

Absolute Value

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 18

Here is a simple but powerful idea: **absolute value** measures how far a number is from zero on the number line—not which side of zero it is on. That is why $|-7|$ and $|7|$ both equal 7; each sits exactly 7 units from zero. Because distance is never negative, an absolute value is always zero or positive. One common trap to watch for: if there is a minus sign *outside* the absolute-value bars, find the absolute value first, then apply the sign. Mastering this concept now will pay off every time you work with integer operations, distance, and real-world contexts like temperature change.

Key Concepts & Quick Review

Definition: $|n| =$ distance from n to 0 on the number line $\Rightarrow |n| \geq 0$ always.

Rule: $|n| = n$ if $n \geq 0$; $|n| = -n$ if $n < 0$
absolute value)

Key fact: $|-n| = |n|$ (opposites have the same absolute value)



Examples

① Evaluate $-|-9|$.

Think It Through: Work from the inside out. First find the absolute value: $|-9| = 9$ because -9 is 9 units from zero. Then look at the negative sign outside the bars and apply it after the absolute value is finished. That gives $-(9) = -9$. A negative sign outside absolute value bars does not disappear.

Answer: -9

② Two hikers leave camp (position 0 on a trail). Hiker A walks 11 *mi* east (+11) and Hiker B walks 11 *mi* west (-11). Use absolute value to compare the distances each hiker traveled. Then find $|+11| - |-11|$.

Think It Through: Absolute value tells distance from zero, so direction does not matter here. Hiker A traveled $|+11| = 11$ *mi* and Hiker B traveled $|-11| = 11$ *mi*. That means they are the same distance from camp even though they walked in opposite directions. Subtracting the two distances gives $11 - 11 = 0$.

Answer: 0; both hikers traveled equal distances



Practice Problems

Evaluate each expression.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. $ -8 =$ | _____ | 9. $ -45 =$ | _____ |
| 2. $ 15 =$ | _____ | 10. $ 7 - -7 =$ | _____ |
| 3. $- -7 =$ | _____ | 11. $ -13 + -8 =$ | _____ |
| 4. $ -34 =$ | _____ | 12. $ -6 \cdot -4 =$ | _____ |
| 5. $- 12 =$ | _____ | 13. $ -3 ^2 =$ | _____ |
| 6. $ 0 =$ | _____ | 14. $ 8 - 15 =$ | _____ |
| 7. $ -23 =$ | _____ | 15. $ -100 \div -25 =$ | _____ |
| 8. $- -20 =$ | _____ | | |

Study Tips

- 👉 Absolute value is **always** ≥ 0 . It measures distance, and distance is never negative.
- 👉 A negative sign *outside* the bars is applied **after** taking the absolute value: $-|-5| = -(5) = -5$.
- 👉 Work from the inside out: simplify what is inside $| \cdot |$ first, then evaluate the absolute value, then apply any outside operations.

Word Problems

16. Two submarines depart from a dock at sea level (depth = 0). Submarine A dives to a depth of -340 feet and Submarine B dives to a depth of -180 feet. Use absolute value to determine which submarine is *closer* to the surface, and by exactly how many feet closer it is than the other submarine. _____
17. Alena's bank account balance was \$0 on Sunday. By Monday evening her balance had dropped to $-\$47$. By Tuesday evening it had dropped further to $-\$62$. Use absolute value to state her Tuesday balance as a positive amount owed. Then determine by how many dollars her balance changed between Monday evening and Tuesday evening, and express that change as an absolute value. _____
18. Three points P, Q, R are marked on the number line shown here. Find $|P|, |Q|,$ and $|R|$. Then determine which point is *farthest* from zero, and compute $|P| + |R|$ (the total distance from zero of the two outer points). _____



Answer Keys

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1) 8</p> <p>2) 15</p> <p>3) -7</p> <p>4) 34</p> <p>5) -12</p> <p>6) 0</p> <p>7) 23</p> <p>8) -20</p> <p>9) 45</p> <p>10) 0</p> | <p>11) 21</p> <p>12) 24</p> <p>13) 9</p> <p>14) 7</p> <p>15) 4</p> <p>16) Sub B is closer; it is 160 <i>ft</i> closer.</p> <p>17) Owes \$62; $-62 - (-47) = \\$15$ change.</p> <p>18) $P = -7$; $Q = -2$; $R = 5$; farthest from 0: P; $P + R = 12$</p> |
|---|---|

Step-by-Step Explanations

Strategy: For Absolute Value, treat absolute value as distance from zero; first make the value inside the bars nonnegative, then handle any operation outside the bars. A correct solution should make clear whether the bars changed the sign or only measured distance.

Practice 1: $|-8| =$ **Answer:** 8

In the opening example, evaluate absolute-value bars as distance from zero before doing any remaining operation.

Practice 15: $|-100| \div |-25| =$ **Answer:** 4

For the end-of-set item, evaluate absolute-value bars as distance from zero before doing any remaining operation.

Word-problem notes:

16. Answer: Sub B is closer; it is 160 *ft* closer.

Use absolute value to compare how far each submarine is below the surface. Submarine A is $|-340| = 340$ feet below, and Submarine B is $|-180| = 180$ feet below. Since 180 is smaller, Submarine B is closer to the surface. The difference is $340 - 180 = 160$ feet.

17. Answer: Owes \$62; $|-62 - (-47)| = \$15$ change.

A balance of $-\$62$ means Alena owes \$62, so the positive amount owed is \$62. To find the change from Monday to Tuesday, subtract: $-62 - (-47) = -62 + 47 = -15$. The negative sign shows the balance went down by 15 dollars. The size of the change is $|-15| = \$15$.

18. Answer: $P = -7$, so $|P| = 7$; $Q = -2$, so $|Q| = 2$; $R = 5$, so $|R| = 5$; P is farthest from 0; $|P| + |R| = 12$. Read the points off the number line: P is at -7 , Q is at -2 , and R is at 5. Absolute value gives the distance from zero, so $|P| = 7$, $|Q| = 2$, and $|R| = 5$. The largest absolute value is 7, so P is farthest from zero. Adding the outer distances gives $|P| + |R| = 7 + 5 = 12$.



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