unless you decide how negatives behave under multiplication.

- For example, take distributivity:

$0 = (1+(-1)) \cdot (1+(-1))$

or, $0 = 1 \cdot 1 + 1 \cdot (-1) + (-1) \cdot 1 + (-1) \cdot (-1)$

or, $0 = 1 + (-1) + (-1) + [(-1) \cdot (-1)]$

If we don't decide that $(-1) \cdot (-1) = +1$, the rules break down.

So the reason for consistency is: either

- we abandon distributivity, commutativity, etc. (which makes arithmetic weaker), or
- we preserve them by decree — even if the intuition feels artificial.

IMPORTANT NOTES

2. The properties we demand from multiplication.