

Correct Order of Operations

Step 1: Grouping Symbols

Step 2: Exponents

Step 3: Multiplication and Division

Step 4: Addition and Subtraction

Step 1: Grouping Symbols

Starting with the inner most grouping symbol perform the indicated operations.

Parentheses	$(a + b)$
Brackets	$[a + b]$
Braces	$\{a + b\}$
Fraction Bar	$\frac{a + b}{d + c}$
Absolute Value Bars	$ a + b $

Step 2: Exponents

When doing exponents, be sure to only apply the exponent to the number or item in grouping symbols immediately preceding it.

Correct	Incorrect
$5 - 2 \cdot 3^2$	$5 - 2 \cdot 3^2$
$5 - 2 \cdot 9$	$5 - 6^2$
$5 - 18$	$5 - 36$
-13	-31

Step 3: Multiplication and Division

After completing step 1 and step 2, the multiplication and division should be done from left to right.

Correct	Incorrect
$6 \div 2 \cdot 3 \div 3$	$6 \div 2 \cdot 3 \div 3$
$3 \cdot 3 \div 3$	$6 \div 6 \div 3$
$9 \div 3$	$1 \div 3$
3	$\frac{1}{3}$

Step 4: Addition and Subtraction

After completing step 1 through step 3, the addition and subtraction should be done from left to right.

Correct	Incorrect
$10 - 5 + 4 - 2$	$10 - 5 + 4 - 2$
$5 + 4 - 2$	$10 - 9 - 2$
$9 - 2$	$1 - 2$
7	-1