

The Quadratic Formula and the Discriminant

Algebra 1 • Section 9.5

Name: _____

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Quick Review and Helpful Hints

Quadratic functions can be read through their zeros, vertex, axis of symmetry, and opening direction. Choose factoring, square roots, completing the square, or the quadratic formula based on the form you see.

▷ **Example:** Solve $x^2 - 5x + 6 = 0$.

Work: Factor the quadratic: $x^2 - 5x + 6 = (x - 2)(x - 3)$. Set each factor equal to zero.

★ **Answer:** $x = 2$ or $x = 3$

◆ Practice Problems

Solve each problem. Show enough work that another student could follow your thinking.

1. Find the discriminant of $x^2 - 5x + 6 = 0$. _____

6. Solve $x^2 + 4x + 1 = 0$. _____

2. How many real solutions if $D = 0$? _____

7. How many real solutions for $x^2 - 6x + 9 = 0$? _____

3. Solve $x^2 - 3x - 10 = 0$ using any method. _____

8. Solve $x^2 - 2x - 8 = 0$. _____

4. Solve $2x^2 - 8x + 6 = 0$. _____

9. Find D for $4x^2 - 4x + 1 = 0$. _____

5. Find the discriminant of $3x^2 + 2x + 5 = 0$. _____

10. Solve $x^2 + 2x + 5 = 0$ over the reals. _____

◆ Word Problems

11. A ball equation gives $-t^2 + 6t + 7 = 0$. Which positive time solves it? _____

12. A designer checks $D = 25$ for a quadratic. What does that tell about roots? _____



Answer Keys

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <input type="text" value="1"/> | 7. <input type="text" value="One"/> |
| 2. <input type="text" value="One repeated real solution"/> | 8. <input type="text" value="x = 4, -2"/> |
| 3. <input type="text" value="x = 5, -2"/> | 9. <input type="text" value="0"/> |
| 4. <input type="text" value="x = 1, 3"/> | 10. <input type="text" value="No real solutions"/> |
| 5. <input type="text" value="-56"/> | 11. <input type="text" value="t = 7"/> |
| 6. <input type="text" value="x = -2 ± √3"/> | 12. <input type="text" value="Two distinct real roots"/> |

Step-by-Step Explanations

- The discriminant is just $b^2 - 4ac$. Plug in carefully: $25 - 24 = 1$, a tidy positive number.
- When $D = 0$ there's nothing under the root to give a plus-or-minus, so the parabola just grazes the x -axis once.
- Factoring is quickest here: $(x - 5)(x + 2) = 0$, and the quadratic formula would land on the exact same answers.
- Every term divides by 2, so simplify first to $x^2 - 4x + 3 = 0$ — much easier to factor as $(x - 1)(x - 3)$.
- Computing $b^2 - 4ac$ gives $4 - 60 = -56$. A negative result is your signal that no real solutions exist.
- This one won't factor nicely, so lean on the formula: $\frac{-4 \pm \sqrt{12}}{2}$ tidies up to $-2 \pm \sqrt{3}$.
- Check the discriminant: $36 - 36 = 0$. A zero there always means a single, repeated solution.
- Spot the pair that multiplies to -8 and adds to -2 , and you've got $(x - 4)(x + 2) = 0$.
- Running $b^2 - 4ac$ gives $16 - 16 = 0$ — a hint this is actually a perfect-square trinomial.
- The discriminant comes out to $4 - 20 = -16$. Since you can't take a real square root of a negative, there's no real answer.
- Multiply through by -1 to clean it up, then $t^2 - 6t - 7 = (t - 7)(t + 1)$ — and only $t = 7$ makes sense for time.
- Any positive discriminant means the square root gives a real plus-and-minus, so you land on two separate roots.



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