



Maths Accelerator Centre

1 Marine Parade Central, #12-03, Parkway Centre, S 449408

Tel/SMS/Whatsapp : 87257203 Email : maths.accelerator.centre@gmail.com

P5 Problem Sums – Mini Lesson

Term 1 Lesson 2

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Strategy: Constant Difference

Description:

The **Constant Difference** principle is a powerful mental math and algebraic tool. It is based on the idea that if you change two numbers by the same amount, the "gap" between them stays exactly the same. In many mathematical problems—especially those involving age, ratios, or shifting benchmarks—we encounter scenarios where two variables change simultaneously.

Key Takeaway

- **The "Gap" is Fixed:** Whenever "the same amount" is added or removed from two entities, ignore the changing totals for a moment and focus on the unchanging difference.
- **Simplification Tool:** Use this to turn "messy" subtraction problems into "clean" ones by rounding one number to the nearest ten.
- **Problem-Solving Shortcut:** In word problems, identifying a constant difference usually allows you to set up an equation much faster than trying to track every individual change.

 If a problem mentions "equal amount added" or "years passed," immediately calculate the difference between the starting numbers. That number is your "anchor" for the rest of the problem.

Discussion Question

Follow the trainer in this video and solve this question.

Sandy had \$1032, and Janice had \$680. After each of them had spent an equal amount of money, Sandy had 3 times as much money left as Janice.

How much did each of them spend?

Practice Time

Here are **4 practice questions** based on this strategy.

Follow the step-by-step method we discussed in the video to solve each one.

- ✓ Work through the problems carefully.
 - ✓ Check your solutions against the **Answer Key** provided on the last page.
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1. Alice had \$1,500, and Bob had \$900. After each of them had spent an equal amount of money, Alice had \$4 times as much money left as Bob. How much did each of them spend?

2. Mark had \$800, and Sarah had \$500. After each of them had spent an equal amount of money, Mark had \$2 times as much money left as Sarah. How much did each of them spend?

3. David had \$1,200, and Chloe had \$800. After each of them had spent an equal amount of money, David had \$3 times as much money left as Chloe. How much did each of them spend?

4. Kevin had \$2,400, and Julia had \$1,000. After each of them had spent an equal amount of money, Kevin had \$5 times as much money left as Julia. How much did each of them spend?

Answer Key

1. \$ 700

2. \$ 200

3. \$ 600

4. \$ 650