# Kaplan 4 Step Method to Problem Solving

**STEP 1: Understand the question.**

In order for the students to answer each question correctly, it is important that they understand what is being asked, and what math is needed to solve the problem.

On each problem

 \* Identify the question being asked.

 \* Determine what math is required to answer the question.

**STEP 2: Find the helpful information.**

It is important that students first gather the necessary information before attempting to solve the problem. This information can be numbers, charts, graphs.

Students should ask themselves

 \* What helpful information is given?

 \* What helpful information can I infer?

 \* What information can I ignore?

**STEP 3: Plan your approach.** After thinking about the question, deciding which type of math is appropriate, and identifying the useful information, students need to decide which approach is best to answer this particular problem.

Here are some things they should think about:

 \* Can I break the problem into smaller parts?

 \* Will my plan lead me to the correct answer?

 \* On multiple-choice questions, should I use a Front-Door or a Back-Door strategy?

A Front-Door strategy is the traditional method for solving the problem. If students know how to do a Front-Door method easily, they should use it. If not, a Back-Door strategy that uses the answer choices can also lead the students to the correct answer. We will discuss the Back-Door strategies later in this session.

**STEP 4: Answer the question.** If the student understands the question, know what math is required, have gathered all the useful information and planned their approach, this last step will be easy to complete. All that is left for them to do is the math.