

Solving cubic equations

Example 4

Solve the equation $2x^3 - 4x^2 - 11x + 12 = 0$.

 $\div 2$ \Rightarrow

$$x^3 - 2x^2 - 11x + 12 = 0$$

(1) guess

$$f(1) = (1)^3 - 2(1)^2 - 11(1) + 12 = 0$$

 $\Rightarrow x = 1$ is solution $\Rightarrow (x-1)$ is factor

(2) Divide

$$\begin{array}{r} x^2 - x - 12 \\ \hline x-1) x^3 - 2x^2 - 11x + 12 \\ \cancel{+ x^3} \cancel{- x^2} \\ \hline -x^2 - 11x \\ \cancel{+ x^2} \cancel{- x} \\ \hline -12x + 12 \\ \cancel{+ 12x} \cancel{- 12} \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

(3) solve quadratic

$$x^2 - x - 12 = 0 \Rightarrow (x+3)(x-4) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow x = -3 \quad \& \quad x = 4$$

with calculator:

$$f(-3) = 0, f(1) = 0, f(4) = 0$$