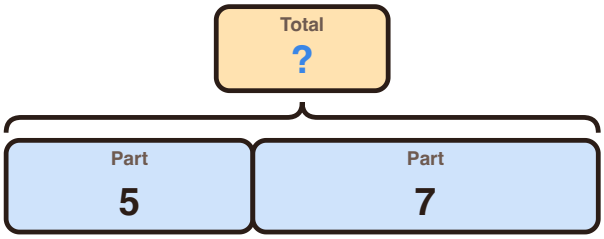
Four pictures for word problems

Before solving a word problem, children in grades 2 and 3 do best when they first decide what kind of problem it is and draw it. Almost every one-step problem is one of these four. Put the numbers from the story in the boxes; the ? is what the question asks.

Putting together

Two parts make a total. Total missing: add. A part missing: subtract.

“I need 5 bunnies and 7 parrots. How many pets is that?”

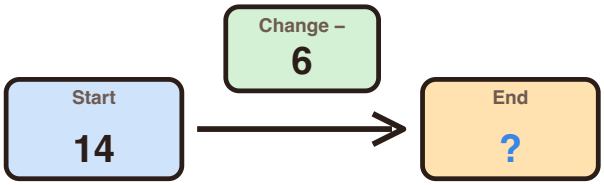


Answer: **12**

Adding to and taking from

Something starts, changes, and ends. Read which way it changed.

“I had 14 frogs and sold 6. How many frogs are left?”

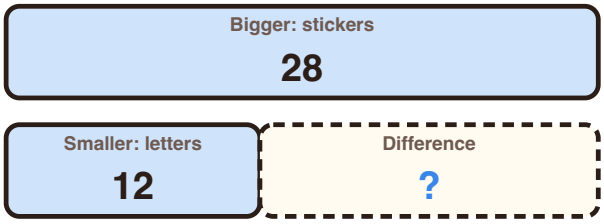


Answer: **8**

Comparing

Two amounts side by side. The gap between them is the difference.

“There are 28 stickers and 12 letters. How many more stickers are there than letters?”

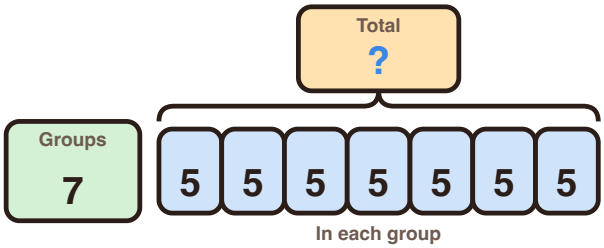


Answer: **16**

Equal groups

Groups the same size. Groups times the number in each makes the total.

“Each sheet has 5 stamps. Eli buys 7 sheets. How many stamps is that?”



Answer: **35**

For grown-ups: four steps

1. **Read the story together**, out loud if that helps. Reading is not the math.
2. **Ask which picture fits** before any adding or subtracting. Does it put two things together, change one thing, compare two things, or make equal groups?
3. **Fill the boxes** with the numbers from the story. The ? goes where the question points.
4. **Let the picture choose the operation.** A missing total adds or multiplies; a missing part, change or difference subtracts or divides.

Figure Street is a math word-problem game for grades 2 and 3: your child runs a street of shops, and every customer’s order is one of these problems. Free to try on the App Store: apps.apple.com/app/id6825498476. Free to print and share. © 2026 Bruin Labs LLC.

Your turn

Read each order. Which of the four pictures fits? Draw it, put in the numbers, then solve.

1. Priya and Finn have 14 donuts together. Priya has 9. How many does Finn have?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

2. I had 13 cupcakes. Then I got 2 more. How many cupcakes do I have now?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

3. I had 16 scones and sold 10. How many scones are left?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

4. There are 62 labels and 45 parcels. How many more labels are there than parcels?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

5. I had 17 snails. Now I have 29. How many more did I get?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

6. Finn sold 19 stickers. Zoe sold 43 more than Finn. How many did Zoe sell?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

7. 3 friends each buy 9 labels. How many labels do they buy in all?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

8. Sam shares 9 crayons equally among 3 friends. How many does each friend get?

Draw the picture here

Kind: _____ Answer: _____

Answers: 1. 5 (putting together) · 2. 15 (adding to / taking from) · 3. 6 (adding to / taking from) · 4. 17 (comparing) · 5. 12 (adding to / taking from) · 6. 62 (comparing) · 7. 27 (equal groups) · 8. 3 (equal groups)

Figure Street is a math word-problem game for grades 2 and 3: your child runs a street of shops, and every customer's order is one of these problems. Free to try on the App Store: apps.apple.com/app/id6825498476. Free to print and share. © 2026 Bruin Labs LLC.