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| CHAPTER 7 | Guidelines for Balancing Equations | BLM 7.0.2 |
| OVERHEAD | | |
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1. Compare the number of reactant atoms and polyatomic ions on both sides of the unbalanced equation.
2. Identify the atoms or polyatomic ions that are present in different numbers on the two sides of the equation.
3. Choose one of the ions mentioned in Step 2 and write an integer coefficient in front of the compound that will balance the number of ions on the two sides of the equation.
4. Identify another atom or polyatomic ion that is different in number on the two sides of the equation.
5. Determine the integer coefficient for the compound containing that atom or polyatomic ion that will balance it on the two sides of the equation.
6. Once more, compare the number of each type of atom or polyatomic ion on each side of the equation. If the addition of coefficients has caused another atom or polyatomic ion to become unbalanced, repeat Steps 4 and 5. If the numbers of each of the atoms and polyatomic ions is now the same on both sides of the equation, the equation is balanced.