Problem Solving: Break a Problem into Part

You can solve problems by breaking the problem into parts.

Cami and Terry are comparing their miniature pine cone collections. Cami has 7 hemlock pine cones, 3 tamarack pine cones, and 9 lodgepole pine cones. Terry has been collecting pine cones longer. She has 24 hemlock pine cones, 3 tamarack pine cones, and 9 lodgepole pine cones.

How many more miniature pine cones does Terry have than Cami?

Step 1 Write an expression that shows the number of pine cones Cami has.
7 + 3 + 9

Step 2 Write an expression that shows the number of pine cones Terry has.
24 + 3 + 9

Step 3 Write an expression that shows Cami’s pine cones subtracted from Terry’s pine cones. Use parentheses to show which operations to do first.
(24 + 3 + 9) − (7 + 3 + 9)

Solution: (24 + 3 + 9) − (7 + 3 + 9) = 17 pine cones

Write an expression with parentheses for each problem. Then solve the problem.

1. Cami gave away three tamarack pine cones from her collection. Write an expression that shows how many pine cones Cami has left.

2. Terry collected 36 more pine cones while her family was on vacation. She collected 7 tamarack pine cones and 21 lodgepole pine cones. How many hemlock pine cones did Terry collect?

Writing Math How do parentheses in an expression help you solve a multistep problem?