottom, the whole thing falls apart! Math is like that too. Let's say you're trying to do long division, but you forget your multiplication facts. They're the foundation! It would be very hard for you to do that division question without knowing them. You may need to hit the pause button on your current topic and relearn some lessons from previous units or even from your previous year. Get some help with those, then get ready to build the best math sundae EVER!

#5: Ask your fave teacher If you're feeling stumped, asking your fave teacher is SUCH a great idea because they are actual experts in explaining things. If your teacher isn't around to ask right away, circle the question or put a sticky note next to it so you can easily find it when you do get a chance to talk to them. If you're feeling scared, don't worry. Teachers are there TO HELP YOU! Asking questions lets them know that you care and want to learn, and that's music to a teacher's ears!

#6: Talk it out! If you just can't understand how to do a question, speak out! Pretend you're explaining it to your BFF or grab a stuffie and give it a mini math lesson. Read the question out loud and just start talking! What is it asking you to do, in your OWN words? What are some things that come to mind that can help you start solving the problem? What are some things you've already tried, and why didn't they work? You might find that a new idea pops into your head. Use YOUR voice and let it lead the way!



#7: Get up – literally You may not believe me, but sometimes doing math while you're standing up CHANGES EVERYTHING. Stand-up desks are totally a thing! Try working at the kitchen counter or ask an adult to help you build a raised area on your desk. Or skip the desk and tape the biggest piece of paper you can find to a wall so that you can write on it. You can even next-level it by jogging on the spot while rocking your math questions.

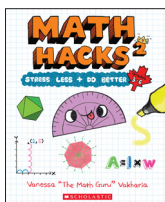


#8: Highlight the way Highlighters are one of my FAVOURITE math tools! Sometimes you might get stuck on figuring out what a question is asking you to do. Use your highlighters for key words and numbers in the question. Now see if you can figure out what the relationship between those words and numbers is! Using different colours might help you see what numbers go with what words in the question. Have a few highlighters in your pencil case at all times so you can pull 'em out whenever you need to!



#9: Thumbs-up for screen time Even if you have a great teacher, sometimes you might need a little extra help understanding a math lesson. The internet is there to help! There are a TON of videos, worksheets and pictures about every single math topic out there. There are also a TON of questions in case you want to get really, REALLY good with extra practice. Ask an adult to help you get online, type your math question into a search engine, and watch the magic unfold!

For more helpful tips, see:



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