

Withhold the Question

Set the stage before starting the journey.

When presenting a word problem, begin by introducing the situation and background information. Do not provide the actual question to be answered until you are ready for students to get to work.



Why Try It



*This nudge encourages students to focus on the problem's context by momentarily withholding the question. It promotes **deliberative problem-solving skills** and keeps the class more on the same page instead of some students racing ahead of others.*

MLR 6: Three Reads

Withholding the question lets students focus first on the task's context and key details. This reduces distractions and enhances their problem-solving process.

Teacher Notes

- If the context resonates with certain students, withholding the question can affirm their experiences and backgrounds. For others, discussing the context helps build understanding to reason through the problem.
- If students still tend to work ahead (e.g., anticipating what the question will be) consider withholding values or key details as well.
- You can ask students to predict the question, but they may focus on their own ideas instead of the learning goal.



Caution

Do not spend too much time discussing the context. This is meant to be a quick routine.