

# “Woodchuck” Problems

*What information do I need to provide a suitable answer?*



Woodchuck Problems are scenarios that require students to ask questions and seek more information before they can properly answer it.

## Where did the name “Woodchuck” come from?

These are named for the most famous “Woodchuck”  
Problem of all:

➤ *How much wood could a woodchuck  
chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?*

**You could answer this if you knew:**

- *How big are the woodchuck’s teeth?*
- *How long is will it be chucking the wood?*
- *What exactly is “chucking”?*

***BUT FIRST YOU HAVE TO FIND ALL OF THAT INFORMATION!***



## Sample “Woodchuck” Problems:

# Woodchuck Problem

*these are problems where students need to ask questions and seek out more information before they can provide a logical answer*



What's the Problem?

Shown below is a "Woodchuck Problem." This is a problem that requires students to ask questions and seek more information before they can properly answer it. To learn more about "Woodchuck Problems" (including how they got their name), [click here](#).

**The Problem:**

**Mrs. Johnson brings a bowl of candy into class. How many pieces of candy are in the bowl when she brings it in?**

Where do we begin? [Click here to find out how Woodchuck Problems work...](#)

To answer this, students must ask questions to gain the following information:

- The size of the bowl
- The size of the individual pieces of candy
- Whether all of the candy is the same size and shape
- Whether the bowl is completely full, or only partly full

*It is also important to provide students with some **irrelevant information** as you answer their questions (this gets them into the habit of evaluating information prior to generating a response).*

**Here are examples of **irrelevant information** that you might give the students.**

- The material that the bowl is made from
- The color and appearance of the bowl
- The type of candy (unless this gives them a clue about the size of the candy)
- How long the candy has been in the bowl, and who placed it there