



# 4.1 # Exponential Functions

- A polynomial function has the basic form:  $f(x) = x^3$ 

*base* → *Exponent*
- An exponential function has the basic form:  $f(x) = 3^x$ 

*base* → *Exponent*
- An exponential function has the variable in the exponent, not in the base.
- General Form of an Exponential Function:

## EXPONENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The exponential function with base  $a$  is defined for all real numbers  $x$  by

where  $a > 0$  and  $a \neq 1$

$$f(x) = a^x$$

*base* → *Exponential variable*

We assume that  $a \neq 1$  because the function  $f(x) = 1^x = 1$  is just a constant function. Here are some examples of exponential functions:

$$f(x) = 2^x \quad g(x) = 3^x \quad h(x) = 10^x$$

Base 2
Base 3
Base 10

### EXAMPLE 1 ■ Evaluating Exponential Functions

Let  $f(x) = 3^x$ , and evaluate the following:

- (a)  $f(5)$       (b)  $f(-\frac{2}{3})$   
 (c)  $f(\pi)$       (d)  $f(\sqrt{2})$

**SOLUTION** We use a calculator to obtain the values of  $f$ .

$$f(5) \Rightarrow x=5 \rightarrow f(x) = 3^x = 3^5 = 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 = 243$$

$$f(-\frac{2}{3}) \rightarrow x = -\frac{2}{3} \rightarrow f(-\frac{2}{3}) = \frac{1}{3^{2/3}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt[3]{9}} = \sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{9}}$$

$$f(\pi) \rightarrow x = \pi \rightarrow f(\pi) = 3^\pi = \sqrt[3]{3^\pi}$$

$$f(\sqrt{2}) \rightarrow x = \sqrt{2} \rightarrow f(\sqrt{2}) = 3^{\sqrt{2}} = \sqrt[3]{3^{\sqrt{2}}}$$

# Given  $f(x) = 2^{x+3} + 2$

$$f(1) = 2^{1+3} + 2 = 2^4 + 2 = \underbrace{2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2}_{4 \cdot 4} + 2 = 16 + 2 = 18$$

# Graph

Plotting point

$$x = v$$

$$y = v$$

$$f(x) = a^x$$

Keypoints

$$f(x) = a^x \rightarrow \boxed{a=v}$$

$$\left(-3, \frac{1}{a^3}\right) \left(-2, \frac{1}{a^2}\right) \left(-1, \frac{1}{a}\right) (0, 1) (1, a) (2, a^2) (3, a^3)$$

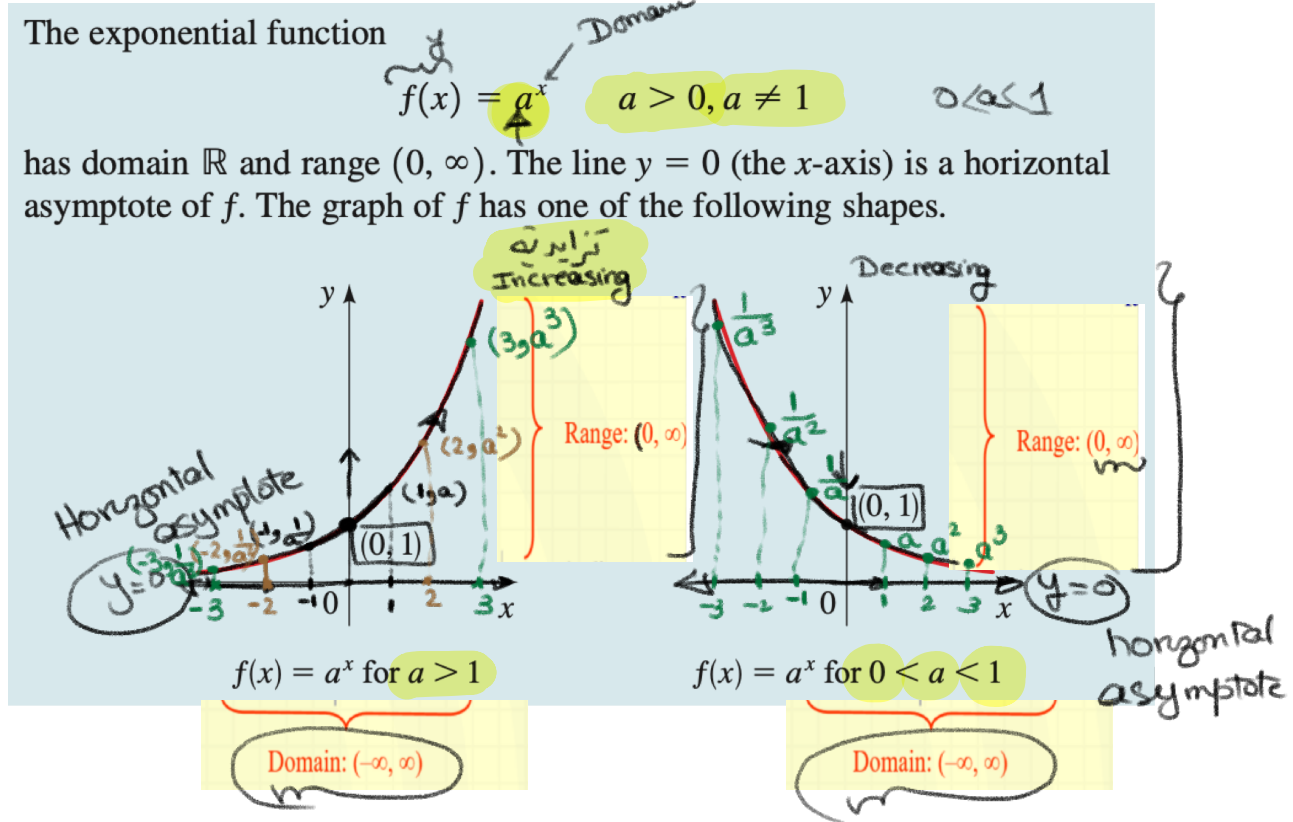
x	f(x)
-3	
-2	
-1	
0	
1	
2	
3	

# GRAPHS OF EXPONENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The exponential function

$$f(x) = a^x \quad a > 0, a \neq 1 \quad 0 < a < 1$$

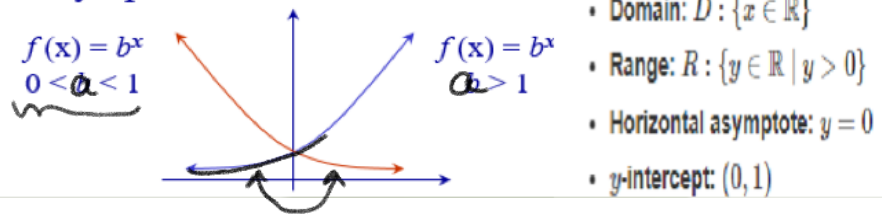
has domain  $\mathbb{R}$  and range  $(0, \infty)$ . The line  $y = 0$  (the  $x$ -axis) is a horizontal asymptote of  $f$ . The graph of  $f$  has one of the following shapes.



- Exponential functions with positive bases greater than 1 have graphs that are increasing.

# Characteristics of Exponential Functions

- The domain of  $f(x) = a^x$  consists of all real numbers. The range of  $f(x) = b^x$  consists of all positive real numbers.  $(-\infty, \infty)$   $(0, \infty)$
- The graphs of all exponential functions pass through the point  $(0, 1)$  because  $f(0) = a^0 = 1$ .  $a \neq 0$
- If  $a > 1$ ,  $f(x) = a^x$  has a graph that goes up to the right and is an increasing function.
- If  $0 < a < 1$ ,  $f(x) = b^x$  has a graph that goes down to the right and is a decreasing function.
- $f(x) = b^x$  is a one-to-one function and has an inverse that is a function.
- The graph of  $f(x) = b^x$  approaches but does not cross the  $x$ -axis. The  $x$ -axis is a horizontal asymptote.



$f^{-1}$

is inverse one to another

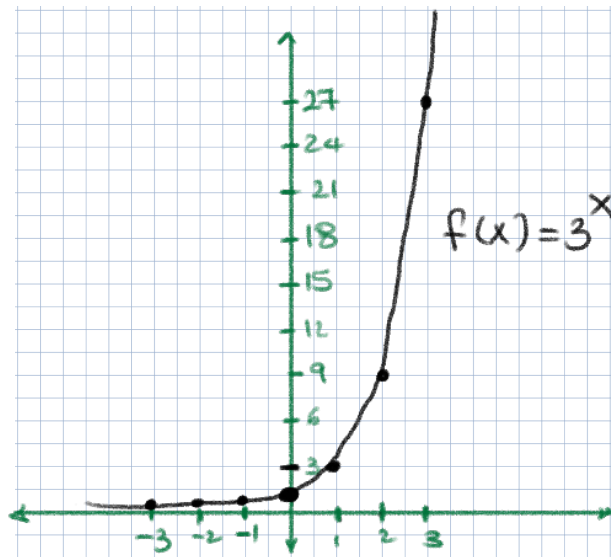


## EXAMPLE 2 ■ Graphing Exponential Functions by Plotting Points

Draw the graph of each function.

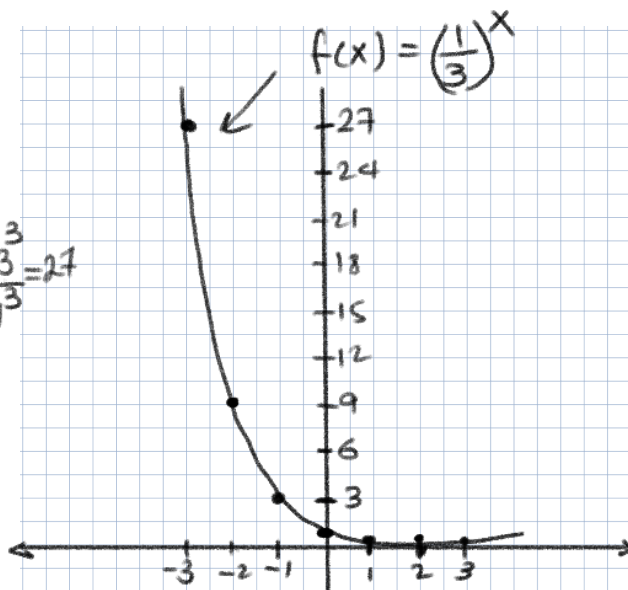
(a)  $f(x) = 3^x$

x	$f(x) = 3^x$
-3	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{27}} \rightarrow 3^{-3} = \frac{1}{3^3} = \frac{1}{27}$
-2	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{9}} \rightarrow 3^{-2} = \frac{1}{3^2} = \frac{1}{9}$
-1	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{3}} \rightarrow 3^{-1} = \frac{1}{3}$
0	$3^0 = 1$
1	$3^1 = 3$
2	$3^2 = 9$
3	$3^3 = 27$

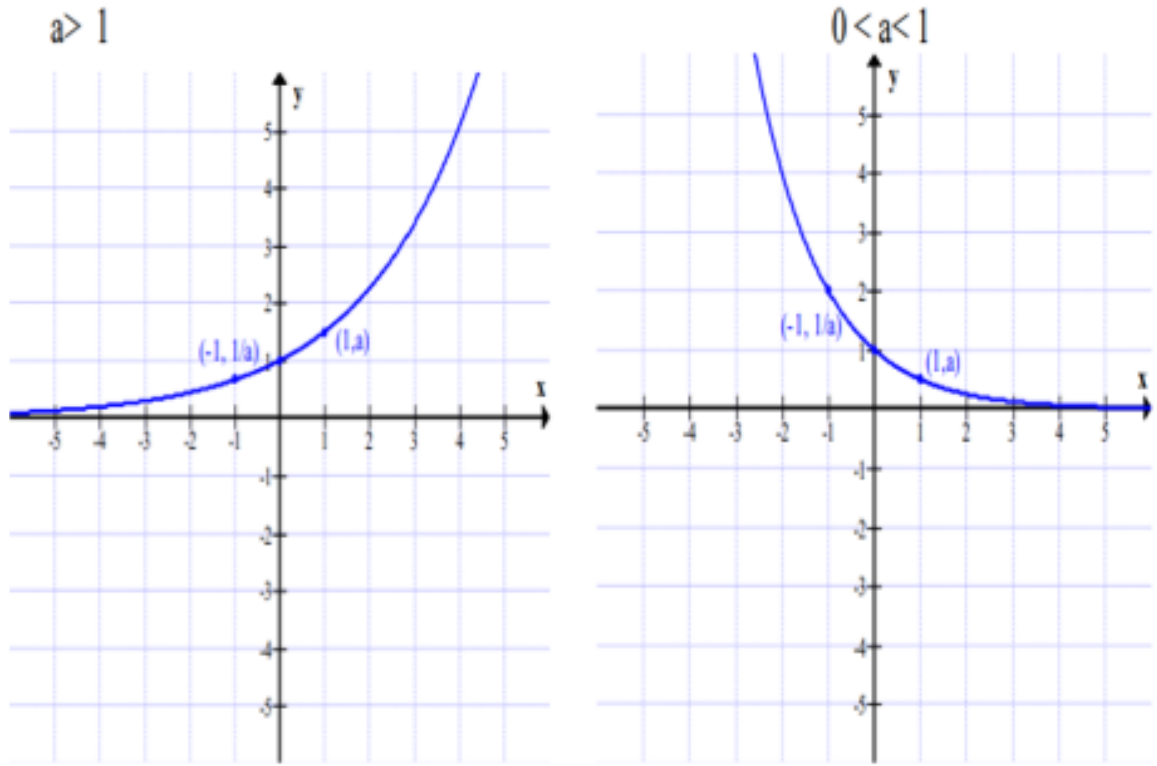


(b)  $g(x) = \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^x$

x	$g(x) = \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^x$
-3	$\sqrt[3]{27} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^{-3} = \frac{1}{\left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^3} = \frac{3}{1} = 3$
-2	$\sqrt[3]{9} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^{-2} = \frac{1}{\left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2} = \frac{3^2}{1} = 9$
-1	$\sqrt[3]{3} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^{-1} = \frac{1}{\left(\frac{1}{3}\right)} = \frac{3}{1} = 3$
0	$\sqrt[3]{1} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^0 = 1$
1	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{3}} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^1 = \frac{1}{3}$
2	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{9}} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2 = \frac{1}{9}$
3	$\sqrt[3]{\frac{1}{27}} \rightarrow \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^3 = \frac{1}{27}$



# Points on the graph method



Points on the graph:  $(-1, 1/a), (0, 1), (1, a)$

17-20 ■ Graphing Exponential Functions Graph both functions on one set of axes

19.  $f(x) = 4^x$  and  $g(x) = 7^x$

$a = 4$

Keypoints

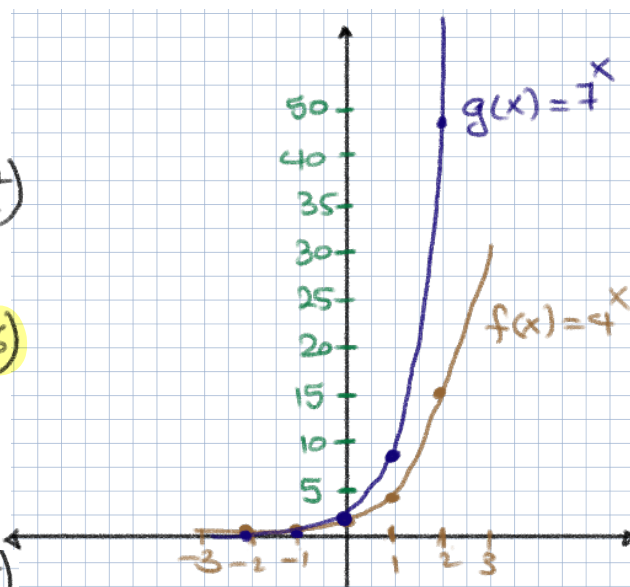
$(-2, \frac{1}{a^2}) (-1, \frac{1}{a}) (0, 1) (1, a) (2, a^2)$

$(-2, \frac{1}{16}) (-1, \frac{1}{4}) (0, 1) (1, 4) (2, 16)$

$a = 7$

$(-2, \frac{1}{a^2}) (-1, \frac{1}{a}) (0, 1) (1, a) (2, a^2)$

$(-2, \frac{1}{49}) (-1, \frac{1}{7}) (0, 1) (1, 7) (2, 49)$





$$0 < \frac{3}{4} < 1$$

20.  $f(x) = \left(\frac{3}{4}\right)^x$  and  $g(x) = 1.5^x$

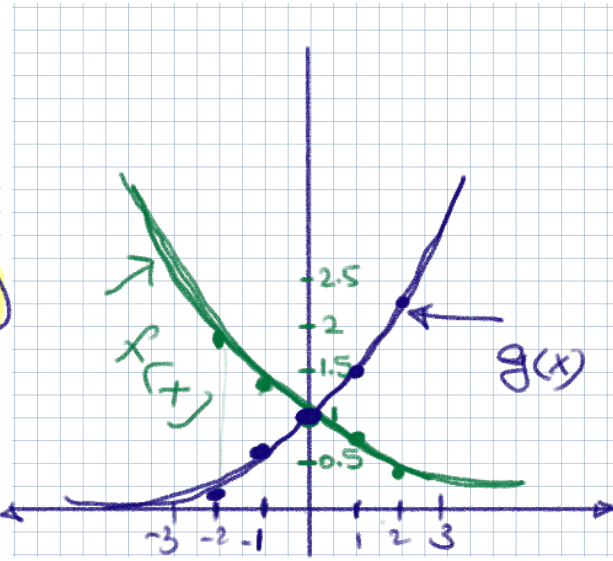
$$a = \frac{3}{4} \rightarrow a^2 = \left(\frac{3}{4}\right)^2 = \frac{9}{16}$$

$$\left(-2, \frac{1}{a^2}\right) \left(-1, \frac{1}{a}\right) (0, 1) (1, a) (2, a^2)$$

$$\left(-2, \frac{16}{9}\right) \left(-1, \frac{4}{3}\right) (0, 1) \left(1, \frac{3}{4}\right) \left(2, \frac{9}{16}\right)$$

↘ 1.8

$$a = \left(\frac{3}{2}\right) \rightarrow \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^2 = \frac{9}{4}$$



$$\left(-2, \frac{1}{a^2}\right) \left(-1, \frac{1}{a}\right) (0, 1) (1, a) (2, a^2)$$

$$\left(-2, \frac{4}{9}\right) \left(-1, \frac{2}{3}\right) (0, 1) \left(1, \frac{3}{2}\right) \left(2, \frac{9}{4}\right)$$

↙ 2.25