

Permutations and Combinations

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 18

Quick Review and Helpful Hints

A *permutation* counts arrangements where order matters: ${}_n P_r = \frac{n!}{(n-r)!}$. A *combination* counts selections where order does *not* matter: ${}_n C_r = \frac{n!}{r!(n-r)!}$. Remember that $n!$ (factorial) means multiply every whole number from n down to 1.

▶ **Example:** In how many ways can you arrange 3 of 5 books on a shelf (order matters)? **Work:** Order matters, so use a permutation: ${}_5 P_3 = \frac{5!}{(5-3)!} = \frac{5!}{2!} = \frac{120}{2}$. ★ **Answer:** 60

◆ Practice Problems

Evaluate each expression.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. $4!$ _____</p> <p>2. $5!$ _____</p> <p>3. $3!$ _____</p> <p>4. ${}_5 P_2$ _____</p> <p>5. ${}_6 P_3$ _____</p> <p>6. ${}_4 P_4$ _____</p> <p>7. ${}_5 C_2$ _____</p> | <p>8. ${}_6 C_2$ _____</p> <p>9. ${}_7 C_3$ _____</p> <p>10. ${}_4 C_1$ _____</p> <p>11. ${}_6 P_2$ _____</p> <p>12. ${}_5 C_5$ _____</p> <p>13. ${}_8 C_2$ _____</p> <p>14. ${}_7 P_2$ _____</p> |
|---|--|

◆ Word Problems

15. In how many ways can a president and a vice-president be chosen from a club of 6 members (order matters)? _____
16. How many ways can you choose 2 toppings from 5 available toppings (order does not matter)? _____
17. How many different 3-letter arrangements can be made from the letters A, B, C, D with no repeats (order matters)? _____
18. A team of 3 is chosen from 8 players (order does not matter). How many different teams are possible? _____



Answer Keys

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <input type="text" value="24"/> | 7. <input type="text" value="10"/> | 13. <input type="text" value="28"/> |
| 2. <input type="text" value="120"/> | 8. <input type="text" value="15"/> | 14. <input type="text" value="42"/> |
| 3. <input type="text" value="6"/> | 9. <input type="text" value="35"/> | 15. <input type="text" value="30"/> |
| 4. <input type="text" value="20"/> | 10. <input type="text" value="4"/> | 16. <input type="text" value="10"/> |
| 5. <input type="text" value="120"/> | 11. <input type="text" value="30"/> | 17. <input type="text" value="24"/> |
| 6. <input type="text" value="24"/> | 12. <input type="text" value="1"/> | 18. <input type="text" value="56"/> |

Step-by-Step Explanations

1. Start by naming the process: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is A factorial multiplies down to 1: $4! = 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 24$. So the final answer is 24.

2. A good way to think about this is: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is $5! = 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$. So the final answer is 120.

3. Step by step: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is $3! = 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 6$. So the final answer is 6.

4. Take it one move at a time: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Permutations count ordered choices: ${}_5P_2 = 5 \times 4 = 20$. So the final answer is 20.

5. Start by naming the process: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_6P_3 = 6 \times 5 \times 4 = 120$. So the final answer is 120.

6. A good way to think about this is: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_4P_4 = 4! = 24$ – every arrangement of all four items. So the final answer is 24.

7. Step by step: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Combinations ignore order: ${}_5C_2 = \frac{5 \times 4}{2 \times 1} = 10$. So the final answer is 10.

8. Take it one move at a time: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_6C_2 = \frac{6 \times 5}{2} = 15$. So the final answer is 15.

9. Start by naming the process: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_7C_3 = \frac{7 \times 6 \times 5}{3 \times 2 \times 1} = 35$. So the final answer is 35.

10. A good way to think about this is: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Choosing 1 from 4 can be done in 4 ways. So the final answer is 4.

11. Step by step: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_6P_2 = 6 \times 5 = 30$. So the final answer is 30.

12. Take it one move at a time: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is There is exactly one way to choose all 5, so ${}_5C_5 = 1$. So the final answer is 1.

13. Start by naming the process: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_8C_2 = \frac{8 \times 7}{2} = 28$. So the final answer is 28.

14. A good way to think about this is: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is ${}_7P_2 = 7 \times 6 = 42$. So the final answer is 42.

15. Step by step: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Order matters (president vs. vice-president), so ${}_6P_2 = 6 \times 5 = 30$. So the final answer is 30.

16. Take it one move at a time: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Order doesn't matter for toppings, so ${}_5C_2 = \frac{5 \times 4}{2} = 10$. So the final answer is 10.

17. Start by naming the process: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is Arrangements care about order: ${}_4P_3 = 4 \times 3 \times 2 = 24$. So the final answer is 24.

18. A good way to think about this is: Decide whether order matters, then use the counting rule, permutation rule, or combination rule that fits. The setup/work is A team ignores order, so ${}_8C_3 = \frac{8 \times 7 \times 6}{3 \times 2 \times 1} = 56$. So the final answer is 56.



Keep Building PSAT 8/9 Math Skills

Recommended Effortless Math resources



PSAT 8/9 Math Full Study Guide

Use the complete PSAT 8/9 Math resource for review, worked examples, extra practice, and test-style questions after each worksheet.



Scan Me
Download Instantly

STUDENT FAVORITE - PSAT 8/9 Math for Beginners



PSAT 8/9 Math for Beginners 2026

Step-by-step lessons, topic practice, and full review support for students who want a calm path through PSAT 8/9 Math preparation.

A strong companion for self-study, tutoring, homework, and targeted review.

PDF Edition



Scan Me
Download Instantly

For more PSAT 8/9 Math prep, visit EffortlessMath.com/PSAT-8-9