

Sometimes the parentheses appear later in the expression, such as $2 - 3(x + 4)$. When this is the case, bring down the first number, then distribute.

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 - 3(x + 4) \\ \downarrow \quad \text{---} \\ 2 - 3x - 12 \end{array}$$

You will often need to combine like terms:

$$\begin{array}{c} \boxed{2} \quad \boxed{-3x} \quad \boxed{-12} \\ -3x - 12 \end{array}$$

When there is a negative sign in front of parentheses, such as $-(3m - 4)$, or when an expression in parentheses is being subtracted, such as $(4p - 3) - (2p - 6)$, there are two ways to solve the problem.

The first is to treat the expression in the parentheses as if you were distributing a negative one (multiply everything inside by -1). The second way is to just change the sign of every term inside the parentheses. When there is a plus sign, or no sign in front of the parentheses, you can just remove the parentheses.

$$\begin{array}{r} (4p - 3) - (2p - 6) \\ 4p - 3 - 2p + 6 \end{array}$$

Notice, the first set of parentheses was dropped, while the second set was distributed by -1 , changing the $+2p$ to $-2p$, and the -6 to $+6$.

Rearrange using the commutative property...

$$4p - 2p + 6 - 3$$

...and combine: $2p + 3$