

One goal in helping students learn is to assist them in figuring out as much as they can for themselves. You do not need to know how to do the problem to support your student's learning. A good question can help students clarify a problem and support different ways of thinking about it.

Good questions and good listening will help students make sense of mathematics, build self-confidence, and encourage mathematical thinking and communication. Ask questions that guide.

Here are some questions you might try:

Getting Started

- What do you know?
- What do you need to find out?
- How could you begin?
- Are there words you do not understand?
- Have you solved similar problems that would help? Let's look at your notebook.

While Working

- How can you organize the information?
- Can you make a prediction?
- Can you make a drawing (model) to explain your thinking?
- Do you see any patterns or relationships that will help solve this?
- Can you describe an approach (strategy) you can use to solve this?
- How were you thinking about the problem when you did this . . . ?
- What would happen if . . . ?

Reflecting About the Solution

- Has the question been answered?
- How do you know your solution (conclusion) is reasonable?
- How can you convince me your answer makes sense?
- What did you try that did not work?
- Can the explanation be made clearer?

Clarifying and Extending Thinking

- Help me understand this part . . .
- Can you explain it in a different way?
- Is there another possibility or strategy that would work?
- How is this related to other mathematical ideas that you have learned?
- Are there any questions you want to ask your teacher?