

Subtracting Integers

6th Grade

Every subtraction is an addition wearing a disguise.

**Subtracting is the same as adding the opposite.
Change the sign of the second number, change the
operation to add, then follow the addition rules.**

$$a - b = a + (-b)$$

$$5 - (-3)$$

$$5 + 3 = 8$$

Two negatives next to each other become a plus.

$$(-5) - 3$$

$$(-5) + (-3) = -8$$

Now both are negative, so add and keep the sign.

$$(-5) - (-3)$$

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

Rewrite, then different signs subtract.

$$3 - 8$$

$$3 + (-8) = -5$$

Works for ordinary subtraction too.

THE COMMON MISTAKE

$$\times 5 - (-3) = 2$$

$$\checkmark 5 - (-3) = 8$$

Taking away a debt leaves you better off. Two minuses side by side make a plus.

Keep, change, change: keep the first, change the operation, change the second's sign.