You assume that the distance up the mountain is equal to the distance down the mountain, so start by drawing a line that represents this distance.:

Then, in relation to this distance the problem tells you some other information you can add to your diagram. For instance, the ski lift moves at 6mph and it took her x minute to get up the mountain. X minutes can be written as x/60 hours. We do this to keep the units consistent. So since Distance = R(T) The Distance up the mountain was 6(x/60). Round Trip was 40 minutes long. So Time Up + Time Down = 40 minutes. 40 minutes = .67 hours

Time up = x

x + time down = .67 hours

Time Down = .67 – (x/60)

Speed going down was 54 mph, so distance down = 54(.67-(x/60))

Distance Up

6(x/60)

Distance Down 54(.67-(x/60))

I converted 40 minutes to hours so that the units match up with 6mph. For Distance to equal R(T) your units in the rate and in the time had to cancel and leave miles—a distance unit. The only way this would happen is if minutes were converted to hours.