

5.2 Solving Absolute Value Equations

Absolute value equations are equations with a variable in the absolute value bars.

Ex.) $|x| = 9$

When solving absolute value equations, we have to consider two cases; the positive case and the negative case.



Ex.) Solve, both algebraically and graphically:

$|6 - x| = 2$

Graphically

$y_1 = |6 - x|$

$y_2 = 2$

$x = 4, 8$

Algebraically

Case 1


$6 - x = 2$
 $+x \quad +x$
 $6 = 2 + x$
 $-2 \quad -2$

$4 = x$

Case 2

$-(6 - x) = 2$
 $-6 + x = 2$
 $+6 \quad +6$

$x = 8$



Ex.) $|x + 5| = 4x - 1$


Graphically
 $y_1 = |x + 5|$
 $y_2 = 4x - 1$
 $x = 2$

Algebraically

Case 1
 $x + 5 = 4x - 1$
 $-4x \quad -4x$
 $-3x + 5 = -1$
 $-3x = -6$
 $x = 2$

Case 2
 $-(x + 5) = 4x - 1$
 $-x - 5 = 4x - 1$
 $-4 = 5x$
 $\frac{-4}{5} = \frac{5x}{5}$
 $x = -4/5$

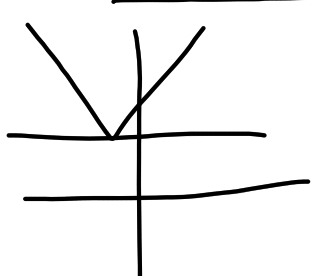
Always verify w/ original equation extraneous



Ex.) $|3x - 4| + 12 = 9$
 $-12 \quad -12$

$|3x - 4| = -3$

no solutions
 because by the definition of abs. value $\neq -\#$





Ex.) $|x - 5| = x^2 - 8x + 15$

$$3 \stackrel{?}{=} 3$$

Case 1

$$x - 5 = x^2 - 8x + 15$$

$$0 = x^2 - 9x + 20$$

$$0 = (x - 4)(x - 5)$$

$$x = \boxed{4, 5}$$

extraneous

Case 2

$$-1(x - 5) = x^2 - 8x + 15$$

$$-x + 5 = x^2 - 8x + 15$$

$$0 = x^2 - 7x + 10$$

$$0 = (x - 5)(x - 2)$$

$$x = \boxed{5, 2}$$

* make sure abs. value bars are isolated *

* set up 2 cases *

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