

Answers, standards, and classroom notes. Numbers, measures, and units. No traps, 2 word problems.

ANSWER KEY

Step	Answer	Standard addressed	The move
A	96	6.EE.A.2c	$102 - 26 + (5 \times 4)$
B	100	6.SP.B.5c	$400 / 4$
C	78	6.NS.B.2	$178 - 100$
D	13	6.RP.A.2, 6.RP.A.3b	$78 / 6$
E	39	6.NS.B.2	13×3
F	11	6.EE.A.2c	$(39 + 16) / 5$
G	20	6.EE.A.2c	$11 + 4 + 5$
H	10	6.NS.B.4	GCF of 20 and 50
I	40	6.NS.B.2	10×4
J	36	6.NS.B.3	$40 \times 0.8 = 32$, then $+ 4$

The Clue: The number of inches in a yard is 36. If J matches, the student just proved their own work. No red pen needed.

NOTHING HIDDEN HERE

This cipher has no traps. Every step means what it says, so a student who gets a mismatch at the Clue made an arithmetic slip rather than a reading error. Send them back to check the division and the multiplication before anything else.

WHY IT IS BUILT THIS WAY

This is one of the opening ciphers of the year. There are no traps in it at all and the numbers stay small. Students are coming back from a summer of not much arithmetic, so the page is meant to rebuild the habit of working ten steps in order, not to test anything new. Almost everyone should finish.

The largest number a student handles here is 100. Difficulty in a Dovetail comes from the steps, not from where the cipher lands, so a small Clue does not mean an easy page and a four-digit Clue does not mean a hard one.

The cipher is unforgiving on purpose. One wrong answer travels all the way down, and the mismatch at the Clue tells a student something broke without telling them where. That is the whole design.

THE CLUE, IN CLASS

The Clue comes from review from earlier grades. It never states the number, so students have to know the fact or go find it. If nobody in the room knows it, that is two minutes well spent before anyone picks up a pencil, and it is the reason the Clue is there.