

# The anatomy of a simple *term*...

**Exponent:** raise the variable to this power.

$$4x^2$$

**Coefficient:** multiply the variable (**after** raising it to the exponent power) by this number.

**Variable:** the letter used in place of an unknown number.

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But what if all three parts aren't there?

$$x^2$$

**Coefficient missing:** assume it's 1.

$$x^2 / 3$$

**Coefficient hidden:** it's really 1/3.

**Missing exponent:** assume it's 1.

$$4x$$

$$4^2$$

**Missing variable:** the term is a constant!

And what about  $1/x^n$ ? It's the same as  $x^{-n}$ .

For more about identifying parts and coefficients of terms, see [http://www.onemathematicalcat.org/algebra\\_book/online\\_problems/id\\_var\\_part\\_coeff.htm](http://www.onemathematicalcat.org/algebra_book/online_problems/id_var_part_coeff.htm).