

Step	Guideline	Examples
1	Choose a theme that is high interest and relevant for grade band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪School: physical education class, school dance, library ▪Leisure: video game store, beach, movies
2	Follow a formula for the problem type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Compare problems: two people/objects comparing amounts of one thing or one person/object comparing amounts of two things
3	Avoid reliance on key words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Key words do not always accurately reflect operation: how many more (subtraction) versus given two more (addition)
4	Use considerate text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Keep sentences the same length and use words that are easy to decode
5	Use a variety of nouns that are familiar, concrete, and related to the theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Physical education class: football, soccer ball, jump rope, cone ▪Grocery store: broccoli, carrot, soda, chips
6	Choose names that will increase engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Students in classroom ▪Familiar people (family, community, school) ▪Reflect their interest (athletes, celebrities)
7	Use verbs familiar to students with clear action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Combine, find, buy, break, spill, pay
8	Intentionally choose numbers based on student ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Easiest to represent as numerals, sums of less than 10 if using manipulatives ▪Alternate between smaller or larger number first in addition word problem
9	Check for bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Gender: equal use of female and male characters and theme, avoid gender stereotypes ▪Culture: avoid cultural or racial stereotypes, use scenarios that are relevant and meaningful

Reprinted from *Bridging the Gap Between Arithmetic & Algebra*, Ed. B. Witzel, p. 177. Copyright 2016 Council for Exceptional Children. All rights reserved.