

Exercise 10

Use de Moivre's formula (Sec. 8) to derive the following trigonometric identities:

$$(a) \cos 3\theta = \cos^3 \theta - 3 \cos \theta \sin^2 \theta;$$

$$(b) \sin 3\theta = 3 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta - \sin^3 \theta.$$

Solution

Consider $e^{i3\theta}$.

$$e^{i3\theta} = (e^{i\theta})^3$$

Apply de Moivre's formula, which says $(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)^m = e^{im\theta} = \cos m\theta + i \sin m\theta$ for any integer m , on both sides.

$$\begin{aligned} \cos 3\theta + i \sin 3\theta &= (\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)^3 \\ &= \cos^3 \theta + 3 \cos^2 \theta (i \sin \theta) + 3 \cos \theta (i \sin \theta)^2 + (i \sin \theta)^3 \\ &= \cos^3 \theta + 3i \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta - 3 \cos \theta \sin^2 \theta - i \sin^3 \theta \\ &= \cos^3 \theta - 3 \cos \theta \sin^2 \theta + i(3 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta - \sin^3 \theta) \end{aligned}$$

Match the real and imaginary part of each side to obtain the desired relationships.

$$\cos 3\theta = \cos^3 \theta - 3 \cos \theta \sin^2 \theta$$

$$\sin 3\theta = 3 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta - \sin^3 \theta$$