Square Root Encyclopedia Article

Square Root

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Square Root

The number *k* is a **square** root of the number *n* if *k2* = *n*. For example, 4 and -4 are the square **roots** of 16 since 4 x 4 = 16 and (-4) x (-4) = 16. The square root symbol is and for *n* greater than **zero** the symbol is understood to be a positive number. Thus 16 = 4 and -16 = -4.

When *n* is a negative number, the square root *n* is called *imaginary*. Customarily, -1 is designated by *i* so that the square root of any negative number can be expressed as *ai* where *a* is a real number. Thus -5 = 5 *i*.