

Column Subtraction

When subtracting using the column method, ensure that all your numbers are lined up correctly in their columns to avoid confusion.

	T	Th	Th	H	T	O
	7	⁴ 5	¹ 5		² 3	¹ 2
-	2	2	6	2	3	
	5	2	9	0	9	

1. Starting at the ones column, your first calculation is $2 - 9$, which can't be done. Therefore you must exchange from the Tens column. This means you take one from that column (cross out the 3) and make that a 2. Then carry the one you have exchanged to the 2 in the ones column. This then becomes a 12. Your calculation is now $12 - 9$.
2. Your next calculation is the tens column so you are working out $2 - 2$.
3. The next step is to complete the subtraction in the hundreds column. $5 - 6$ can't be done so you are exchanging from the Thousands column. Once you have taken one from that column, (cross out the 5 to become a 4) you place the one next to the 5 to make 15. Your calculation is now $15 - 6$.
4. You now complete the subtraction in the thousands which is $4 - 2$.
5. Your last step is to complete the ten thousand column which is $7 - 2$.