

Problem 11: Find all roots of  $f(t) = 2t^4 - 23t^2 + 27t - 36$ . (Source: AoPS Precalculus)

Let  $f(t) = 2t^4 - 23t^2 + 27t - 36$ .

We have

$$f(1) = 2 - 23 + 27 - 36$$

$$f(1) = 2 + 4 - 36$$

$$f(1) = -30$$

$$f(2) = 2(16) - 23(4) + 27(2) - 36$$

$$f(2) = 32 - 92 + 54 - 36$$

$$f(2) = -60 + 54 - 36$$

$$f(2) = -42$$

$$f(3) = 2(81) - 23(9) + 27(3) - 36$$

$$f(3) = 162 - 207 + 81 - 36$$

$$f(3) = 162 - 126 - 36$$

$$f(3) = 0$$

Thus  $t - 3$  is a factor of  $f(t) = 2t^4 - 23t^2 + 27t - 36$ .

Dividing  $f(t)$  by  $t - 3$ , we get

$$f(t) = (t - 3)(2t^3 + 6t^2 - 5t + 12)$$

Now we can experiment with some values of  $t$  and plug in  $t = -1, -2, -3, -4$ .

After experimenting, we find that  $f(-4) = 0$ . So  $t + 4$  is a factor of  $f(t)$ .

Dividing  $f(t)$  by  $t + 4$ , we get

$$f(t) = (t - 3)(t + 4)(2t^2 - 2t + 3)$$

Applying the quadratic formula, we get the other two roots.

$t = 3, \quad -4, \quad \frac{1 + i\sqrt{5}}{2}, \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{1 - i\sqrt{5}}{2}$
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