

Six friends go out for dinner.

They order a veggie burger, a veggie burger, a veggie burger, a pizza, fish and chips and fish and chips.

The waiter groups the order together, like this.

This is called simplifying an expression.

Three veggie burgers, a pizza and two fish and chips.

Simplifying an expression involves gathering like algebraic terms.

This equation has a lot of terms and is long and overcomplicated.

To make it simpler, gather the like terms by adding and subtracting the like variables.

Two  $X$  plus four  $X$  is six  $X$ .

Five  $y$  subtract three  $y$  is two  $y$

Group them together and you simplify the expression.

The 18 remains unchanged as it has no like variable, there are no other numbers to deal with.

So, to simplify an expression, simply gather like terms. Simple.