
Step	Example: $5x - 3 + 2x - 8$
1. Identify terms with signs	$+5x, -3, +2x, -8$
2. Group like terms	$(5x + 2x) + (-3 - 8)$
3. Add coefficients	$7x - 11$
4. Standard order	Variables alphabetically, constant last

Terms	Like?	Why
$3x$ and $-5x$	Yes	Same variable, same power
$4y$ and $4x$	No	Different variables
$2x$ and $2x^2$	No	Different powers
7 and -2	Yes	Both constants