

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Objectives:

~ Evaluate n th roots

~ Simplify Expressions of the form $\sqrt[n]{a^n}$

~ Evaluate Expressions of the form $a^{\frac{1}{n}}$

~ Evaluate Expressions of the form $a^{\frac{m}{n}}$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

The principal n th root of a number, a , is symbolized by $\sqrt[n]{a}$ where $n \geq 2$ and an integer.

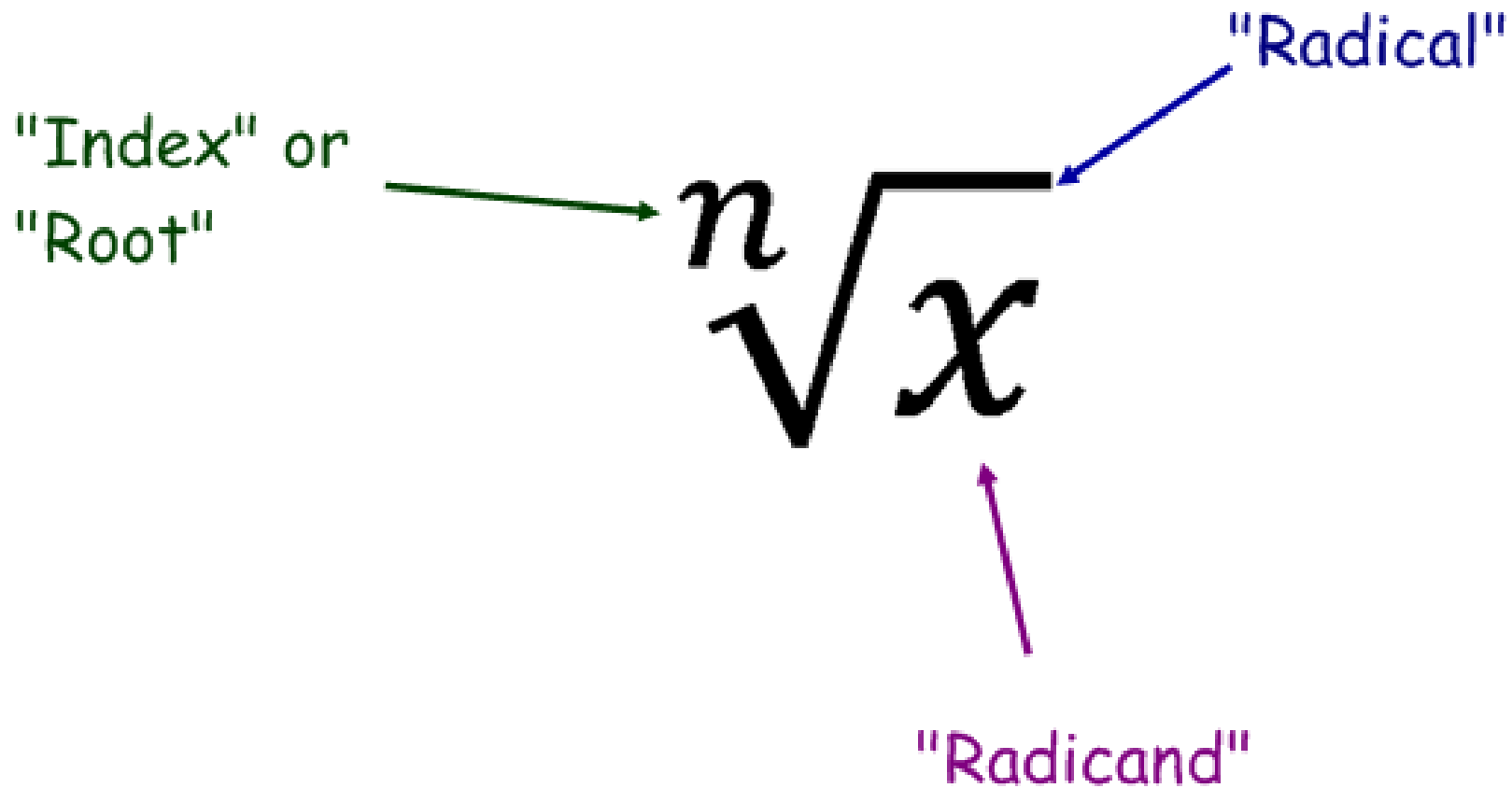
$$\sqrt[n]{a} = b \text{ means } a = b^n$$

- ~ If n is even, then a and b must be greater than or equal to 0 (pos.).
- ~ If n is odd, then a and b can be any real number (pos. or neg.).

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Just a quick reminder...

Parts of a Radical:



Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

When we evaluate radicals, we really like “perfect” numbers. These are numbers that have exact answers. Here are some examples of perfect Squares, Cubes, Fourths, Fifths...

x	x^2	x^3	x^4	x^5	x^6	x^7
2	4	8	16	32	64	128
3	9	27	81	243	729	2187
4	16	64	256	1024	4096	
5	25	125	625	3125		
6	36	216	1296			
7	49	343	2401			
8	64	512	4096			
9	81	729				

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Use the what you know about “perfect” numbers to evaluate.

Example 1: Evaluate the following:

a.) $\sqrt[3]{27}$

b.) $\sqrt[4]{256}$

c.) $\sqrt[3]{-125}$

d.) $\sqrt[4]{16}$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Simplify Expressions of the form $\sqrt[n]{a^n}$.

$$\sqrt[n]{a^n} = a \quad \text{if } n \text{ odd}$$

$$\sqrt[n]{a^n} = |a| \quad \text{if } n \text{ is even}$$

* This is not that important for us, because we are going to assume ALL variables are positive. But in the back of the book, you will see answers with absolute values.

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Example 2: Simplify the following:

a.) $\sqrt[5]{z^5}$

b.) $\sqrt[4]{(n-3)^4}$

c.) $-\sqrt[6]{(2)^6}$

d.) $\sqrt[3]{\frac{27}{8}}$

Writing Radicals with Rational Exponents

Definition:

If a is a real number and n is an integer with $n \geq 2$, then

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

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Example 3: Rewrite the following radicals with a rational exponent.

a.) $\sqrt[3]{9z}$

b.) $\sqrt[4]{\frac{a^3b}{7}}$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Evaluate Expressions of the Form $a^{\frac{m}{n}}$

Definition:

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

* Generally, taking the root FIRST is easier.

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Example 4: Evaluate the following expressions.

a.) $9^{\frac{3}{2}}$

b.) $125^{\frac{2}{3}}$

c.) $-36^{\frac{3}{2}}$

d.) $(-27)^{\frac{4}{3}}$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Example 5: Rewrite the following with Rational Exponents

a.) $\sqrt[5]{x^3}$

b.) $2\sqrt[3]{a^2}$

c.) $\left(\sqrt[3]{24xy^2}\right)^4$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

What if the Exponent is negative?

What happens?

$$a^{-\frac{m}{n}} = \frac{1}{a^{\frac{m}{n}}} \text{ or } \frac{1}{a^{-\frac{m}{n}}} = a^{\frac{m}{n}}$$

Lesson 7.1: Radicals and Rational Exponents

Example 6: Rewrite each of the following with POSITIVE exponents and then completely simplify if possible.

a.) $49^{-\frac{1}{2}}$

b.) $\frac{1}{64^{-\frac{2}{3}}}$

c.) $(3x)^{-\frac{3}{4}}$

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Homework:

Pg. 540: #'s 9-67 odds

* If you do the Exponent Monster at home, you can get 15 points extra credit.