

Break Down into Smaller Parts

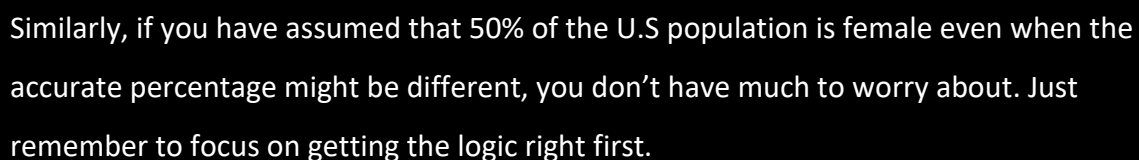
Once you have set clear boundaries round the problem and made the required assumptions, it's time to break down the problem into smaller, more manageable parts.

This is the most critical part of solving a guesstimate question and it's important that you 'take a moment' to think about how to go about it. Thirty seconds of silence now may save wasted time later in the interview. Remember that there are often multiple ways to break down a problem. You should pick the one which is logical and which you feel the most confident about.

You might find yourself thinking graphically at this point. Don't hesitate to use a paper and pen to draw out your structure. If you do so, make sure that the interviewer is a part of it by showing what you are drawing/writing. Remember that guesstimate problems are back of the napkin calculations so they needn't be unnecessarily long and subjective.

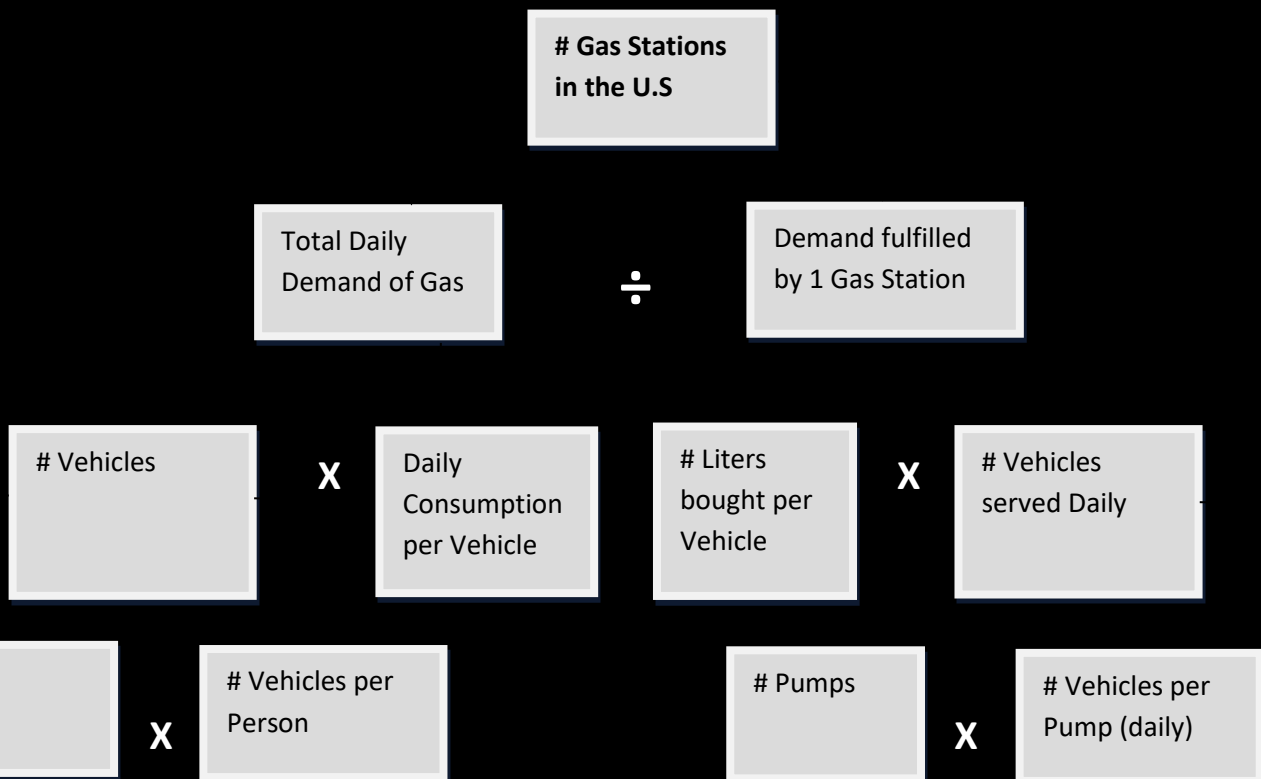
Breaking down the problem into smaller components helps you to focus on one small problem at a time which is easier to handle as compared to cracking the entire problem in one go. It also gives you the flexibility to revisit and correct a small part of your calculations if you think you have made a mistake rather than do all calculations again from scratch.

“Calculate the Total Sales of Lipsticks in the U.S.”



Let's look at another problem:

"Calculate the number of Gas Stations in the U.S"



Remember the more problems you practice, the more intuitively you'll be able to logically disintegrate them into smaller sub problems. So, keep practicing and perfecting your game!