

Subtracting Signed Numbers

Practice Exercises

These exercises will help you practice subtracting signed numbers. It is important that you be able to do problems like this very quickly and very easily, without a calculator. If you cannot, you are going to have tremendous difficulty with later topics in math, and the problem will not be those topics, it will be that you are not comfortable with exercises like these.

Remember, turn subtraction problems into addition problems as follows:

- 1) Leave the first number alone.
- 2) Change the subtraction operation to addition.
- 3) Change the sign of the second number.

If the problem has many things for you to subtract, change all the subtraction operations to addition, and change the sign of all the numbers that were to the right of the subtraction signs.

Once the problem is converted to addition, treat positive numbers as money that you have, and treat negative numbers as money that you owe. First determine if your final answer will be positive or negative, and then do the appropriate computation to get your answer.

Note: The parentheses in these problems are optional. There were added to make the numbers easier to see. You may not see parentheses in similar problems, but if it is helpful, you can put them in yourself.

1) $(-3) - (5)$

9) $(13) - (-13)$

2) $(5) - (-7)$

10) $(-5) - (5)$

3) $(-9) - (-8)$

11) $(-3) - (-2) - (8)$

4) $(-2) - (7)$

12) $(-6) - (4) - (-7)$

5) $(-8) - (2)$

13) $(6) - (-8) - (-1) - (13)$

6) $(-9) - (10)$

14) $(-2) - (-9) - (-11)$

7) $(-4) - (-7)$

15) $(5) - (6) - (-9)$

8) $(-12) - (-12)$

16) $(-4) - (0) - (5) - (-7) - (3) - (-10)$