

Number and algebra · supported focus

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Mathematics:
Applications and Interpretation · HL

Scope and prerequisites

Supported HL focus. First assessment 2021; current through 2028. First-assessment-2029 course is separate.. Remaining guide, assessment and practical requirements retain their recorded holds.

Prerequisites: read the stated quantities and units, use arithmetic and the model conditions below. Each lesson develops its own method before independent transfer.

These are original or explicitly fictional teaching examples, not actual measurements or completed assessed learner investigations.

Exact arithmetic and estimation

■ Can we pack without leftovers?

- A supplier packs 72 pencils and 90 pens into identical gift bags. How can we avoid leftovers?
- This lesson studies **prime factor** : A prime number that divides the integer exactly.

■ Choose the mathematical structure

- Prime factors reveal shared structure. Use the smallest common prime powers for the HCF and the largest for the LCM. Estimate before calculating; use brackets to preserve the order of operations.
- State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.

■ Work through a checked case

$$a = \prod p_i^{\alpha_i}, \quad b = \prod p_i^{\beta_i}, \quad \text{HCF}(a, b) = \prod p_i^{\min(\alpha_i, \beta_i)}$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

$72=2^3 \times 3^2$ and $90=2 \times 3^2 \times 5$. Their HCF is $2 \times 9=18$. Make 18 bags with 4 pencils and 5 pens each. Their LCM is $2^3 \times 3^2 \times 5=360$.

$$72 = 2^3 \times 3^2$$

$$90 = 2 \times 3^2 \times 5$$

Shared smallest powers: $2 \times 3^2 = 18$

■ Test a tempting shortcut

- The HCF divides both numbers; the LCM is a multiple of both. They answer different questions. A decimal estimate is not an exact fraction.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

The HCF of two positive integers is always larger than either integer. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- For a non-calculator paper, keep fractions exact and show cancellation. For a calculator paper, enter the full expression and compare with your estimate.
 - A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.
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■ Use this in your course

- Current first-assessment-2021 Applications and Interpretation HL. This is authored concept support; the full guide is needed to certify every objective.
- Give the method before the final answer, and use the paper's calculator and formula rules. Review a wrong answer by locating the first invalid step.

Key:

A prime number that divides the integer exactly. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.

Percentages, ratio and proportional reasoning

■ Can we recover the original price?

- A coat is reduced by 20% to ¥240. The discount applies to the original price, not to the sale price.
 - This lesson studies **multiplier** : A factor that performs a percentage change in one multiplication.
-

■ Choose the mathematical structure

- A p% increase has multiplier $1+p/100$; a decrease has multiplier $1-p/100$. Reverse a percentage by dividing by the multiplier. In a ratio, first find the total number of parts.
 - State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.
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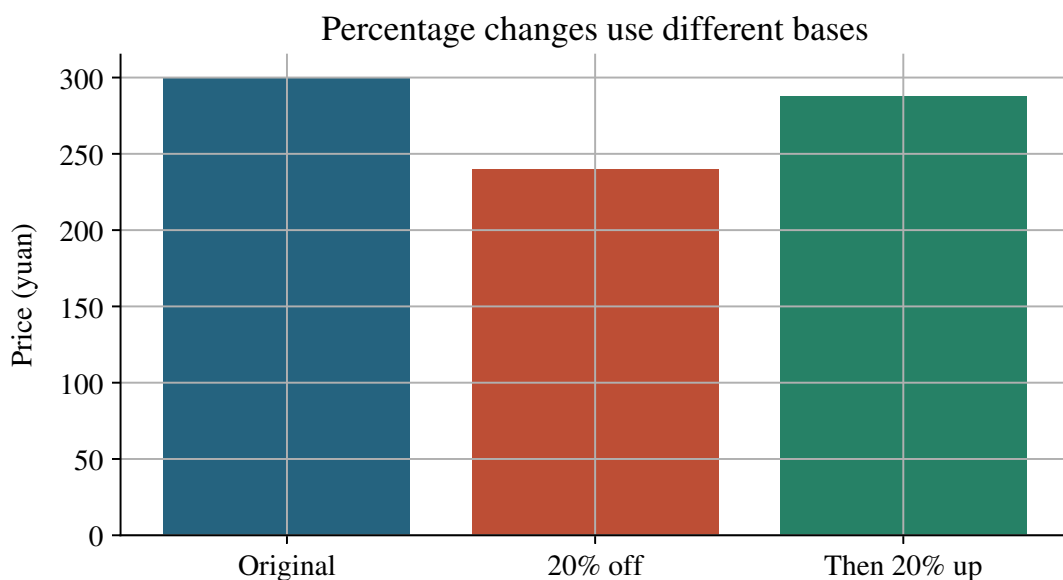
■ Work through a checked case

$$P_{\text{new}} = P_{\text{old}} \left(1 + \frac{r}{100} \right)$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

Let the original price be P. The model is sale price=0.8P. Hence $P=240/0.8=300$. A later 20% increase gives $240 \times 1.2=288$, so the two changes do not cancel.



■ Test a tempting shortcut

- A percentage uses a stated base. Subtracting the percentages loses that base. For compound change, multiply the multipliers; do not add the percentages.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

A 20% decrease followed by a 20% increase restores the starting price. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- For direct proportion use $y=kx$; for inverse proportion use $y=k/x$. Calculate k from a known pair before using a new value. State what you held constant.
 - A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.
-

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Key:

A factor that performs a percentage change in one multiplication. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.

Sequences, series and recurrence

■ Does the change add or multiply?

- A saving plan adds ¥30 more each week; a population model grows by 5% each year. Equal differences and equal ratios need different models.
 - This lesson studies **common ratio** : The constant multiplier between consecutive terms of a geometric sequence.
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■ Choose the mathematical structure

- For an arithmetic progression, $u_n = a + (n-1)d$ and $S_n = n(2a + (n-1)d)/2$. For a geometric progression, $u_n = ar^{n-1}$ and $S_n = a(1-r^n)/(1-r)$. An infinite geometric sum exists only if $|r| < 1$.
 - State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.
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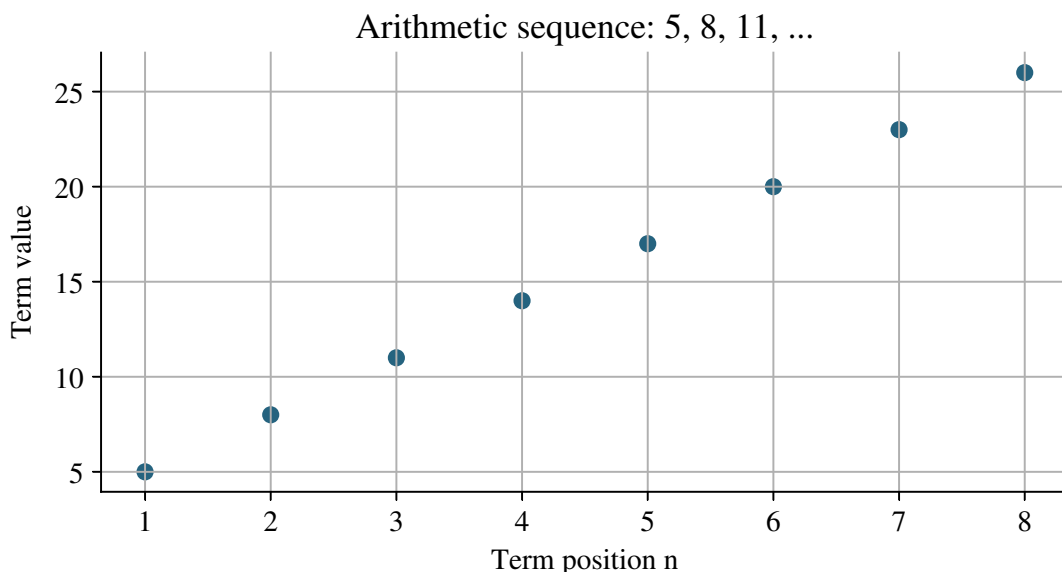
■ Work through a checked case

$$u_n = a + (n-1)d, \quad S_n = \frac{n}{2} [2a + (n-1)d]$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

For $a=5, d=3, n=8$, $u_8 = 5 + 7 \times 3 = 26$ and $S_8 = 8(10 + 21)/2 = 124$. For $a=12, r=1/2$, $S_{\infty} = 12/(1-1/2) = 24$. For $u_{n+1} = 2u_n + 1$ with $u_1 = 1$, the next terms are 3, 7, 15.



■ Test a tempting shortcut

- The first term has index 1, so the exponent is $n-1$. A sequence is a list; a series is a sum. A geometric sequence can alternate in sign and still converge.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

Every geometric series has a finite sum to infinity. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- Explain whether the context justifies additive or multiplicative change. In finance, distinguish a single deposit from a stream of deposits before choosing a sum formula.
- A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.

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Key:

The constant multiplier between consecutive terms of a geometric sequence. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.

Regression, financial models and residuals

■ Is the prediction supported by the data?

- A line predicts bus travel time from distance. A small calculation error matters less than using a model outside its evidence.
 - This lesson studies **residual** : The observed value minus the value predicted by a fitted model.
-

■ Choose the mathematical structure

- A linear model $y=a+bx$ has intercept a and slope b with contextual units. Inspect residuals and the data range. For repeated percentage change use a geometric model; for a loan distinguish principal, rate, repayment and period.
 - State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.
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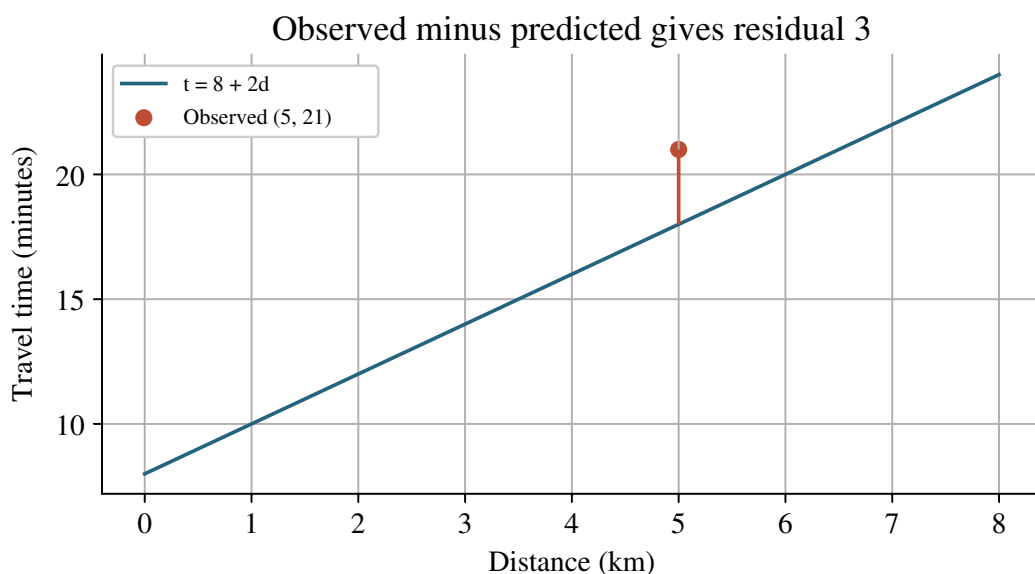
■ Work through a checked case

$$\hat{t} = 8 + 2d, \quad e = t - \hat{t}$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

The fitted model $t=8+2d$ predicts 18 minutes at $d=5$ km. If the observed time is 21, the residual is 3 minutes. A ¥1000 deposit at 5% compound annual interest becomes $1000 \times 1.05^3 = 1157.625$ after 3 years.



■ Test a tempting shortcut

- A good fit does not prove a causal mechanism. A correlation coefficient measures linear association, not the gradient. Calculator output must be translated into a model, checked and interpreted.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

A high correlation permits reliable extrapolation to any distance. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- In IB AI, record the data source, domain, assumptions and calculator method. Compare an alternative model and judge predictions against residuals. A financial answer must state payment timing and whether interest is compounded.
- A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.

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- Give the method before the final answer, and use the paper's calculator and formula rules. Review a wrong answer by locating the first invalid step.

Key:

The observed value minus the value predicted by a fitted model. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.

Matrix transformations, inverses and eigenvalues

■ Where do the basis vectors go?

- A map stretches one direction and shears another. A matrix records the transformation of each basis vector.
 - This lesson studies **determinant** : A scalar that determines whether a square matrix is invertible and, in two dimensions, its signed area factor.
-

■ Choose the mathematical structure

- A 2×2 matrix $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$ has determinant $ad-bc$ and inverse $\begin{bmatrix} d & -b \\ -c & a \end{bmatrix} / (ad-bc)$ if the determinant is nonzero. Transform column vectors by left multiplication. The rightmost matrix acts first in a product.
 - State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.
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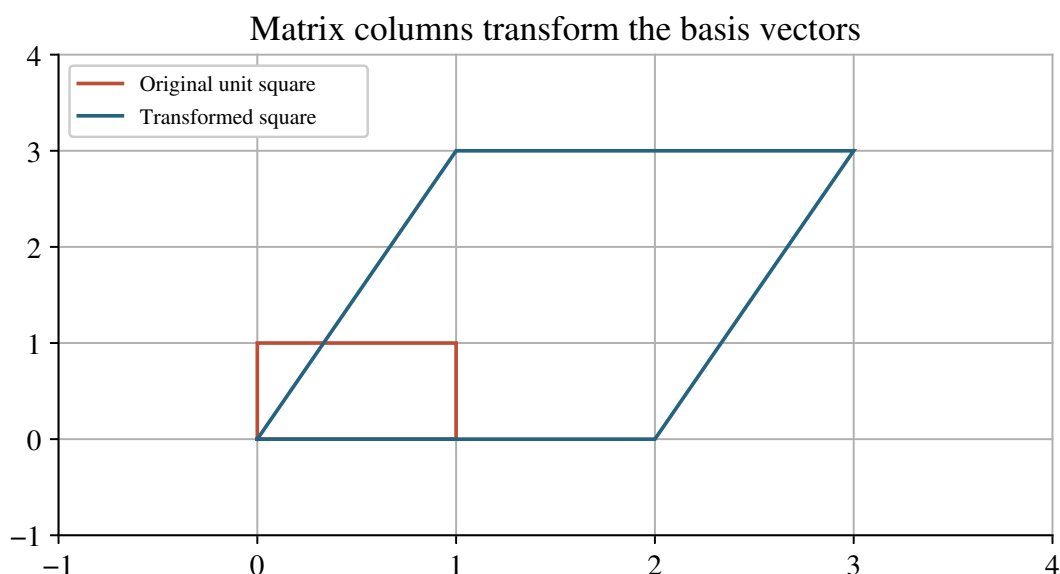
■ Work through a checked case

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} = ad - bc$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

For $A = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ 0 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$, $\det A = 6$. $A(1,2) = (4,6)$. Its inverse is $\begin{bmatrix} 1/2 & -1/6 \\ 0 & 1/3 \end{bmatrix}$. The characteristic equation is $(2-\lambda)(3-\lambda)=0$, so the eigenvalues are 2 and 3.



■ Test a tempting shortcut

- Matrix multiplication is usually not commutative. A determinant of zero means the transformation loses a dimension and has no inverse. Eigenvalues and diagonalisation are advanced scope, not ordinary GCSE vector content.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

Every square matrix has an inverse. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- Find an eigenvector by solving $(A - \lambda I)v = 0$ with $v \neq 0$. Explain the geometrical meaning: this vector keeps its line direction under the transformation.
- A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.

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Key:

A scalar that determines whether a square matrix is invertible and, in two dimensions, its signed area factor. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.

Complex numbers and roots

■ What if the root is not real?

- The equation $x^2+1=0$ has no real roots. Extending the number system lets us represent and calculate with both roots.
 - This lesson studies **complex conjugate** : The number obtained by reversing the sign of the imaginary part.
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■ Choose the mathematical structure

- Write $z=a+bi$ with $i^2=-1$. The conjugate is $a-bi$ and z times its conjugate $=a^2+b^2$. The modulus is $\sqrt{a^2+b^2}$; the argument needs the correct quadrant. Conjugate roots occur for polynomials with real coefficients.
 - State the allowed inputs and units before calculating. An equation should express the relationship, not just record a calculator entry.
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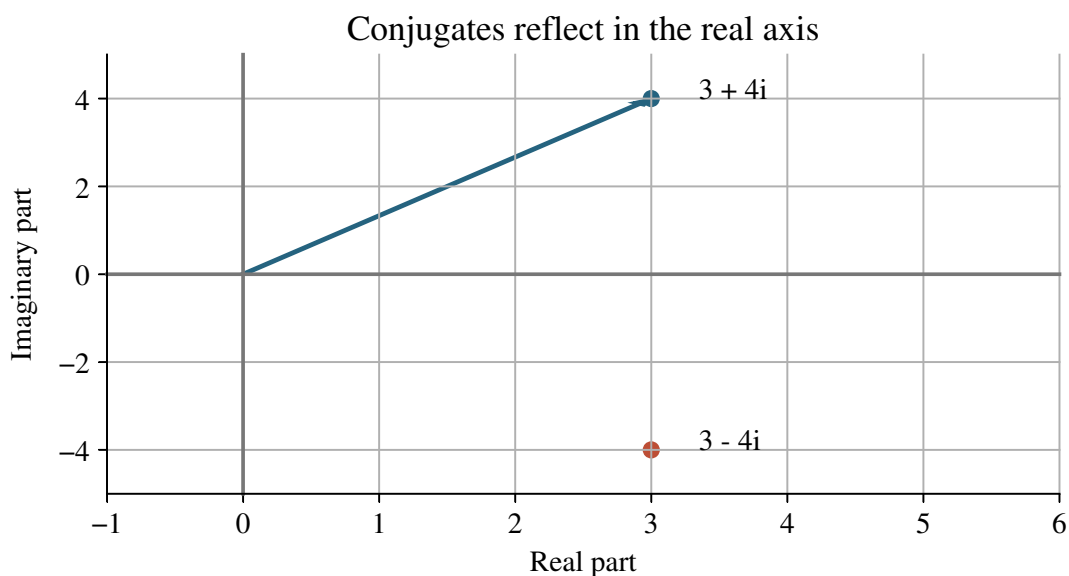
■ Work through a checked case

$$z = a + bi, \quad |z| = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}, \quad z\bar{z} = a^2 + b^2$$

- Check the result against the starting quantities. Substitute into the original relation, or compare the graph and numerical answer where appropriate.

Example:

For $z=3+4i$, $|z|=5$ and z conjugate $=3-4i$. The reciprocal is $(3-4i)/25$. For $x^2-6x+13=0$, the roots are $3\pm 2i$. Multiplying by the conjugate makes a complex denominator real.



■ Test a tempting shortcut

- The square root of a sum is not the sum of the square roots. An inverse tangent alone may return the wrong quadrant. Do not confuse modulus with squared modulus.
- When a shortcut fails, identify the assumption it breaks. Keep an exact value until the requested final rounding.

Warn:

For $a+bi$, its modulus is always $a+b$. This claim is false. Explain which definition or assumption it violates.

■ Interpret a new situation

- Draw the real axis horizontally and imaginary axis vertically. For products, moduli multiply and arguments add; powers extend this geometric pattern through de Moivre's theorem.
- A complete solution gives the mathematical result and explains what it means. Check that it is possible in the stated context.

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- Give the method before the final answer, and use the paper's calculator and formula rules. Review a wrong answer by locating the first invalid step.

Key:

The number obtained by reversing the sign of the imaginary part. Choose the relationship, show the method, check its assumptions and interpret the result.