



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2007 Volume VI: Keeping the Meaning in Mathematics: The Craft of Word Problems

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## **Crafting Word Problems Even a Child Can Do**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.06.02, published September 2007

by Huwerl Thornton, Jr.

This unit covers the structure of addition and subtraction math word problems. It analyzes the different ways that addition and subtraction word problems can be created. The unit looks at how word problems strike fear in the hearts of many people and how teachers can help their students to develop ways to attack word problems. This in turn will hopefully help students develop a love for word problems. More importantly, the unit helps teachers realize that the creation of word problems is something that should be done with great care and should be created with a specific objective to be taught.

The second part of the unit looks at how to use reading strategies to help students solve word problems. It explores the use of making connections, asking questions, visualization, determining importance, inferring and predicting, and synthesizing. The unit focuses on a modified KWL chart called KWC. The KWC and using reading strategies to help solve word problems comes from Arthur Hyde's book *Comprehending Math: Adapting Reading Strategies to Teach Mathematics, K-6*. The lessons in the unit are about teaching the KWC to the class to use as a strategy and tool to solve word problems.

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