

Solving Exponential Equations

Example 1

Solve the following exponential equation using multiple techniques.

$$10 = 80(2)^{\frac{3}{x}}$$

Method 1 (Using Logarithms)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{10}{80} &= \frac{80(2)^{\frac{3}{x}}}{80} \\ \frac{1}{8} &= 2^{3/x} \\ \log \frac{1}{8} &= \log 2^{3/x} \\ \log \frac{1}{8} &= \frac{3}{x} \log 2 \\ \frac{\log \frac{1}{8}}{\log 2} &= \frac{3}{x} \\ \frac{\log \frac{1}{8}}{\log 2} &= \frac{3}{x} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} x \log \frac{1}{8} &= 3 \log 2 \\ \frac{x \log \frac{1}{8}}{\log \frac{1}{8}} &= \frac{3 \log 2}{\log \frac{1}{8}} \\ x &= -1 \end{aligned}$$

Method 2 (Using Common Base)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{10}{80} &= \frac{80(2)^{3/x}}{80} \\ \frac{1}{8} &= 2^{3/x} \\ 2^{-3} &= 2^{3/x} \\ -3 &= \frac{3}{x} \\ \frac{-3}{1} &= \frac{3}{x} \\ -3x &= 3 \\ \frac{-3x}{-3} &= \frac{3}{-3} \\ x &= -1 \end{aligned}$$

Example 2

Solve the following using common bases.

a) $4^{2x-3} = 8^{x+5}$

$$\begin{aligned} (2^2)^{2x-3} &= (2^3)^{x+5} \\ 2^{4x-6} &= 2^{3x+15} \\ 4x-6 &= 3x+15 \\ 4x-3x &= 15+6 \\ x &= 21 \end{aligned}$$

b) $27^{x-2} = \sqrt[3]{81}$

$$\begin{aligned} 27^{x-2} &= 81^{\frac{1}{3}} \\ (3^3)^{x-2} &= (3^4)^{\frac{1}{3}} \\ 3^{3x-6} &= 3^{\frac{4}{3}} \\ \log_3 3^{3x-6} &= \log_3 3^{\frac{4}{3}} \\ \frac{3x-6}{1} &= \frac{4}{3} \\ 9x-18 &= 4 \\ 9x &= 4+18 \\ \frac{9x}{9} &= \frac{22}{9} \\ x &= \frac{22}{9} \end{aligned}$$

Example 3

Solve the following exponential equations.

a) $3^{x+2} - 3^x = 18$

$$3^x 3^2 = 3^{x+2}$$

$$3^x 3^2 - 3^x = 18$$

$$3^x (3^2 - 1) = 18$$

$$\frac{3^x (8)}{8} = \frac{18}{8}$$

$$3^x = \frac{9}{4}$$

$$x = \log_3 \frac{9}{4}$$

$$x = \frac{\log \frac{9}{4}}{\log 3}$$

$$x \approx 0.74$$

b) $4^x + 2^{2x-5} = 12$

$$(2^2)^x + 2^{2x-5} = 12$$

$$2^{2x} + 2^{2x} 2^{-5} = 12$$

$$2^{2x} (1 + 2^{-5}) = 12$$

$$2^{2x} \left(\frac{32}{32} + \frac{1}{32} \right) = 12$$

$$\left(\frac{32}{32} \right) 2^{2x} \left(\frac{33}{32} \right) = \frac{12}{1} \left(\frac{32}{33} \right)$$

$$2^{2x} = \frac{384}{33}$$

$$\frac{2x}{2} = \log_2 \left(\frac{384}{33} \right) \div 2$$

$$x = \frac{\log \left(\frac{384}{33} \right)}{\log 2} \div 2$$

$$x \approx 1.77$$

Example 4

Solve the following exponential equations.

a) $5^{x-2} = 3^{x+2}$

$$\log 5^{x-2} = \log 3^{x+2}$$

$$(x-2) \log 5 = (x+2) \log 3$$

$$x \log 5 - 2 \log 5 = x \log 3 + 2 \log 3$$

$$x \log 5 - x \log 3 = 2 \log 3 + 2 \log 5$$

$$\frac{x(\log 5 - \log 3)}{\log 5 - \log 3} = \frac{(2 \log 3 + 2 \log 5)}{(\log 5 - \log 3)}$$

$$x \approx 10.60$$

b) $3^{5x-3} = 24$

$$\log 3^{5x-3} = \log 24$$

$$\log 3^x + \log 5^{x-3} = \log 24$$

$$x \log 3 + (x-3) \log 5 = \log 24$$

$$x \log 3 + x \log 5 - 3 \log 5 = \log 24$$

$$x \log 3 + x \log 5 = \log 24 + 3 \log 5$$

$$\frac{x(\log 3 + \log 5)}{(\log 3 + \log 5)} = \frac{(\log 24 + 3 \log 5)}{(\log 3 + \log 5)}$$

$$x \approx 2.96$$

Example 5

Solve the following exponential equation.

$$2(2^{2x}) + 7(2^x) - 4 = 0$$

$$2(2^x)^2 + 7(2^x) - 4 = 0$$

let $n = 2^x$

$$2n^2 + 7n - 4 = 0$$

$$2n^2 + 8n - 1n - 4 = 0 \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} P(-8) \\ S(7) \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} 8, -1 \end{array}$$

$$2n(n+4) - 1(n+4) = 0$$

$$(2n-1)(n+4) = 0$$

$$n = \frac{1}{2} \text{ or } n = -4$$

$$n = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$2^x = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$2^x = 2^{-1}$$

$$x = -1$$

$$n = -4$$

$$2^x = -4$$

No Solⁿ

Example 6

Marylou puts \$5000 into a bank account that earns 5% compounded annually. She wishes to purchase a car that is currently worth \$25,000. The car depreciates at a rate of 12% each year. When will she be able to purchase the car?

$$A = P(1+i)^n$$

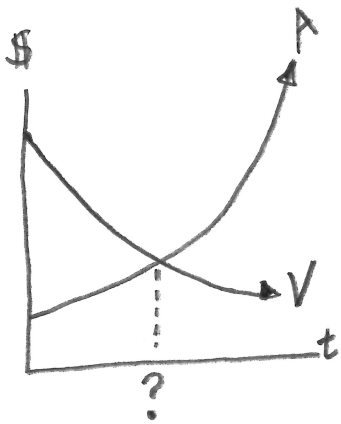
$$A = 5000(1.05)^t$$

Investment

$$V = a(1-r)^t$$

$$V = 25000(0.88)^t$$

Value of the Car



set $A = V$

$$\frac{5000(1.05)^t}{5000} = \frac{25000(0.88)^t}{5000}$$

$$1.05^t = 5(0.88)^t$$

$$\log 1.05^t = \log [5(0.88)^t]$$

$$\log 1.05^t = \log 5 + \log 0.88^t$$

$$t \log 1.05 = \log 5 + t \log 0.88$$

$$t \log 1.05 - t \log 0.88 = \log 5$$

$$t \frac{(\log 1.05 - \log 0.88)}{\log 1.05 - \log 0.88} = \frac{\log 5}{(\log 1.05 - \log 0.88)}$$

$$t \approx 9.11 \text{ years}$$