As you can see, there's no such thing as a boring problem. The more creative and imaginative you are when it comes to tackling them, the better chance of success you'll have. And while doing homework assignments has always been challenging for many people, that doesn't mean we give up. Even though we may not get perfect grades on our work, we can still learn a lot from trying and failing — the very process of getting out of your comfort zone is what motivates us. So if you're feeling a little stuck while trying to solve a problem, ask yourself these three questions: • Can you break down the problem into a smaller one? This generally helps for problems that involve taking something apart and putting it back together. The key here is to treat the problem as "divide and conquer" – break the whole thing into smaller parts, solve each part, then combine them into an answer. For example, say you have a word problem that asks "A word puzzle has five words with three letters each. If the letters are scrambled, how many different four-letter words can you make?". First, convert the word problem into two smaller questions: "How many 4-letter words can you form with three letters each?" and "How many 4-letter words can you form with 5 letters and no duplicated letters?". Once we break down the problem into smaller parts, we're able to see how to solve it more clearly. And this approach works for other types of word problems as well. • Is there a pattern to the problem? Many math problems can be solved by looking for patterns or series that repeat, either throughout the whole problem or in smaller sections. Remembering what you've already done (or what someone else has previously done) can help you understand how to solve the remaining part(s) of the problem. Let's say you're solving a word problem that asks "A ladder with 3 rungs is leaning against a building. It falls over and slides down the side of the building. If the ladder is 3 meters long, how far will it slide?" To answer this problem, look for a pattern to repeat. First, you would set up the ladder with 3 rungs (3 m). Then, you would let it fall over the side of the building (let x be how far it fell over). When you go back up to your original starting position (3m), it is now leaning against the side of building (x), which represents double its original length (2x).

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