A **Three-Act Task** is a whole-group mathematics task consisting of three distinct parts: an engaging and perplexing Act One, an information and solution seeking Act Two, and a solution discussion and solution revealing Act Three.

Why would I use this strategy?

- To provide an engaging context for the use of mathematics and the development of mathematical understanding.
- To reduce the literacy demand.
- To add engagement. Students wonder what will happen next.
- To create low barriers to entry, allowing the teacher to scaffold as necessary.
- To provide an opportunity for estimation and reasonableness.
- To provide opportunities to talk about mathematics.
- To provide opportunities for reflective thought.
- To build new knowledge from prior knowledge.
- To encourage multiple approaches.
- To honor diversity.
- To create situations which require students to engage in mathematical modeling.
- To build relational understandings among mathematics concepts.
- To shift student ideas about justification of thinking and answers.

How do I use this strategy?

ACT 1: Engage and Perplex

- In Act 1, the teacher sharing with students an image, video, or other situation that is engaging and perplexing.
- Students discuss what they notice and wonder. They generate question to ask about the situation.
- Students decide on a question to answer and make estimates about the likely solution.

ACT 2: Seek Information and Solutions

- In Act 2, students work on finding solutions to their problems.
- They use information they have and ask for more information as needed.
- The teacher supplies more information as requested by students.
- They may adjust their question as they work.

ACT 3: Reveal, Discuss, Extend!

- In Act 3, students share their work, their thinking, and their solutions.
- There is a reveal by the teacher of a solution, and the discussion that ensues may take many directions:
- Students might compare their solutions to each others and to the reveal.
- Students might compare their solutions to their estimates and discuss the comparison.
- Students might discuss the assumptions that were made in the work.
- Students might think of other questions they could pursue next
- The teacher helps students connect their work to the core math of the task.

More Resources for 3-Act Tasks:

- NCSM's Tool to Evaluate 3-Act Tasks
- The Three Acts of a Mathematics Lesson Explained
- Engaging Students in Three Acts. (Online Article)
- Get Your Model On: Modeling in the Elementary Grades.
- Why Use 3-Act Tasks?
- GSE Effective Instructional Practices Guide (Three Act Tasks)
- Dan Meyer
    - 3 Act Math Lessons
- Graham Fletcher
    - 3 Act Math Lessons