

<b>Choosing a Strategy for Factoring Polynomials</b>	
Step 1:	Factor out the GCF.
Step 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If <b>two</b> terms, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <math>a^2 - b^2 = (a + b)(a - b)</math></li> <li>○ <math>a^2 + b^2</math> is NOT factorable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If <b>three</b> terms, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <math>a^2 + 2ab + b^2 = (a + b)^2</math></li> <li>○ Use <math>a \cdot c</math> method</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If <b>four or more</b> terms, try factoring by grouping</li> </ul>
Step 3:	See if any factors can be factored further.
Step 4:	Check by multiplying.

Adapted from *Beginning and Intermediate Algebra, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* by Martin-Gay