Solving linear simultaneous equations by elimination

Key points

- Two equations are simultaneous when they are both true at the same time.
- Solving simultaneous linear equations in two unknowns involves finding the value of each unknown which works for both equations.
- Make sure that the coefficient of one of the unknowns is the same in both equations.
- Eliminate this equal unknown by either subtracting or adding the two equations.

Example 1 Solve the simultaneous equations $3x + y = 5$ and $x + y = 1$

$3x + y = 5$ $-\quad x + y = 1$ $2x \quad = 4$ So $x = 2$ Using $x + y = 1$ $2 + y = 1$ So $y = -1$ Check: equation 1: $3 \times 2 + (-1) = 5$ YES equation 2: $2 + (-1) = 1$ YES	**1** Subtract the second equation from the first equation to eliminate the y term. **2** To find the value of y, substitute $x = 2$ into one of the original equations. **3** Substitute the values of x and y into both equations to check your answers.

Example 2 Solve $x + 2y = 13$ and $5x - 2y = 5$ simultaneously.

$x + 2y = 13$ $+ \quad 5x - 2y = 5$ $6x \quad = 18$ So $x = 3$ Using $x + 2y = 13$ $3 + 2y = 13$ So $y = 5$ Check: equation 1: $3 + 2 \times 5 = 13$ YES equation 2: $5 \times 3 - 2 \times 5 = 5$ YES	**1** Add the two equations together to eliminate the y term. **2** To find the value of y, substitute $x = 3$ into one of the original equations. **3** Substitute the values of x and y into both equations to check your answers.

Practice questions

Solve these simultaneous equations.

1 $4x + y = 8$
$x + y = 5$

2 $3x + y = 7$
$3x + 2y = 5$

3 $4x + y = 3$
$3x - y = 11$

4 $3x + 4y = 7$
$x - 4y = 5$

5 $2x + y = 11$
$x - 3y = 9$

6 $2x + 3y = 11$
$3x + 2y = 4$

7 $4x + y = 25$
$x - 3y = 16$

Answers

1 $x = 1, y = 4$

2 $x = 3, y = -2$

3 $x = 2, y = -5$

4 $x = 3, y = -\frac{1}{2}$

5 $x = 6, y = -1$

6 $x = -2, y = 5$

7 $x = 7, y = -3$