

# Zero and Negative Exponents

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 18

### Quick Review and Helpful Hints

Any *nonzero* base raised to the 0 power equals 1:  $x^0 = 1$ . A *negative* exponent means take the reciprocal:  $x^{-n} = \frac{1}{x^n}$ , and  $\frac{1}{x^{-n}} = x^n$ . To finish a problem, rewrite everything with positive exponents and then simplify.

▷ **Example:** Rewrite  $2^{-3}$  with a positive exponent and evaluate it. **Work:** A negative exponent means take the reciprocal:  $2^{-3} = \frac{1}{2^3}$ . Then  $2^3 = 8$ , so the value is  $\frac{1}{8}$ . ★ **Answer:**  $\frac{1}{8}$

### ◆ Practice Problems

Evaluate or rewrite each expression with positive exponents.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Evaluate <math>7^0</math> _____</p> <p>2. Evaluate <math>3^{-2}</math> _____</p> <p>3. Evaluate <math>5^{-1}</math> _____</p> <p>4. Evaluate <math>(-4)^0</math> _____</p> <p>5. Evaluate <math>2^{-4}</math> _____</p> <p>6. Rewrite <math>x^{-5}</math> with a positive exponent _____</p> <p>7. Evaluate <math>10^{-3}</math> _____</p> | <p>8. Simplify <math>\frac{1}{x^{-2}}</math> _____</p> <p>9. Evaluate <math>4^0 + 3^0</math> _____</p> <p>10. Evaluate <math>6^{-2}</math> _____</p> <p>11. Rewrite <math>3x^{-2}</math> with positive exponents _____</p> <p>12. Evaluate <math>2^{-3}</math> _____</p> <p>13. Evaluate <math>\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{-2}</math> _____</p> <p>14. Evaluate <math>9^{-1}</math> _____</p> |
|--|---|

### ◆ Word Problems

15. A scientist writes a measurement as  $10^{-2}$  meters. Express this as a fraction. \_\_\_\_\_
16. A calculator displays  $5^0$  as a result. What number is this? \_\_\_\_\_
17. The thickness of a sheet is  $2^{-4}$  inch. Write this thickness as a fraction. \_\_\_\_\_
18. A science formula has the denominator  $4^{-1}$  in the expression  $\frac{1}{4^{-1}}$ . What is the simplified value? \_\_\_\_\_



## Answer Keys

1.  $\boxed{1}$

2.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{9}}$

3.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{5}}$

4.  $\boxed{1}$

5.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{16}}$

6.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{x^5}}$

7.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{1000}}$

8.  $\boxed{x^2}$

9.  $\boxed{2}$

10.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{36}}$

11.  $\boxed{\frac{3}{x^2}}$

12.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{8}}$

13.  $\boxed{4}$

14.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{9}}$

15.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{100}}$

16.  $\boxed{1}$

17.  $\boxed{\frac{1}{16}}$

18.  $\boxed{4}$

### Step-by-Step Explanations

1. Start by naming the process: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Any nonzero number raised to the zero power equals 1 – a handy rule to memorize, so  $7^0 = 1$ . So the final answer is 1.

2. A good way to think about this is: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is A negative exponent means take the reciprocal:  $3^{-2} = \frac{1}{3^2} = \frac{1}{9}$ .

So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{9}$ .

3. Step by step: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $5^{-1}$  is simply the reciprocal of 5, namely  $\frac{1}{5}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{5}$ .

4. Take it one move at a time: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is The zero power gives 1 even with a negative base, so  $(-4)^0 = 1$ . So the final answer is 1.

5. Start by naming the process: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Flip and raise:  $2^{-4} = \frac{1}{2^4} = \frac{1}{16}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{16}$ .

6. A good way to think about this is: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Move the factor to the denominator to make the exponent positive:  $x^{-5} = \frac{1}{x^5}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{x^5}$ .

7. Step by step: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $10^{-3} = \frac{1}{10^3} = \frac{1}{1000}$  – powers of ten make this quick. So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{1000}$ .

8. Take it one move at a time: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is A negative exponent in the denominator jumps up top:  $\frac{1}{x^{-2}} = x^2$ . So the final answer is  $x^2$ .

9. Start by naming the process: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Each term is 1 because of the zero power, so  $1 + 1 = 2$ . So the final answer is 2.

10. A good way to think about this is: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Flip and square:  $6^{-2} = \frac{1}{6^2} = \frac{1}{36}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{36}$ .

11. Step by step: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Only the  $x$  has the negative exponent, so it moves down while the 3 stays:  $3x^{-2} = \frac{3}{x^2}$ .

So the final answer is  $\frac{3}{x^2}$ .

12. Take it one move at a time: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $2^{-3} = \frac{1}{2^3} = \frac{1}{8}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{8}$ .

13. Start by naming the process: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is A negative exponent flips the fraction first:  $(\frac{1}{2})^{-2} = (\frac{2}{1})^2 = 4$ . So the final answer is 4.

14. A good way to think about this is: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $9^{-1}$  is the reciprocal of 9, namely  $\frac{1}{9}$ . So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{9}$ .

15. Step by step: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $10^{-2} = \frac{1}{10^2} = \frac{1}{100}$  meter. So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{100}$ .

16. Take it one move at a time: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is Any nonzero base to the zero power is 1, so the display reads 1. So the final answer is 1.

17. Start by naming the process: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is  $2^{-4} = \frac{1}{2^4} = \frac{1}{16}$  inch. So the final answer is  $\frac{1}{16}$ .

18. A good way to think about this is: Read what the problem is asking, choose the matching rule, write the setup, and then simplify one step at a time. The setup/work is The negative exponent in the denominator moves up top:  $\frac{1}{4^{-1}} = 4$ . So the final answer is 4.



# Keep Building TABE Math Skills

Recommended Effortless Math resources



## The Most Comprehensive TABE Math Preparation Bundle

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



Scan Me  
Download Instantly

### STUDENT FAVORITE - TABE Math for Beginners



## TABE Math for Beginners 2026

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

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

PDF Edition



Scan Me  
Download Instantly

For more TABE Math prep, visit [EffortlessMath.com/TABE](https://EffortlessMath.com/TABE)