

# The earliest known uses of absolute value essay sample



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Absolute Value is a term that is commonly used in the field of mathematics. How truly old is the term absolute value? What was absolute value first used for? How has the term changed over time if it has at all? The questions information has been found for the paper was found on three online websites that will be cited at the end. The paper will talk about what absolute value truly means today and in the past. It will also be focused on how when the term came about and how it has transformed to modern day mathematics and the uses of it. The reason for this paper is to enlighten the reader on the first known use of absolute value and explain what it is exactly does absolute value mean?

### Absolute Value

Several key events took place to get the term absolute value to a commonly used math word. The term absolute value was presented by a man named Jean-Robert Argand a mathematician in 1806 who is famous for his work with “ module” (The French word for absolute value). The measuring device was “ invented” in France for complex absolute values and was somewhat similar to the absolute value term we have today, but the sign (the two parallel bars) will not be invented for a long time. It was not for a while till the English decided to use the term absolute value in the year 1857 when it was first introduced. The term was actually borrowed from the Latin term “ modulus” which has an equal meaning to absolute value and is sometimes referred to by its Latin name still today. The way absolute value is written is with bar then a variable followed by another bar, like so  $|x|$ . It can also be writing with negative inside it, but the sign is dropped. This way of writing it

was introduced by a man named Karl Weierstrass in the year 1841 and has stuck around ever since.

These key factors are what made it the common known mathematical term we know today as absolute value. When the word is broken down Absolute means free from condition and value means worth. Free from condition meaning not positive or negative and value like how far away it is from zero is basically describing how it measures. Absolute value can basically be viewed as how far away a number is from zero, regardless of sign this makes solving problems harder because the step is sometimes forgotten or overlooked. The more distant a number is from zero the larger it is. It is a way of measuring the size of a number without regarding the sign making it a great tool to understand and use. For example  $|-200|$  equals 200 and the absolute value of  $|10|$  would be 10. The rule how about far it is from zero applies mainly to real numbers, they are ordered. Complex numbers cannot use the same rule because they are not ordered like real numbers are.  $Z = X+iY$  is the formula to measure the distance between two Complex numbers. The way the term absolute value has evolved through the years has been a pretty simple process. The term came from French to Latin to English. Shortly after it was given a two bar sign it was brought to the English language. It has come a long way to the form we know as  $| \text{Absolute Value} |$ .

#### Works Cited

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