

A simple formula:

$$\alpha > \beta$$

One with a few horizontal lines:

$$\frac{2 \pm \sqrt{7}}{3}$$

Inline replacements works, too:  $\alpha + \beta^2$  <-- there should be an alpha + beta

You can use a math role:  $\alpha + \beta$  but it has some problems with spacing and if things are not one-line:  $\alpha^2$  .

Don't push it, the directive just works better:  $\frac{2 \pm \sqrt{7}}{3}$