Creativity and Innovation: Problem Solving

Learning the Skill
David became known as the greatest king of the Israelites. Part of his fame came because of his ability to solve problems. For example, when he became king, he faced several important problems. The Israelite tribes were divided. The kingdom also faced a threat from the Philistines. David gained recognition by uniting the Israelites and defeating the Philistines.

The ability to solve problems can lead to success in many areas of life. You likely solve problems every day at home, at school, and elsewhere. There are several steps you can take to help you solve problems more effectively:

Problem-Solving Process
1. Identify the problem. Be as specific as possible.
2. Brainstorm a list of possible solutions. Generate as many possibilities as you can.
3. Evaluate each of these possible solutions. Consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of each.
4. Choose the best solution and take action on it.

As you put your chosen solution into action, consider its effectiveness. What if it doesn’t resolve the problem? If so, ask yourself whether your solution could be improved somehow. If not, return to step 1 and begin the process again.
Practicing the Skill Read this paragraph about a time in David’s life before he became king. Then, answer the questions that follow.

As David’s popularity increased, Saul became jealous. In fact, he grew so jealous that he formed a plot to kill David. David escaped into the desert frontier of Judah. There he began to put a plan into motion. David organized other people who were considered outcasts or refugees. David’s group began to gain the support of people living nearby. They protected people from bandits. At times, they even retrieved stolen items and returned them. Through these deeds, David remained popular with the people of Judah. When Saul died in battle, David was asked to become king.

1. **Identifying** What problem or problems did David face in this episode?

2. **Analyzing** What do you think is another possible solution that David could have tried?

3. **Evaluating** Do you think David’s solution was successful? Explain your answer.
Applying the Skill
Think about a problem that you face in your school or community. Use what you have learned about problem solving to plan a possible solution to this problem. Remember to follow each of the steps of the problem-solving process. When you have finished, write a paragraph describing both the problem and your proposed solution. Explain how you arrived at your chosen solution and identify some of the possible benefits and drawbacks that you considered for it.