

Definition: The symbol $\log_a b$ represents the number that if we write as an exponent of a , we achieve b . This expression is only meaningful if both a and b are positive numbers and $a \neq 1$.

Every logarithmic statement can be re-written as an exponential statement.

$$\log_a b = x \text{ is the same as } a^x = b$$

Example: Find the value of $\log_2 8$.

$\log_2 8$ is a number, it is the exponent we need to write over 2 to obtain 8. In short, $2^? = 8$. The answer is clearly 3, since $2^3 = 8$.

$$\log_2 8 = 3$$

Similarly, most exponential statements can be re-written as a logarithmic statement.

$$n^y = M \text{ is the same as } \log_n M = y$$

Some properties of logarithms follow immediately from its definition.

Theorem 1. $\log_a a^k = k$

Proof. To achieve a^k , we need to raise a exactly to the k th power. Or, using exponential notation,

$$\text{if } x = \log_a a^k, \text{ then } a^x = a^k \implies x = k$$

Sample Problems

1. Find the exact value of each of the following logarithmic expressions.

$$\text{a) } \log_3 3 \quad \text{b) } \log_4 1 \quad \text{c) } \log_5 \left(\frac{1}{25} \right) \quad \text{d) } \log_9 3 \quad \text{e) } \log_8 \left(\frac{1}{16} \right) \quad \text{f) } \ln e^8$$

2. Simplify each of the following expressions. Assume that $a > 0$ and $a \neq 1$.

$$\begin{array}{llll} \text{a) } \log_a (a^9) & \text{c) } \log_2 (16^a) & \text{e) } \log_{25} (5^x) & \text{g) } \log_{10} (1000^x) \\ \text{b) } \log_2 (8^x) & \text{d) } \log_{25} (5^{36}) & \text{f) } \ln \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{e}} \right) & \text{h) } \ln \left(\frac{1}{e} \right) \end{array}$$

3. Place each of the following logarithms between two consecutive integers.

$$\text{a) } \log_3 60 \quad \text{b) } \log_2 60 \quad \text{c) } \log_{10} 2011$$

4. Solve each of the following equations for x . Present the exact value of each solution.

$$\text{a) } \log_5 x = 3 \quad \text{b) } \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (3p + 1) - 1 = 2 \quad \text{c) } 3 \ln (w - 4) - 5 = 1$$

5. Prove that if $\log_a b \neq 0$, then $\log_a b$ and $\log_b a$ are reciprocals of each other.

6. What is the connection between $\log_a b$ and $\log_a \left(\frac{1}{b} \right)$?

Practice Problems

1. Find the exact value of each of the following logarithmic expressions.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) $\log_2 32$ | g) $\log_8 4$ | m) $\log_3 \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)$ | s) $\log_8 \left(\frac{1}{4}\right)$ |
| b) $\log_3 81$ | h) $\log_{10} 0.000001$ | n) $\log_3 0$ | t) $\log_2 8$ |
| c) $\log_4 4$ | i) $\ln \left(\frac{1}{e^2}\right)$ | o) $\log_3 (-3)$ | u) $\log_8 2$ |
| d) $\log_5 1$ | j) $\log_3 9$ | p) $\log_9 3$ | v) $\log_{81} 3$ |
| e) $\log_6 \left(\frac{1}{36}\right)$ | k) $\log_3 3$ | q) $\log_{1/3} 9$ | w) $\log_8 16$ |
| f) $\log_{49} 7$ | l) $\log_3 1$ | r) $\log_7 (7^{23})$ | x) $\log_{27} \left(\frac{1}{9}\right)$ |

2. Simplify each of the following expressions.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| a) $\log_3 (81^A)$ | d) $\log_2 (8^x)$ | g) $\log_9 \left(\frac{1}{3^x}\right)$ | j) $\log_{1/2} (\sqrt{8})$ |
| b) $\log_{\sqrt{6}} (6^{10})$ | e) $\log_8 (2^x)$ | h) $\log_{1000} (10^M)$ | k) $\ln \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt[7]{e}}\right)$ |
| c) $\ln (\sqrt[3]{e})$ | f) $\log_{\sqrt{2}} \left(\frac{1}{8}\right)$ | i) $\log_{1/2} (8^x)$ | |

3. Place each of the following logarithms between two consecutive integers.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a) $\log_2 10$ | c) $\log_3 10$ | e) $\log_{10} 38\,000$ | g) $\log_3 100$ |
| b) $\log_5 10$ | d) $\log_{10} 2011$ | f) $\log_2 100$ | h) $\log_2 \left(\frac{1}{6}\right)$ |

4. Re-write each of the following logarithmic statements as an exponential statement.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| a) $\log_3 x = 10$ | c) $\log_5 10 = y$ | e) $\log_A B = C$ |
| b) $\ln A = -2$ | d) $\log_x y = 4$ | f) $\ln (x - 2) = 5$ |

5. Re-write each of the following exponential statements as a logarithmic statement.

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| a) $A^B = C$ | b) $3^x = 8$ | c) $2^{t-5} = 11$ | d) $e^x = 10$ |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|

6. Solve each of the following equations for x . Present the exact value of each solution.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| a) $\log_3 x = 2$ | d) $\log_7 (5x - 1) = 2$ | g) $\frac{2}{3} \ln (x - 1) - 1 = 5$ |
| b) $\log_2 (x - 5) = 3$ | e) $\log_3 (2x^2 - 5) = 3$ | h) $\frac{\log_5 (x + 1) - 1}{3} = -1$ |
| c) $\ln (x - 1) = 2$ | f) $\log_{10} (x + 2) = -2$ | |

Sample Problems - Answers

1. a) 1 b) 0 c) -2 d) $\frac{1}{2}$ e) $-\frac{4}{3}$ f) 8
2. a) 9 b) $3x$ c) $4a$ d) 18 e) $\frac{x}{2}$ f) $-\frac{1}{2}$ g) $3x$ h) -1
3. a) $3 < \log_3 60 < 4$ b) $5 < \log_2 60 < 6$ c) $3 < \log_{10} 2011 < 4$
4. a) 125 b) 21 c) $e^2 + 4$
5. see solutions
6. see solutions

Practice Problems - Answers

1. a) 5 b) 4 c) 1 d) 0 e) -2 f) $\frac{1}{2}$ g) $\frac{2}{3}$ h) -6 i) -2 j) 2
 k) 1 l) 0 m) -1 n) undefined o) undefined p) $\frac{1}{2}$ q) -2 r) 23
 s) $-\frac{2}{3}$ t) 3 u) $\frac{1}{3}$ v) $\frac{1}{4}$ w) $\frac{4}{3}$ x) $-\frac{2}{3}$
2. a) $4A$ b) 20 c) $\frac{1}{3}$ d) $3x$ e) $\frac{x}{3}$ f) -6 g) $-\frac{x}{2}$ h) $\frac{M}{3}$ i) $-3x$ j) $-\frac{3}{2}$ k) $-\frac{1}{7}$
3. a) $3 < \log_2 10 < 4$ b) $1 < \log_5 10 < 2$ c) $2 < \log_3 10 < 3$ d) $3 < \log 2010 < 4$
 e) $4 < \log_{10} 38\,000 < 5$ f) $6 < \log_2 100 < 7$ g) $4 < \log_3 100 < 5$ h) $-3 < \log_2 \left(\frac{1}{6}\right) < -2$
4. a) $3^{10} = x$ b) $e^{-2} = A$ c) $5^y = 10$ d) $x^4 = y$ e) $A^C = B$ f) $e^5 = x - 2$
5. a) $\log_A C = B$ b) $x = \log_3 8$ c) $t - 5 = \log_2 11$ d) $x = \ln 10$
6. a) 9 b) 13 c) $e^2 + 1$ d) 10 e) 4, -4 f) -1.99 g) $e^9 + 1$ h) $-\frac{24}{25}$

Sample Problems - Solutions

1. Find the exact value of each of the following logarithmic expressions.

a) $\log_3 3$

Solution: $\log_3 3$ is a number, it is the exponent we need to write over 3 to obtain 3.

In short, $3^? = 3$. The answer is clearly 1, since $3^1 = 3$.

$$\log_3 3 = 1$$

b) $\log_4 1$

Solution: $\log_4 1$ is a number, it is the exponent we need to write over 4 to obtain 1.

In short, $4^? = 1$. The answer is clearly 0, since $4^0 = 1$.

$$\log_4 1 = 0$$

c) $\log_5 \left(\frac{1}{25} \right)$

Solution: $\log_5 \left(\frac{1}{25} \right)$ is a number, it is the exponent we need to write over 5 to obtain $\frac{1}{25}$.

In short, $5^? = \frac{1}{25}$. The answer is clearly -2 , since $5^{-2} = \frac{1}{25}$.

$$\log_5 \left(\frac{1}{25} \right) = -2$$

d) $\log_9 3$

Solution: $\log_9 3$ is a number, it is the exponent we need to write over 9 to obtain 3.

In short, $9^? = 3$. We know that 3 is the square root of 9. We re-write this statement as an exponential statement

$$3 = \sqrt{9} = 9^{1/2} \quad \text{and so} \quad \log_9 3 = \frac{1}{2}$$

e) $\log_8 \left(\frac{1}{16} \right)$

Solution: $\log_8 \left(\frac{1}{16} \right)$, it is the exponent we need to write over 8 to obtain $\frac{1}{16}$.

In short, $8^? = \frac{1}{16}$. It looks like we have a problem here, $\frac{1}{16}$ is not a straightforward power of 8. The trick is to realize that they are both powers of 2, and express 2 first as a power of 8.

$$8^{1/3} = 2 \quad \text{and we also know that} \quad \frac{1}{16} = 2^{-4}$$

$$\text{our plan:} \quad 8 \longrightarrow 2 \longrightarrow \frac{1}{16}$$

$$8^{1/3} = 2 \quad \text{raise both sides to the power of } -4$$

$$\left(8^{1/3} \right)^{-4} = 2^{-4} \quad \text{recall that } (a^n)^m = a^{nm}$$

$$8^{-4/3} = \frac{1}{16} \quad \text{and so} \quad \log_8 \left(\frac{1}{16} \right) = -\frac{4}{3}$$

f) $\ln e^8$

Solution: $\ln$ is short for $\log_e$. So the question is $\log_e (e^8)$. In order to obtain the product e^8 , we will need eighth factors of e . This $\ln e^8 = 8$. (If this problem is confusing because of the unusual number e , try to argue why $\log_3 (3^{25})$ must be 25.)

2. Simplify each of the following expressions. Assume that $a > 0$ and $a \neq 1$.

a) $\log_a(a^9)$

Solution: In order to obtain the product a^9 , we will need nine factors of a .

b) $\log_2(8^x)$

Solution: In order to simplify this expression, we will use the fact that $\log_2(2^b) = b$. The problem is that the base of the logarithm does not match the base of the exponentiation. We will change the base of the exponentiation by re-writing 8^x as a 2-power. Clearly, $2^3 = 8$.

$$\log_2(8^x) = \log_2((2^3)^x) = \log_2(2^{3x}) = 3x$$

Note that we used the following rule of exponents:

$$(a^n)^m = a^{nm}$$

when we re-wrote 8^x as 2^{3x} .

c) $\log_2(16^a)$

Solution: In order to simplify this expression, we will use the fact that $\log_2(2^b) = b$. The problem is that the base of the logarithm does not match the base of the exponentiation. We will change the base of the exponentiation by re-writing 16^a as a 2-power. Clearly, $2^4 = 16$.

$$\log_2(16^a) = \log_2((2^4)^a) = \log_2(2^{4a}) = 4a$$

Note that we used the rule of exponents $(a^n)^m = a^{nm}$ when we re-wrote 16^a as 2^{4a} .

d) $\log_{25}(5^{36})$

Solution: In order to simplify this expression, we will use the fact that $\log_5(5^b) = b$. The problem is that the base of the logarithm does not match the base of the exponentiation. We will change the base of the exponentiation by re-writing 5 as a 25-power. Clearly, $5^2 = 25$, but that is not what we need. We need $25^{\frac{1}{2}} = 5$. That missing exponent is $\frac{1}{2}$, in other words, $25^{1/2} = 5$

$$\log_{25}(5^{36}) = \log_{25}\left(\left((25)^{1/2}\right)^{36}\right) = \log_{25}\left(25^{1/2 \cdot 36}\right) = \log_{25}(25^{18}) = 18$$

Note that we used the rule of exponents $(a^n)^m = a^{nm}$ when we re-wrote 5^{36} as 25^{18} .

e) $\log_{25}(5^x)$

Solution: In order to simplify this expression, we will use the fact that $\log_5(5^b) = b$. The problem is that the base of the logarithm does not match the base of the exponentiation. We will change the base of the exponentiation by re-writing 5 as a 25-power. Clearly, $5^2 = 25$, but that is not what we need. We need $25^{\frac{1}{2}} = 5$. That missing exponent is $\frac{1}{2}$, in other words, $25^{1/2} = 5$

$$\log_{25}(5^x) = \log_{25}\left(\left((25)^{1/2}\right)^x\right) = \log_{25}\left(25^{1/2 \cdot x}\right) = \log_{25}\left(25^{x/2}\right) = \frac{x}{2}$$

Note that we used the rule of exponents $(a^n)^m = a^{nm}$ when we re-wrote 5^x as $25^{x/2}$.

f) $\ln\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{e}}\right)$

Solution: recall that $\ln x$ is short for $\log_e x$ (although nobody writes it that way) and so

$$\ln\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{e}}\right) = \ln\left(e^{-1/2}\right) = -\frac{1}{2}$$

by the same rule, $\log_a(a^b) = b$.

g) $\log_{10}(1000^x)$

Solution: $\log_{10}(1000^x) = \log_{10}((10^3)^x) = \log_{10}(10^{3x}) = 3x$

h) $\ln\left(\frac{1}{e}\right)$

Solution: $\ln\left(\frac{1}{e}\right) = \ln(e^{-1}) = -1$

3. Place each of the following logarithms between two consecutive integers.

a) $\log_3 60$

Solution: We need to place 60 between two consecutive three-powers. Those are 27 and 81. Since 60 is between 27 and 81, $\log_3 60$ is between 3 and 4.

$$27 < 60 < 81 \implies 3^3 < 60 < 3^4 \implies 3 < \log_3 60 < 4$$

b) $\log_2 60$

Solution: We need to place 60 between two consecutive two-powers. Those are 32 and 64. Since 60 is between 32 and 64, $\log_2 60$ is between 5 and 6.

$$\begin{aligned} 32 &< 60 < 64 \\ 2^5 &< 60 < 2^6 \\ 5 &< \log_2 60 < 6 \end{aligned}$$

c) $\log_{10} 2011$

Solution: We need to place 2011 between two consecutive ten-powers. Those are 1000 and 10 000. Since 2011 is between 1000 and 10 000, $\log_{10} 2011$ is between 3 and 4.

$$\begin{aligned} 1000 &< 2011 < 10\,000 \\ 10^3 &< 2011 < 10^4 \\ 3 &< \log_{10} 2011 < 4 \end{aligned}$$

4. Solve each of the following equations for x . Present the exact value of each solution.

a) $\log_5 x = 3$

Solution: We re-write the logarithmic statement as an exponential statement.

$$\begin{aligned} \log_5 x &= 3 \\ 5^3 &= x \\ 125 &= x \end{aligned}$$

We check: $\log_5 125 = 3$ is indeed true.

$$\text{b) } \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (3p + 1) - 1 = 2$$

Solution: We first isolate the logarithmic expression. Then we re-write the logarithmic statement as an exponential statement, and solve for p .

$$\begin{array}{rcll} \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (3p + 1) - 1 & = & 2 & \text{add 1} \\ \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (3p + 1) & = & 3 & \text{multiply by 2} \\ \log_2 (3p + 1) & = & 6 & \text{re-write into an exponential statement} \\ 3p + 1 & = & 2^6 & \\ 3p + 1 & = & 64 & \text{subtract 1} \\ 3p & = & 63 & \text{divide by 3} \\ p & = & 21 & \end{array}$$

We check: if $p = 21$, then

$$\text{LHS} = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (3 \cdot 21 + 1) - 1 = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (63 + 1) - 1 = \frac{1}{2} (\log_2 64) - 1 = \frac{1}{2} \cdot 6 - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2 = \text{RHS}$$

$$\text{c) } 3 \ln (w - 4) - 5 = 1$$

Solution: We first isolate the logarithmic expression. Then we re-write the logarithmic statement as an exponential statement, and solve for w .

$$\begin{array}{rcll} 3 \ln (w - 4) - 5 & = & 1 & \text{add 5} \\ 3 \ln (w - 4) & = & 6 & \text{divide by 3} \\ \ln (w - 4) & = & 2 & \text{re-write into an exponential statement} \\ w - 4 & = & e^2 & \text{add 4} \\ w & = & e^2 + 4 & \end{array}$$

We check: if $w = e^2 + 4$, then

$$\text{LHS} = 3 \ln ((e^2 + 4) - 4) - 5 = 3 \ln (e^2) - 5 = 3 \cdot 2 - 5 = 1 = \text{RHS}$$

5. Claim: If $\log_a b \neq 0$, then $\log_a b$ and $\log_b a$ are reciprocals of each other.

Proof. Let $x = \log_a b$. Then the statement can be re-written as $a^x = b$.

$$\begin{array}{rcll} x & = & \log_a b & \\ a^x & = & b & \text{raise both sides to the power of } \frac{1}{x} \\ (a^x)^{1/x} & = & b^{1/x} & (a^x)^{1/x} = a^{x \cdot \frac{1}{x}} = a^1 = a \\ a & = & b^{1/x} & \text{same as } \frac{1}{x} = \log_b a \\ \frac{1}{x} & = & \log_b a & \end{array}$$

6. $\log_a b$ and $\log_a \left(\frac{1}{b}\right)$ are opposites of each other.

Proof. Let $x = \log_a b$. Then the statement can be re-written as $a^x = b$.

$$\begin{array}{ll} x &= \log_a b \\ a^x &= b && \text{raise both sides to the power of } -1 \\ (a^x)^{-1} &= b^{-1} && (a^x)^{-1} = a^{x \cdot (-1)} = a^{-x} \\ a^{-x} &= \frac{1}{b} && \text{same as } -x = \log_a \left(\frac{1}{b}\right) \\ -x &= \log_a \left(\frac{1}{b}\right) \end{array}$$