

When an Expression Is Undefined

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 18

Quick Review and Helpful Hints

A fraction is *undefined* when its denominator equals 0, because dividing by zero is not allowed. To find where an expression is undefined, set the *denominator* equal to 0 and solve for x .

▶ **Example:** For what value of x is $\frac{1}{x-2}$ undefined? **Work:** Set the denominator to 0: $x - 2 = 0$, so $x = 2$. ★ **Answer:** $x = 2$



Never divide by zero.

◆ **Practice Problems**

Find where each expression is undefined.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. $\frac{1}{x-2}$ _____</p> <p>2. $\frac{1}{x+3}$ _____</p> <p>3. $\frac{1}{x}$ _____</p> <p>4. $\frac{5}{x-1}$ _____</p> <p>5. $\frac{1}{x+5}$ _____</p> <p>6. $\frac{2}{x-4}$ _____</p> <p>7. $\frac{1}{2x}$ _____</p> | <p>8. $\frac{1}{x-7}$ _____</p> <p>9. $\frac{3}{x+1}$ _____</p> <p>10. $\frac{1}{x-10}$ _____</p> <p>11. $\frac{1}{x+2}$ _____</p> <p>12. $\frac{4}{x-6}$ _____</p> <p>13. Can you divide by 0? _____</p> <p>14. $\frac{1}{x}$ undefined at _____</p> |
|---|---|

◆ **Word Problems**

15. A formula has $x - 3$ in the denominator. Where is it undefined? _____
16. For what value is $\frac{1}{x+4}$ undefined? _____
17. Why is $\frac{5}{0}$ undefined? _____
18. At what value is $\frac{1}{x-9}$ undefined? _____



Answer Keys

1. $x = 2$

2. $x = -3$

3. $x = 0$

4. $x = 1$

5. $x = -5$

6. $x = 4$

7. $x = 0$

8. $x = 7$

9. $x = -1$

10. $x = 10$

11. $x = -2$

12. $x = 6$

13. No

14. $x = 0$

15. $x = 3$

16. $x = -4$

17. division by zero

18. $x = 9$

Step-by-Step Explanations

1. Start by naming the process: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 2 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 2$. So the final answer is $x = 2$.

2. A good way to think about this is: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x + 3 = 0 \Rightarrow x = -3$. So the final answer is $x = -3$.

3. Step by step: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x = 0$ makes the bottom 0. So the final answer is $x = 0$.

4. Take it one move at a time: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 1 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 1$. So the final answer is $x = 1$.

5. Start by naming the process: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x + 5 = 0 \Rightarrow x = -5$. So the final answer is $x = -5$.

6. A good way to think about this is: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 4 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 4$. So the final answer is $x = 4$.

7. Step by step: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $2x = 0 \Rightarrow x = 0$. So the final answer is $x = 0$.

8. Take it one move at a time: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 7 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 7$. So the final answer is $x = 7$.

9. Start by naming the process: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x + 1 = 0 \Rightarrow x = -1$. So the final answer is $x = -1$.

10. A good way to think about this is: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 10 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 10$. So the final answer is $x = 10$.

11. Step by step: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x + 2 = 0 \Rightarrow x = -2$. So the final answer is $x = -2$.

12. Take it one move at a time: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 6 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 6$. So the final answer is $x = 6$.

13. Start by naming the process: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is No - division by zero is undefined. So the final answer is No.

14. A good way to think about this is: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x = 0$ makes the bottom 0. So the final answer is $x = 0$.

15. Step by step: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 3 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 3$. So the final answer is $x = 3$.

16. Take it one move at a time: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x + 4 = 0 \Rightarrow x = -4$. So the final answer is $x = -4$.

17. Start by naming the process: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is The denominator is 0 (dividing by zero). So the final answer is division by zero.

18. A good way to think about this is: A fraction is undefined when its denominator is zero, so set the denominator equal to zero and solve. The setup/work is $x - 9 = 0 \Rightarrow x = 9$. So the final answer is $x = 9$.



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