



Why

Given a real valued function (e.g., a polynomial) how do we compute its root.

Definition

Given $f : \mathbf{R} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$, we call $f(x) = 0$ a *nonlinear equation* (a *nonlinear homogenous equation*). If $x \in \mathbf{R}$ with $f(x) = 0$ we call x a *root* or *solution* of f .

Examples

For a classic example, suppose $s \in \mathbf{R}$ is given and consider the function $f : \mathbf{R} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ defined by

$$f(t) = t - \sqrt{s}$$

Then the solutions $r \in \mathbf{R}$ for which $f(r) = 0$ are those points for which

$$0 = r - \sqrt{s} \Rightarrow r = \sqrt{s}$$

In other words, the *roots* of s .

