

Steps to Solve a Quadratic Equation Containing a Complex Solution

1. W.O.P
2. The square root of a negative number should be replaced by i and the square root of a positive number. For example, $\sqrt{-23}$ becomes $i\sqrt{23}$.
3. Continue to simplify square root and fraction from previous steps.
4. Final simplification should have a number \pm and a number with i or just \pm and a number with i , such as,

$$x = 3 \pm 7i \text{ or something like } x = \pm i\sqrt{11}.$$

Example: Solve $7x^2 - 2x + 4 = 0$.

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Solution

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

$$\text{Evaluate } x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \text{ for } a = 7, b = -2, c = 4$$

$$x = \frac{-(-2) \pm \sqrt{(-2)^2 - 4(7)(4)}}{2(7)}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm \sqrt{4 - 28(4)}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm \sqrt{4 - 112}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm \sqrt{-108}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm i\sqrt{108}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm i\sqrt{(36)(3)}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm i\sqrt{36}\sqrt{3}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm i(6)\sqrt{3}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2 \pm 6i\sqrt{3}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{2}{14} \pm \frac{6i\sqrt{3}}{14}$$

$$x = \frac{(\cancel{2})(1)}{(\cancel{2})(7)} \pm \frac{(\cancel{2})(3)i\sqrt{3}}{(\cancel{2})(7)}$$

$$x = \frac{1}{7} \pm \frac{3i\sqrt{3}}{7}$$

$$x = \frac{1 \pm 3i\sqrt{3}}{7}$$

$$x = \frac{1}{7} \pm \frac{3i\sqrt{3}}{7}$$

$$x = \frac{1}{7} \pm \frac{3}{7}i\sqrt{3}$$

Notes:

Write the original problem

Set up quadratic formula.

Substitute values.

Simplify under $\sqrt{\quad}$ and simplify the fraction.

There is a square root of a negative number so change to an expression containing i .

Finish simplification of square root.

We notice all the numbers outside of the $\sqrt{\quad}$ have a common factor of two so we split up fraction to do more simplification and then put fraction back together.

We split off the real part and the imaginary part.

Final simplification should have a number \pm a number with i .

The solution set is $\left\{\frac{1}{7} \pm \frac{3}{7}i\sqrt{3}\right\}$.

The solution set can also be written as $\left\{\frac{1}{7} + \frac{3}{7}i\sqrt{3}, \frac{1}{7} - \frac{3}{7}i\sqrt{3}\right\}$.