

The four mistakes to watch for

The four mistakes that come up most, each next to the version that is right. Read every pair aloud.

Not this

$$6 + 4 \times 5 = 50$$

Added before multiplying.

This

$$6 + 4 \times 5 = 26$$

$$20 - 12 \div 4 = 2$$

Subtracted before dividing.

$$20 - 12 \div 4 = 17$$

$$3 \times 4^2 = 144$$

The power belongs to the 4 alone, not to the product.

$$3 \times 4^2 = 48$$

$$24 \div 4 \times 2 = 3$$

Multiply and divide run left to right.

$$24 \div 4 \times 2 = 12$$

Now try these

1. $7 + (9 - 5) \times 9 =$

2. $3 + 4 \times (5 + 5) =$

3. $6 + 6 \times (2 + 6) =$

4. $4 + (5 + 5) \times 6 =$

Answer key: The four mistakes to watch for

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Now try these

1. $7 + (9 - 5) \times 9 = 43$
2. $3 + 4 \times (5 + 5) = 43$
3. $6 + 6 \times (2 + 6) = 54$
4. $4 + (5 + 5) \times 6 = 64$