

Math 1060 ~ Trigonometry

18 Graphing Polar Equations

Learning Objectives

In this section you will:

- Learn techniques for graphing polar equations.
- Graph polar equations.

$$\sin^2 u + \cos^2 u = 1$$

$$\sin 2u = 2 \sin u \cos u$$

$$\frac{a}{\sin A} = \frac{b}{\sin B} = \frac{c}{\sin C}$$

$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2 - 2ab \cos C$$

What do these equations represent?

$$\theta = \beta$$

$$r \cos \theta = a$$

$$r \sin \theta = b$$

What about these?

$$r = 2a \cos \theta$$

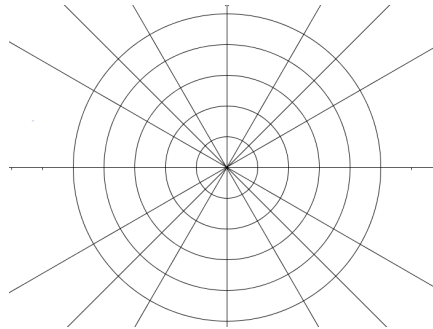
$$r = 2b \sin \theta$$

$$r = 2a \cos \theta + 2b \sin \theta$$

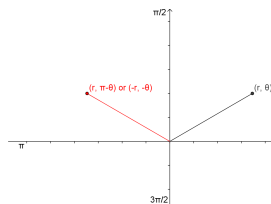
Ex 1:

$$r = 4 \cos \theta$$

θ	0	$\pi/4$	$\pi/3$	$\pi/2$	$2\pi/3$	$3\pi/4$	π	$5\pi/4$	$3\pi/2$	$7\pi/4$	2π
r											



Symmetry

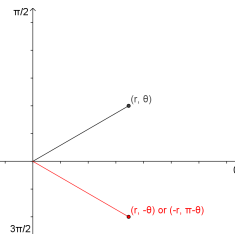


Symmetry with respect to the line $\theta = \pi/2$

Replace (r, θ) with $(r, \pi - \theta)$ or $(-r, -\theta)$: If an equivalent equation results, the graph has this type of symmetry.

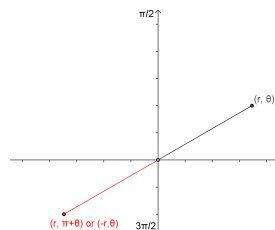
Symmetry with respect to the polar axis ($\theta = 0$):

Replace (r, θ) with $(r, -\theta)$ or $(-r, \pi - \theta)$: If an equivalent equation results, the graph has this type of symmetry.



Symmetry with respect to the pole

Replace (r, θ) with $(-r, \theta)$ or $(r, \pi + \theta)$: If an equivalent equation results, the graph has this type of symmetry.



If a polar equation passes a symmetry test, then its graph definitely exhibits that symmetry. However, if a polar equation fails a symmetry test, then its graph may or may not have that kind of symmetry.

Zeros and maximum r -values

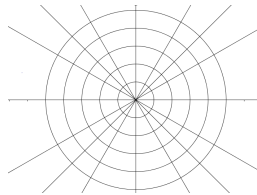
Other helpful tools in graphing polar equations are knowing the values for θ for which $|r|$ is maximum and those for which $r = 0$.

Ex 2: Graph $r = \frac{1}{2} + \cos \theta$

Symmetry:

$|r|$ maximum:

Zero of r :



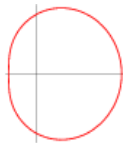
Limaçon

Limaçons

$$r = a \pm b \cos \theta$$

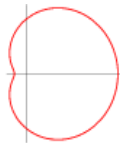
$$r = a \pm b \sin \theta$$

$$a > 0, b > 0$$



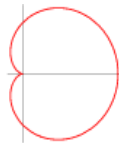
$$\frac{a}{b} \geq 2$$

Convex
limaçon



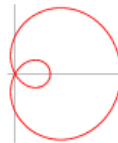
$$1 < \frac{a}{b} < 2$$

Dimpled
limaçon



$$\frac{a}{b} = 1$$

Cardioid
-always passes
through pole



$$\frac{a}{b} < 1$$

Limaçon
with inner
loop

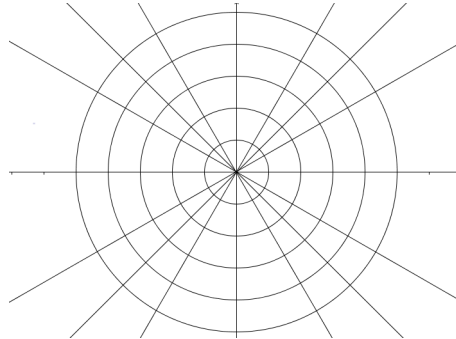
Ex 3: Graph $r = 3\sin 2\theta$

Symmetry:

r | maximum:

Zero of r :

θ	0	$\pi/8$	$\pi/6$	$\pi/4$	$\pi/3$	$\pi/2$
r						



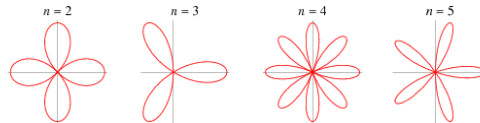
Roses

$$r = a \sin(n\theta),$$

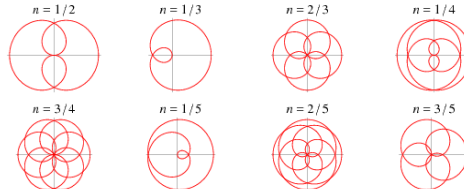
or

$$r = a \cos(n\theta).$$

If n is odd, the rose is n -petalled. If n is even, the rose is $2n$ -petalled.



No reason to limit ourselves to n integer:



Or even rational:

