

Problem Of The Day 2022

1. (21 Mar) Simplify the algebraic fraction $\frac{a^4 - a^2b^2}{(a - b)^2} \div \frac{a(a + b)}{b^2} \times \frac{b}{a}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{a^4 - a^2b^2}{(a - b)^2} \div \frac{a(a + b)}{b^2} \times \frac{b}{a} \\&= \frac{a^2(a + b)(a - b)}{(a - b)^2} \times \frac{b^2}{a(a + b)} \times \frac{b}{a} \\&= \frac{b^3}{a - b}\end{aligned}$$

2. (22 Mar) Factorise $a^4 + a^2b^2 + b^4$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}a^4 + a^2b^2 + b^4 &= a^4 + 2a^2b^2 + b^4 - a^2b^2 \\&= (a^2 + b^2)^2 - (ab)^2 \\&= (a^2 - ab + b^2)(a^2 + ab + b^2)\end{aligned}$$

3. (23 Mar) Simplify $\frac{1}{a - x} - \frac{1}{a + x} - \frac{2x}{a^2 + x^2} - \frac{4x^3}{a^4 + x^4} + \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{1}{a - x} - \frac{1}{a + x} - \frac{2x}{a^2 + x^2} - \frac{4x^3}{a^4 + x^4} + \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8} \\&= \frac{2x}{a^2 - x^2} - \frac{2x}{a^2 + x^2} - \frac{4x^3}{a^4 + x^4} + \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8} \\&= \frac{4x^3}{a^4 - x^4} - \frac{4x^3}{a^4 + x^4} + \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8} \\&= \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8} + \frac{8x^7}{a^8 - x^8} \\&= \frac{16x^7}{a^8 - x^8}\end{aligned}$$

4. (24 Mar) Factorise completely $64x^6 - y^{12}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} 64x^6 - y^{12} &= (8x^3 + y^6)(8x^3 - y^6) \\ &= (2x + y^2)(2x - y^2)(4x^2 + 2xy^2 + y^4)(4x^2 - 2xy^2 + y^4) \end{aligned}$$

5. (25 Mar) Factorise completely $x^2(x - 1)^2 + 32(x - x^2) + 60$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} &x^2(x - 1)^2 + 32(x - x^2) + 60 \\ &= x^2(x - 1)^2 - 32x(x - 1) + 60 \\ &= [x(x - 1)]^2 - 32[x(x - 1)] + 16^2 - 14^2 \\ &= [x(x - 1) - 16]^2 - 14^2 \\ &= (x^2 - x - 2)(x^2 - x - 30) \\ &= (x - 6)(x - 2)(x + 1)(x + 5) \end{aligned}$$

6. (28 Mar) Simplify $\frac{x^2 - 4}{x^2 - 4x + 4} + \frac{2 - x}{x + 2}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} &\frac{x^2 - 4}{x^2 - 4x + 4} + \frac{2 - x}{x + 2} \\ &= \frac{(x + 2)(x - 2)}{(x - 2)^2} + \frac{-(x - 2)}{x + 2} \\ &= \frac{(x + 2)^2 - (x - 2)^2}{(x + 2)(x - 2)} \\ &= \frac{8x}{x^2 - 4} \end{aligned}$$

7. (29 Mar) An equation in x , $\frac{m}{x - 1} + \frac{3}{1 - x} = 1$, has a positive solution. Find the possible range of values for m .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{m}{x-1} + \frac{3}{1-x} &= 1 \\ m-3 &= x-1 \\ x &= m-2 \\ \therefore x &> 0 \\ \therefore m &> 2\end{aligned}$$

8. (30 Mar) Given that $\frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y} = 3$, find the value of $\frac{3x+4xy+3y}{x+2xy+y}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\therefore \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y} &= 3 \\ \therefore x+y &= 3xy\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{3x+4xy+3y}{x+2xy+y} &= \frac{\frac{13}{3}(x+y)}{\frac{5}{3}(x+y)} \\ &= \frac{13}{5}\end{aligned}$$

9. (31 Mar) A factory scheduled to manufacture 480 toys within a number of days. The factory increased its daily production by 50% since the beginning of the production and finished the whole batch of 480 toys 10 days earlier than the original schedule. How many toys per day did the factory plan to manufacture originally?

Solution: Let x be the number of toys per day the factory planned to manufacture

originally.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{480}{x} - \frac{480}{\frac{3}{2}x} &= 10 \\ \frac{720x - 480x}{\frac{3}{2}x^2} &= 10 \\ 240x &= 15x^2 \\ x &= 16\end{aligned}$$

The company originally planned to manufacture 16 toys per day.

10. (1 Apr) Make y the subject of the formula:

$$\sqrt{\frac{x^3 - x + y}{xy}} = x$$

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\sqrt{\frac{x^3 - x + y}{xy}} &= x \\ x^2 &= \frac{x^3 - x + y}{xy} \\ x^3y &= x^3 - x + y \\ y(x^3 - 1) &= x^3 - x \\ y &= \frac{x^3 - x}{x^3 - 1} \\ &= \frac{x(x+1)\cancel{(x-1)}}{\cancel{(x-1)}(x^2 + x + 1)} \\ &= \frac{x(x+1)}{x^2 + x + 1}\end{aligned}$$

11. (4 Apr) Solve the SLEs:

$$\begin{cases} \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y} = 5 & (1) \\ xy = x - y & (2) \end{cases}$$

Solution:

From (1):

$$xy = \frac{x+y}{5} \quad (3)$$

Substitute (3) into (2):

$$x + y = 5x - 5y$$

$$4x = 6y$$

$$x = \frac{3}{2}y \quad (4)$$

Substitute (4) into (2):

$$\frac{3}{2}y^2 = \frac{1}{2}y$$

$$y \left(\frac{3}{2}y - \frac{1}{2} \right) = 0$$

$$\therefore y = 0 \left(\text{rej., } \frac{1}{y} \text{ cannot be undefined} \right) \text{ or } \frac{1}{3}$$

Substitute $y = \frac{1}{3}$ into (2):

$$\frac{1}{3}x = x - \frac{1}{3}$$

$$\frac{2}{3}x = \frac{1}{3}$$

$$x = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$\therefore x = \frac{1}{2} \text{ and } y = \frac{1}{3}$$

12. (5 Apr)

- (a) Find the equation of the line l_1 that makes a 45° angle with the positive x -axis and its y -intercept is -3 .

Solution: Since the angle between the positive x -axis and l_1 has to be 45° , the gradient (m) can only be 1. Since the y -intercept is -3 , the value of c in the gradient-intercept form has to be -3 as well. Therefore, the equation of line l_1 is $y = x - 3$.

- (b) Hence, find the equation of a vertical line l_2 which intersects with l_1 at a point with a y -coordinate of 10.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}y &= x - 3 \\10 &= x - 3 \\\therefore x &= 13\end{aligned}$$

The equation of line l_2 is $x = 13$.

- (c) Are the following three points collinear: the intersection point between l_1 and l_2 , the origin, and $(-6.5, -5)$?

Solution: There can be a line, l_3 , with both the origin and the intersection on it. The equation of this line would thus be:

$$y = \frac{10 - 0}{13 - 0}x = \frac{10}{13}x$$

Substituting $x = -6.5$ and $y = -5$ into that equation, we see that:

$$-5 = \frac{10}{13} \times -\frac{13}{2}$$

Therefore, all three points are collinear.

13. (7 Apr) Expand and simplify the expression $[x(x^4 - y^4) - 3xy(-y)^3] \cdot x^2y$.

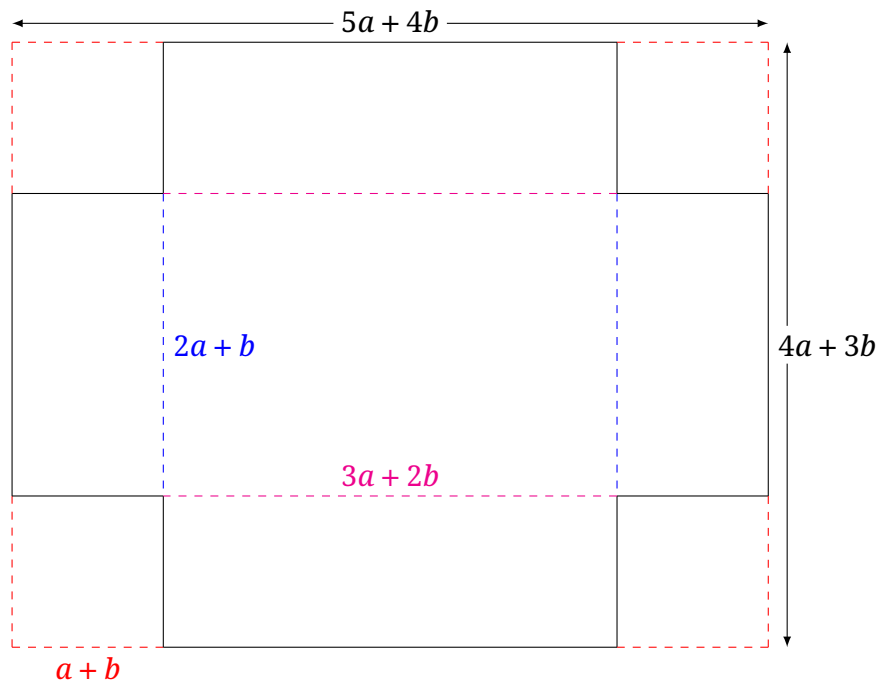
Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}& [x(x^4 - y^4) - 3xy(-y)^3] \cdot x^2y \\&= x^3y [x^4 - y^4 - 3y(-y)^3] \\&= x^3y (x^4 + 2y^4)\end{aligned}$$

14. (8 Apr) There is a rectangular piece of paper with length $(5a + 4b)$ and breadth $(4a + 3b)$. A square of side length $(a + b)$ is cut away from the four corners of the paper. Using the remaining paper, a box without its top cover can be folded.

- (a) Find the total surface area of the folded paper box.

Solution: Draw the diagram.



$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{total surface area} &= 2 \cdot [(5a + 4b)(4a + 3b) - 4(a + b)] \\
 &= 2 \left(20a^2 + 15ab + 16ab + 12b^2 - 4(a + b) \right) \\
 &= 40a^2 + 62ab + 24b^2 - 8a - 8b
 \end{aligned}$$

(b) Find the volume of the paper box.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{volume of paper box} &= (3a + 2b)(2a + b)(a + b) \\
 &= 6a^3 + 13a^2b + 9ab^2 + 2b^3
 \end{aligned}$$

15. (11 Apr) Solve the equation $(x + 1)(1 - 3x)(4y - 5) = 7(5 - 4y)$.

Solution:

Case 1: Solve for x .

$$\begin{aligned}(x+1)(1-3x)(4y-5) &= -7(4y-5) \\ -3x^2 - 2x + 1 + 7 &= 0 \\ (-3x+4)(x+2) &= 0 \\ \therefore x &= -2 \text{ or } x = \frac{4}{3}\end{aligned}$$

Both possibilities of x in **Case 1** result in an identity when trying to solve for y , so we can say when $x = -2$ or $\frac{4}{3}$, $y \in \mathbb{R}$.

Case 2: Solve for y .

$$\begin{aligned}(x+1)(1-3x)(4y-5) &= 7(5-4y) \\ -12x^2y + 15x^2 - 8xy + 10x + 4y - 5 &= -28y + 35 \\ y(-12x^2 - 8x + 32) &= -15x^2 - 10x + 40 \\ y &= \frac{-15x^2 - 10x + 40}{-12x^2 - 8x + 32} \\ &= \frac{5}{4}\end{aligned}$$

The solution $y = \frac{5}{4}$ results in an identity when trying to solve for x , so we can also say that when $y = \frac{5}{4}$, $x \in \mathbb{R}$.

$$\therefore \begin{cases} x = -2 \text{ or } \frac{4}{3}, & y \in \mathbb{R} \\ x \in \mathbb{R}, & y = \frac{5}{4} \end{cases}$$

16. (12 Apr) Out of the following equations:

$$2x^2 + x - 3$$

$$\frac{5x}{x^2 + 1} = 2$$

$$(x+1)(x-2) = x^2$$

$$(t+1)^2 = 2t(t+1)$$

How many quadratic equations are there?

Solution: There are 2 quadratic equations.

1. $2x^2 + x - 3$ is an expression, not an equation.
2. $\frac{5x}{x^2 + 1}$ can be expressed in the form $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{5x}{x^2 + 1} &= 2 \\ 5x &= 2(x^2 + 1) \\ 2x^2 - 5x + 2 &= 0\end{aligned}$$

3. $(x + 1)(x - 2) = x^2$ cannot be expressed in the form $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$. It is in fact, a linear equation.

$$\begin{aligned}(x + 1)(x - 2) &= x^2 \\ x^2 - x - 2 &= x^2 \\ -x - 2 &= 0\end{aligned}$$

4. $(t + 1)^2 = 2t(t + 1)$ can be expressed in the form $ax^2 = c$.

$$\begin{aligned}(t + 1)^2 &= 2t(t + 1) \\ t^2 + 2t + 1 &= 2t^2 + 2t \\ t^2 &= 1\end{aligned}$$

17. (13 Apr) For an equation in x , $(m^2 - 8m + 17)x^2 - 2mx + 1 = 0$, where m is a real constant. Which of the following statements is true?

- A. It is a quadratic equation.
- B. It is a linear equation.
- C. It cannot be determined if it is a quadratic equation.

Solution: C.

Although it is true that $m^2 - 8m + 17 \in \mathbb{R}$ and $-2m \in \mathbb{R}$, which makes the equation seem to conform to the standard form of $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$, there is a possibility that $m^2 - 8m + 17 = 0$, which makes the ax^2 term 0, causing the equation to no longer be quadratic. Due to the value of m being unknown, we cannot confirm whether the equation is quadratic.

18. (14 Apr) Solve the quadratic equation $(x - 1)^2 - 5x(x + 5) = -2(x - 2) + 3$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}(x - 1)^2 - 5x(x + 5) &= -2(x - 2) + 3 \\ x^2 - 2x + 1 - 5x^2 - 25x &= -2x + 7 \\ -4x^2 - 25x - 6 &= 0 \\ (-4x^2 - x) + (-24x - 6) &= 0 \\ (4x + 1)(-x - 6) &= 0 \\ \therefore x &= -6 \text{ or } -\frac{1}{4}\end{aligned}$$

19. (18 Apr) A rectangle of breadth 2 cm is cut from a square. The rectangle's length is the same as the square's. The remaining area is 48 cm^2 . Find the original area of the square.

Solution: Let the length of the square be x cm.

$$\begin{aligned}x^2 - 2x &= 48 \\ (x + 6)(x - 8) &= 0 \\ x &= -6 \text{ (rej.) or } x = 8 \\ \therefore x^2 &= 64\end{aligned}$$

The original area of the square is 64 cm^2 .

20. (19 Apr) Determine if the following relationships are quadratic functions.

- (a) Within a certain distance, the speed of the train $v \text{ km h}^{-1}$ and the time $t \text{ h}$.

Solution: No. Both v and t are constants within that certain distance.

- (b) The perimeter C and the length of the side a of an equilateral triangle.

Solution: No. $C = 3a$.

- (c) The area S and the length of radius R of a sector of angle 120° .

Solution: Yes. $S = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2$.

21. **(20 Apr)** There is a 56 cm piece of wire. It is cut into two pieces and each piece is then made into a square.

(a) If the sum of the areas of the two squares is 100 cm^2 , how should the wire be cut?

Solution: Let the lengths of the two pieces be x cm and y cm respectively.

$$x + y = 56 \quad (1)$$

$$\left(\frac{x}{4}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{y}{4}\right)^2 = 100 \quad (2)$$

From (2):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{x^2 + y^2}{16} &= 100 \\ x^2 + y^2 &= 1600 \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Substitute (1) into (3):

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 + (56 - x)^2 &= 1600 \\ x^2 + 3136 - 112x + x^2 &= 1600 \\ 2x^2 - 112x + 1536 &= 0 \\ x^2 - 56x + 768 &= 0 \\ (x - 24)(x - 32) &= 0 \\ x &= 24 \text{ or } 32 \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Substitute (4) into (1):

$$\begin{cases} x = 24, y = 32 \\ x = 32, y = 24 \end{cases}$$

Hence, the wire should be cut into 24 cm and 32 cm pieces.

(b) If the sum of the areas of the two squares is 196 cm^2 , how should the wire be cut?

Solution: Let the lengths of the two pieces be x cm and y cm respectively.

$$x + y = 56 \quad (1)$$

$$\left(\frac{x}{4}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{y}{4}\right)^2 = 196 \quad (2)$$

From (2):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{x^2 + y^2}{16} &= 196 \\ x^2 + y^2 &= 3136 \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Substitute (1) into (3):

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 + (56 - x)^2 &= 3136 \\ x^2 + 3136 - 112x + x^2 &= 3136 \\ 2x^2 - 112x &= 0 \\ x^2 - 56x &= 0 \\ x(x - 56) &= 0 \\ x &= 0 \text{ (rej.) or } 56 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the wire cannot be cut into two such pieces.

(c) Is it possible for the sum of the two areas to be 200 cm^2 ?

Solution: Assuming that it is possible:

Let the lengths of the two pieces be x cm and y cm respectively.

$$x + y = 56 \quad (1)$$

$$\left(\frac{x}{4}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{y}{4}\right)^2 = 200 \quad (2)$$

From (2):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{x^2 + y^2}{16} &= 200 \\ x^2 + y^2 &= 3200 \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Substitute (1) into (3):

$$x^2 + (56 - x)^2 = 3200$$

$$x^2 + 3136 - 112x + x^2 = 3200$$

$$2x^2 - 112x - 64 = 0$$

$$x^2 - 56x - 32 = 0$$

$$x = \frac{56 \pm \sqrt{3264}}{2}$$

Even if we reject the negative case, $x = \frac{56 - \sqrt{3264}}{2}$, y will still be negative, rendering it impossible for the sum of the areas of the two squares to be 200 cm^2 .

22. (21 Apr) The graph of a quadratic function $y = mx^2 + x + m(m - 2)$ passes through the origin. Find the value of m .

Solution: Substituting $x = 0$ and $y = 0$ into the equation:

$$0 = m \cdot 0^2 + 0 + m(m - 2)$$

$$m(m - 2) = 0$$

$$m = 0 \text{ (rej.) or } 2$$

$$\therefore m = 2$$

23. (22 Apr) Refer to the quadratic graph below. Which of the following could be the equation of said graph?

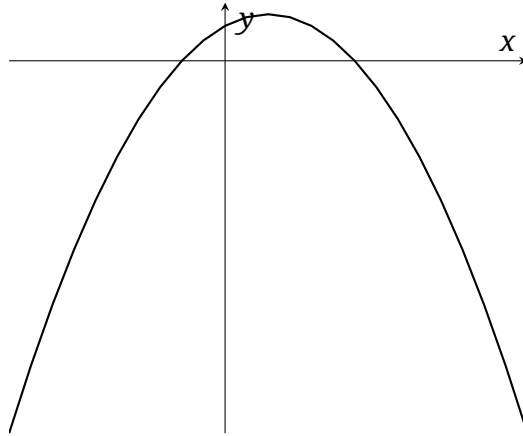
A. $y = x^2 - 2x + 3$

B. $y = -x^2 - 2x + 3$

C. $y = x^2 + 2x + 3$

D. $y = -x^2 + 2x + 3$

Solution: D.



The graph is a 'n'-shaped one, meaning the coefficient of the x^2 term is negative. The turning point of the curve is also within the positive x -axis, so the coefficient of the x term is positive, leaving the option of **D**.

24. (25 Apr) If $\left(-\frac{13}{4}, y_1\right)$, $(-1, y_2)$, $\left(\frac{5}{3}, y_3\right)$ are three points on a quadratic curve with equation $y = -x^2 - 4x + 5$, which of the following is true?

A. $y_1 < y_2 < y_3$ B. $y_3 < y_2 < y_1$ C. $y_3 < y_1 < y_2$ D. $y_2 < y_1 < y_3$

Solution: C.

- The graph is a 'n'-shaped one as the coefficient of the x^2 term is negative.
- The maximum point is on the negative x -axis as the coefficient of the x term is negative. It lies on the line $x = -2$.
- The coordinates of x -intercepts are 1 and -5 .

$$0 = -x^2 - 4x + 5$$

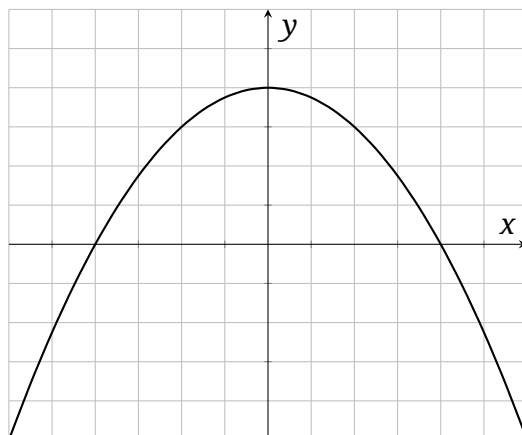
$$(-x + 1)(x + 5) = 0$$

$$x = 1 \text{ or } -5$$

Conclusions:

- y_2 is the largest as its point's x -coordinate is the closest to the maximum point.
- The point with y -coordinate y_1 is in the 2nd Quadrant.
- $y_3 < y_1 < y_2$.

25. (26 Apr) Refer to the graph of the quadratic function, $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ below, where $a \neq 0$. Which of the following statement(s) is / are correct?

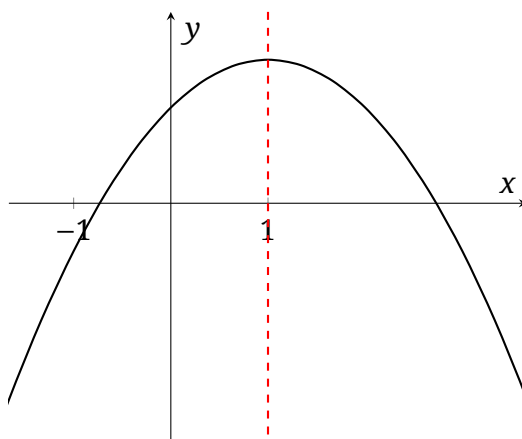


- A. $a > 0$ B. $c > 0$ C. $\frac{a}{c} > 0$ D. $-ac < 0$

Solution: B.

1. The graph is an 'n'-shaped one, so $a < 0$.
2. The graph intercepts the y-axis on the positive y-axis, so $c > 0$.
3. Since $a < 0$ and $c > 0$, $\frac{a}{c} < 0$.
4. Since $a < 0$ and $c > 0$, $-ac > 0$.

26. (27 Apr) Refer to the graph of the quadratic function, $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ below, where $a \neq 0$. The line of symmetry passes through $(1, 0)$. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

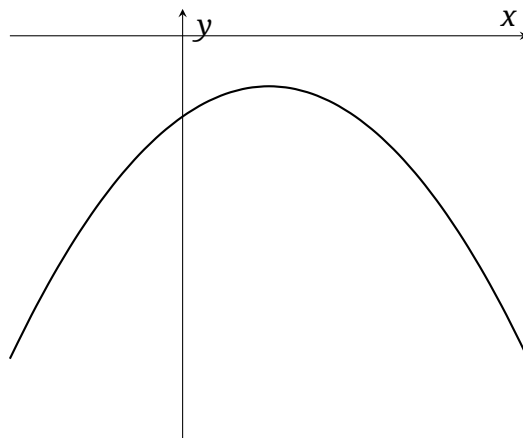


- A. $abc > 0$ B. $b > a + c$ C. $a + b + c < 0$

Solution: B.

1. The graph is an 'n'-shaped one, so $a < 0$. The turning point is on the positive side of the x -axis, so $b > 0$. The y -intercept is on the positive y -axis, so $c > 0$.
 $\therefore abc < 0$.
2. $b > a+c \Rightarrow a-b+c < 0$. Substituting the values of $x = -1$ into $y = ax^2+bx+c$ returns $y = a - b + c$. The point on the curve with x -coordinate -1 has a negative y -coordinate, hence $y < 0 \Rightarrow a - b + c < 0 \Rightarrow b > a + c$.
3. At the maximum point, (x_P, y_P) , $y_P > 0$. Since $x_P = 1$, $ax_P^2 + bx_P + c = a + b + c = y_P$, so $a + b + c > 0$.

27. (28 Apr) Refer to the graph of the quadratic function below, where the equation of the function is $y = ax^2 + bx + c$, $a \neq 0$. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?



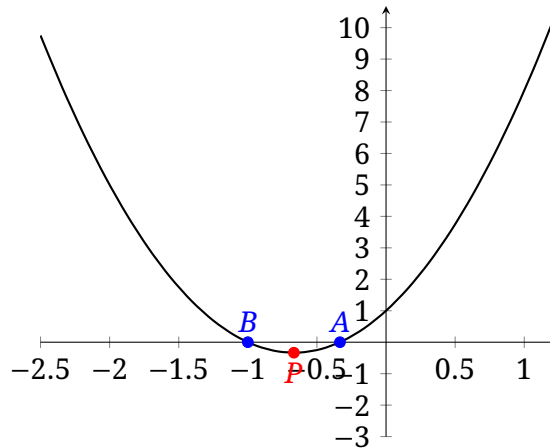
- A. $ab > 0$ B. $abc > 0$ C. $a - b + c > 0$ D. $a + b + c < 0$

Solution: B and D.

1. $a < 0$ since the graph is 'n'-shaped, and $b > 0$ since the turning point is on the positive x -axis. $\therefore ab < 0$.
2. $a < 0$ and $b > 0$. $c < 0$ since the graph intercepts the y -axis on the negative y -axis. $\therefore abc > 0$.
3. $a < 0$, $b > 0$ and $c < 0$, $\therefore a - b + c < 0$.

4. We can assume that the point with an x -coordinate of 1 (which is greater than 0), lies on the negative y -axis. Substituting $x = 1$ into $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ would yield $y = a + b + c$. Indeed, $y < 0$ for such a point, hence $a + b + c < 0$.

28. (29 Apr) The graph of the quadratic function $y = 3x^2 + 4x + 1$ is shown below.



- (a) State the value of the y -intercept.

Solution: The y -intercept is 1.

- (b) Find the coordinates of the points of intersection between the curve and the x -axis, A and B.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} 3x^2 + 4x + 1 &= 0 \\ (3x + 1)(x + 1) &= 0 \\ x &= -1 \text{ or } -\frac{1}{3} \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the coordinates of the points of intersection between the curve and the x -axis are $(-1, 0)$ and $(-\frac{1}{3}, 0)$.

- i. State the range of values of x , for $3x^2 + 4x + 1 > 0$.

Solution: $x < -1$ or $x > -\frac{1}{3}$.

- ii. Hence, find the equation of the line of symmetry.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}x &= \frac{-1 + \left(-\frac{1}{3}\right)}{2} \\&= -\frac{2}{3}\end{aligned}$$

iii. Hence, find the coordinates of the minimum point P .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}y_P &= 3x_P^2 + 4x_P + 1 \\&= 3 \times \left(-\frac{2}{3}\right)^2 + 4 \times \left(-\frac{2}{3}\right) + 1 \\&= \frac{4}{3} - \frac{8}{3} + 1 \\&= -\frac{1}{3}\end{aligned}$$

The coordinates of the minimum point P are $\left(-\frac{2}{3}, -\frac{1}{3}\right)$.

iv. Find the area of triangle ABP .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{area of triangle } ABP &= \frac{bh}{2} \\&= \frac{\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{1}{3}}{2} \\&= \frac{1}{9}\end{aligned}$$

(c) Find the value of the quadratic expression $3x^2 + 4x + 1$, when $x = \frac{1}{3}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}3x^2 + 4x + 1 &= 3 \times \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2 + 4 \times \left(\frac{1}{3}\right) + 1 \\&= \frac{1}{3} + \frac{4}{3} + 1 \\&= \frac{8}{3}\end{aligned}$$

(d) Write down the straight lines drawn on the same axes to solve the following equations graphically.

i. $3x^2 + 4x = 0$

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}3x^2 + 4x &= 0 \\3x^2 + 4x + 1 &= 1 \\y &= 1\end{aligned}$$

$$\therefore x = 0 \text{ or } x = -1.3 \text{ (} x = -\frac{4}{3} \text{ in actuality)}$$

ii. $3x^2 + 5x + 1 = 0$

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}3x^2 + 5x + 1 &= 0 \\3x^2 + 4x + 1 &= -x \\y &= -x\end{aligned}$$

$$\therefore x = -1.4 \text{ or } x = -0.2 \text{ (} x = \frac{-5 \pm \sqrt{13}}{6} \text{ in actuality)}$$

iii. $3x^2 + 8x - 1 = 0$

Solution:

$$3x^2 + 8x - 1 = 0$$

$$3x^2 + 8x + 1 = 2$$

$$3x^2 + 4x + 1 = 2 - 4x$$

$$y = -4x + 2$$

$$\therefore x = -2.7 \text{ or } x = 0.1 \left(x = \frac{-4 \pm \sqrt{19}}{3} \text{ in actuality} \right)$$

29. (4 May) If 5^{78} and 2^{81} are multiplied out, what is the leading digit of the product? How many zeroes are there in the product?

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} 5^{78} \times 2^{81} &= (2 \times 5)^{78} \times 2^3 \\ &= 8 \times 10^{78} \end{aligned}$$

The leading digit of the product is **8**. The product will have **78** zeroes.

30. (5 May) Given that $5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 = 5^x$ and $2^2 + 2^2 = 2^y$, find the value of x^y .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} 5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 + 5^3 &= 5 \times 5^3 \\ &= 5^4 \end{aligned}$$

$$x = 4 \tag{1}$$

$$\begin{aligned} 2^2 + 2^2 &= 2 \times 2^2 \\ &= 2^3 \end{aligned}$$

$$y = 3 \tag{2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} x^y &= 4^3 \\ &= 64 \end{aligned}$$

31. (6 May) Solve the equations:

(a) $216 \cdot 6^6 = 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x$

Solution:

$$216 \cdot 6^6 = 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x + 6^x$$

$$6^3 \cdot 6^6 = 6 \times 6^x$$

$$6^9 = 6^{x+1}$$

$$x + 1 = 9$$

$$x = 8$$

(b) $2^2 \times 4^2 \times 8^2 \times 16^2 \times 32^2 \times \cdots \times 1024^2 = 2^x$

Solution:

$$2^2 \times 4^2 \times 8^2 \times 16^2 \times 32^2 \times \cdots \times 1024^2 = 2^x$$

$$(2^1)^2 \times (2^2)^2 \times (2^3)^2 \times (2^4)^2 \times (2^5)^2 \times \cdots \times (2^{10})^2 = 2^x$$

$$2^2 \times 2^4 \times 2^6 \times 2^8 \times 2^{10} \times \cdots \times 2^{20} = 2^x$$

$$2^{(2+4+6+8+10+\cdots+20)} = 2^x$$

$$x = 2 + 4 + 6 + 8 + 10 + \cdots + 20$$

$$= 22 \times 5$$

$$= 110$$

32. (9 May)

(a) Given that $5^x = 3$, find the value of 5^{2x+3} .

Solution:

$$5^{2x+3} = 5^{2x} \cdot 5^3$$

$$= (5^x)^2 \cdot 125$$

$$= 3^2 \cdot 125$$

$$= 1125$$

(b) Given that $2^x = 6$, find the value of 2^{3x-1} .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}2^{3x-1} &= (2^x)^3 \div 2^1 \\&= 6^3 \div 2 \\&= 108\end{aligned}$$

33. (10 May) Solve the equation $2^{16^x} = 16^{2^x}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}2^{16^x} &= 16^{2^x} \\2^{16^x} &= (2^4)^{2^x} \\16^x &= 4 \cdot 2^x \\2^{4x} &= 2^{x+2} \\4x &= x + 2 \\x &= \frac{2}{3}\end{aligned}$$

34. (11 May) Given that $9^{x-1} = 7$, find the value of 3^{2x+3} .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}9^{x-1} &= 7 \\\therefore 3^{2x-2} &= 7 \\3^{2x+3} &= 3^{2x-2} \cdot 3^5 \\&= 7 \cdot 243 \\&= 1701\end{aligned}$$

35. (12 May) Solve the equation $(8^x)^{2x+1} \cdot 16^x = \left(\frac{1}{4^x}\right)^{-3x} \cdot 32$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}(8^x)^{2x+1} \cdot 16^x &= \left(\frac{1}{4^x}\right)^{-3x} \cdot 32 \\ \left[(2^3)^x\right]^{2x+1} \cdot (2^4)^x &= \left[(2^{-2})^x\right]^{-3x} \cdot 2^5 \\ 2^{6x^2+3x} \cdot 2^{4x} &= 2^{6x^2} \cdot 2^5 \\ 6x^2 + 3x + 4x &= 6x^2 + 5 \\ 7x &= 5 \\ x &= \frac{5}{7}\end{aligned}$$

36. (13 May) Given the following equations, solve for a , b and c .

$$7^a \cdot 7^b = 7^c \quad (1)$$

$$(2^a)^b = 64 \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{3^b}{3^c} = \frac{1}{9} \quad (3)$$

Solution: We can construct 3 linear equations.

From (1):

$$\begin{aligned}7^a \cdot 7^b &= 7^c \\ a + b &= c\end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

From (2):

$$\begin{aligned}(2^a)^b &= 64 \\ ab &= 6 \\ a &= \frac{6}{b}\end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

From (3):

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{3^b}{3^c} &= \frac{1}{9} \\ \frac{3^b}{3^c} &= 3^{-2} \\ b - c &= -2 \\ c &= b + 2\end{aligned}\tag{6}$$

Substitute (5), (6) into (4):

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{6}{b} + b &= b + 2 \\ \therefore b &= 3 \\ \therefore c &= b + 2 = 3 + 2 = 5 \\ \therefore a &= \frac{6}{b} = 6 \div 3 = 2 \\ \therefore \begin{cases} a &= 2 \\ b &= 3 \\ c &= 5 \end{cases}\end{aligned}$$

37. (17 May) If both m and n are positive and $m^n = n^m$, show that $\left(\frac{m}{n}\right)^{\frac{m}{n}} = m^{\frac{m-n}{n}}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\left(\frac{m}{n}\right)^{\frac{m}{n}} &= m^{\frac{m-n}{n}} \\ \sqrt[n]{\frac{m^m}{n^m}} &= \sqrt[n]{m^{m-n}} \\ \sqrt[n]{\frac{m^m}{m^n}} &= \sqrt[n]{m^{m-n}} \\ \frac{m^m}{m^n} &= m^{m-n}\end{aligned}$$

38. (18 May) Simplify $[(a - b - c)^3]^{2n} \cdot [(b - a + c)^3]^{2n}$.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} [(a-b-c)^3]^{2n} \cdot [(b-a+c)^3]^{2n} &= (a-b-c)^{6n} \cdot (b-a+c)^{6n} \\ &= [(a-b-c)(b-a+c)]^{6n} \\ &= [-(a-b-c)^2]^{6n} \\ &= (a-b-c)^{12n} \end{aligned}$$

39. (19 May) The result of $(-2)^{30} + (-2)^{31}$ is:

- A. $(-2)^{30}$ B. -2^{30} C. $(-2)^{31}$ D. 2^{30}

Solution: B.

$$\begin{aligned} (-2)^{30} + (-2)^{31} &= (-2)^{30} \times [1 + (-2)] \\ &= -1 \times (-2)^{30} \\ &= -2^{30} \end{aligned}$$

40. (20 May) Given that m is a positive integer, which of the following is not true?

- A. $a^{2m} = (a^m)^2$ B. $a^{3m} \div a^m = a^{2m}$ C. $a^{2m} = (-a^2)^m$ D. $a^{2m} = (-a^m)^2$

Solution: C. m may not always be even, causing $-a^2$ to be multiplied by itself an odd number of times, resulting in a negative result, which contradicts the positive a^{2m} on the LHS.

41. (21 May) Compare the size of the following pairs of numbers:

1. 7777^{111} and 90^{222}
2. -0.001^{27} and -0.01^{40}

Solution:

$$1. 7777^{111} < 90^{222}.$$

$$\because 90^{222} = (90^2)^{111}$$

$$\because 7777 < 90^2$$

$$\therefore 7777^{111} < (90^2)^{111}$$

$$2. -0.001^{27} > -0.01^{40}$$

$$\because -0.001^{27} = -1 \times 10^{-81}$$

$$\because -0.01^{40} = -1 \times 10^{-80}$$

$$\therefore -1 \times 10^{-81} > -1 \times 10^{-80}$$

42. (24 May) Given that $a = 7^8$ and $b = 8^7$, express 56^{56} in terms of a and b .

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned} 56^{56} &= (7 \times 8)^{8 \times 7} \\ &= 7^{8 \times 7} \times 8^{7 \times 8} \\ &= (7^8)^7 \times (8^7)^8 \\ &= a^7 b^8 \end{aligned}$$

43. (27 May) Which of the following is a possible plot of the two lines $l_1: y = (k - 2)x + k$ and $l_2: y = kx$?

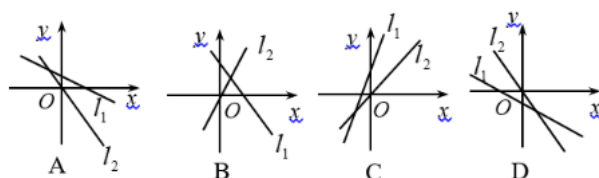


Figure 1: Four plots.

Solution: B.

- **A** cannot be a possible plot as l_1 would intersect the negative x -axis when $k < 0$.
- **B** can be a possible plot if $k = 1$.
- **C** cannot be a possible plot as l_1 would intersect l_2 in the 1st Quadrant if $k \geq 3$.
- **D** cannot be a possible plot as l_1 would intersect l_2 in the 2nd Quadrant if $k < 0$.