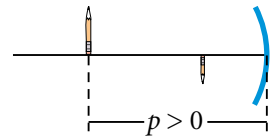
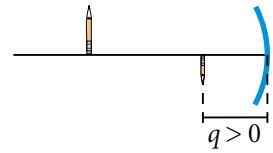
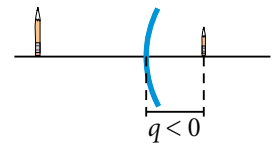
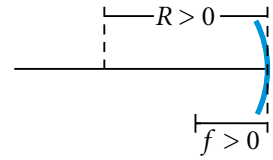
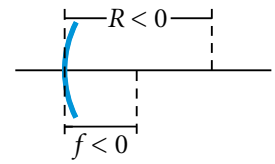
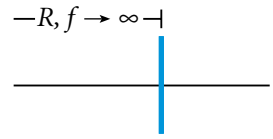
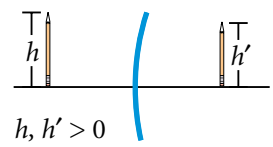
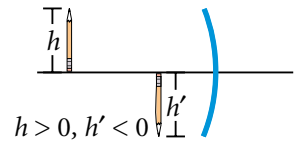
Table 5 Sign Conventions for Mirrors

Symbol	Situation	Sign	
p	object is in front of the mirror (real object)	+	
q	image is in front of the mirror (real image)	+	
q	image is behind the mirror (virtual image)	−	
R, f	center of curvature is in front of the mirror (concave spherical mirror)	+	
R, f	center of curvature is behind the mirror (convex spherical mirror)	−	
R, f	mirror has no curvature (flat mirror)	∞	
h'	image is above the principal axis	+	
h'	image is below the principal axis	−	

Did you know?

There are certain circumstances in which the object for one mirror is the image that appears behind another mirror. In these cases, the object is virtual and has a negative object distance. Because of the rarity of these situations, virtual object distance ($p < 0$) has not been listed in **Table 5.**