



QUANTITATIVE METHODS FOR BUSINESS

THIRD EDITION

A CUSTOM EDITION FOR THE UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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AND DR NICK FEWSTER-YOUNG

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3RD EDITION

Quantitative Methods for Business

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5th edition

Berenson, Levine, Szabat, Stephan, O'Brien, Jayne & Watson

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Brackets in algebra

Using brackets in algebraic expressions

Here we will continue our study of algebra and show how algebraic expressions use brackets in exactly the same way as 'normal numbers' do – this is what you'd expect, since letters in algebra basically just stand for numbers!

Key topics

- Expanding brackets
- Simplifying expressions
- Multiplying out brackets
- Factorisation

Key terms

algebra and brackets expanding brackets factorising

→ Expanding brackets

Remember from the BODMAS law we introduced in Chapter 1, that things in brackets are always done first, so for example $3 \times (2 + 4)$ is the same as $3 \times 6 = 18$, working out the bit in brackets $(2 + 4)$ first.

Now, note the following: if you multiply both things in the bracket by 3 and add them up, you get $3 \times 2 + 3 \times 4$ which is $6 + 12 = 18$ – the same answer.

So $3 \times (2 + 4)$ is the same as $3 \times 2 + 3 \times 4$.

Does this always work? Check the following are true:

- $4 \times (3 + 2)$ is the same as $4 \times 3 + 4 \times 2$.
- $6 \times (1 + 5)$ is the same as $6 \times 1 + 6 \times 5$.
- $2 \times (3 + 7)$ is the same as $2 \times 3 + 2 \times 7$.

It works when there's a minus inside the brackets too:

- $4 \times (3 - 2)$ is the same as $4 \times 3 - 4 \times 2$.
- $6 \times (1 - 5)$ is the same as $6 \times 1 - 6 \times 5$.
- $2 \times (3 - 7)$ is the same as $2 \times 3 - 2 \times 7$.

In general, this always works. Technically, the word for this is *distributive* but you don't need to know that – but you should know the phrase *expanding the brackets* to describe this process.

Going back to our idea of using symbols to 'stand for something', we can say that for any numbers x , y and z , we have

$$x(y + z) = xy + xz$$

(remember that we don't normally write the multiplication sign \times in algebraic expressions).

→ Expressions involving brackets

Now you know this, you can use this to simplify more complicated expressions. For example, what is $3(x + y) + 2(x - y)$?

Use the rules that we just talked about: $3(x + y)$ is the same as $3x + 3y$. And $2(x - y)$ is the same as $2x - 2y$. So in total, this expression is the same as $3x + 3y + 2x - 2y$. Now if you collect together like terms, as before, then you get $5x + y$.

So $3(x + y) + 2(x - y)$ is the same as $5x + y$, which is much simpler!

Be careful with minus signs. What is $3(x + y) - 2(x - y)$?

Well, $3(x + y)$ is the same as $3x + 3y$, and $2(x - y)$ is the same as $2x - 2y$, just as before. So you have to work out $3x + 3y - (2x - 2y)$ which is the same as $3x + 3y - 2x + 2y$, which now easily simplifies to $x + 5y$.

Don't forget the minus signs when you expand brackets!

**smart
tip**

The hardest part about doing this was the negative numbers. Don't assume in maths that once you've done a topic, you'll never need it again. For example, you will use negative numbers in many other topics (they are just numbers after all) and they often cause problems – so, regularly go back and quickly revise previous chapters to be sure everything stays in your head.

→ Brackets times brackets

We can use what we developed above to expand even more complicated expressions. What is, for example, $(2 + 3) \times (4 + 5)$? If you work this out, it's 5×9 which gives the answer 45.

Note that if you work out $2 \times 4 + 2 \times 5 + 3 \times 4 + 3 \times 5$ you also get the answer 45 (check this yourself!) Why is this going to be true?

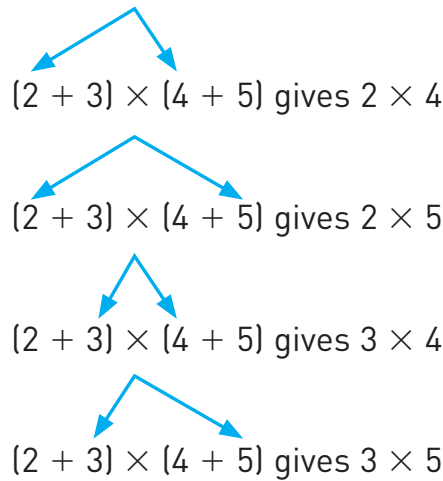
Well, if you used our rules from above about expanding brackets, note that $(2 + 3) \times (4 + 5)$ is the same as $(2 + 3) \times 4 + (2 + 3) \times 5$ (you multiply each bit of the $(4 + 5)$ by what is outside). Because it doesn't matter which order we do multiplication in, this is the same as $4 \times (2 + 3) + 5 \times (2 + 3)$ and we can use our 'expanding brackets' rules again, to get $4 \times 2 + 4 \times 3 + 5 \times 2 + 5 \times 3$, which is the same as $2 \times 4 + 2 \times 5 + 3 \times 4 + 3 \times 5$, just changing the order a little.

What we've done, is basically take every combination of a number from the first bracket and a number from the second bracket:

- The first term is 2×4 , which is the first number in $(2 + 3)$ multiplied by the first number in $(4 + 5)$.
- The second term is 2×5 , which is the first number in $(2 + 3)$ multiplied by the second number in $(4 + 5)$.
- The third term is 3×4 , which is the second number in $(2 + 3)$ multiplied by the first number in $(4 + 5)$.
- The fourth term is 3×5 , which is the second number in $(2 + 3)$ multiplied by the second number in $(4 + 5)$.

(Remember that a *term* is one of the things you add up in an expression).

This is illustrated like this:



So in total you have:

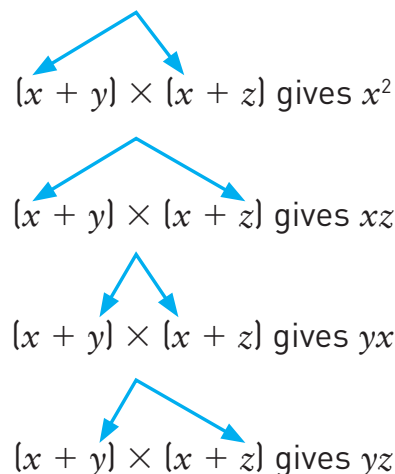
$$2 \times 4 + 2 \times 5 + 3 \times 4 + 3 \times 5 = 45$$

It works in general, for any numbers, and also then for algebraic expressions.

For example, what is $(x + y)(w + z)$? Taking our combinations just like above, this is the same as $xw + xz + yw + yz$.

Again be careful with minus signs: what is $(x - y)(w - z)$? Again taking combinations but being careful we get all the signs right, this is $xw - xz - yw + yz$.

If you have the same letter in both brackets you can end up with something like $x \times x$. Remember that this is written as x^2 . So something like $(x + y)(x + z)$ is the same as $x^2 + xz + yx + yz$ - see below:



So in total you have:

$$x^2 + xz + yx + yz$$

It works just the same way if there are numbers in front of the symbols. For example, what is $(x + 2y)(3x + z)$?

The first term is $x \times 3x$ which we would normally write as $3x^2$ ($x \times 3x$ is the same as $x \times 3 \times x$, which is the same as $3 \times x \times x$ since the order of multiplication doesn't matter, which we can write as $3x^2$ ignoring the multiplication signs).

Similarly the second term is xz , the third term is $6xy$ (it is conventional to write symbols in alphabetical order but if you write $6yx$ that is fine) and the fourth term is $2yz$.

Hence the final answer is $3x^2 + xz + 6xy + 2yz$.

Note that we always write algebraic terms with the number first then the letters (often in alphabetical order) – so for example we would write $6xy$ rather than $y6x$ – it looks much nicer and makes it easier to follow!



Also, remember to collect terms together. If you do $(x + y)(x + y)$ then you get $x^2 + xy + yx + y^2$. Now, xy is just the same as yx , so these two terms can be collected together and you get $x^2 + 2xy + y^2$.

An interesting one to note is $(x + y)(x - y)$. If you expand this, you get $x^2 - xy + yx - y^2$. Since xy is the same as yx , the two middle terms just cancel to leave you with just $x^2 - y^2$. For example, $(5 + 3)(5 - 3)$ is the same as $5^2 - 3^2 = 25 - 9 = 16$ (check this is right!)

→ Factorisation

Here you've seen how you can expand brackets, so for example we worked out that $x(y + z)$ is the same as $xy + xz$

The reverse process, so given $xy + xz$ and saying that this is the same as $x(y + z)$, is called *factorisation*.

All you have to do is look for something that is in every term of our expression. For example, to do it with numbers first, consider the expression

$$3 \times 4 + 3 \times 5$$

There is a '3' in each term, so we 'bring this out to the front'. What this means is to do the 'multiplying out the brackets' in reverse.

The 3 is in every term, so we write it first, then inside the brackets we fill in all the rest of the terms, but getting rid of the multiplying by 3 in each case. That means we write the 3 first, then inside the brackets write $4 + 5$ (what is left from $3 \times 4 + 3 \times 5$ when we get rid of the multiplying by 3 in each term).

Hence this expression is $3 \times (4 + 5)$. Check that this is the same.

It works exactly the same for symbols too. What is $yz + yx$? Following exactly our rules, we note that there is a y in both terms. 'Bring it out to the front' and you are left with $y(z + x)$ as you would expect.

Don't forget it doesn't matter what order you do multiplying in, and you can 'bring out' any term.

For example, what is $xyz + 3y$? The only thing in both terms is y . 'Bring it out' and you are left with $y(xz + 3)$ (getting rid of the y from the xyz term leaves xz and similarly, getting rid of it from the $3y$ term leaves just 3).

What about something like $6x^2 + 8xy$? You have to be careful here.

The numbers aren't the same, but notice that 2 divides into them both. Also, remember that x^2 is the same as $x \times x$. So, you *could* write this expression as $2 \times 3 \times x \times x + 2 \times 4 \times x \times y$.

Now you can see that there is a $2 \times x$ in both terms, so you can 'bring this out' and you get $(2 \times x)(3 \times x + 4 \times y)$ which you would then write as $2x(3x + 4y)$

After a bit of practice you will be able to do this in one go, but it does take some practice.

**smart
tip**

When doing algebra, it's often a good idea to see if your answers seem right by checking with some actual values. For example, suppose you had to expand $x(y + z)$. You should get $xy + xz$, which you can check by choosing some random values of x , y and z , say $x = 2$, $y = 3$, $z = 4$. Then $x(y + z) = 2 \times (3 + 4) = 2 \times 7 = 14$, and also $xy + xz = 2 \times 3 + 2 \times 4 = 6 + 8 = 14$, the same thing, so you can be confident you got it right! If you didn't get the same thing (say you wrongly wrote $xy + z$ as the answer, then you get $2 \times 3 + 4 = 6 + 4 = 10$) then you know you've got it wrong. Checking your answers like this can really help give you reassurance that you are doing the right thing.



Summary

Using normal numbers, we need to use brackets sometimes. Since algebra is just using symbols to represent numbers, then we need brackets here too, and we'd expect them to follow exactly the same rules as they would with normal numbers. We aren't creating anything magical and new, just doing with the symbols the same as we do with normal numbers!



Exercises

1 Verify the following are true.

Example: $2 \times (3 + 5) = 2 \times 3 + 2 \times 5$

Solution: $2 \times (3 + 5) = 2 \times 8 = 16$. Also, $2 \times 3 + 2 \times 5 = 6 + 10 = 16$, so the two things are equal.

(a) $3 \times (4 + 2) = 3 \times 4 + 3 \times 2$ (b) $2 \times (1 + 1) = 2 \times 1 + 2 \times 1$

(c) $3 \times (4 - 2) = 3 \times 4 - 3 \times 2$ (d) $2 \times (3 - 4) = 2 \times 3 - 2 \times 4$

(e) $-2 \times (3 - 2) = (-2) \times 3 + (-2) \times (-2)$ (f) $2 \times (1 - 1) = 2 \times 1 - 2 \times 1$

2 Expand the brackets in the following algebraic expressions.

Example: $x(y + 3z)$

Solution: Multiply each term by x , so you get the answer of $xy + 3xz$.

(a) $x(y + z)$

(b) $a(b + c)$

(c) $r(s - t)$

(d) $2(x + y)$

(e) $4(x - y)$

(f) $2(2x + 3y)$

(g) $2x(y + z)$

(h) $3x(x - y)$

(i) $xy(x + y)$

(j) $x(3 + y)$

(k) $z(x - 2)$

(l) $2y(x - z)$

3 Expand the brackets in the following algebraic expressions.

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

Solution: This is the same as $4x + 8y + 6x - 2y$ which simplifies to $10x + 6y$.

(a) $2(x + y) + 3(x + y)$

(b) $3(x - 2y) + 2(x + 3y)$

(c) $2(x + y) - 3(x - y)$

(d) $5(2x - 3y) - 2(3x - 6y)$

(e) $x(x + y) + y(2x + y)$

(f) $x(x + y) - y(x - y)$

4 Multiply out the following brackets:

Example: $(x + 2y)(3x + z)$

Solution: Working out the four terms in order as done in the examples above (first term multiplied by first term, etc), you get $3x^2 + xz + 6xy + 2yz$.

Note: remember to collect together like terms where possible.

(a) $(t + u)(r + s)$

(b) $(x + y)(z - w)$

(c) $(x + 2y)(2z + 3w)$

(d) $(x + 2y)(2x + y)$

(e) $(x - 2y)(2x + y)$

(f) $(2x + z)(2x - z)$

5 Factorise the following expressions, checking your final answer.

Example: $2xy + 4xz$

Solution: The two terms have a 2 and an x in common, so 'bringing this out to the front', we get $2x(y + 2z)$. Checking by multiplying out, this is indeed the same as $2xy + 4xz$ so we were right.

(a) $2x + 2y$

(b) $3xy + 2xz$

(c) $3xz + 6xy$

(d) $xyz + xyw$

(e) $10xy + 5y$

(f) $x^2y + xy^2$