Neat and Picky Algebra Format

By Abby

Introduction

Algebra has some VERY picky rules that you need to live by for the rest of your life. There are seven very important rules, so make sure you remember them during math… or you will get lost!!!!!

Rule #1: Show Each Step in the Equation

- ALWAYS SHOW EACH STEP IN THE EQUATION!!
- The solving action must be very clear under the equation. Otherwise, you will wonder what happened next!!! The result is your next equation line.

Rule #1 Example

Ex. $1+(-4a)=29$

$-1 \qquad -1$

$(-4a)=28$

$-4 \quad -4$

$a = -7$

Problem

What you do to one side,
you must do to the other.

Isolate the variable.

Solve!!!! ☺

✓ $1+(-4*-7)=29$

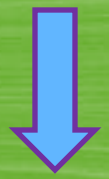
$1+28=29$

Make sure you write each step very clearly under the equation. See how I made the problem very clear and easy to read!!!

Rule #2: Write in a Vertical Arrangement

- Always write in a vertical arrangement!
- The last line should have the answer clearly written on the last line.

- The problem should be like a vertical line that goes down!!!



Rule #2 Example

Ex.

$$\frac{9a}{9}=\frac{108}{9}$$

$$a=12$$

Problem

Next step is neatly underneath the problem.

The final answer is written on the last line!

✓ $9(12)=108$

The problem is in a vertical arrangement and is very clear to read!!!

Rule #3: Equal Signs Must be Lined up

- In your problem, the equals signs must be lined up!
- Otherwise, you will get confused which numbers are on each side of the problem!

Rule #3 Example

Ex.

$$-2a+(-16)=4$$
$$+16+16$$
$$\frac{-2a}{-2}=\frac{20}{-2}$$
$$a=-10$$

$-2(-10)+(-16)=4$

$20+(-16)=4$

Each of my equal signs match up perfectly!

Even the check's equal signs do!

Rule #4: Balance Your Equation

- Whatever you do to one side of the equation, you must do to the other! Otherwise, the problem will get all uneven and messed up!
- One side is on this side of the equal sign= and this is the other!!!

Rule #4 Example

Ex.

$$-2n+(5)=68$$
$$-5 \quad -5$$
$$-2n=63$$
$$-2 \quad -2$$
$$n=-31.5$$

$$-2(-31.5)+5=68$$
$$\checkmark \quad 63+5=68$$

Whatever I did to one side of the equation, I did to the other!!!

Rule #5:The Variable Must be on the Left

- In an equation, your answer is on the last line, but if the problem gets kind of jumbled up, the variable might end up on the right.
- What do you do? Simply switch the answer and the variable. There, that's better! Now you can read it easier.
- Since you read left to right, that's the way you want your answer to be!

Rule #5 Example

Ex.

10=d/6

*6 *6

60=d

d=60

10=60/6

In the check, leave the problem in its original form.

Rule #6:Always Show a Check

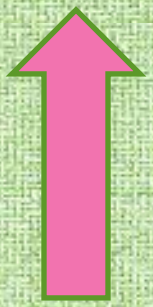
- After the equation is solved, always put a check. A check puts the answer back in the problem and is like a cop. It never lets wrong answers by.
- MAKE SURE YOU CHECK YOUR CHECK!!! Don’t just do it because you have to, make sure it really does work before moving on to another problem.

Rule #6 Example

Ex.

$$4p(-9)=27$$
$$+9 \quad +9$$
$$\frac{4p}{4}=\frac{36}{4}$$
$$p=9$$

$$4(9)-9=27$$
$$\checkmark$$
$$36-9=27$$



My check has a check!

Yours should too!

Rule #7: WRITE NEATLY!!!

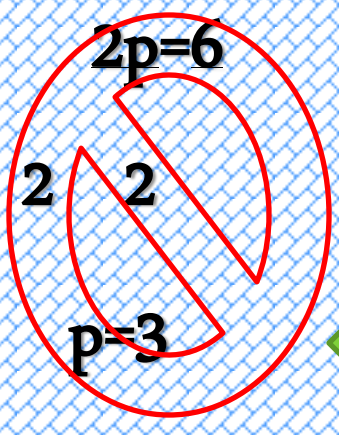
- This is probably the most important rule ever!!!
- If you don’t write neatly, the whole problem will fail! Always make it very simple to read so you can get the A you deserve!!!

Rule #7 Example

Ex. $\frac{2p}{2}=\frac{6}{2}$ $2(3)=6$

$p=3$

Simple to read!!!

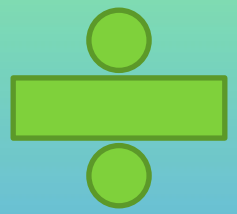


Who could read that?

Rules Rule!!

- OK that's all of them! Here's a little recap:

1. Show each step in the equation
2. Write in a vertical arrangement
3. Equal signs must be lined up
4. Balance the equation
5. Variable must be written on the left side of the equal sign
6. Show a check
7. WRITE NEATLY



GO ALGEBRA!!!