

Story Problem Starters – Real Life Word Problems

Use these simple prompts to help your child apply math in real situations. Just change the numbers or details based on what's happening in your day!

Shopping & Budgeting

- You have \$20 to spend at the store. If apples cost \$4 and bread costs \$3, how much can you buy?
 - A toy costs \$15. If you have \$9, how much more do you need?
 - You buy 3 boxes of cereal that each cost \$3.50. What's your total?
 - If lunch costs \$6 per person, how much will it cost for 4 people?
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Cooking & Measuring

- A recipe calls for 3 cups of flour. If you already used $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups, how much more do you need?
 - You want to double a recipe that serves 4. How much do you need of each ingredient to serve 8?
 - If a cookie sheet fits 12 cookies and you made 36, how many sheets do you need?
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Home Projects

- You have 12 feet of wood and need 3 feet per shelf. How many shelves can you build?
 - You want to paint a wall that is 8 feet tall and 10 feet wide. What is the area?
 - If one roll of tape covers 6 feet and you need to wrap 18 feet of presents, how many rolls do you need?
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Travel & Time

- You leave at 3:15 p.m. and your trip takes 45 minutes. What time will you arrive?
- The gas tank holds 12 gallons. If you use 4 gallons per trip, how many trips can you make before refueling?

- If you're driving 60 miles per hour, how far do you travel in 3 hours?
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Chores & Routines

- You folded 4 loads of laundry with 8 towels each. How many towels total?
 - It takes 20 minutes to clean the kitchen and 15 minutes to vacuum. How long does it take to do both?
 - If everyone in the family washes 3 dishes, how many dishes will be done?
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Money Math

- You earn \$5 each time you help mow the lawn. How much will you earn after 6 times?
 - If you save \$2 per week, how much will you have after 10 weeks?
 - You want to buy a \$24 game and have a coupon for \$6 off. What will you pay?
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You can let your child draw the problem, act it out, or talk through it aloud. Use these prompts for fun, low-pressure thinking—and don't forget to let them create their own too!