

Lesson 24 - Solving Exponential Equations Using Logarithms

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Fast Five

- Solve the following graphically:
- (a) $5^x = 53$ (b) $\log_3 38 = x$
- (c) $2^x = 7 \rightarrow$ Now ALGEBRAICALLY solve
 $8^{(2x)} = 7^{(1-x)}$

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(A) Strategies for Solving Exponential Equations - Guessing

- we have explored a variety of equation solving strategies, namely being able to isolate a variable
- this becomes seemingly impossible for exponential equations like $5^x = 53$
- our earlier strategy was to express both sides of an equation with a common base, (i.e. $2^x = 32$) which we cannot do with the number 53 and the base of 5
- Alternatively, we can simply "guess & check" to find the right exponent on 5 that gives us 53 \rightarrow we know that $5^2 = 25$ and $5^3 = 125$, so the solution should be somewhere closer to 2 than 3

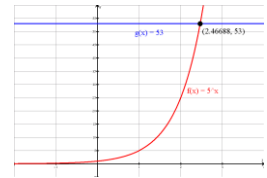
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(B) Strategies for Solving Exponential Equations - Graphing

- Going back the example of $5^x = 53$, we always have the graphing option
- We simply graph $y_1 = 5^x$ and simultaneously graph $y_2 = 53$ and look for an intersection point (2.46688, 53)



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(C) Strategies for Solving Exponential Equations - Inverses

- However, one general strategy that we have used previously was to use an "inverse" operation to isolate a variable
- and so now that we know how to "inverse" an exponential expression using logarithms, we will use the same strategy \rightarrow inverse an exponential using logarithms
- So then if $5^x = 53$, then $\log_5(53) = x \rightarrow$ but this puts us in the same dilemma as before \rightarrow we don't know the exponent on 5 that gives 53

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(D) Strategies for Solving Exponential Equations - Logarithms

- So we will use the logarithm concept as we apply another logarithm rule \rightarrow let's simply take a common logarithm of each side of the equation (\log_{10}) (since our calculators are programmed to work in base 10)
- Thus, $5^x = 53$ now becomes
- $\log_{10}(5^x) = \log_{10}(53)$
- $\log_{10}(5)^x = \log_{10}(53)$
- $x[\log_{10}(5)] = \log_{10}(53)$ (using log rules)
- $x = \log_{10}(53) \div \log_{10}(5)$
- $x = 2.46688 \dots$

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(D) Strategies for Solving Exponential Equations – Natural Logarithms

- In solving $5^x = 53$, we used a common logarithm (log base 10) to solve the equation
- One other common logarithm you will see on your calculator is the natural logarithm (ln which uses a special base of numerical value 2.71828... which is notated by the letter $e \rightarrow$ so $\log_e(x) = \ln(x)$)
- Thus, $\ln 5^x = \ln 53$
- And $x(\ln 5) = \ln 53$
- And $x = \ln 53 \div \ln 5 = 2.46688$ as before

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(E) Examples

- Evaluate $\log_3 38 = x$
- Again, same basic problem \rightarrow we are using a base in which 38 is an awkward number to work with (unlike 9, 27, 81, 243, 729, ...)
- So let's change the expression to an exponential equation $\rightarrow 3^x = 38$ and this puts us back to the point we were at before with $5^x = 53$!!
- Thus, $\log_{10}(3)^x = \log_{10}(38)$
- And $x \log 3 = \log 38$
- So $x = \log 38 \div \log 3 = 3.31107\dots$

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(E) Examples

- Solve the following for x
- (a) $2^x = 9$
- (b) $2^x = 1.6$
- (c) $3(1.25)^x = 11$
- (d) $4 + 2.5^x = 12$
- (e) $2^{4x+1} = 7^{1-x}$
- (f) $2^{x^2-4} = 9^x$
- (g) $2^{3x+2} = 9$
- (h) $3(2^{2x-1}) = 5^x$
- (i) $2^{4x+1} - 3^x = 0$

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(F) Applications of Exponential Equations

- The half-life of radium-226 is 1620 years. After how many years is only 30 mg left if the original sample contained 150 mg?
- Recall the formula for half-life is $N(t) = N_0(2)^{-t/h}$ where h refers to the half-life of the substance
- Rework the problem knowing that the formula for ANY exponential application is $y(x) = c(1+r)^x$.

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(F) Applications of Exponential Equations

- The half-life of radium-226 is 1620 years. After how many years is only 30 mg left if the original sample contained 150 mg?
- Recall the formula for half-life is $N(t) = N_0(2)^{-t/h}$ where h refers to the half-life of the substance
- or $N(t) = N_0(1+r)^t$ where r is the rate of change (or common ratio of -0.5; and t would refer to the number of "conversion periods – or the number of halving periods)
- Therefore, $30 = 150(2)^{-t/1620}$
- $30/150 = 0.20 = 2^{-t/1620}$
- $\log(0.2) = (-t/1620) \log(2)$
- $\log(0.2) \div \log(2) = -t/1620$
- $-1620 \times \log(0.2) \div \log(2) = t$
- Thus $t = 3761.5$ years

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(F) Applications of Exponential Equations

- The logarithmic function has applications for solving everyday situations:
- ex 1. Mr. S. drinks a cup of coffee at 9:45 am and his coffee contains 150 mg of caffeine. Since the half-life of caffeine for an average adult is 5.5 hours, determine how much caffeine is in Mr. S.'s body at class-time (1:10pm). Then determine how much time passes before I have 30 mg of caffeine in my body.
- ex 2. The value of the Canadian dollar, at a time of inflation, decreases by 10% each year. What is the half-life of the Canadian dollar?

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(F) Applications of Exponential Equations

- Ex 3. Two populations of bacteria are growing at different rates. Their populations at time t are given by $P_1(t) = P_0 5^{4t}$ and $P_2(t) = P_0 e^{2t}$ respectively.
 - (a) At what time are the populations the same?
 - (b) When is the population of P_2 twice that of P_1 ?
- ex 4. Find the length of time required for an investment of \$1000 to grow to \$4,500 at a rate of 9% p.a. compounded quarterly. How does this time change if the investment is compounded continuously?

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(F) Applications of Exponential Equations

- ex 5. Dry cleaners use a cleaning fluid that is purified by evaporation and condensation after each cleaning cycle. Every time it is purified, 2% of the fluid is lost.
 - (a) An equipment manufacturer claims that after 20 cycles, about two-thirds of the fluid remains. Verify or reject this claim.
 - (b) If the fluid has to be "topped up" when half the original amount remains, after how many cycles should the fluid be topped up?
 - (c) A manufacturer has developed a new process such that two-thirds of the cleaning fluid remains after 40 cycles. What percentage of fluid is lost after each cycle?

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(G) Internet Links

- [College Algebra Tutorial on Exponential Equations](#) (NOTE: this lesson uses natural logarithms to solve exponential equations)
- [Solving Exponential Equations Lesson from Purple Math](#) (NOTE: this lesson uses natural logarithms to solve exponential equations)
- [SOLVING EXPONENTIAL EQUATIONS from SOS Math](#) (NOTE: this lesson uses natural logarithms to solve exponential equations)

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(H) Homework

- Larson text, S3.4, p213, Q43,45,47,49,51,53,57,103,105,107 & some word problems → Q111,113
- Nelson text, S2.6, p133, Q14,15,16,18,19

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