

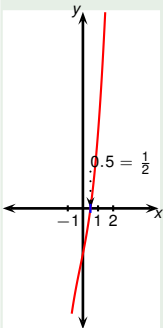
Precalculus

Factor cubic with one real root using its plot

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2019

Example



Plot the left hand side of the equation with a graphing calculator. Find all real solutions of the equation.

$$2x^3 + x^2 + 5x - 3 = 0$$

$$(x - \frac{1}{2})(2x^2 + 2x + 6) + 0 = 0$$

We see only one root, $x = 0.5 = \frac{1}{2}$. Is our guess correct?

Is there another root (far away from 0)? Factor:

Quotient: $2x^2 + 2x + 6$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 x - \frac{1}{2} \overline{) 2x^3 + x^2 + 5x - 3} \\
 \underline{2x^3 - x^2} \\
 2x^2 + 5x - 3 \\
 \underline{2x^2 - x} \\
 6x - 3 \\
 \underline{6x - 3} \\
 0
 \end{array}$$

Remainder:

0

Example

Plot the left hand side of the equation with a graphing calculator. Find all real solutions of the equation.

$$2x^3 + x^2 + 5x - 3 = 0$$

$$(x - \frac{1}{2})(2x^2 + 2x + 6) + 0 = 0$$

$$x - \frac{1}{2} = 0 \quad \text{or} \quad x = \frac{-2 \pm \sqrt{2^2 - 4 \cdot 2 \cdot 6}}{2 \cdot 2}$$

$$x = \frac{1}{2} \quad x = \frac{-2 \pm \sqrt{-44}}{2 \cdot 2}$$

no real solution

We see only one root, $x = 0.5 = \frac{1}{2}$. Is our guess correct? Is there another root (far away from 0)?

