

# Using worked and partially completed examples

## What is a worked example?

A worked example is a problem that has already been solved for the pupil, with every step fully explained and clearly shown. The beauty of a worked example is that they make visible an expert's problem-solving solution, and then this is shared with the novice pupil as an example to learn from. They also free up the pupil's working memory by shifting the focus from finding the correct answer to understanding and learning the steps in the example. This means that they are more likely to recall how to solve this type of problem when they are faced with it in the future (Centre for Education, Statistics and Evaluation, 2018).

## Creating a worked example

When you are creating a worked example, you are not aiming to reduce the complexity of the knowledge being learnt and remove any of the academic rigour around it. The knowledge will remain complex and pupils will need to partake in effortful thinking in order to understand it. But worked examples are effective at removing any extraneous information and distractions that would stop pupils being able to think deeply about each step of the process. With the support of the example, they can instead focus on the content and exactly how an expert would solve it.

## What features make a worked example effective?

Effective worked examples often share the following features:

- They offer a clear structure and reasoning behind the steps shown.
- They take pupils through the problem to its logical conclusion without any step being left to interpretation.
- The teacher talks through their reasoning, sharing their expert thinking and understanding.
- After studying a worked example, learners require practise on their own to provide them with feedback on whether they have learnt it or not.

## What are partially completed examples?

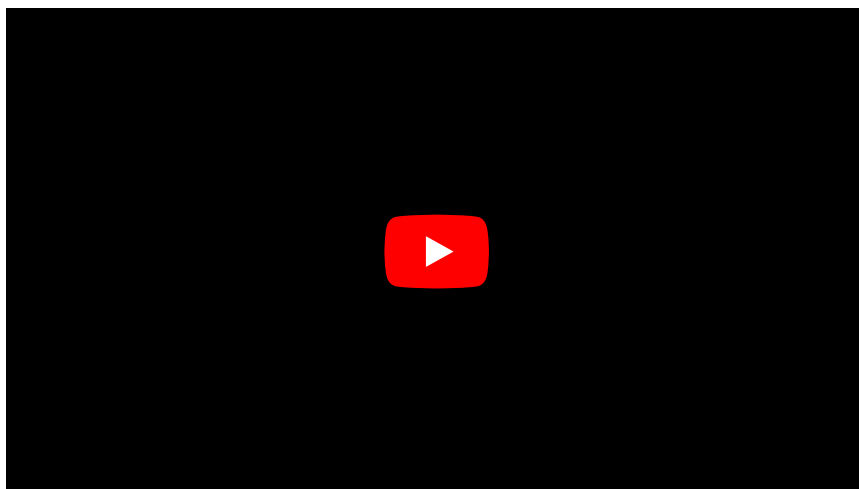
Partially completed examples are worked examples that have had some steps left blank for pupils to complete. They allow the teacher to direct the pupil to where the practise needs to take place. The idea behind a partially completed example is that you are directing pupils to where you want them to focus their thinking.

## Listen to Benjamin Riley

Listen to Benjamin Riley from Deans for Impact as he:

- explains why worked examples can be so effective in reducing the risk of overloading the working memory
- talks through a worked example of how to solve a crossword puzzle, modelling sharing his thought process aloud

You can make notes on the content using the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook):



Direct Link: [Worked examples - Benjamin Riley, Deans for Impact](#)

Transcript: [Worked examples - Benjamin Riley, Deans for Impact](#)