

Is Algebra Necessary?

" Is Algebra Necessary? " That was the headline in a New York Times op-ed in 2012. Perhaps New York Times reporters could use a dose. The following is from the December 28, 2014 issue:



Dan Meyer (@ddmeyer) pointed out the problem on Twitter:



Let's see. Let x be the number of digital rentals and y be the number of sales. We know $x + y = 2,000,000$. We also know $\$6x + \$15y = \$15,000,000$. Any student in my economics

principles class who could not solve this would not pass the course. But, for the edification of Times reporters, here's the solution.

I hope this helps people understand why algebra is useful.