Factors and Zeros of Polynomials

Let $p(x) = a_n x^n + a_{n-1}x^{n-1} + \cdot \cdot \cdot + a_1 x + a_0$ be a polynomial. If $p(a) = 0$, then a is a *zero* of the polynomial and a solution of the equation $p(x) = 0$. Furthermore, $(x - a)$ is a *factor* of the polynomial.

Fundamental Theorem of Algebra

An nth degree polynomial has n (not necessarily distinct) zeros. Although all of these zeros may be imaginary, a real polynomial of odd degree must have at least one real zero.

Quadratic Formula

If $p(x) = ax^2 + bx + c$, and $0 \le b^2 - 4ac$, then the real zeros of p are $x = \left(-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}\right)/2a$.

Special Factors

$x^2 - a^2 = (x - a)(x + a)$

$x^3 - a^3 = (x - a)(x^2 + ax + a^2)$

$x^3 + a^3 = (x + a)(x^2 - ax + a^2)$

$x^4 - a^4 = (x^2 - a^2)(x^2 + a^2)$

Binomial Theorem

$(x + y)^2 = x^2 + 2xy + y^2$

$(x - y)^2 = x^2 - 2xy + y^2$

$(x + y)^3 = x^3 + 3x^2y + 3xy^2 + y^3$

$(x - y)^3 = x^3 - 3x^2y + 3xy^2 - y^3$

$(x + y)^4 = x^4 + 4x^3y + 6x^2y^2 + 4xy^3 + y^4$

$(x - y)^4 = x^4 - 4x^3y + 6x^2y^2 - 4xy^3 + y^4$

$$(x + y)^n = x^n + nx^{n-1}y + \frac{n(n-1)}{2!}x^{n-2}y^2 + \cdot \cdot \cdot + nxy^{n-1} + y^n$$

$$(x - y)^n = x^n - nx^{n-1}y + \frac{n(n-1)}{2!}x^{n-2}y^2 - \cdot \cdot \cdot \pm nxy^{n-1} \mp y^n$$

Rational Zero Theorem

If $p(x) = a_n x^n + a_{n-1}x^{n-1} + \cdot \cdot \cdot + a_1 x + a_0$ has integer coefficients, then every *rational zero* of p is of the form $x = r/s$, where r is a factor of a_0 and s is a factor of a_n.

Factoring by Grouping

$acx^3 + adx^2 + bcx + bd = ax^2(cx + d) + b(cx + d) = (ax^2 + b)(cx + d)$

Arithmetic Operations

$ab + ac = a(b + c)$

$\dfrac{a}{b} + \dfrac{c}{d} = \dfrac{ad + bc}{bd}$

$\dfrac{a + b}{c} = \dfrac{a}{c} + \dfrac{b}{c}$

$\dfrac{\left(\frac{a}{b}\right)}{\left(\frac{c}{d}\right)} = \left(\dfrac{a}{b}\right)\left(\dfrac{d}{c}\right) = \dfrac{ad}{bc}$

$\dfrac{\left(\frac{a}{b}\right)}{c} = \dfrac{a}{bc}$

$\dfrac{a}{\left(\frac{b}{c}\right)} = \dfrac{ac}{b}$

$a\left(\dfrac{b}{c}\right) = \dfrac{ab}{c}$

$\dfrac{a - b}{c - d} = \dfrac{b - a}{d - c}$

$\dfrac{ab + ac}{a} = b + c$

Exponents and Radicals

$a^0 = 1, \quad a \ne 0$

$(ab)^x = a^x b^x$

$a^x a^y = a^{x+y}$

$\sqrt{a} = a^{1/2}$

$\dfrac{a^x}{a^y} = a^{x-y}$

$\sqrt[n]{a} = a^{1/n}$

$\left(\dfrac{a}{b}\right)^x = \dfrac{a^x}{b^x}$

$\sqrt[n]{a^m} = a^{m/n}$

$a^{-x} = \dfrac{1}{a^x}$

$\sqrt[n]{ab} = \sqrt[n]{a}\sqrt[n]{b}$

$(a^x)^y = a^{xy}$

$\sqrt[n]{\dfrac{a}{b}} = \dfrac{\sqrt[n]{a}}{\sqrt[n]{b}}$