

Subtracting integers is often the hardest of the four basic operations for students. Sometimes students try to take a shortcut and they don't change the signs to "add the opposite." The problem can be easy to miss when you don't change these signs.

Here are some other explanations to help you remember why we can change the subtracting problem to an addition problem.

PARTY #1: This is a positive party. It is filled with positive people. What could you do to make this party less positive?

- One option would be to make some of the positive people go home. ***This means you are subtracting positive people.***
- A second option would be to bring in some negative people. ***This means you are adding negative people.***

Therefore you have accomplished the same thing two different ways.

***Subtracting positives is the same as adding negatives.***

PARTY #2: This is a negative party. It is filled with negative people. What could you do to make this party less negative (more positive)?

- One option would be to make some of the negative people go home. ***This means you are subtracting negative people.***
- A second option would be to bring in some positive people. ***This means you are adding positive people.***

Therefore you have accomplished the same thing two different ways.

***Subtracting negatives is the same as adding positives.***