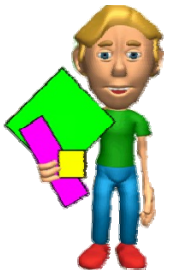
Algebra Tiles



Algebra tiles empower students of all learning styles to better understand mathematical concepts. For many students, abstract algebraic concepts are more easily grasped with the concrete representations displayed by the tiles. In addition, the tactile nature of the tiles, allows students to connect on a personal level with the concepts being discussed.

> ***When I listen, I hear.***
> ***When I see, I remember.***
> ***When I do, I understand.***

Description: Algebra tiles can be easily (and cheaply) constructed. The tiles shown here were made from colored card stock (3x5 card thickness). Using the given template, cut out enough tiles to allow students to manipulate a range of problems.

The tile set in the picture includes: positive tiles (18 unit tiles in yellow, 8 “x” tiles in pink, 4 “x^2” tiles in green) and negative tiles (18 unit tiles, 8 “x” tiles, 4 “x^2” tiles all in red).

There is no need to have different colors among the positive tiles. The positive tiles could all be of one color. The negative tiles should, however, all be red. These tile sets are packaged in sandwich bags and enough sets are prepared so that each student in the class has his/her own set. (I also produced an "enlarged" tile set with magnets on the back for demonstrations at the chalkboard. Magnetic strips can be found in any craft department.)

Many of the commercial versions of algebra tiles are made from plastic and possess a "projectile" quality. I have found that the homemade tiles are seldom "airborne" since they are aerodynamically deficient. :)

Template: If your copy machine can process card stock paper, you can transfer the template directly to the card stock. If not, you may need to measure and cut the tiles by hand.
(The template was modeled after a template appearing in CORD Applied Mathematics-Unit 23.)

***Hint:** When making your tile sets, consider asking for assistance from other adults, retired persons, younger children, and student helpers. My retired mother ("grandma") was most willing to assist in making these manipulatives.

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