Chapter 3: SIMULTANEOUS EQUATIONS

An example of a pair of simultaneous equations is $3x + 2y = 8$ ①
$5x + y = 11$ ②

In these equations, x and y stand for two numbers. We can solve these equations in order to find the values of x and y by eliminating one of the letters from the equations.

In these equations it is simplest to eliminate y. We do this by making the coefficients of y the same in both equations. This can be achieved by multiplying equation ② by 2, so that both equations contain $2y$:

$3x + 2y = 8$ ①
$10x + 2y = 22$ 2×② = ③

To eliminate the y terms, we subtract equation ③ from equation ①. We get: $7x = 14$
i.e. $x = 2$

To find y, we substitute $x = 2$ into one of the original equations. For example if we put it into ②:

$10 + y = 11$
$y = 1$

Therefore the solution is $x = 2$, $y = 1$.

Remember: You can check your solutions by substituting both x and y into the original equations.

Example: Solve $2x + 5y = 16$ ①
$3x - 4y = 1$ ②

Solution: We begin by getting the same number of x or y appearing in both equation. We can get $20y$ in both equations if we multiply the top equation by 4 and the bottom equation by 5:

$8x + 20y = 64$ ③
$15x - 20y = 5$ ④

As the SIGNS in front of $20y$ are DIFFERENT, we can eliminate the y terms from the equations by ADDING:

$23x = 69$ ③+④
i.e. $x = 3$

Substituting this into equation ① gives:

$6 + 5y = 16$
$5y = 10$
So… $y = 2$
The solution is $x = 3$, $y = 2$.

If you need **more help** on solving simultaneous equations, you can download a booklet from the following website:
http://www.mathcentre.ac.uk/resources/workbooks/mathcentre/web-simultaneous1.pdf

Exercise:

Solve the pairs of simultaneous equations in the following questions:

1) $x + 2y = 7$
$3x + 2y = 9$

2) $x + 3y = 0$
$3x + 2y = -7$

3) $3x - 2y = 4$
$2x + 3y = -6$

4) $9x - 2y = 25$
$4x - 5y = 7$

5) $4a + 3b = 22$
$5a - 4b = 43$

6) $3p + 3q = 15$
$2p + 5q = 14$