Why is it when you multiply two negative numbers you get a positive number? Good question!

The First Answer

Some people think of a negative as meaning "not". So if I say, "I am not going to the store," that is sort of the negative version of "I am going to the store."

So what do two "nots" mean? Consider this sentence: "You may tell me NOT to go to the store, but I'm NOT going to do what you say!" By negating your negation, I am insisting that I will go to the store.

Two "nots" cancel each other out, just like two negatives.

The Second Answer

Let's use negatives with money. A green chip is worth $5. A red chip means that I owe you $5. So if you lose $5, you can represent that by giving up a green chip or by picking up a red chip. So a green chip is +$5 and a red chip is -$5.

If you gain three green chips, what happens? 3 times $5 equals a $15 gain.

If you gain three red chips, what happens? 3 times -$5 equals a $15 loss.

What if you lose three green chips? You just lost $15. -3 times $5 equals a $15 loss.

What is you lose three red chips? You just gained $15. -3 times -$5 equals a $15 gain.

The Third Answer

How about proving it with a pattern?

$3 \bullet 5$	**+15**
$2 \bullet 5$	**+10**
$1 \bullet 5$	**+5**
$0 \bullet 5$	**0**
$-1 \bullet 5$	**-5**
$-2 \bullet 5$	**-10**

So….

$3 \bullet -5$	**-15**
$2 \bullet -5$	**-10**
$1 \bullet -5$	**-5**
$0 \bullet -5$	**0**
$-1 \bullet -5$	**+5**
$-2 \bullet -5$	**+10**