

Reporting Answers w/ correct # of Significant Figures (sf) when you *ADD & SUBTRACT*

1. Take your calculator out of Scientific Notation or work the problem "long hand". It can be time consuming and annoying to switch modes in your calculator every time you need to.
2. Copy down the problem making sure that the decimal point in each figure to be added or subtracted lines up vertically with the decimal point of each other figure to be added or subtracted.
3. Do the addition and/or subtraction.
4. Underline the uncertain digit in each figure that was added or subtracted.
(**NOTE:** The uncertain digit is the last significant figure *digit* of each number that you added and/or subtracted. When you have finished this step, each line of numbers will have one number with a line under it.)
5. Underline each number in the answer in a column containing an uncertain digit.
6. Record the answer using scientific notation.
7. Round your answer so that it contains only one uncertain digit.

NOTE: When doing problems that contain a combination of multiplication and/or division, plus addition and/or subtraction, it is best to do the addition and subtraction parts of the problem 1st, applying all the rules of significant figures before you attempt to do the multiplication and/or division.

Example:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 9700 \\
 355 \\
 7.65 \\
 \hline
 10062.65 \\
 \text{[decimal notation]}
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{r}
 1.006265 \times 10^4 \\
 \text{[scientific notation]}
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{r}
 \text{final answer:} \\
 1.01 \times 10^4 \\
 \text{[scientific notation]}
 \end{array}$$