MATHEMATICS · GRADES 7-9

Coefficients

Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 7-9

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Overview of the concept

This is how you read a term like three times an unknown amount in a price or a recipe. The number in front tells you how many of that amount you have, and it is called the coefficient. Spotting it quickly is the first step in reading any algebra expression, because it tells you the size of each part before you start combining them.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q In 4x, identify the coefficient

SOLUTION

A coefficient is the number multiplying the variable.

Here the number in front of x is 4.

So the coefficient of x is 4.

EXAMPLE 2

Q In −7y, identify the coefficient

SOLUTION

A coefficient is the number multiplying the variable.

Here the number in front of y is −7, sign included.

So the coefficient of y is −7.

Practice questions

1 **In 3x, what is the coefficient of x?**

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2 In 4x + 9y, what is the coefficient of y?

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3 In -5b, what is the coefficient of b?

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4 In x, what is the coefficient of x?

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5 In -x, what is the coefficient of x?

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6 In 12xy, what is the coefficient?

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7 In 2x + 7, what is the coefficient of x?

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8 In -4m + 3, what is the coefficient of m?

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9 In 0.5z, what is the coefficient of z?

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10 In $(\frac{1}{2})$t, what is the coefficient of t?

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ANSWER KEY

1. 3

2. 9

3. -5

4. 1

5. -1

6. 12

7. 2

8. -4

9. 0.5

10. $\frac{1}{2}$

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