Section 10.3 Polar Coordinates

A coordinate system represents a point in the plane by an ordered pair of numbers called coordinates. So far we have been using cartesian coordinates, which are directed distances from two perpendicular axes. In this section we describe a coordinate system called **the polar coordinate system** which is more convenient for many purposes.

We choose a point in the plane that is called the **pole** (or origin) and labeled O. Then we draw a ray starting at O called the **polar axis**. This axis is usually drawn horizontally to the right and corresponds to the positive x-axis in cartesian coordinates.

If P is any other point in the plane, let r be the distance from O to P and let θ be the angle between the polar axis and the line OP. Then the point P is represented by the ordered pair (r, θ) , and r, θ are called the **polar coordinates** of P.



Note: We use the convention that an angle is positive if measured in the counterclockwise direction and negative in the clockwise direction. The meaning of polar coordinates (r, θ) can be extended to the case in which r is negative by taking the convention that $(-r, \theta) = (r, \theta + \pi)$. Also note that $(r, \theta) = (r, 2\pi + \theta)$, so there are infinitely many ways to express a point in polar coordinates.

1. Plot the points whose polar coordinates are given. Then find two other pairs of polar coordinates at this point, one with r > 0 and one with r < 0.

a.)
$$\left(2,\frac{\pi}{4}\right)$$
 b.) $\left(-2,\frac{3\pi}{2}\right)$ c.) $\left(2,-\frac{\pi}{6}\right)$

To convert from polar coordinates $((r, \theta))$ to cartesian coordinates ((x, y)), or vice versa:



2. Find the cartesian coordinates of the polar point $\left(2, \frac{2\pi}{3}\right)$.

3. Find a cartesian equation for the curve described by the given polar equation and identify it. a.) $r = 2\sin\theta$

b.) $r = 9\cos\theta$

c.) $r = 5 \sec \theta$

4. Find polar coordinates, (r, θ) , of the rectangular point, where r > 0.

a.)
$$(3,\sqrt{3})$$
 b.) $(3,4)$ c.) $(-2,2)$

5. Find a polar equation for the curve described by the given Cartesian equation.

a.) x = 6

b.) y + x = 1

c.) $x^2 = 4y$

6. Sketch the region in the plane consisting of points whose polar coordinates are given.

a.)
$$r = 4$$
 b.) $2 \le r < 4$

c.)
$$0 \le \theta \le \frac{\pi}{3}$$
 d.) $0 \le r \le 2, \frac{\pi}{2} \le \theta \le \pi$

7. Sketch the graph of each polar equation.

a.)
$$r = 3\cos\theta$$

					5				
					-2-				
					-1-				
-3	-	2	-	1	0	1	2	2	3
3	-	2	_	1	0]	2	2	2
-3	-	2		1	0]	2	2	3
3	-	2		1	0]	2	2	2
-3	-	2	_	1	0]	2	2	
-3	-	2		1	-1]	2	2	
-3	-	2		1	0]	2	2	2
-3	-	2	-	1	0 1- -2]		2	3
-3		2	-	1	0]	2	2	2
-3		2		1	0	1			

b.)
$$r = -2\sin\theta$$

					3					
					-2					
					1					
3	-	2	-	1	0	1		2	2	c,
					-1-					
					-2					
		L								
					-3		1			

c.) $r = 1 + \cos \theta$



d.)
$$r = 1 - \sin \theta$$



Petals! For $r = \sin(kx)$ or $r = \cos(kx)$, if k is odd, the graph has k petals. If k is even, the graph has 2k petals. Note: If k=1, there is one petal, hence a circle as we saw in 7 a.) and 7 b.).

Summary of Roses:



e.)
$$r = \cos(2\theta)$$

				3					
				-2-					
				1-					
3 -	-2	-	1	0]	-	2	}	3
				-1-					
				-2					
	1			-3				I	

f.) $r = \sin(3\theta)$

