

Turning a word problem into a number sentence

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

A short story can be written as a number sentence with a box standing for the one number we do not yet know. Listen for action words like more or gave away to choose + or -.

→ Aoife had 8 marbles and won some more to make 15 becomes $8 + \square = 15$.

→ Tom had 12 sweets and gave away 5 becomes $12 - 5 = \square$.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

SAOIRSE AND HER STICKERS

- 1 Read the family story: Saoirse had some stickers. She got 4 more. Now she has 10 stickers.
- 2 The words 'got more' tell us to add. The start amount is unknown so we use a box.
- 3 Say the number sentence out loud: $\square + 4 = 10$.
- 4 Find what fills the box so the balance beam hangs level: the box is 6 because $6 + 4$ makes 10.

ANSWER KEY

a) 9

b) 6

c) 7

Q1: 7

a) Always — Those signal words always point to adding the known parts around the unknown.

b) Always — That is exactly why we write the box.

c) Never — Take-away stories with gave away or left use a minus sign instead.

d) Sometimes — The box can be the start amount, the change, or the total depending on the story.