Precalculus
Logarithm definition

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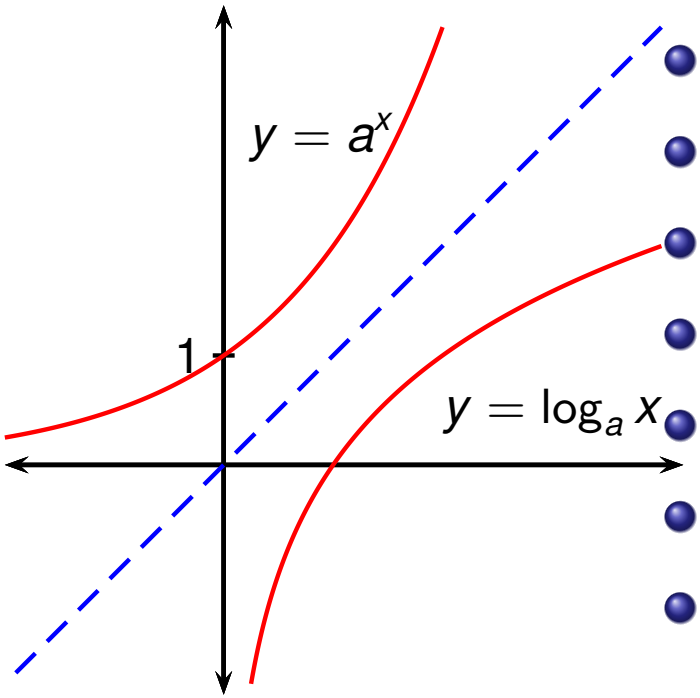
Logarithmic Functions



- Suppose $a > 0$, $a \neq 1$.
- Let $f(x) = a^x$.
- Then f is either increasing or decreasing.
- Therefore f is one-to-one.
- Therefore f has an inverse function, f^{-1}.
- The graph shows $y = a^x$ for $a > 1$.
- The graph of $y = \log_a x$ is the reflection of this in the line $y = x$.

Definition ($\log_a x$)

The inverse function of $f(x) = a^x$ is called the logarithmic function with base a, and is written $\log_a x$. It is defined by the formula

$$\log_a x = y \qquad \Leftrightarrow \qquad a^y = x.$$