

SIMPLIFY AND SOLVE ANSWER KEY Online PDF

Simplify and solve answer key is a crucial tool for students, educators, and anyone involved in mathematics and problem-solving activities. Whether you're tackling algebra, geometry, or word problems, having a clear and accurate answer key helps ensure correctness, builds confidence, and promotes effective learning. In this article, we'll explore what it means to simplify and solve problems, the importance of answer keys, and practical strategies to master the process, along with tips for creating and using answer keys effectively.

Understanding the Basics of Simplify and Solve

What Does It Mean to Simplify?

Simplifying a mathematical expression involves reducing it to its most straightforward form without changing its value. This process often includes combining like terms, reducing fractions, eliminating parentheses, and applying arithmetic operations. Simplification makes complex expressions easier to understand and manipulate.

Examples of Simplifying:

- Simplify $(3x + 2x - 5 + 7)$ to $(5x + 2)$.
- Reduce the fraction $(\frac{8}{12})$ to $(\frac{2}{3})$.
- Simplify $((2 + 3) \times 4)$ to (20) .

What Does It Mean to Solve?

Solving involves finding the value(s) of the variable(s) that satisfy an equation or inequality. The goal is to isolate the variable on one side of the equation to determine its value(s).

Examples of Solving:

- Solve for (x) : $(2x + 3 = 7)$. Solution: $(x = 2)$.
- Solve $(\frac{1}{2}x = 4)$. Solution: $(x = 8)$.
- Solve $(x^2 - 4 = 0)$. Solutions: $(x = 2)$ or $(x = -2)$.

The Role of an Answer Key in Learning

Why Use an Answer Key?

An answer key serves as a reference to verify the correctness of solutions. It helps students:

- Identify errors in their work.
- Understand the correct steps to reach a solution.
- Build confidence by confirming correct answers.
- Develop problem-solving skills through comparison and correction.

For educators, answer keys are essential for efficient grading and providing feedback, ensuring consistency and fairness.

Characteristics of a Good Answer Key

A well-constructed answer key should:

- Clearly show the correct answer.
- Include step-by-step solutions or explanations.
- Cover all possible solutions, especially for equations with multiple roots.
- Be accurate and free of errors.
- Be organized and easy to navigate.

Strategies to Simplify and Solve Effectively

Step-by-Step Approach to Simplify

- Identify the parts of the expression: Recognize terms, coefficients, and constants.
- Combine like terms: Group similar variables or constants.
- Apply arithmetic operations: Follow order of operations (PEMDAS/BODMAS).
- Reduce fractions or radicals: Simplify to simplest form.
- Check your work: Ensure the simplified expression is equivalent to the original.

Step-by-Step Approach to Solve

- Isolate the variable: Use inverse operations to get the variable alone.

- Perform inverse operations carefully: Addition/subtraction, multiplication/division.
- Check for multiple solutions: For quadratic and higher degree equations.
- Verify solutions: Substitute back into the original equation to confirm correctness.
- Consider special cases: No solution, infinite solutions, or extraneous solutions.

Creating and Using a Simplify and Solve Answer Key

How to Create an Effective Answer Key

- Work through each problem thoroughly: Include all steps for clarity.
- Use consistent formatting: Make steps easy to follow.
- Highlight key operations: Emphasize critical steps or common pitfalls.
- Include explanations: When appropriate, clarify why certain steps are taken.
- Double-check answers: Ensure solutions are correct before finalizing.

Using an Answer Key to Improve Skills

- Compare and analyze: Match your solutions with the key to identify errors.
- Understand mistakes: Learn why a particular step was incorrect.
- Practice problems repeatedly: Reinforce the method and improve speed.
- Use as a learning tool: Don't just look for the answer?study the process.

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Dealing with Complex Expressions

- Break down expressions into smaller parts.
- Simplify each part step-by-step.
- Keep track of parentheses and exponents carefully.

Handling Multiple Solutions or No Solution Cases

- For quadratic equations, use factoring, completing the square, or quadratic formula.
- Check the discriminant ($b^2 - 4ac$) to determine the number of solutions.
- Be aware of extraneous solutions introduced by certain operations (like squaring both sides).

Managing Errors and Misconceptions

- Always verify solutions by substitution.
- Review fundamental algebraic rules regularly.
- Practice with a variety of problems to recognize patterns.

Practical Tips for Mastering Simplify and Solve

- Practice regularly: Consistent practice builds proficiency.
- Use visual aids: Diagrams or charts can help understand geometric problems.
- Seek help when needed: Collaborate with teachers, tutors, or peers.
- Utilize online resources: Tutorials, videos, and interactive tools can reinforce learning.
- Stay organized: Keep your work neat to avoid mistakes.

Conclusion

Mastering the art of simplifying and solving equations is fundamental to success in mathematics. An accurate and comprehensive simplify and solve answer key not only aids in verifying your work but also enhances understanding of underlying concepts. By adopting systematic strategies, creating detailed answer keys, and practicing diligently, students can improve their problem-solving skills, reduce errors, and gain confidence in their mathematical abilities. Remember, the goal is not just to find the answer but to understand the process, and a well-designed answer key is an invaluable tool in this journey.

Simplify and Solve Answer Key: Your Comprehensive Guide to Mastering Problem Solving

When tackling math problems or complex questions across various subjects, students and professionals alike often turn to the simplify and solve answer key as their trusted roadmap. This essential tool streamlines the process, helping users break down complicated equations and concepts into manageable steps, ultimately leading to accurate solutions. Whether you're preparing for a test, working through homework, or refining your problem-solving skills, understanding how to effectively simplify and solve using answer keys can dramatically enhance your learning efficiency and confidence.

Understanding the Importance of Simplify and Solve Answer Keys

Before diving into the mechanics, it's crucial to grasp why simplify and solve answer keys are so valuable:

- Guided Learning: They serve as step-by-step guides, illustrating the logical progression needed to reach a solution.

- Error Prevention: By following the answer key, learners are less likely to make careless mistakes.
- Skill Development: Analyzing the solutions helps in recognizing patterns, understanding problem structures, and mastering various techniques.
- Time Efficiency: Knowing how to quickly simplify and solve accelerates the problem-solving process, especially under exam conditions.

What Is a Simplify and Solve Answer Key?

A simplify and solve answer key is a detailed solution manual that provides:

- Step-by-step simplifications of complex expressions or equations.
- Methods to isolate variables or components within a problem.
- Final answers with explanations on how they were derived.

It acts as both a reference and a learning tool, allowing users to compare their approach with the provided solution and learn from any discrepancies.

How to Effectively Use a Simplify and Solve Answer Key

Mastering the use of an answer key involves more than just copying answers. Here's a strategic approach:

- Attempt the Problem Independently First
 - Work through the problem on your own.
 - Write down each step clearly.
 - Identify where you're uncertain or stuck.
- Consult the Answer Key
 - Review the provided solution carefully.
 - Compare each step with your own.
 - Note any differences or mistakes.

- Analyze the Solution

- Understand why each step was taken.
- Recognize the techniques used to simplify and solve.
- Reflect on how you might incorporate these methods into your own problem-solving toolkit.

- Practice Similar Problems

- Use the answer key as a template.
- Try solving similar problems without referring to the solution.
- Reinforce your understanding through repetition.

Step-by-Step Guide to Simplify and Solve Problems Using an Answer Key

Let's delve into a structured process that applies broadly across different types of problems, particularly algebraic equations.

Step 1: Understand the Problem

- Carefully read the question.
- Identify what is being asked.
- Note the information given and what needs to be found.

Step 2: Simplify the Expression

- Combine like terms.
- Reduce fractions or radicals where applicable.
- Apply algebraic identities or properties (associative, distributive, commutative laws).

Step 3: Isolate the Variable

- Use inverse operations (addition ? subtraction, multiplication ? division).
- Keep the equation balanced.
- Simplify step-by-step until the variable is alone.

Step 4: Solve for the Variable

- Calculate the value of the variable.
- Check for extraneous solutions if applicable (especially in radical or rational equations).

Step 5: Verify Your Solution

- Substitute the answer back into the original problem.
- Confirm that it satisfies all conditions.
- Use the answer key to verify correctness.

Common Techniques in Simplify and Solve Problems

Understanding standard techniques enhances your ability to handle various problems efficiently:

Algebraic Simplification

- Combining like terms.
- Factoring expressions.
- Rationalizing denominators.
- Expanding binomials or polynomials.

Solving Linear Equations

- Isolating the variable.
- Handling equations with fractions or decimals.
- Dealing with variables on both sides.

Solving Quadratic Equations

- Factoring.
- Using the quadratic formula.
- Completing the square.

Handling Absolute Values

- Setting up piecewise equations.
- Solving both positive and negative cases.

Working with Radicals and Exponents

- Applying exponent rules.
- Rationalizing radicals.
- Simplifying exponential expressions.

Examples: Applying the Simplify and Solve Process

Example 1: Solving a Linear Equation

Problem: Solve for x : $3(2x - 4) + 5 = 11$

Step-by-step:

- Distribute: $6x - 12 + 5 = 11$
- Combine like terms: $6x - 7 = 11$
- Add 7 to both sides: $6x = 18$
- Divide both sides by 6: $x = 3$

Using the Answer Key:

- Confirm that substituting $x = 3$ back into the original yields:

$$3(2 \cdot 3 - 4) + 5 = 3(6 - 4) + 5 = 3(2) + 5 = 6 + 5 = 11, \text{ correct.}$$

Example 2: Solving a Quadratic Equation

Problem: Find x : $x^2 - 5x + 6 = 0$

Step-by-step:

- Factor: $(x - 2)(x - 3) = 0$
- Set each factor to zero:

$$- x - 2 = 0 \ ? \ x = 2$$

$$- x - 3 = 0 \ ? \ x = 3$$

Answer Key Confirmation:

- Substitute $x = 2$: $4 - 10 + 6 = 0$, correct.

- Substitute $x = 3$: $9 - 15 + 6 = 0$, correct.

Troubleshooting Common Challenges

While using the simplify and solve answer key, you might encounter challenges. Here's how to address them:

Challenge 1: Discrepancies Between Your Solution and the Answer Key

- Review each step carefully.
- Check for calculation errors.
- Ensure you're applying the correct techniques.

Challenge 2: Encountering Unfamiliar Methods

- Study the techniques used in the answer key.
- Practice similar problems to build familiarity.
- Consult additional resources or tutorials as needed.

Challenge 3: Complex or Multi-Step Problems

- Break the problem into smaller parts.
- Solve each part sequentially.
- Use the answer key as a guide for handling each segment.

Tips for Maximizing Learning from Answer Keys

- Don't Rush: Take your time to understand each step.
- Annotate: Write notes or alternative methods alongside the answer key steps.
- Practice Variations: Modify problems to apply learned techniques.

- Seek Clarification: If a step isn't clear, consult teachers, tutors, or online resources.

Conclusion: Empowering Your Problem-Solving Skills

Mastering the art of simplify and solve answer keys is a powerful step toward becoming a confident and proficient problem solver. By understanding how to systematically simplify complex expressions and equations, and by learning to interpret detailed solutions, students can develop deeper comprehension and stronger analytical skills. Remember, the key is not just to arrive at the correct answer but to understand the journey—each step, each technique, and each reasoning process along the way. With consistent practice and strategic use of answer keys, you'll transform challenging problems into manageable tasks and unlock new levels of academic and professional success.

QuestionAnswer What does 'simplify and solve answer key' mean in math problems? It refers to the process of reducing an algebraic expression to its simplest form and then solving for the variable, often with an answer key provided to verify your solutions. How can I effectively use an answer key to improve my algebra skills? Compare your solutions with the answer key, identify any mistakes, understand the correct steps, and practice similar problems to strengthen your understanding. What are common steps to simplify algebraic expressions before solving? Combine like terms, distribute multiplication over addition/subtraction, and reduce fractions to their simplest form before solving for the variable. Why is it important to simplify expressions before solving equations? Simplifying makes equations easier to work with, reduces chances of errors, and often reveals the solution more straightforwardly. How do I check my solution using the answer key? Plug your solution back into the original equation or expression, compare your result with the answer key, and verify if they match. Can answer keys be used for self-assessment in math practice? Yes, they help you verify your solutions, understand mistakes, and learn correct problem-solving methods independently. What should I do if my solution doesn't match the answer key? Review each step of your solution, check for calculation errors or misapplied rules, and seek help if needed to understand the correct method. Are answer keys available for all math levels and topics? Answer keys are available for many topics and levels, especially in textbooks and online resources, but always ensure they match your specific problems. How can I simplify complex algebraic expressions effectively? Break down the expression into smaller parts, use distributive property, combine like terms, and reduce fractions step-by-step to simplify efficiently.

Related keywords: simplify algebra expressions, solve equations step-by-step, answer key solutions, math problem solving, algebra tutorials, step-by-step math solutions, solving equations guide, math answer key, algebra simplification tips, problem-solving strategies

ALGEBRA 1 ASSIGNMENT SIMPLIFY EACH EXPRESSION

Algebra 1 Assignment: Simplify Each Expression

Algebra 1 assignment simplify each expression is a fundamental task that helps students grasp the core principles of algebra. Simplifying expressions involves reducing complex mathematical statements into their most straightforward form, making it easier to analyze, solve, and understand algebraic problems. Whether you're dealing with linear expressions, polynomials, or rational expressions, mastering the art of simplification is essential for progressing in algebra and other higher-level math courses.

Understanding the Importance of Simplifying Algebraic Expressions

Why Simplify Algebraic Expressions?

Simplification of algebraic expressions provides several benefits:

- Reduces complexity, making problems easier to solve.
- Helps in identifying like terms and combining them efficiently.
- Prepares expressions for substitution or solving equations.
- Enhances understanding of algebraic structures and relationships.

Common Types of Expressions in Algebra 1

As you work through assignments, you'll encounter various types of expressions, including:

- Linear expressions (e.g., $3x + 5$)
- Quadratic expressions (e.g., $x^2 + 4x + 4$)
- Polynomial expressions (e.g., $2x^3 - x^2 + 3x - 7$)
- Rational expressions (e.g., $(x + 2)/(x - 3)$)

Key Concepts for Simplifying Expressions

1. Combining Like Terms

Like terms are terms that have the same variables raised to the same powers. Combining them simplifies the expression without changing its value.

- Example: $4x + 3x = 7x$
- Note: Constants are like terms with each other (e.g., 5 and -2)

2. Distributive Property

The distributive property allows you to remove parentheses by multiplying each term inside by the factor outside.

- Example: $3(2x + 4) = 3 \times 2x + 3 \times 4 = 6x + 12$

3. Combining Multiple Terms

When expressions include multiple operations, follow order of operations (PEMDAS) to simplify step-by-step.

- Parentheses
- Exponents
- Multiplication and division
- Addition and subtraction

Step-by-Step Process to Simplify Expressions

Step 1: Expand Parentheses

If the expression contains parentheses, apply the distributive property to eliminate them.

Step 2: Combine Like Terms

Group similar terms and add or subtract their coefficients accordingly.

Step 3: Simplify Exponents

Handle any exponents in the expression, simplifying where possible.

Step 4: Reduce the Expression to its Simplest Form

Make sure no like terms remain, and the expression is as concise as possible.

Examples of Simplifying Algebraic Expressions

Example 1: Simplify $3x + 2x + 5$

- Identify like terms: $3x$ and $2x$
- Combine: $(3 + 2)x + 5 = 5x + 5$

Example 2: Simplify $4(2x - 3) + 5x$

- Distribute: $4 \times 2x - 4 \times 3 + 5x = 8x - 12 + 5x$
- Combine like terms: $(8x + 5x) - 12 = 13x - 12$

Example 3: Simplify $(x + 3) + 2(x - 4)$

- Distribute: $x + 3 + 2x - 8$
- Combine like terms: $(x + 2x) + (3 - 8) = 3x - 5$

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Simplifying

- Failing to distribute the negative sign properly, especially in expressions like $-(x + 3)$.
- Mixing unlike terms or not recognizing like terms.
- Ignoring the order of operations when multiple operations are involved.
- Overlooking exponents or misapplying exponent rules.

Practice Problems for Mastery

To excel in simplifying algebraic expressions, consistent practice is essential. Here are some problems to hone your skills:

- Simplify $2(3x - 4) + 5x$
- Reduce $x^2 + 3x + 4x^2 - 2x$
- Simplify $(x + 2)(x - 3)$
- Express as a simplified form: $4x/2 + 6 - 3x/2$
- Simplify $-(2x + 3) + 4x - 5$

Tools and Resources to Help You

Several tools and resources can assist you in mastering algebraic simplification:

- Algebra calculators online for step-by-step solutions

- Interactive algebra tutorials and videos
- Practice worksheets and quizzes
- Algebra textbooks with practice problems and explanations

Tips for Success in Algebra Assignments

- Always write out each step to avoid mistakes.
- Double-check your work, especially signs and coefficients.
- Familiarize yourself with common algebraic identities and properties.
- Practice regularly to develop confidence and speed.
- Seek help from teachers or tutors if you're stuck on a concept.

Conclusion: Mastering Simplification for Algebra Success

Simplifying algebraic expressions is a vital skill that forms the foundation for solving equations, graphing, and understanding more complex concepts in mathematics. By mastering the techniques of combining like terms, distributing, and following the order of operations, students can confidently tackle their Algebra 1 assignments. Remember, consistent practice and attention to detail are key to becoming proficient in algebra. Keep working on diverse problems, utilize available resources, and don't hesitate to seek help when needed. With dedication, you'll find yourself simplifying expressions with ease and laying a solid groundwork for future mathematical achievements.

Algebra 1 Assignment: Simplify Each Expression

Algebra 1 is often regarded as the foundational course that bridges basic arithmetic to higher-level mathematics. Among the many skills students develop in Algebra 1, simplifying expressions is a cornerstone that underpins their ability to manipulate and understand more complex algebraic concepts. When assigned tasks to simplify each expression, students are not merely practicing rote procedures but are also honing their critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and understanding of algebraic properties. This article provides an in-depth review of the process, features, and value of such assignments, aiming to guide students, educators, and parents in appreciating their significance and best practices.

Understanding the Importance of Simplifying Expressions

Simplification is a fundamental algebraic skill that involves reducing an expression to its most concise and simplest form. This process often reveals the core structure of an expression, making it easier to evaluate, compare, or substitute values into.

Why is simplifying expressions important?

- Clarity: Simplified expressions are easier to interpret and understand.
- Efficiency: Simplification reduces computational work, especially when evaluating for different values.
- Foundation for Solving Equations: Simplified expressions are often easier to manipulate further when solving equations.
- Preparation for Advanced Topics: Concepts such as factoring, functions, and calculus build directly on the ability to simplify.

An assignment focused on simplifying each expression encourages students to practice key algebraic principles, including combining like terms, applying distributive properties, and using exponent rules.

Core Strategies for Simplifying Expressions

Students tackling "simplify each expression" assignments should familiarize themselves with several core strategies that form the backbone of algebraic simplification:

1. Combining Like Terms

- Terms with the same variable(s) and exponent(s) can be combined by adding or subtracting their coefficients.
- Example: $3x + 5x = 8x$

2. Applying the Distributive Property

- Distribute multiplication over addition or subtraction.
- Example: $3(2x + 4) = 6x + 12$

3. Using Exponent Rules

- Simplify expressions involving exponents using rules like $(a^m \times a^n = a^{m+n})$ or $((a^m)^n = a^{mn})$.
- Example: $(x^3 \times x^2 = x^{3+2} = x^5)$

4. Reducing Fractions

- Simplify fractional expressions by dividing numerator and denominator by their greatest

common divisor.

- Example: $\frac{6x^2}{9x} = \frac{2x}{3}$

5. Eliminating Parentheses

- Use distributive property to remove parentheses, then combine like terms.

- Example: $2(3x + 4) - x = 6x + 8 - x = 5x + 8$

Features of Effective Algebra 1 Assignments on Simplification

Assignments that focus on simplifying algebraic expressions often incorporate several features to enhance learning and assessment:

Progressive Difficulty

- Starting from basic combining like terms to more complex expressions involving multiple steps.
- Helps students build confidence and competence gradually.

Variety of Expression Types

- Includes polynomial expressions, rational expressions, and expressions with exponents.
- Encourages versatile problem-solving skills.

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Clear guidance on each step encourages understanding rather than rote memorization.

Immediate Feedback Options

- Use of interactive platforms that provide instant corrections helps reinforce learning.

Real-World Contexts

- Incorporating word problems or real-life scenarios to make the practice more engaging.

Pros and Cons of Algebra 1 Simplification Assignments

While these assignments are invaluable for learning, they also come with certain limitations.

Pros:

- Builds Fundamental Skills: Developing proficiency in simplifying expressions lays the groundwork for all higher algebra.
- Encourages Critical Thinking: Students learn to identify the best approach for each expression.
- Prepares for Exams: Regular practice enhances performance in assessments.
- Enhances Problem-Solving Confidence: Successfully simplifying complex expressions boosts confidence.

Cons:

- Repetitive Nature: Excessive focus on similar types of problems may cause boredom.
- Potential for Misunderstanding: Without proper guidance, students may develop misconceptions, such as misapplying properties.
- Time-Consuming: Complex expressions can require significant time and effort to simplify correctly.
- Overemphasis on Procedure: Focusing solely on mechanical steps might hinder understanding of underlying concepts.

Best Practices for Approaching Simplification Assignments

Students can maximize their learning by adopting effective strategies:

- Read Instructions Carefully: Understand what is being asked?whether to combine like terms, factor, or simplify fractions.
- Work Step-by-Step: Break down the expression into manageable parts.
- Review Algebraic Properties: Recall properties like distributive, associative, and commutative laws.
- Check Work: Verify each step to prevent errors and reinforce understanding.
- Practice Diverse Problems: Expose oneself to different types of expressions to build versatility.
- Use Visual Aids: Diagrams or color-coding can help distinguish terms and operations.

Sample Simplification Problems and Solutions

Below are several representative problems illustrating typical tasks in an Algebra 1 assignment, complete with solutions.

Problem 1: Simplify $(3x + 5x - 2x)$

Solution:

Combine like terms:

$$(3x + 5x - 2x = (3 + 5 - 2)x = 6x)$$

Problem 2: Simplify $(4(2x + 3) - 2(x - 4))$

Solution:

Distribute:

$$(8x + 12 - 2x + 8)$$

Combine like terms:

$$(8x - 2x + 12 + 8 = 6x + 20)$$

Problem 3: Simplify $(\frac{12x^2}{4x})$

Solution:

Divide numerator and denominator by 4x:

$$(\frac{12x^2}{4x} = 3x)$$

Problem 4: Simplify $((x^3)^2 \times x^2)$

Solution:

Apply exponent rule:

$$((x^3)^2 = x^{3 \times 2} = x^6)$$

Multiply with (x^2) :

$$(x^6 \times x^2 = x^{6+2} = x^8)$$

Conclusion: The Value of Simplify Each Expression Assignments in Algebra 1

Assignments that task students with simplifying each expression serve as essential practice in mastering algebraic manipulation. They reinforce foundational concepts, develop procedural fluency, and prepare students for more advanced topics. While they may sometimes seem repetitive or challenging, their benefits far outweigh the drawbacks when approached thoughtfully. By understanding key strategies, practicing diverse problems, and seeking feedback, students can turn these assignments into powerful tools for learning and confidence-building in algebra.

Ultimately, the goal is for students not just to get the correct answer but to understand the process deeply. Simplifying expressions is more than a skill; it is a way of thinking mathematically—organized, logical, and strategic. Embracing this perspective transforms routine homework into an opportunity for growth and mastery in the fascinating world of algebra.

Question What is the first step to simplify the expression $3x + 5x - 2$? Combine like terms by adding the coefficients: $3x + 5x = 8x$, so the simplified expression is $8x - 2$. How do I simplify the expression $4(2x + 3) - 2x$? First distribute 4: $4 \cdot 2x = 8x$ and $4 \cdot 3 = 12$, then combine like terms: $8x + 12 - 2x = (8x - 2x) + 12 = 6x + 12$. What does it mean to simplify an algebraic expression? To simplify an algebraic expression means to combine like terms and reduce it to its simplest form for easier understanding and solving. How can I simplify the expression $(5x^2 + 3x) + (2x^2 - x)$? Combine like terms: $(5x^2 + 2x^2) + (3x - x) = 7x^2 + 2x$. Is it necessary to always distribute first before combining like terms? No, distribution is necessary only when parentheses are involved. Otherwise, you can combine like terms directly if no parentheses are present. How do I handle simplifying expressions with negative signs, like $-3x + 4 - 2x + 7$? Combine like terms: $(-3x - 2x) + (4 + 7) = -5x + 11$. What are common mistakes to avoid when simplifying algebraic expressions? Common mistakes include forgetting to distribute, combining unlike terms, or misapplying signs. Always double-check that only like terms are combined and signs are correctly handled.

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