

4.6 Quadratic Formula and the Discriminant
Honors Algebra 2

Quadratic Formula:

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

$$y = ax^2 + bx + c$$

1. Solve each equation using the quadratic formula.

a. $x^2 - 4x = -1$

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 - 4x + 1 &= 0 \\ x &= \frac{-(-4) \pm \sqrt{(-4)^2 - 4(1)(1)}}{2(1)} \\ &= \frac{4 \pm \sqrt{16 - 4}}{2} \\ &= \frac{4 \pm \sqrt{12}}{2} \\ &= \frac{4 \pm 2\sqrt{3}}{2} \\ &= \boxed{2 \pm \sqrt{3}} \end{aligned}$$

b. $f(x) = 3x^2 + 5x + 4$

$$\begin{aligned} x &= \frac{-5 \pm \sqrt{5^2 - 4(3)(4)}}{2(3)} \\ &= \frac{-5 \pm \sqrt{25 - 48}}{6} \\ &= \frac{-5 \pm \sqrt{-23}}{6} \\ &= \boxed{\frac{-5 \pm i\sqrt{23}}{6}} \end{aligned}$$

Discriminant:

$$b^2 - 4ac$$

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

Solutions of Quadratic Equations when a , b , and c are integers

example

$b^2 - 4ac = 16$

$b^2 - 4ac = 2$

$b^2 - 4ac = 0$

$b^2 - 4ac = -4$

Discriminant	Number of Solutions	Type of Solutions
Positive, perfect square	2	Rational
Positive, but not a perfect square	2	Irrational
Zero	1	Rational
Negative	2	Complex



irrational = # can't be written as ratio
ex) π , $\sqrt{2}$

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6. Evaluate the discriminant for each equation. Then use it to determine the number of distinct solutions, and tell whether they are rational, irrational, or nonreal complex numbers. (Do not solve the equation).

a. $x^2 + 4x + 4 = 0$

$$b^2 - 4ac$$

$$4^2 - 4(1)(4)$$

$$16 - 16$$

$$0$$

1 Real Root

b. $8x^2 = -14x - 3$

$$8x^2 + 14x + 3 = 0$$

$$14^2 - 4(8)(3)$$

$$196 - 96$$

$$100$$

perfect square

2 Rational
Roots

c. $2x^2 + 4x + 1 = 0$

$$b^2 - 4ac$$

$$4^2 - 4(2)(1)$$

$$16 - 8$$

$$8$$

2 Irrational
Roots