

Precalculus, Section 4.3, #20
Complex Zeros; Fundamental Theorem of Algebra

Form a polynomial function $f(x)$ with real coefficients having the given degree and zeros. Answers will vary depending on the choice of the leading coefficient. Use a graphing utility to graph the functions and verify the result.¹

Degree 6; zeros: $i, 4 - i, 2 + i$

We want a polynomial function $f(x)$ with real coefficients. From the Conjugate Pairs Theorem, we know if $r = a + bi$ is a zero of f , then the complex conjugate $\bar{r} = a - bi$ is also a zero. So the zeros of our desired function are

$i, -i, 4 - i, 4 + i, 2 + i, 2 - i$

From the Fundamental Theorem of Algebra, we know that for each zero r_i there is a corresponding linear factor of the form $(x - r_i)$. Our function can be written as

$$f(x) = a(x - (i))(x - (-i))(x - (4 - i))(x - (4 + i))(x - (2 + i))(x - (2 - i))$$

where a can be any real number, $a \neq 0$. Let's simplify

$$\begin{aligned} &= a(x - i)(x + i)(x - 4 + i)(x - 4 - i)(x - 2 - i)(x - 2 + i) \\ &= a((x - i)(x + i))((x - 4 + i)(x - 4 - i))((x - 2 - i)(x - 2 + i)) \\ &= a(x^2 + xi - xi - i^2)(x^2 - 4x - xi - 4x + 16 + 4i + xi - 4i - i^2) \cdot \\ &\quad (x^2 - 2x + xi - 2x + 4 - 2i - xi + 2i - i^2) \\ &= a(x^2 - (-1))(x^2 - 8x + 16 - (-1))(x^2 - 4x + 4 - (-1)) \\ &= a(x^2 + 1)(x^2 - 8x + 17)(x^2 - 4x + 5) \\ &= a(x^4 - 8x^3 + 17x^2 + x^2 - 8x + 17)(x^2 - 4x + 5) \\ &= a(x^4 - 8x^3 + 18x^2 - 8x + 17)(x^2 - 4x + 5) \\ &= a(x^6 - 4x^5 + 5x^4 - 8x^5 + 32x^4 - 40x^3 + 18x^4 - 72x^3 + 90x^2 - 8x^3 + 32x^2 - 40x + 17x^2 - 68x + 85) \\ &= a(x^6 - 12x^5 + 55x^4 - 120x^3 + 139x^2 - 108x + 85) \end{aligned}$$

Now a can be any real number, so let's keep things simple and choose $a = 1$. Thus, our function is

$$f(x) = x^6 - 12x^5 + 55x^4 - 120x^3 + 139x^2 - 108x + 85$$

¹Sullivan, *Precalculus: Enhanced with Graphing Utilities*, p. 215, #20.