

STUDYING STUDENT THINKING

Use the suggestions below to learn about your student thinking by asking them to make it visible.

1

- Say: “This is to help me understand better how you make sense of math problems.”
- Unless the task specifies how tools should be used, they may use any manipulatives and tools they normally use in class.



2

- Ask the student to read the task out loud.
- If they seem to have trouble reading the task, provide just enough scaffolding to support their comprehension of the task context.
- Try hard not to suggest a specific strategy.



3

If the student seems unsure about how to start, you might ask:

- “Is there anything you recognize or know from reading the problem?”
- “What are some ideas you are having about solving the problem?”
- “Can you think of something to try and see what happens?”



6

Use the last page of Teacher Notes of this task to reflect and capture your thoughts...

- What other solution paths might you expect to see?
- What does the language they’ve used reveal about their mathematical thinking?
- How can you engage your students’ interests, experiences, and/or funds of knowledge?



Math
Milestones™



5

When done, ask the student to share their thinking:

- “What were you thinking about as you worked on the problem?”
- “What was the first thing you thought about?”
- “Can you tell me more about that?”



4

Then, observe the student engaging with the task. Some things to observe for:

- What does the student write down?
- Does it include a math diagram with a representation of the problem?
- What does the representation show about the student’s understanding of the problem?

