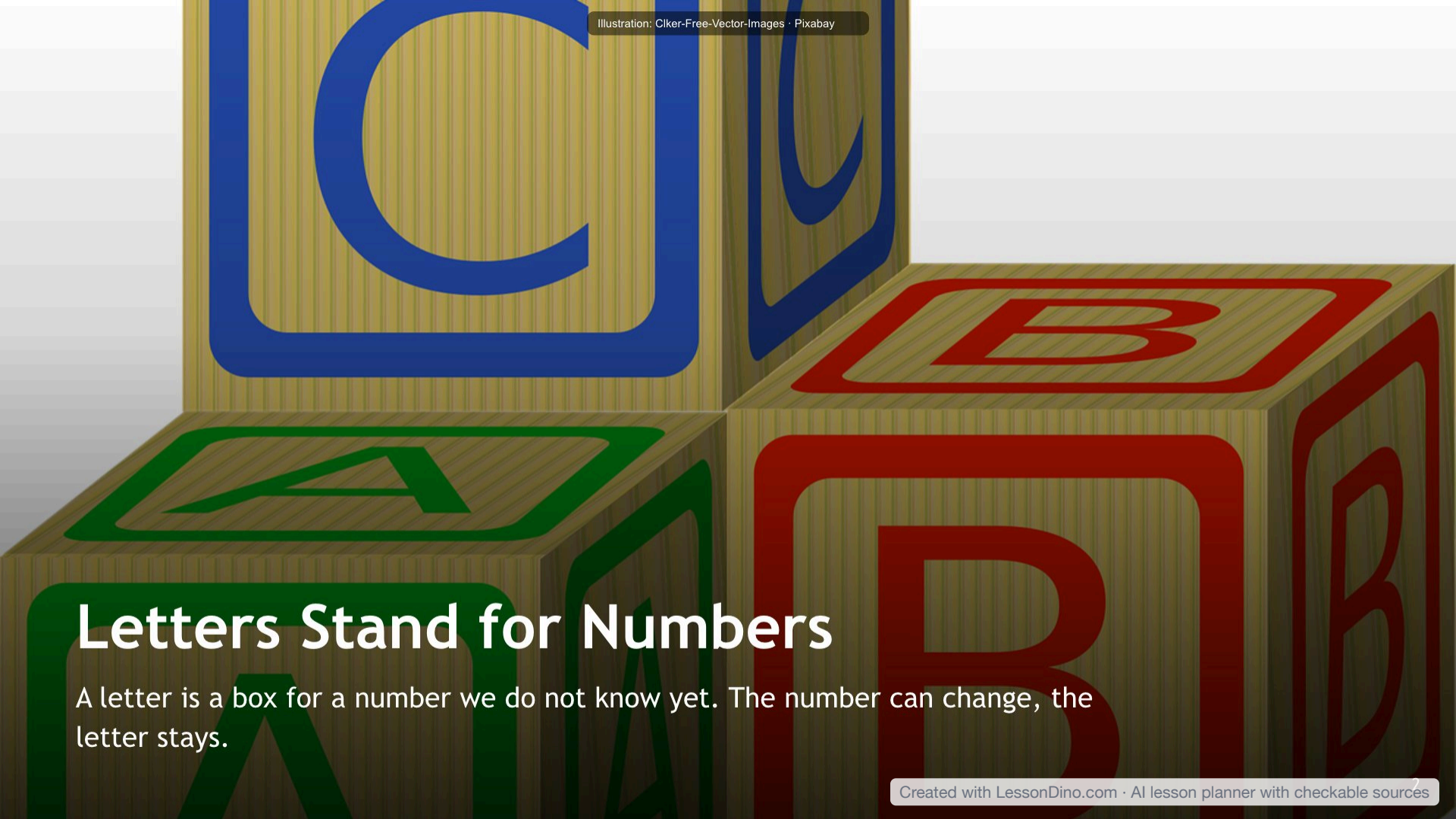
Writing Algebraic Expressions

Turning words into math with numbers and letters



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Letters Stand for Numbers

A letter is a box for a number we do not know yet. The number can change, the letter stays.

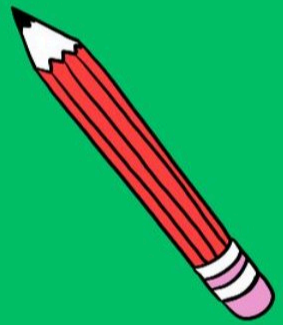
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$a^2+b^2=c^2$

BIG IDEA

An expression shows what to do, with no equal sign.





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Words That Tell the Operation

+

Add

Sum, plus, more than mean +.

−

Subtract

Difference, less, from mean -.

×

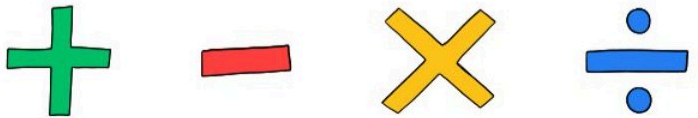
Multiply

Product, times mean × or letter next to number.

÷

Divide

Quotient, shared by mean ÷.



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$a^2+b^2=c^2$

Think, pair, share

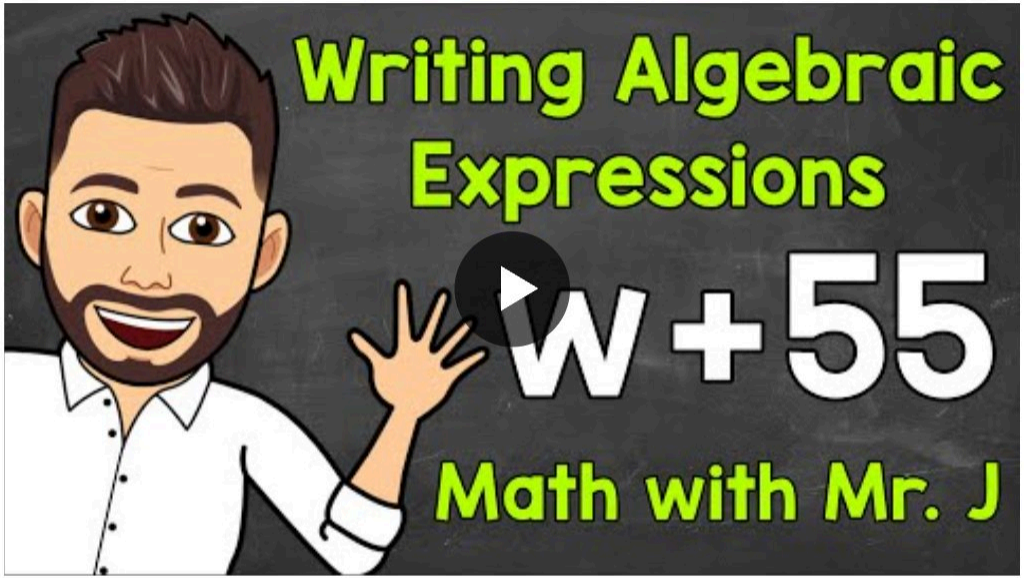
A student has 5 stickers, then gets n more. What math would record the total?





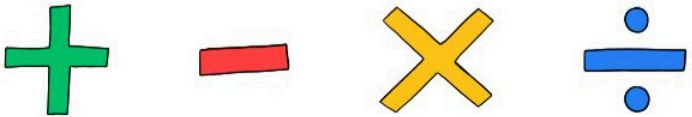
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Watch: Subtract y From 5



▶ 0:00 – 4:50

- Listen for why order matters with from
- Watch how words become 5 - y

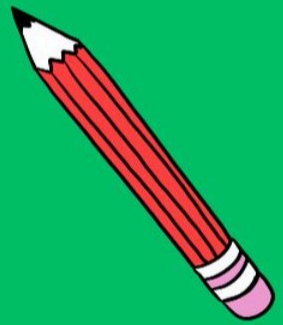


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$a^2+b^2=c^2$

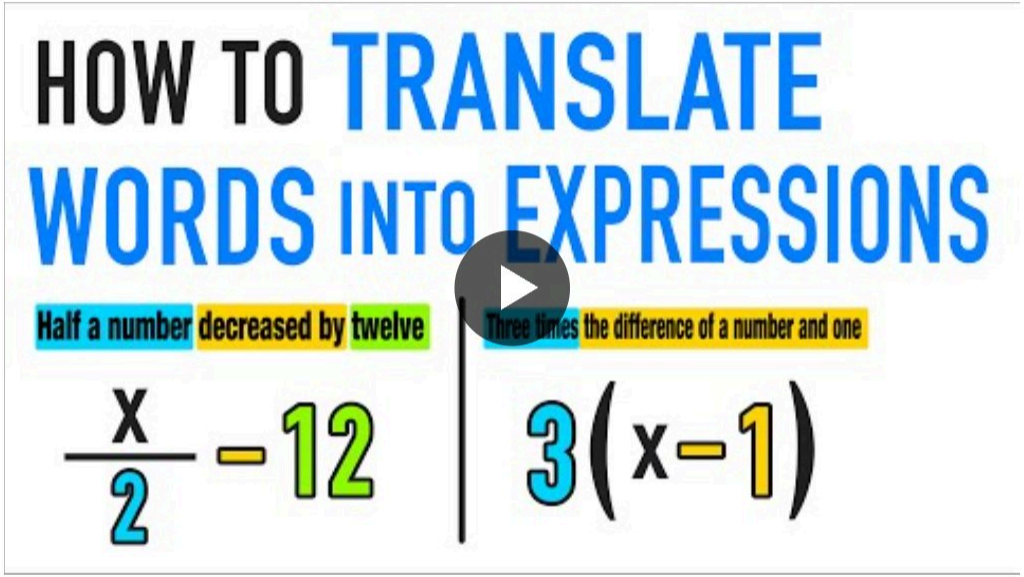
From Words to Symbols

1. Find numbers and the letter
2. Pick operation from key word
3. Keep order, write left to right
4. Check: no = sign



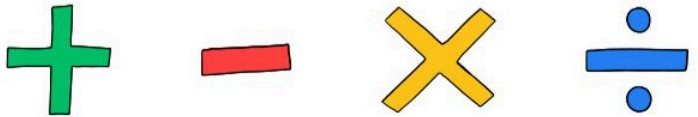
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Watch: Key Words to Symbols



▶ 0:00 – 4:20

- Spot words for + - × ÷
- Notice how letters sit next to numbers



$a^2+b^2=c^2$

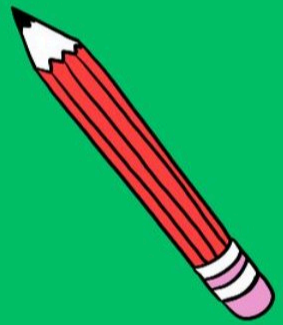
Your task

Write expressions for these: add 4 to z, subtract y from 5, 3 times m, p divided by 2.

1. Write all four on your own
2. Compare order with your partner
3. Test one with a number, like y = 2

10 min

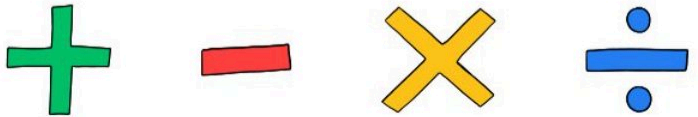
In pairs



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Check It Like a Pro

1. Say it back in words
2. Point to numbers, letter, sign
3. Try a number to see if it fits

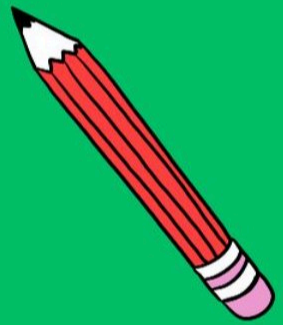


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$a^2+b^2=c^2$

What Should n Mean?

What should 20 - n mean for our class?



A Dollars left after spending

B Pages left to read

C Minutes left to play

Vote with your hands, then explain why.

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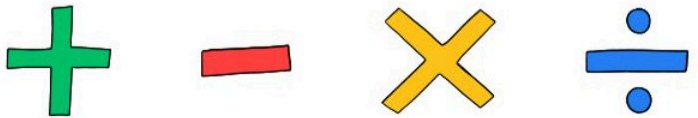
True or false?

5 - y means subtract y from 5.

3m means 3 + m.

n / 2 is an expression.

x + 5 = 8 is an expression.



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