Two-Step Word Problems

Unknown: The unknown is the number or value that is not given in a problem. It is what needs to be solved. We assign an appropriate letter to the unknown in an equation.

$45 + n = 63$

Example:

A train has 4 cars.

There are 60 seats in each car.

There are 318 passengers on the train.

Some passengers are standing and some are sitting. There are no empty seats.

How many passengers are standing?

Step 1:

$4 \times 60 = s$ (s is the unknown because we need to know how many total seats there are first) OR $60 + 60 + 60 + 60 = s$

$s = 240$

Step 2:

$318 - 240 = p$ (p is the unknown amount of passengers that are standing)

$p = 78$

*Students can solve these problems any way that is efficient and works well for them.