

# Problem-Solving Vocabulary

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Here are some important words to understand about solving problems.

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| <b>alternatives</b>  | one of two or more things to choose from; choices; options<br><br>The teacher asked the students to make a list of <b>alternatives</b> for their class trip.  |
| <b>conflict</b>      | a struggle or disagreement between parties with differences in information, personal experience, values, needs, or wants<br><br>Jason ignored his brother's teasing in order to avoid further <b>conflict</b> . |
| <b>evaluate</b>      | to judge the success, value, or condition of something<br><br>Take time to <b>evaluate</b> how well you solved the problem.   |
| <b>outcome</b>       | the result or conclusion of a problem; how something ends<br><br>Louis was glad the meeting with his teacher produced a positive <b>outcome</b> .   |
| <b>perspective</b>   | a person's point of view about a situation or problem<br><br>Melissa tried to see the problem from Joe's <b>perspective</b> .   |
| <b>problem</b>       | an obstacle; an unresolved situation or question that requires a solution or answer<br><br>Brendan knew he had a <b>problem</b> when he saw water under the sink.   |
| <b>pros and cons</b> | the positive and negative aspects of something<br><br>Corey made a list of the <b>pros and cons</b> of taking the job at the grocery store.   |
| <b>resources</b>     | a source of supply or support<br><br>When faced with a problem, think of the <b>resources</b> you have to help you.   |
| <b>solution</b>      | an action or process of solving a problem; the answer to a problem<br><br>Kevin knew that organizing his desk was the best <b>solution</b> to his problem of misplacing his homework.                           |

# Four Steps to Solve Problems

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Use these four steps to solve your problems. The more you use them, the better problem-solver you'll become.

## 1. Identify the problem.

- What is the problem?
- Who owns the problem?
- State the problem in one clear sentence.

## 2. Think of solutions.

- List all the ways you could solve this problem.
- What help or resources do you need?
- Look at the pros and cons of each possible solution.

## 3. Try a solution.

- Choose the best solution.
- Plan to try that solution.
- Sequence the steps of what to do.
- Do it!

## 4. Evaluate the outcome.

- Did your solution work? Why or why not?
- What could you have done differently?
- How can you avoid a similar problem in the future?

# What's the Problem?

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➡ Read each situation. List the possible problems each situation might cause.

1. Dale has the flu. He has missed three days of school.

Possible problems

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2. Ellen loves to lie out in the sun without putting sunscreen on.

Possible problems

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3. Theo's friends have joined a gang. They're putting pressure on Theo to join.

Possible problems

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4. Kara and her little sister, Mia, fight constantly. Recently they've started hitting each other when they fight.

Possible problems

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5. Evan walks to school every day. His neighbor's dog is mean and is allowed to run loose.

Possible problems

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## What's the Problem?, *continued*

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6. Pam is in a band with some of her friends. One player is constantly late for rehearsals.

Possible problems

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7. It's very foggy outside. You notice many cars without their headlights on.

Possible problems

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8. Stefan needs a specific book from the school library for his class project today. Roland has already checked out the book Stefan needs.

Possible problems

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9. Latrice goes to school full-time and works part-time at the flower shop, the grocery store, and the gas station. Her boss at the grocery store wants her to work overtime one night a week.

Possible problems

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10. Tony has a huge test tomorrow, but he promised his dad he'd clean his room tonight.

Possible problems

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## Possible Solutions

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➔ Read each situation and identify the problem. Then list at least three possible solutions for the problem on a separate sheet of paper. Write any solution you think of, even if it may not be the one you would choose.

1. Adrian's dog, Patches, constantly chews on the furniture. Adrian's mom is getting tired of it. Today she told Adrian that Patches must shape up or get shipped out!

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Jemma borrowed Helen's necklace to wear to the dance. The next day, Jemma loaned the necklace to Stacey. It's three days later and Helen is asking Jemma for her necklace back. Jemma asks Stacey for the necklace. Stacey can't find the necklace anywhere.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Alan wants a spot on the school basketball team. Coach Clark announced the tryout date. It's the same date as Alan's sister's wedding.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. A flock of crows is creating a mess at City Hall. City Hall employees say their cars are covered with bird droppings at the end of each day. The city health inspector says it's becoming a serious health issue.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Possible Solutions, *continued*

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5. Your math teacher has a hard time controlling the students' behavior. Today she announced that everyone's grade would be lowered if the class doesn't settle down. You have an excellent grade in math.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Your little sister keeps getting into your stuff. She has some special learning difficulties, so you've tried to be tolerant, but you're starting to get mad. You came home from school today and a bunch of your CDs are missing.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Meredith never eats lunch at school anymore. She looks very thin and pale. She's even fainted a few times at school. You and your friends are worried about her.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Your neighbor works second shift and gets home after midnight. Lately he's been having loud parties each night into the early morning hours. You and your family can't sleep.

What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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