

SOLVING LINEAR EQUATIONS STUDY NOTES

Goal: The goal of solving a linear equation is to find the value of the variable that will make the statement (equation) true.

Method: Perform operations to both sides of the equation to isolate the variable.

Addition and Subtraction Properties of Equality:

Let $a, b,$ and c represent algebraic expressions.

1. Addition property of equality:

If $a = b,$

Then $a + c = b + c$

2. Subtraction property of equality:

If $a = b,$

Then $a - c = b - c$

Multiplication and Division Properties of Equality:

Let $a, b,$ and c represent algebraic expressions.

1. Multiplication property of equality:

If $a = b,$

Then $a \cdot c = b \cdot c$

2. Division property of equality:

If $a = b,$

then $\frac{a}{c} = \frac{b}{c}$ (provided $c \neq 0$)

Clearing Fractions or Decimals in an Equation:

When solving an equation with fractions or decimals, there is an option to clearing the fractions or decimals to create a simpler equation involving whole numbers.

1. To clear fractions, multiply both sides of the equation (distributing to all terms) by the LCD of all the fractions.

2. To clear decimals, multiply both sides of the equation (distributing to all terms) by the lowest power of 10 that will make all decimals whole numbers.

Steps for Solving a Linear Equation in One Variable:

1. Simplify both sides of the equation.

2. Use the addition or subtraction properties of equality to collect the variable terms on one side of the equation and the constant terms on the other.

3. Use the multiplication or division properties of equality to make the coefficient of the variable term equal to 1.
4. Check your answer by substituting your solution into the original equation.

Note: If, when solving an equation, the variables are eliminated to reveal a true statement, such as $12 = 12$, then the solution is all real numbers. This type of equation is called an identity. On the other hand, if the variables are eliminated to reveal a false statement, such as $5 = 3$, then there is no solution. This type of equation is called a contradiction. All other linear equations that have only one solution are called conditional.

Examples:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{A. } x + 5 &= 2 \\ -5 &= -5 \end{aligned}$$



$$X = -3$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{B. } x - 3 &= 7 \\ +3 &+3 \end{aligned}$$

$$X = 10$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C. } \frac{5x}{5} &= \frac{30}{5} \\ X &= 6 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{D. } \frac{3}{4}x &= 6 \\ \frac{4}{3} \cdot \frac{3}{4}x &= 6 \cdot \frac{4}{3} \quad (\text{Multiply by the reciprocal}) \\ X &= 8 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{F. } \frac{x}{3} &= 5 \\ \frac{3}{1} \cdot \frac{x}{3} &= 5 \cdot \frac{3}{1} \\ X &= 15 \end{aligned}$$

Identity Example:

$$\begin{aligned} 2x + 9 &= 3(x + 3) - x \\ 2x + 9 &= 3x + 9 - x \\ 2x + 9 &= 2x + 9 \\ -2x &-2x \\ 9 &= 9 \end{aligned}$$