INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



CUBES Squared

CUBES Squared is a strategy to help students dissect questions in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Students encounter a problem or passage and use the steps in the CUBES acronym to solve the key question.

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Summary

Following the CUBES acronym, students in pairs solve a key problem or question by circling, underlining, boxing, and striking through key elements. Then, partners solve the problem or answer the question, and show and check their work.

Procedure

1. CIRCLE Key Numbers and Units OR Nouns and Verbs: Given an equation or reading passage, have students work with an elbow partner to find the key numbers and units (Math) or the nouns and verbs (ELA).
2. UNDERLINE the Question: Have students continue working with their partner to find and underline the question within the problem set or passage that needs to be answered.
3. BOX Key Question Words: Next, have partners find the key action numbers, operators, or words within the question—that is, what this question is specifically asking them to do—and draw a box around those numbers, operators, or words.
4. EVALUATE and ELIMINATE: Have partners find the remaining information that is not needed to help answer the question, and draw a line through it.
5. SHOW Your Work and Check It: Have partners identify the steps in their math work, or the evidence in the reading passage, that support their answer to the key question. Then ask partners to demonstrate and confirm it together.

Nagel, D. R., Schumaker, J. B., & Deshler, D. D. (1986). The FIRST-letter mnemonic strategy. Lawrence, KS: EXCELLenterprises.