planetmath.org

Math for the people, by the people.

argument

Canonical name	Argument
Date of creation	2013-03-22 16:07:06
Last modified on	2013-03-22 16:07:06
Owner	Wkbj79 (1863)
Last modified by	Wkbj79 (1863)
Numerical id	8
Author	Wkbj79 (1863)
Entry type	Definition
Classification	msc 03E20
Classification	msc 97D70

The *argument* of a function is its input. For example, in the expression $f(x)$, x is the argument of f.

A common error for those who are unfamiliar with mathematics is to treat a function and its argument as two separate entities. For example, in solving the equation $\ln x = 5$ for x, people who are unfamiliar with mathematics may give the erroneous answer $x = \dfrac{5}{\ln}$. This error might be circumvented by stressing that a function and its argument are not multiplied, but rather that a function its argument.

Another common error is to try to separate the argument of a function. This error is most common when the argument consists of at least two . For example, students may write $f(x + 5) = f(x) + f(5)$ regardless of what the function f is.