There are several functions in the first section of our college algebra book that use fractions. Being able to enter complex expressions involving fractions will be a valuable skill throughout the semester.

One of the early assignments asks you to evaluate the function f of x and y equal to 1.1 to the x power plus 0.9 to the y power all over the square root of x plus y. As an example, we will evaluate the function for x equals 3 and y equals 7.

To do this calculation on a TI-84 style calculator, start by getting a fraction bar. Type alpha, y=, and 1 to get the fraction bar. Enter the top by typing 1.1, ^, 3, right arrow, plus, 0.9, ^, 7. Press the right arrow to go to the denominator. Type square root, 3, plus, 7. Press right arrow once to leave the square root and once more to leave the fraction. Press enter.

The value of f of 3 and 7 is 0.57 rounded to two decimal places.

The TI-83 Plus does not have a fraction menu like the TI-84 calculators. Use parentheses to keep the numerator and denominator of the fractions separate. Type right parenthesis, 1.1, ^, 3, plus, 0.9 ^, 7, left parenthesis, Type division to start the denominator. Press right parenthesis, square root, 3, plus, 7, left parenthesis twice to finish the denominator. Press enter.

The answer is still 0.57.

Doing a calculation like this is more difficult on a cell phone calculator.