

Collecting Like Terms

Collecting like terms is a way of simplifying algebraic expressions.

To do this we identify the like terms in an algebraic expression and combine them by adding or subtracting.



Collect the like terms $3a + 4b + 2a - 2b$

$3a$ and $+2a$ are like terms.

$+4b$ and $-2b$ are different like terms.

The addition or subtraction sign in front of a term belongs to that term.

$$\begin{aligned} 3a + 4b + 2a - 2b &= 3a + 2a + 4b - 2b \\ &= 5a + 2b \end{aligned}$$