

# Exploring maths



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Class Book

7

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# Contents

# Tier 7

<b>N7.1 Powers and roots</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>A7.2 Expressions and formulae</b>	<b>97</b>
1 Negative powers	1	1 Simplifying expressions	97
2 Fractional indices	3	2 Expanding brackets	100
3 Surds	6	3 Factorising expressions	102
How well are you doing?	10	4 Working with formulae	104
		5 Investigations	106
<b>A7.1 Linear graphs and inequalities</b>	<b>12</b>	6 Deriving formulae	110
1 Working with coordinates	12	How well are you doing?	113
2 Exploring linear graphs	14		
3 Simultaneous linear equation	16	<b>G7.2 Trigonometry 1</b>	<b>115</b>
4 Linear inequalities in one variable	19	1 Pythagoras' theorem in 3D	115
5 Linear inequalities in two variables	21	2 Finding an unknown angle	119
6 Optimisation problems	24	3 Finding an unknown side	122
How well are you doing?	28	How well are you doing?	125
Functional skills 1	30	<b>N7.3 Proportional reasoning</b>	<b>127</b>
		1 Percentage problems	127
<b>N7.2 Decimals and accuracy</b>	<b>32</b>	2 Direct proportion 1	131
1 Significant figures	32	3 Direct proportion 2	135
2 Standard form	36	4 Inverse proportion	138
3 Accuracy of measurements	39	5 Proportion and square roots	142
4 Upper and lower bounds	42	How well are you doing?	145
5 Dimensions	45		
How well are you doing?	48	Functional skills 3	148
<b>S7.1 Enquiry 1</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>G7.3 Geometrical reasoning</b>	<b>150</b>
1 Sampling	51	1 Tangents and chords	150
2 Planning and collecting data	55	2 Circle theorems	153
3 Drawing histograms	56	3 More circle theorems	156
4 Choosing class intervals	59	4 Using the circle theorems	160
5 Using histograms	61	5 Congruent triangles	164
6 Moving averages	65	6 Proving congruency	168
How well are you doing?	68	7 Similar shapes and solids	171
		How well are you doing?	176
Functional skills 2	70	Functional skills 4	178
<b>G7.1 Measures and mensuration</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>S7.2 Probability 1</b>	<b>180</b>
1 Arcs and sectors of circles	72	1 Using tree diagrams	180
2 Circle problems	75	2 The probability of combined events	184
3 Volume of 3D shapes	77	3 Investigating a game of chance	186
4 Surface area of 3D shapes	81	4 Conditional probability	189
5 Problem solving	84	5 The 'and' and 'or' rules	193
How well are you doing?	93	How well are you doing?	197

<b>A7.3 Solving equations</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>S7.4 Probability 2</b>	<b>289</b>
1 Linear equations	200	1 Capture-recapture	289
2 Solving quadratic equations graphically	202	2 The birthday problem	292
3 Solving quadratic equations by factorisation 1	204	3 Using probability 1	296
4 Solving quadratic equations by factorisation 2	206	4 Using probability 2	298
5 Completing the square	208	5 Quincunx	300
6 Using the quadratic formula	210	How well are you doing?	303
7 Simultaneous linear and quadratic equations	212	Functional skills 7	306
8 Simultaneous linear and non-linear equations	214		
How well are you doing?	216	<b>A7.4 Exploring graphs</b>	<b>308</b>
Functional skills 5	218	1 Exploring quadratic and cubic functions	308
		2 Properties of polynomial functions	311
<b>G7.4 Transformations and vectors</b>	<b>220</b>	3 Reciprocal functions	314
1 Symmetry patterns ( <i>double lesson</i> )	220	4 Exponential functions	316
3 Vectors and vector notation	222	5 Generating trigonometric functions	319
4 The magnitude of a vector	225	6 Exploring trigonometric functions	321
5 Vector addition	227	7 Transformations of functions	324
6 Parallel vectors and problem solving	231	8 Loci	328
How well are you doing?	236	9 Solving problems	330
Functional skills 6	238	How well are you doing?	333
		Functional skills 8	336
<b>S7.3 Enquiry 2</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>N7.4 Using and applying maths</b>	<b>338</b>
1 Sampling and statistics	240	1 The history of convex polyhedra ( <i>double lesson</i> )	338
2 Five-figure summaries	242	3 Algebraic proof	341
3 Cumulative frequency 1	245	4 Careers in mathematics	343
4 Cumulative frequency 2	247	How well are you doing?	345
5 Estimating statistics for grouped data	250	<b>R7.1 Revision unit 1</b>	<b>348</b>
6 Box plots	252	1 Percentages and ratios	348
7 Histograms and frequency density	254	2 Expressions and equations	353
8 Moving averages	257	3 Formulae, functions and graphs	356
How well are you doing?	261	4 Geometrical reasoning	362
		5 Probability	367
<b>G7.5 Trigonometry 2</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>R7.2 Revision unit 2</b>	<b>373</b>
1 2D and 3D problems	264	1 Indices and standard form	373
2 Area of a triangle	268	2 Equations and inequalities	377
3 Angles larger than $90^\circ$	271	3 Functions and graphs	381
4 Graphs of trigonometric functions	273	4 Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry	385
5 The sine rule	275	5 Graphs, charts and statistics	389
6 The cosine rule	278	Answers	399
7 Using the sine and cosine rules	281	Index	406
How well are you doing?	286		

# Powers and roots

## This unit will help you to:

- use the index laws for negative and fractional powers;
- understand and use rational and irrational numbers;
- use surds in exact calculations, without a calculator.

## 1 Negative powers

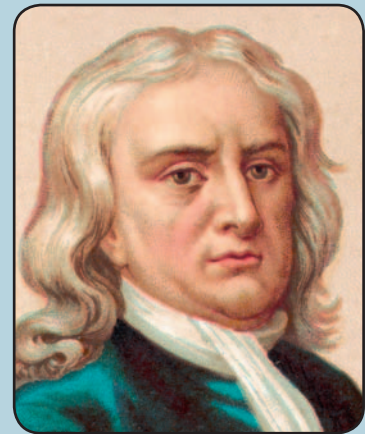
This lesson will help you to work with zero and negative powers.



### Did you know that...?

The French mathematician **René Descartes**, famous for his invention of coordinates, lived in the first half of the 17th century. He was the first to write positive integer powers as we write them today, apart from  $a^2$  for the square of a number. For this, he wrote  $aa$  instead, maybe because  $aa$  takes up the same space as  $a^2$ , and is just as quick to write.

Negative integer powers were first written as we do by **Sir Isaac Newton** (1642–1727) in a letter he wrote in 1676 describing his discovery of a theorem 12 years earlier.



Isaac Newton

### Exercise 1

For any non-zero value of  $a$ ,  $a^0 = 1$ .

For any number  $n$ ,  $a^{-n} = \frac{1}{a^n}$ . For example,  $10^{-2} = \frac{1}{10^2} = \frac{1}{100}$ .

To **multiply** two numbers in index form, **add** the indices, so  $a^m \times a^n = a^{m+n}$ ,

e.g.  $10^4 \times 10^2 = 10^{4+2} = 10^6$ .

To **divide** two numbers in index form, **subtract** the indices, so  $a^m \div a^n = a^{m-n}$ ,

e.g.  $10^3 \div 10^2 = 10^{3-2} = 10^1 = 10$ .

### Example

Simplify  $\frac{2^3 \times 2^4}{2 \times 2^8}$ .

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{2^3 \times 2^4}{2 \times 2^8} &= \frac{2^7}{2^9} \\ &= 2^{-2} = \frac{1}{2^2} = \frac{1}{4} \end{aligned}$$

You can use a calculator to find the values of powers of numbers.

For example, to find  $2.5^{-3}$  a common key sequence is

$2 \ . \ 5 \ x^y \ 3 \ +/- \ =$

which produces the answer 0.064.

Make sure that you know how to use your own calculator to find powers of numbers.

Do questions 1 to 6 **without using your calculator**.

1 Work out each value.

a  $2^{-1}$

b  $3^{-2}$

c  $5^{-3}$

d  $10^{-3}$

e  $12^0$

f  $\left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^{-1}$

g  $\left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^{-2}$

h  $2.5^{-1}$

2 Simplify these.

a  $2^2 \times 2^{-5}$

b  $3^{-2} \times 3^{-3}$

c  $10^{-2} \times 10^{-2}$

d  $9^5 \times 9^{-3}$

e  $5^{-3} \div 5^{-1}$

f  $10^{-4} \div 10^{-3}$

g  $4^{-2} \div 4^{-1}$

h  $3^2 \div 3^{-1}$

i  $(2^{-3})^2$

j  $(5^2)^{-2}$

k  $(3^4)^2$

l  $(2^{-1})^{-4}$

3 Simplify these.

a  $\frac{2^4 \times 2^2}{2^7}$

b  $\frac{3^4 \times 3^{-2}}{3^5}$

c  $\frac{10^{-2} \times 10^2}{10}$

d  $\frac{2^{-4} \times 2^2}{2^{-7}}$

e  $\frac{2^4}{2^7 \times 2^{-2}}$

f  $\frac{3^4 \times 3^2}{3 \times 3^7}$

g  $\frac{4^4 \times 4^{-2}}{4^{-1}}$

h  $\frac{2^4 \times 2^2}{2^7 \times 2^{-1}}$

4 Find the value of  $n$  in each of these.

a  $2^n = \frac{2^2}{2^5}$

b  $3 \times 3^n = \frac{3^4}{3^6}$

c  $\frac{10^n}{10} = \frac{10^3}{10^5}$

d  $4^2 \times 4^n = \frac{4}{4^5}$

5 Work out each value.

a  $6 \times 10^{-1}$

b  $8.2 \times 10^2$

c  $2.9 \times 10^{-3}$

d  $8.7 \times 10^{-2}$

e  $1.6 \times 10^3$

f  $4 \times 10^{-4}$

6 Find the value of  $n$  in each of these.

a  $5000 = 5 \times 10^n$

b  $28000 = 2.8 \times 10^n$

c  $0.3 = 3 \times 10^n$

d  $6380 = 6.38 \times 10^n$

e  $0.0051 = 5.1 \times 10^n$

f  $0.234 = 2.34 \times 10^n$

7 Use your calculator to work these out.

Where appropriate, give your answer correct to two decimal places.

a  $1.25^{-1}$

b  $0.16^{-1}$

c  $0.4^{-2}$

d  $2.5^{-3}$

e  $12.5^{-2}$

f  $0.45^{-1}$

g  $0.96^{-8}$

h  $0.6^{-4}$

## Extension problems

- 8 What is the last digit of  $5^{-55}$ ?
- 9 Use each of the digits 2, 3 and 4 once.  
What is the biggest number that you can make?

For example:

$$2 \times 3^4 = 162 \text{ or } 32 \times 4 = 128$$

## Points to remember

- To **multiply** two numbers in index form, add the indices, so  $a^m \times a^n = a^{m+n}$ .
- To **divide** two numbers in index form, subtract the indices, so  $a^m \div a^n = a^{m-n}$ .
- To **raise the power of a number to a power**, multiply the indices, so  $(a^m)^n = a^{m \times n}$ .
- These rules work with both positive and negative integer powers.

## 2 Fractional indices

This lesson will help you to work with fractional indices.

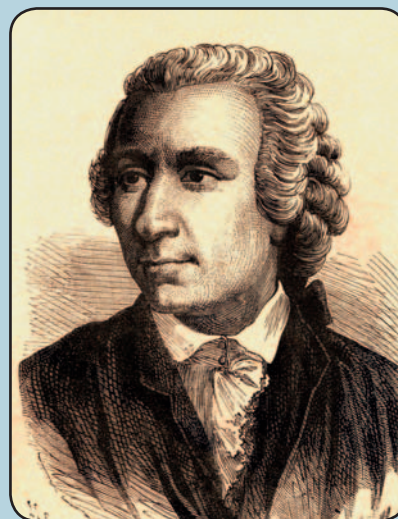
### **i** Did you know that...?

No-one knows for certain the origin of the square root symbol  $\sqrt{\quad}$ . The Swiss mathematician **Leonhard Euler** (1707–1783) thought it came from the letter *r*, the first letter of the Latin word *radix*, which means 'root'.

A square root symbol like a capital R with a line across its tail was used in 1220 by **Leonardo of Pisa**.

The symbol  $\sqrt{\quad}$  without the vinculum (the top bar over the numbers) was used in 1525 by **Christoff Rudolff**, a German mathematician.

In 1637, **Rene Descartes** used the symbol  $\sqrt{\quad}$ , adding the vinculum, in his book *La Geometrie*.



Leonhard Euler

## Exercise 2

Since  $a^m \times a^n = a^{m+n}$ ,

$$a^{\frac{1}{2}} \times a^{\frac{1}{2}} = a^1 = a$$

This means that  $a^{\frac{1}{2}}$  multiplied by itself gives  $a$ , so  $a^{\frac{1}{2}}$  is the same as the **square root of  $a$** , that is,  $a^{\frac{1}{2}} = \sqrt{a}$ .

In the same way,  $a^{\frac{1}{3}} \times a^{\frac{1}{3}} \times a^{\frac{1}{3}} = a^1 = a$ , so  $a^{\frac{1}{3}}$  is the same as the **cube root of  $a$** .

In general,  $a^{\frac{1}{n}} = \sqrt[n]{a}$ , where  $\sqrt[n]{a}$  means the  **$n$ th root of  $a$** .

The index law  $(a^m)^n = a^{m \times n}$  holds for fractional powers. So:

$$(a^{\frac{1}{m}})^n = a^{\frac{1}{m} \times n} = a^{\frac{n}{m}} \text{ and } (a^m)^{\frac{1}{n}} = a^{m \times \frac{1}{n}} = a^{\frac{m}{n}}$$

### Example

Simplify  $(\sqrt[3]{11})^2$ .

$$(\sqrt[3]{11})^2 = (11^{\frac{1}{3}})^2 = 11^{\frac{2}{3}}$$

1 Without using a calculator, work out the value of each of these.

a  $9^{\frac{1}{2}}$

b  $121^{\frac{1}{2}}$

c  $36^{-\frac{1}{2}}$

d  $10\,000^{\frac{1}{2}}$

e  $27^{\frac{1}{3}}$

f  $1\,000\,000^{\frac{1}{3}}$

g  $-64^{-\frac{1}{3}}$

h  $216^{-\frac{1}{3}}$

i  $9^{\frac{5}{2}}$

j  $16^{\frac{3}{4}}$

k  $(-27)^{\frac{2}{3}}$

l  $25^{\frac{3}{2}}$

2 Write each of these as a single fraction.

a  $(\frac{1}{2})^4$

b  $(\frac{1}{3})^2$

c  $(\frac{2}{5})^4$

d  $(\frac{3}{4})^3$

e  $25^{-\frac{1}{2}}$

f  $27^{-\frac{2}{3}}$

g  $32^{-\frac{4}{5}}$

h  $64^{-\frac{4}{3}}$

3 Simplify and write these in the form  $a^n$ .

a  $2^{\frac{1}{2}} \times 2^{\frac{1}{2}}$

b  $3^{\frac{1}{2}} \div 3^{\frac{1}{3}}$

c  $10^{\frac{1}{5}} \times 10^{\frac{1}{2}}$

d  $8^{\frac{5}{6}} \div 8^{\frac{5}{6}}$

4 Find the value of  $n$  in each of these.

a  $(\sqrt{5})^6 = 5^n$

b  $(\sqrt[3]{7})^8 = 7^n$

c  $\sqrt{5^8} = 5^n$

d  $(\sqrt[3]{2})^{11} = 2^{-2n}$



5 Use your calculator to work these out.

Where appropriate, give your answer correct to two decimal places.

a  $\sqrt[3]{1.728}$

b  $\sqrt{8.41}$

c  $\sqrt[3]{3.375}$

d  $\sqrt[4]{33.1776}$

6 State which of each pair of numbers is larger. You may use your calculator.

a  $\sqrt{10}, \sqrt[3]{50}$

b  $\sqrt[3]{60}, \sqrt[4]{235}$

c  $\sqrt[4]{20}, \sqrt[5]{40}$

d  $35^{\frac{1}{2}}, 200^{\frac{1}{3}}$

e  $55^{\frac{1}{3}}, 210^{\frac{1}{4}}$

f  $40^{\frac{1}{4}}, 100^{\frac{1}{5}}$

7 I am an integer less than 10.

Cube me, rearrange my digits, then take my cube root to get another integer less than 10. What are the two integers?

8 I am a three-digit cube that is also a square. What am I?

### Extension problems

A **rational number** is any number that can be expressed in the form  $\frac{a}{b}$ , where  $a$  and  $b$  are integers, and  $b \neq 0$ . Examples are:

$$2\frac{1}{2} = \frac{5}{2} \quad 1.3 = \frac{13}{10} \quad 129 = \frac{129}{1} \quad \sqrt{0.81} = 0.9 = \frac{9}{10} \quad 0.\dot{3}\dot{6} = \frac{4}{11}$$

Numbers that cannot be written as a fraction are **irrational numbers**.

Examples are decimals like  $\pi$  that neither terminate nor recur, some roots like  $\sqrt{2}$ , and expressions like  $\frac{3\pi}{4}$  or  $4\sqrt{7}$ .

Together, all rational and irrational numbers make up the set of **real numbers**.

9  $\sqrt{5\frac{4}{9}}$ , or  $\sqrt{\frac{49}{9}}$ , is a rational number, since it equals  $\frac{7}{3}$ , or  $2\frac{1}{3}$ .

$\sqrt{5\frac{1}{16}}$ , or  $\sqrt{\frac{81}{16}}$ , is a rational number, since it equals  $\frac{9}{4}$ , or  $2\frac{1}{4}$ .

$$\sqrt{5\frac{4}{9}} = 2\frac{1}{3} \quad \text{and} \quad \sqrt{5\frac{1}{16}} = 2\frac{1}{4}$$

Find three more numbers between 5 and 6 that have rational square roots.

10 Can you get TEN by finding the square root of a DOZEN?

$$\sqrt{\text{DOZEN}} = \text{TEN}$$

Each letter stands for a different single-digit number. Find the values of the digits.



## Points to remember

- ◉  $a^{\frac{1}{2}}$  is the same as the **square root** of  $a$ .
- ◉  $\sqrt[n]{a}$  or  $a^{\frac{1}{n}}$  means the  **$n$ th root** of  $a$ , e.g.  $\sqrt[3]{a}$  or  $a^{\frac{1}{3}}$  is the **cube root** of  $a$ .
- ◉ The **index laws** also hold for fractional powers, so:  
 $(a^{\frac{1}{m}})^n = a^{\frac{1}{m} \times n} = a^{\frac{n}{m}}$  and  $(a^m)^{\frac{1}{n}} = a^{m \times \frac{1}{n}} = a^{\frac{m}{n}}$

## 3 Surds

This lesson will help you to use surds in exact calculations, and rationalise expressions such as  $\frac{5}{\sqrt{3}}$ .



### Did you know that...?

**Al-Khwarizmi** was an Arab who wrote about Hindu–Arabic numerals and how to use place value in calculations. The word *algorithm* comes from his name, and the word *algebra* from his book *Hisab al-jabr*.

The translators of the mathematical work of the ancient Greeks wrongly used the Arabic for ‘deaf and dumb’ for ‘irrational’. So when Al-Khwarizmi wrote about irrational numbers he called them ‘inaudible’.

The Italian **Gherardo** translated the work of the Arabic mathematicians into Latin in the 12th century. He used the Latin *surdus*, meaning ‘deaf’, for ‘inaudible numbers’.

The term eventually reached Britain. In 1551, **Robert Recorde** described quantities that are ‘partly rationally, and partly surde’.



Statue of Al-Khwarizmi, c. 790 to 840, in Tehran, Iran

## Exercise 3

A **surd** is a root that does not have an exact value. For example:

$\sqrt{2}$  is a surd but  $\sqrt{4}$  (which equals  $\pm 2$ ) is not.

$\sqrt[3]{5}$  is a surd but  $\sqrt[3]{1000}$  (which equals 10) is not.

These two identities are often used to simplify expressions involving surds.

$$\sqrt{a} \times \sqrt{b} = \sqrt{ab} \quad \frac{\sqrt{a}}{\sqrt{b}} = \sqrt{\frac{a}{b}}$$

To simplify surds of the form  $\sqrt{n}$ , write  $n$  as a product that includes a square number.

### Example 1

Simplify  $\sqrt{75}$ .

$$\sqrt{75} = \sqrt{25 \times 3} = \sqrt{25} \times \sqrt{3} = 5\sqrt{3}$$

### Example 2

Simplify  $\sqrt{\frac{32}{81}}$ .

$$\sqrt{\frac{32}{81}} = \frac{\sqrt{16 \times 2}}{\sqrt{81}} = \frac{\sqrt{16} \times \sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{81}} = \frac{4\sqrt{2}}{9}$$

You can simplify an expression such as  $(4 + \sqrt{2})(5 - 3\sqrt{2})$  by multiplying out the brackets.

### Example 3

Simplify  $(4 + \sqrt{2})(5 - 3\sqrt{2})$ .

$$(4 + \sqrt{2})(5 - 3\sqrt{2}) = 14 - 7\sqrt{2}$$

×	4	$+\sqrt{2}$	
5	20	$+5\sqrt{2}$	$20 + 5\sqrt{2}$
$-3\sqrt{2}$	$-12\sqrt{2}$	-6	$-6 - 12\sqrt{2}$
			$14 - 7\sqrt{2}$

To simplify a fraction of the form  $\frac{a}{\sqrt{b}}$  where  $a$  and  $b$  are positive integers, multiply both the numerator and the denominator by  $\sqrt{b}$ . This is called **rationalising** the denominator.

### Example 4

Simplify  $\frac{6}{\sqrt{3}}$ .

$$\frac{6}{\sqrt{3}} = \frac{6 \times \sqrt{3}}{\sqrt{3} \times \sqrt{3}} = \frac{6\sqrt{3}}{3} = 2\sqrt{3}$$

1 Find the value of  $n$  in each of these expressions.

a  $\sqrt{8} = n\sqrt{2}$

b  $\sqrt{80} = n\sqrt{5}$

c  $\sqrt{18} = n\sqrt{3}$

d  $\sqrt{50} = n\sqrt{2}$

2 Expand and simplify these expressions.

a  $\sqrt{3}(4 + \sqrt{3})$

b  $(\sqrt{3} + 1)(2 + \sqrt{3})$

c  $(\sqrt{5} - 1)(2 + \sqrt{5})$

d  $(\sqrt{7} + 1)(2 - 2\sqrt{7})$

e  $(3 - \sqrt{5})^2$

f  $(\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{3})(\sqrt{5} + \sqrt{3})$

3 Rationalise the denominators in these expressions.

a  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$

b  $\frac{4}{\sqrt{5}}$

c  $\frac{3}{\sqrt{7}}$

d  $\frac{3}{\sqrt{2}}$

e  $\frac{5}{\sqrt{13}}$

4 Rationalise the denominators and simplify the answers in these expressions.

a  $\frac{2}{\sqrt{6}}$

b  $\frac{3}{\sqrt{15}}$

c  $\frac{15}{\sqrt{20}}$

d  $\frac{5}{\sqrt{5}}$

e  $\frac{14}{\sqrt{7}}$

- 5 Rationalise the denominators in these expressions.  
Give your answers in the form  $a + b\sqrt{c}$ , where  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are integers.

a  $\frac{10 + \sqrt{5}}{\sqrt{5}}$

b  $\frac{2 - \sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{2}}$

c  $\frac{22 + \sqrt{11}}{\sqrt{11}}$

d  $\frac{14 - \sqrt{14}}{\sqrt{14}}$

- 6 The lengths of the two shorter sides of a right-angled triangle are  $\sqrt{11}$  cm and 5 cm.  
Find the length of the third side.

- 7 A square has an area of  $40 \text{ cm}^2$ . Write in surd form:

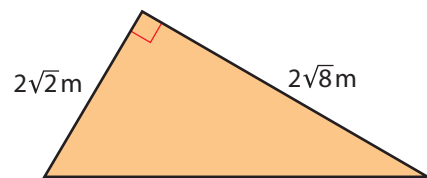
a the length of each side of the square;

b the perimeter of the square.

- 8 a The diagram shows a right-angled triangle.  
Show that it has an area of  $8 \text{ m}^2$ .

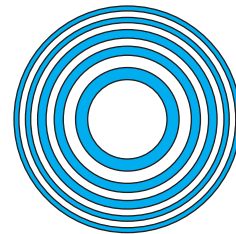
b Show that  $2\sqrt{8}$  can also be written as  $4\sqrt{2}$ .

c Calculate the length of the hypotenuse.  
Leave your answer in surd form, writing it as simply as possible.



- 9 The length of a rectangle is  $(3 + \sqrt{5})$  cm. The width is  $(4 - \sqrt{5})$  cm.  
Work out the perimeter and area of the rectangle.

- 10 Ten concentric circles are drawn.  
The smallest circle has a radius of 1 cm.  
The area between any two consecutive circles is equal to the area of the smallest circle.  
Show that the radius of the largest circle is  $\sqrt{10}$  cm.



### Extension problems

To rationalise a fraction of the form  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{a} + \sqrt{b}}$ , multiply by  $\frac{\sqrt{a} - \sqrt{b}}{\sqrt{a} - \sqrt{b}}$ .

#### Example

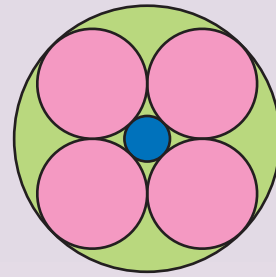
Simplify  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{3} - 1}$ .

Multiply by the fraction  $\frac{\sqrt{3} + 1}{\sqrt{3} + 1}$ .

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{3} - 1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3} - 1} \times \frac{\sqrt{3} + 1}{\sqrt{3} + 1} = \frac{\sqrt{3} + 1}{3 - 1} = \frac{\sqrt{3} + 1}{2}$$

- 11** Six circles touch each other as shown.  
The radius of each pink circle is 1 cm.

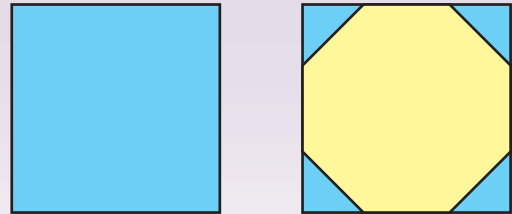
- a** Show that the radius of the green circle is  $(\sqrt{2} + 1)$  cm.  
**b** Show that the radius of the blue circle is  $(\sqrt{2} - 1)$  cm.



- 12** A square is of side 10 cm.

It is made into a regular octagon by cutting off the four corners.

Show that the cuts should be made at a distance  $5(2 - \sqrt{2})$  cm from the vertices of the square.



### Points to remember

- ⦿ A **surd** is a root that does not have an exact value.
- ⦿  $\sqrt{a} \times \sqrt{b} = \sqrt{ab}$  and  $\frac{\sqrt{a}}{\sqrt{b}} = \sqrt{\frac{a}{b}}$ .
- ⦿  $(\sqrt{a} + \sqrt{b})(\sqrt{a} - \sqrt{b}) = a - b$
- ⦿ To **rationalise**  $\frac{a}{\sqrt{b}}$ , multiply the numerator and denominator by  $\sqrt{b}$ .

# How well are you doing?

## Can you:

- calculate the value of numbers raised to negative or fractional powers?
- use surds in exact calculations, without a calculator?
- rationalise a denominator consisting of a single surd?

## Powers and roots (no calculator)

### 1 2004 level 8

a Look at these equations.

$$48 = 3 \times 2^a$$

$$56 = 7 \times 2^b$$

What are the values of  $a$  and  $b$ ?

b  $48 \times 56 = 3 \times 7 \times 2^c$

What is the value of  $c$ ?

### 2 2007 level 8

Look at this information.

$$y^2 = 10$$

Use this information to copy and complete the equations below.

a  $y^4 = \square$

b  $y^{\square} = 1000$

### 3 1997 level 8

For each of these cards  $n$  can be any positive number.

The answers given by the cards are all positive numbers.

$n^2$	$0.8n$	$\sqrt{n}$	$\frac{n}{0.8}$	$\frac{1}{n}$
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- a Which card will always give an answer less than  $n$ ?
- b When  $n$  is 1, which cards will give the answer 1?
- c When  $n$  is 4, which cards will give an answer less than 4?
- d When  $n$  is less than 1, which cards will give an answer less than  $n$ ?

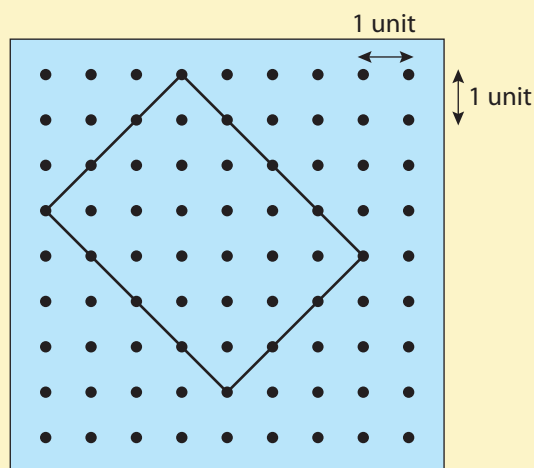
**4** GCSE 1387 November 2006

- a Write down the value of  $4^{\frac{3}{2}}$ .
- b Write  $\sqrt{8}$  in the form  $m\sqrt{2}$ , where  $m$  is an integer.
- c Write  $\sqrt{50}$  in the form  $k\sqrt{2}$ , where  $k$  is an integer.
- d Rationalise  $\frac{1 + \sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{2}}$ .

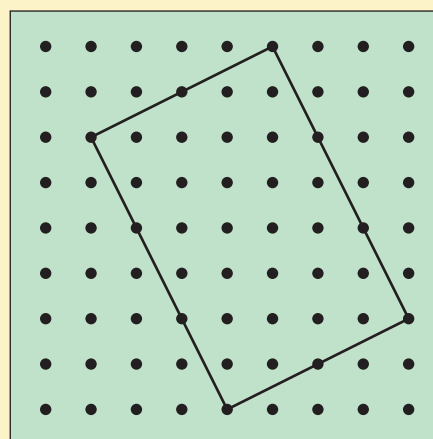
**5** 2002 Exceptional performance

You will need some squared dotted paper for this question.

- a An elastic band is fixed on four pins on a pinboard.  
Show that the total length of the band in this position is  $14\sqrt{2}$  units.



- b What is the length of the band in this new position?  
Write your answer in its simplest form using roots.



- c On dotted paper, outline a 9 by 9 array of dots to use as a pinboard.  
Draw a square on the pinboard that has a perimeter of  $4\sqrt{29}$ .  
Show your working.
- d Outline another 9 by 9 array of dots to use as a pinboard.  
Now draw a trapezium on the pinboard that has a perimeter of  $6 + 4\sqrt{2}$ .  
Show your working.