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numbers are all we do

Teacher Guide

Schema Cards: Movie Posters

Addition & Subtraction Word Problem Schemas • Grades 1–3

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FREE Supplement

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide supports teachers in facilitating schema-based instruction using the Movie Poster cards. Each card is designed to build students' ability to recognize problem structures — not just compute answers. Use the prompts and key ideas below to guide discussion, questioning, and student reasoning.

SCHEMA CATEGORIES AT A GLANCE

Total Parts join to form a whole	Change Amount increases or decreases over time	Compare Two quantities are compared statically
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CLASSROOM QUICK TIPS

- Encourage students to identify the schema before writing any numbers or equations.
- Use the Teacher Move questions as think-alouds: model how you decide "Is this combining or comparing?"
- Revisit cards students find confusing — the same card can be used multiple times with different discussion prompts.
- Post the three schema categories (Total, Change, Compare) visibly in the classroom as anchor charts.

HOW TO USE THE CARD REFERENCE

The following pages contain all 11 schema card references. Each card includes:

- The schema formula for that problem type
- Key things students should notice about the problem structure
- A Teacher Move prompt to guide classroom discussion
- A Key Idea to reinforce the core concept

Cards are grouped so that multiple cards appear on each page. Only schema cards appear on these pages — no other content is mixed in.

1. Carnival Glow Quest [Total]

Schema: Total: $Part + Part = Whole$

What Students Should Notice

- Two separate amounts (6 and 7)
- Nothing is being lost or changed
- The situation is combining

Teacher Move: Ask: "Are we putting parts together, or is something changing?"



Total	
Total	
Part	Part

Key Idea: This is a combine situation. Students should identify both parts and look for the total.

2. Mystery Treasure Chest [Total]

Schema Total: $Whole - Part = Missing Part$

What Students Should Notice

- Total is given (14)
- One part is known (9)
- One part is missing

Teacher Move: Ask: "We know the whole. What piece is missing?"



Total	
Total	
Part	Part

Key Idea: Students must understand that a part is hidden inside the whole, not added later.