

**Pre-algebra**  
**Skill-Builder # 1 – 2**  
**Subtracting Integers**

Apply the **definition of subtraction**:

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

i.e. subtracting a second integer from a first integer is the same as **adding the opposite of the second integer to the first integer**. Then apply the addition rules:

$(+) + (+) = (+)$	positive + positive = positive
$(-) + (-) = (-)$	negative + negative = negative
$(+) + (-)$ or $(-) + (+)$	subtract the "smaller" from the "larger" and take the sign of the "larger"

Examples

1)  $7 - 11 = 7 + (-11) = -4$

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

3)  $15 - 4 = 15 + (-4) = 11$

4)  $-5 - (-3) = -5 + 3 = -2$

5) When performing subtraction involving more than two integers one can work from left to right:

$$\begin{aligned} & 3 - 8 - 9 - (-6) \\ & = \underbrace{3 + (-8)} + (-9) + 6 \\ & = \underbrace{-5} + (-9) + 6 \\ & = \quad -14 \quad + 6 \\ & = \quad \quad -8 \end{aligned}$$

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Subtract:

1)  $2 - 9$

2)  $3 - 12$

3)  $12 - 21$

4)  $16 - 24$

5)  $-4 - 6$

6)  $-7 - 10$

7)  $-16 - 7$

8)  $-11 - 13$

9)  $8 - (-5)$

10)  $11 - (-7)$

11)  $-6 - (-10)$

12)  $-15 - (-5)$

13)  $-3 - 1 - 2 - 6$

14)  $-7 - 9 - 8 - 4$

15)  $3 - (-2) - 6 - 1 - (-4)$

16)  $6 - (-3) - (-2) - 7 - 9$

17)  $-5 - 6 - (-1) - (-3) - 10$

18)  $-7 - 9 - (-6) - (-5) - 4$

19)  $-1 - 2 - (-3) - (-2) - 1 - 7 - 2$

20)  $7 - (-3) - 5 - 4 - (-2) - (-5)$

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Answer Key:

1)  $-7$

2)  $-9$

3)  $-9$

4)  $-8$

5)  $-10$

6)  $-17$

7)  $-23$

8)  $-24$

9)  $13$

10)  $18$

11)  $4$

12)  $-10$

13)  $-12$

14)  $-28$

15)  $2$

16)  $-5$

17)  $-17$

18)  $-9$

19)  $-8$

20)  $8$