BASIC ALGEBRA FORMULAS

Arithmetic Operations

$$a(b + c) = ab + ac, \qquad \frac{a}{b} \cdot \frac{c}{d} = \frac{ac}{bd}$$

$$\frac{a}{b} + \frac{c}{d} = \frac{ad + bc}{bd}, \qquad \frac{a/b}{c/d} = \frac{a}{b} \cdot \frac{d}{c}$$

Laws of Signs

$$-(-a) = a, \qquad \frac{-a}{b} = -\frac{a}{b} = \frac{a}{-b}$$

Zero Division by zero is not defined.

$$\text{If } a \neq 0\text{:} \quad \frac{0}{a} = 0, \quad a^0 = 1, \quad 0^a = 0$$

$$\text{For any number } a\text{: } a \cdot 0 = 0 \cdot a = 0$$

Laws of Exponents

$$a^m a^n = a^{m+n}, \qquad (ab)^m = a^m b^m, \qquad (a^m)^n = a^{mn}, \qquad a^{m/n} = \sqrt[n]{a^m} = \left(\sqrt[n]{a}\right)^m$$

If $a \neq 0$,

$$\frac{a^m}{a^n} = a^{m-n}, \qquad a^0 = 1, \qquad a^{-m} = \frac{1}{a^m}.$$

The Binomial Theorem For any positive integer n,

$$(a + b)^n = a^n + na^{n-1}b + \frac{n(n-1)}{1 \cdot 2}a^{n-2}b^2 + \frac{n(n-1)(n-2)}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3}a^{n-3}b^3 + \cdots + nab^{n-1} + b^n.$$

For instance,

$$(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2, \qquad (a - b)^2 = a^2 - 2ab + b^2$$

$$(a + b)^3 = a^3 + 3a^2b + 3ab^2 + b^3, \qquad (a - b)^3 = a^3 - 3a^2b + 3ab^2 - b^3.$$

Factoring the Difference of Like Integer Powers, $n > 1$

$$a^n - b^n = (a - b)(a^{n-1} + a^{n-2}b + a^{n-3}b^2 + \cdots + ab^{n-2} + b^{n-1})$$

For instance,

$$a^2 - b^2 = (a - b)(a + b),$$
$$a^3 - b^3 = (a - b)(a^2 + ab + b^2),$$
$$a^4 - b^4 = (a - b)(a^3 + a^2b + ab^2 + b^3).$$

Completing the Square If $a \neq 0$,

$$ax^2 + bx + c = au^2 + C \qquad \left(u = x + (b/2a),\ C = c - \frac{b^2}{4a}\right)$$

The Quadratic Formula If $a \neq 0$ and $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$, then

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}.$$