



If we square a negative number, the result will always be a positive number.

$$(-1)(-1) = (-1)^2 = 1$$

If we square zero, the result will always be zero.

$$(0)(0) = 0^2 = 0$$

If we square a positive number, the result will always be a positive number.

$$(1)(1) = 1^2 = 1$$

That covers all the possibilities on the real number line. There aren't any *real numbers* we can square and get a result that is a negative number.

But we can make up a number... an *imaginary number* (it is not real)... that we can square and get a result that **is** a negative number. We will call this number i .

Properties of the imaginary number i

$$i = \sqrt{-1} \quad \text{so} \quad i^2 = -1$$

Any time we see i^2 we can substitute -1 .

Let's see this in action...

Properties of the imaginary number i

$$i = \sqrt{-1} \quad \text{so} \quad i^2 = -1$$

Example 1 Simplify $\sqrt{-100}$

$$\begin{aligned} & \sqrt{-100} \\ & \sqrt{100} \cdot \sqrt{-1} \\ & 10 \cdot i \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{10i}$$

Example 2 Simplify $2\sqrt{-125}$

$$\begin{aligned} & 2\sqrt{-125} \\ & 2\sqrt{125} \cdot \sqrt{-1} \\ & 2(5\sqrt{5}) \cdot i \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{10i\sqrt{5}}$$

[It's easier to read the i in front of the radical – it won't accidentally appear to be under the radical]

Example 3 Simplify $6i \cdot 7i$

$$\begin{aligned} & 6i \cdot 7i \\ & 6 \cdot 7 \cdot i \cdot i \\ & 42i^2 \\ & 42(-1) \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{-42}$$

Properties of the imaginary number i

$$i = \sqrt{-1} \quad \text{so} \quad i^2 = -1$$

Example 4 Simplify $\sqrt{-2} \cdot \sqrt{-8}$

$$\begin{aligned} & \sqrt{-2} \cdot \sqrt{-8} \\ & \sqrt{2} \cdot \sqrt{-1} \cdot \sqrt{8} \cdot \sqrt{-1} \\ & \sqrt{2} \cdot i \cdot \sqrt{8} \cdot i \\ & \sqrt{16} \cdot i^2 \\ & 4(-1) \end{aligned}$$

-4

Example 5 Simplify $(-2i\sqrt{11})^2$

$$\begin{aligned} & (-2i\sqrt{11})^2 \\ & (-2)^2 \cdot i^2 \cdot (\sqrt{11})^2 \\ & 4 \cdot (-1) \cdot 11 \end{aligned}$$

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Example 6 Simplify $\frac{7}{2i}$ [i is a radical, so it can't remain in the denominator]

$$\frac{7}{2i} \cdot \frac{i}{i} = \frac{7i}{2i^2} = \frac{7i}{2(-1)} = \frac{7i}{-2}$$

$-\frac{7i}{2}$

Properties of the imaginary number i

$$i = \sqrt{-1} \quad \text{so} \quad i^2 = -1$$

Example 7 Simplify $-6i(4 - 5i)$

$$\begin{aligned} & -6i(4 - 5i) \\ & -24i + 30i^2 \\ & -24i + 30(-1) \\ & -24i + -30 \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{-30 - 24i}$$

Example 8 Simplify $(3 + 7i)(2 - 3i)$

$$\begin{aligned} & (3 + 7i)(2 - 3i) \\ & 6 - 9i + 14i - 21i^2 \\ & 6 + 5i - 21(-1) \\ & 6 + 5i + 21 \end{aligned}$$

[Use FOIL]

$$\boxed{27 + 5i}$$

Example 9 Simplify $(2 - 4i)^2$

$$\begin{aligned} & (2 - 4i)^2 \\ & (2 - 4i)(2 - 4i) \\ & 4 - 8i - 8i + 16i^2 \\ & 4 - 16i + 16(-1) \\ & 4 - 16i - 16 \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{-12 - 16i}$$