



# Uncomplicating Algebra to Meet Common Core Standards in Math, K-8

*Marian Small*

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In the second book in the *Uncomplicating Mathematics Series*, professional developer Marian Small shows teachers how to uncomplicate the teaching of algebra by focusing on the most important ideas that students need to grasp. Organized by grade level around the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Small shares approaches that will lead to a deeper and richer understanding of algebra for both teachers and students. The book opens with a clear discussion of algebraic thinking and current requirements for algebraic understanding within standards-based learning environments. The book then launches with Kindergarten, where the first relevant standard is found in the operations and algebraic thinking domain, and ends with Grade 8, where the focus is on working with linear equations and functions. In each section the relevant standard is presented, followed by a discussion of important underlying ideas associated with that standard, as well as thoughtful, concept-based questions that can be used for classroom instruction, practice, or assessment. Underlying ideas include:

- Background to the mathematics of each relevant standard.
- Suggestions for appropriate representations for specific mathematical ideas.
- Suggestions for explaining ideas to students.
- Cautions about misconceptions or situations to avoid.

The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics challenges students to become mathematical thinkers, not just mathematical “doers.” This resource will be invaluable for pre- and inservice teachers as they prepare themselves to understand and teach algebra with a deep level of understanding.

*“Uncomplicating Algebra is an excellent resource for teachers responsible for the mathematical education of K–8 students. It is also a valuable tool for the training of preservice teachers of elementary and middle school mathematics.”*

—**Carole Greenes**, associate vice provost for STEM education, director of the Practice Research and Innovation in Mathematics Education (PRIME) Center, professor of mathematics education, Arizona State University

“The current climate in North America places a major emphasis on standards, including the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics in the U.S. In many cases, teachers are being asked to teach content with which they themselves struggle. In this book, Dr. Small masterfully breaks down the big ideas of algebraic thinking to assist teachers, math coaches, and preservice teachers—helping them to deepen their own understanding of the mathematics they teach. She describes common error patterns and examines algebraic reasoning from a developmental viewpoint, connecting the dots from kindergarten through grade 8. The book is clearly written, loaded with specific examples, and very timely. I recommend it strongly as a ‘must-read’ for all who are seeking to broaden their understanding of algebra and how to effectively teach this important content area to children.”

—**Daniel J. Brahier**, director, Science and Math Education in ACTION, professor of mathematics education, School of Teaching and Learning, Bowling Green State University

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