

Simplifying Expressions: (Follow each step!)

1. Do you have parenthesis () ?

- If **YES**, distribute (multiply) the number on the outside of the parenthesis by each term on the inside of the parenthesis!
- If **NO**, move to step 2!

If there is a negative in front of a set of parenthesis, it changes all the signs inside the parenthesis to their opposite.

2. Do you have 'like' terms (same variable and its exponent **MUST** be the same)?

- If **YES**, combine the terms that have the same variable with the same exponent. (ex: $x^2 + x^2 = 2x^2$)
- If **NO**, you are finished!

Remember the rules for adding and subtracting:

- **Same Signs - Add & Keep the Sign**
- **Different Signs - Subtract & Keep the Sign of the Higher**

Strategies to use:

- Shapes around 'like' terms
- Line up 'like' terms over one another
- Underline 'like' terms with different lines