

Chapter 7: Exponential Functions

7.1 Characteristics of Exponential Functions

An exponential function is a function where the *exponent* includes a variable, and the *base* is larger than zero, not equal to 1. Exponential functions are used to model many real-life situations of change – such as population growth, radioactive decay and compound interest.

For example –

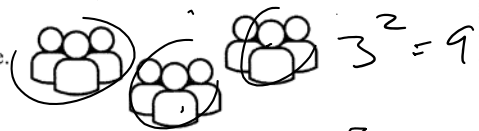
Suppose you greet three people.

$$3^0 = 1$$



$$3^1 = 3$$

Each person you greeted goes on to greet 3 different people.



If this pattern continues, you can see that the number of people greeted grows very quickly.

$$3^3 = 27$$

Consider the function $y = 3^x$.

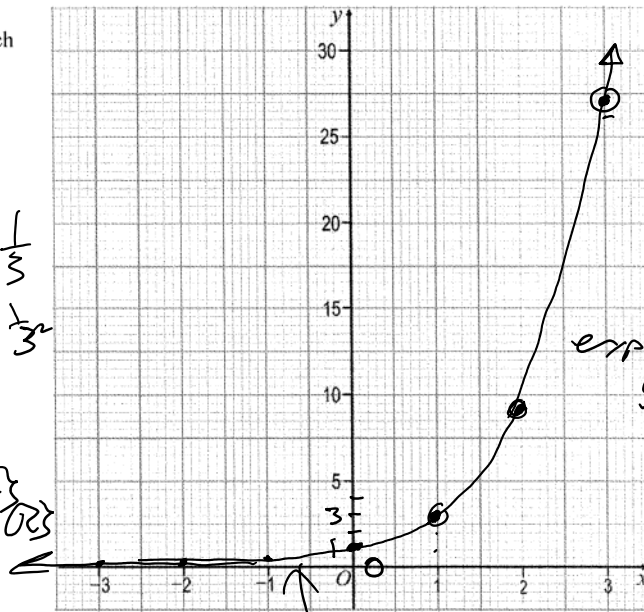
a) Complete the table, then sketch the graph of $y = 3^x$ on the grid.

$y = 3^x$

x	y
0	1
1	3
2	9
3	27
-1	$\frac{1}{3}$
-2	$\frac{1}{9}$
-3	$\frac{1}{27}$

$$3^{-1} = \frac{1}{3}$$

$$3^{-2} = \frac{1}{9}$$



b) State the graph's:

domain $\{x \mid x \in \mathbb{R}\}$

range $\{y \mid y > 0, y \in \mathbb{R}\}$

y-intercept $y = 1$

x-intercept none

horizontal asymptote equation

$$y = 0$$

The graph is asymptotic to the x-axis.

equation Asymptote: $y = 0$

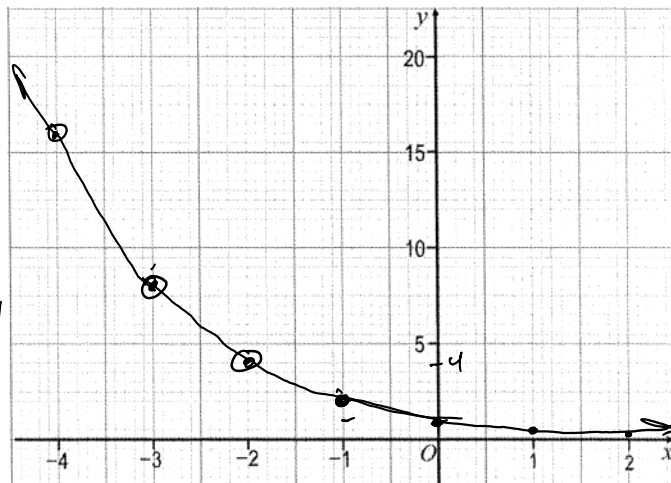
Example

a) Create a table, then sketch the graph of the exponential function $y = \frac{1}{2}^x$ on the grid.

function $y = \frac{1}{2}^x$
on the grid.

x	y
2	$\frac{1}{4}$
1	$\frac{1}{2}$
0	1
-1	2
-2	4
-3	8
-4	16

$y = (\frac{1}{2})^x$
 $y = (\frac{1}{2})^1 = \frac{1}{2}$
 $y = (\frac{1}{2})^0 = 1$
 $y = (\frac{1}{2})^{-1} = 2$



$(\frac{1}{2})^{-1}$
 $(\frac{2}{1})^1 = 2$
 $(\frac{1}{2})^{-2} = (\frac{2}{1})^2 = 4$

exponential decay.

b) State the graph's:

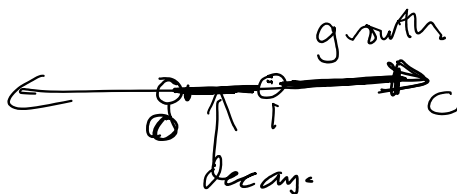
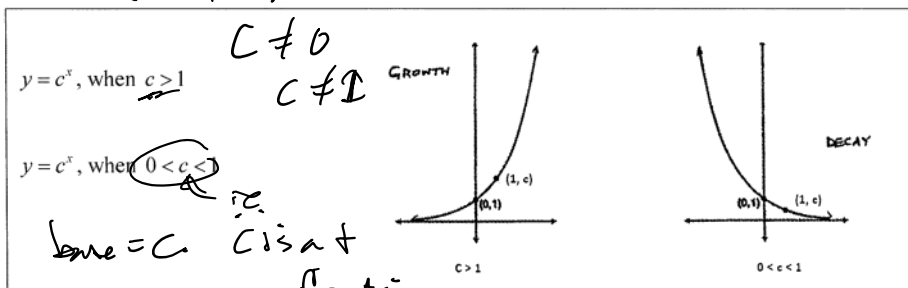
domain $\{x | x \in \mathbb{R}\}$

range $\{y | y > 0\}$

y-intercept $y = 1$

x-intercept none

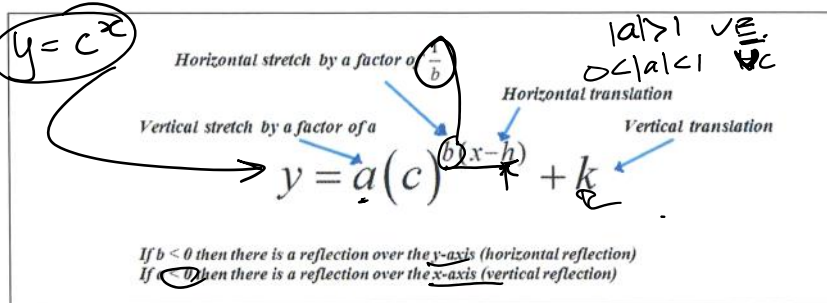
horizontal asymptote equation $y = 0$
(x-axis).



7.2 Transformations of Exponential Functions

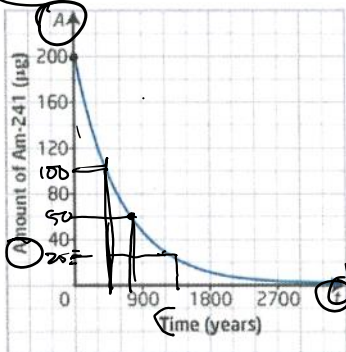
Predict what will happen to the graph of $y = 5^x$ when each of the following changes is made to the equation:

- $c=5$ $y=5^x$ $\rightarrow y=5^{x+1}$ up 1 unit.
- x replaced w/ $x-4$ $y=5^{x-4}$ 4 units right
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of $(\frac{1}{2})^x$ $y=3$ HC by factor $\frac{1}{3}$
- $y=5^{3x-12}$ HC by factor $\frac{1}{3}$, 4 units to right.
- $y=2(5^x)$ VE by factor 2, reflection over x -axis.



Creating Exponential Functions

The radioactive element americium is used in household smoke detectors. Am-241 has a half-life of approximately 432 years. The average smoke detector contains 200 μg of Am-241. What is the exponential function that models the graph showing the radioactive decay of 200 μg of Am-241? (TB, p 353)



$y = (\frac{1}{2})^x$

x	y
-2	4
-1	2
0	1
1	1/2
2	1/4

$1 \mu\text{g} = 10^{-6}$

x	y
0	200
432	100
864	50

200 μg by factor 200
HE by 432

hor. stretch factor
 $= \frac{1}{b} = 432$
 $b = \frac{1}{432}$

x	y
0	200
432	100
864	50

$y = a(\frac{1}{2})^{bx}$
 $y = 200(\frac{1}{2})^{\frac{x}{432}}$

$A = 200(\frac{1}{2})^{\frac{t}{432}}$

Radioactive decay. $A = A_0(\frac{1}{2})^{t/t_{1/2}}$

A_0 = initial sample size $t_{1/2}$ = the half-life.

$t_{1/2}$ = time it takes for $\frac{1}{2}$ of a radioactive sample to decay into other particles.

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$$y = 3^x$$

x	y
0	1
1	3
2	9

$$y = a(3)^{bx} \quad \frac{1}{b} = 6 \Rightarrow b = \frac{1}{6}$$

x	y
0	4000
6	12000
12	36000

$x = \#$ of years after 2006
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Create the Equation

1) The population of a town triples every 6 years. Suppose that 4000 people lived in the town in the year 2006.

a) equation

HE by 6
VE by 4000

$$y = 4000(3)^{\frac{t}{6}}$$

$$P = P_0(3)^{\frac{t}{6}}$$

$P =$ Population.

$P_0 =$ initial population

$t =$ # of years after 2006.

b) How many people would be living in the town in 2050?
 $t =$ years after 2006
 $= 2050 - 2006 = 44$

$$P = 4000(3)^{44/6} = 12\,616\,799 \text{ people.}$$

2) A bacterial culture doubles every 2 hours. This culture had 22,000 bacteria at time $t = 0$.

a) equation

$$y = 2^x$$

$P = P_0(2)^{\frac{t}{2}}$
initial population

$$P = 22000(2)^{\frac{t}{2}}$$

b) How many bacteria would be in the culture after 5 hours?

$$P = 22000(2)^{5/2} = 124\,450.7935 = \underline{124\,451}$$

3) The half-life of a radioactive sample is 4 hours. The sample size was originally 60 g.

a) equation

$$A = A_0 \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{t/t_{1/2}} \Rightarrow A = 60 \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{t/4}$$

b) How many grams would be in the sample after 11 hours?

$$t = 11 \text{ h} \quad A = 60 \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{11/4} = 8.91905 \dots = \underline{8.9 \text{ g.}}$$

depth in m	d	% of light
0	100	100%
1	95	0.95×100
2	90.25	$0.95 \times 95 = 0.9025 \times 100$

4) For every meter that you descend into water, 5% of light is blocked.

(If you start with 100% of the light and 5% is blocked, what percentage of light do you still have?)

a) equation

$$A = 100(0.95)^d$$

b) What percentage of light would still pass through the water, at a depth of 15 meters?

$$A = 100(0.95)^{15} = \underline{46.3\%}$$

5) \$5000 is invested at 7.2% compounded annually

a) equation

$$C = 1 + \frac{r}{100} = 1.072$$

t	A
0	5000
1	$(1.072)(5000)$
2	$(1.072)(1.072)(5000)$

b) How much money would you have after 3 years?

$$A = 5000(1.072)^3 = \underline{\$6159.63}$$

$$A = A_0(1.072)^t$$

7.2% compounded quarterly
n = 4 (4x per year)
n = # of compounds/year

7.2% compounded quarterly

$$A = A_0 \left(1 + \frac{r}{n}\right)^{nt}$$

0.072

$$A = A_0 \left(1 + \frac{r}{4}\right)^{4t}$$

n = # of compounding periods/year
 r = annual rate expressed as a decimal.

7.3 Solving Exponential Equations

Remember the rules for working with exponents:

$$a^m \cdot a^n = a^{m+n} \quad a^2 \times a^7 = a^{2+7} = a^9$$

$$(a^m)^n = a^{m \times n} \quad (a^2)^7 = a^{2 \times 7} = a^{14}$$

$$(ab)^m = a^m b^m \quad \text{NOT } a \times b^m$$

$$\left(\frac{a}{b}\right)^m = \frac{a^m}{b^m}$$

$$\frac{a^m}{a^n} = a^{m-n}$$

$$\left(a^{\frac{m}{n}}\right) = \sqrt[n]{a^m}$$

$m \neq 1$
 $n \in \text{Naturals}$
 $1, 2, 3, 4, \dots$

$$a^{\frac{2}{3}}$$

$$a^{\frac{1}{2}} = \sqrt[2]{a}$$

$$a^{\frac{1}{3}} = \sqrt[3]{a}$$

Exponential equations are ones where the variable is in the exponent. We can solve these equations by

- Writing the left side of the equation and the right side of the equation so they each use the same base.
- Then, we use the fact that if $a^x = a^y$, it forces $x = y$, to finish solving the equation.

$$4^{2x} = 8^{3x-1}$$

$$(2^2)^{2x} = (2^3)^{3x-1}$$

$$2^{4x} = 2^{9x-3}$$

$$4x = 9x - 3$$

$$-9x \quad -9x$$

$$4 = 2^2 \quad 8 = 2^3$$

$$-5x = -3$$

$$\frac{-5x}{-5} = \frac{-3}{-5}$$

$$x = \frac{3}{5}$$

Example

$$8^{4x-1} = \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{x+5}$$

To Try

1. Rewrite the expressions so they have the same base, then solve the equation.

a) $\left(\frac{1}{25}\right)^{4x} = (125)^{3x+2}$

b) $(8)^{2x+7} = 16^{4x+2}$

c) $16^{3x} = 8^{3x-1}64^x$

2. For how long does one need to invest \$2000 in an account that earns 6.1% compounded quarterly, before it increases in value to \$2500?

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

P = principal amount deposited

i = interest rate per compounding period,
in decimal form

n = number of compounding periods

3. The population of a town triples every 6 years. If 4000 people lived there in 2009, how many will be in the town 2030? (Round down to the nearest whole person.)