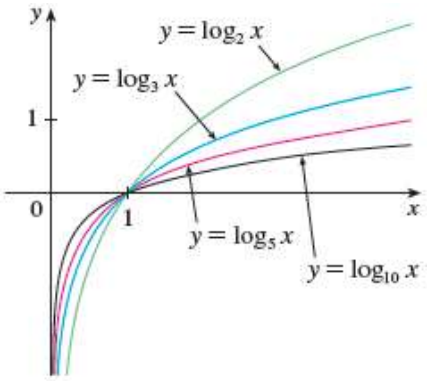
Logarithmic Functions

The **logarithmic functions** $f(x) = \log_b x$, where the base b is a positive constant, are the inverse functions of the exponential functions. They will be studied in Section 1.5. Figure 21 shows the graphs of four logarithmic functions with various bases. In each case the domain is $(0, \infty)$, the range is $(-\infty, \infty)$, and the function increases slowly when $x > 1$.

Figure 21



Example 6

Classify the following functions as one of the types of functions that we have discussed.

(a) $f(x) = 5^x$

(b) $g(x) = x^5$

(c) $h(x) = \dfrac{1 + x}{1 - \sqrt{x}}$

(d) $u(t) = 1 - t + 5t^4$

Solution

(a) $f(x) = 5^x$ is an exponential function. (The x is the exponent.)

(b) $g(x) = x^5$ is a power function. (The x is the base.) We could also consider it to be a polynomial of degree 5.

(c) $h(x) = \dfrac{1 + x}{1 - \sqrt{x}}$ is an algebraic function.

(d) $u(t) = 1 - t + 5t^4$ is a polynomial of degree 4.