How do you want me to simplify this?

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My (admittedly perverse) answer is that "to simplify" means to write an equivalent expression that the instructor/marker likely wants or expects as an answer. It is an exercise in mind-reading.

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Quick guide to simplifying

(a) Reduce all rational numbers to lowest terms.

(b) All arithmetic in sums, products, and exponents should be done.

(c) All common additive and multiplicative terms should be combined.

(d) For any real valued expression, use the identities $1 \times x = x, 0x = 0, 1^x = 1$ and $x^1 = x$ to replace the left side by the right side.

(e) Provided x is a nonzero and real valued expression, use the identities $\frac{x}{x} = 1, x^0 = 1$ to replace the left side by the right side.

(f) Provided x is a nonnegative and real valued expression, use the identity $(x^a)^b = x^{ab}$ to replace the left side by the right side.

(g) Use the well known values of the trigonometric functions at the integer multiplies of $\pi/6$ and $\pi/4$ to simplify these values.

(h) For any odd function O, replace $O(x) + O(-x)$ by zero. For any odd function E, replace $E(x) - E(-x)$ by zero.

(i) Use the well known values of the logarithms to simplify these values.

(j) For a positive integer n, replace $\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$ by $\frac{\sqrt{n}}{n}$.

(k) For a positive integers m and n, replace $\sqrt{mn^2}$ by $n\sqrt{m}$.

[1] Professor Emeritus at Simon Fraser University; see https://www.quora.com/What-does-it-mean-to-simplify-an-expression?share=1