Pythagoras' theorem

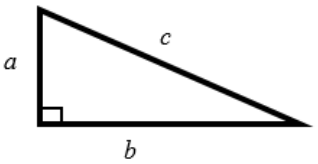
A LEVEL LINKS
Scheme of work: 2a. Straight-line graphs, parallel/perpendicular, length and area problems

Key points

In a right-angled triangle the longest side is called the hypotenuse.

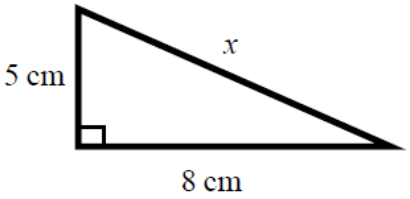
Pythagoras' theorem states that for a right-angled triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.

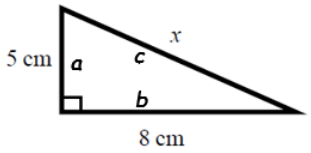
$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$



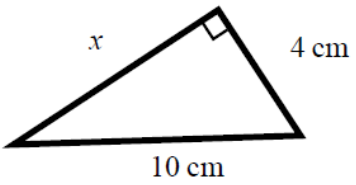
Examples

Example 1 Calculate the length of the hypotenuse.
Give your answer to 3 significant figures.



$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$  $x^2 = 5^2 + 8^2$ $x^2 = 25 + 64$ $x^2 = 89$ $x = \sqrt{89}$ $x = 9.433\,981\,13...$ $x = 9.43$ cm	**1** Always start by stating the formula for Pythagoras' theorem and labelling the hypotenuse c and the other two sides a and b. **2** Substitute the values of a, b and c into the formula for Pythagoras' theorem. **3** Use a calculator to find the square root. **4** Round your answer to 3 significant figures and write the units with your answer.

Example 2 Calculate the length x.
Give your answer in surd form.

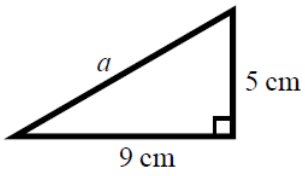


$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$ $10^2 = x^2 + 4^2$ $100 = x^2 + 16$ $x^2 = 84$ $x = \sqrt{84}$ $x = 2\sqrt{21}$ cm	**1** Always start by stating the formula for Pythagoras' theorem. **2** Substitute the values of a, b and c into the formula for Pythagoras' theorem. **3** Simplify the surd where possible and write the units in your answer.

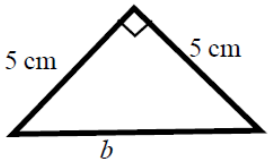
Practice

1 Work out the length of the unknown side in each triangle.
Give your answers correct to 3 significant figures.

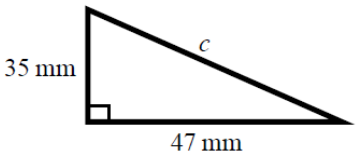
a



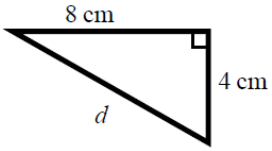
b



c

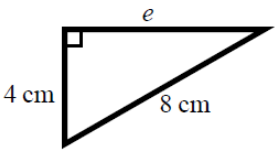


d



2 Work out the length of the unknown side in each triangle.
Give your answers in surd form.

a



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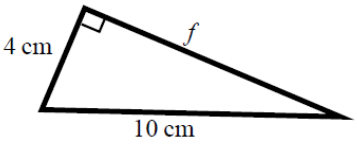

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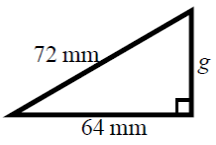
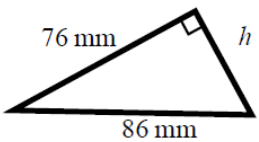
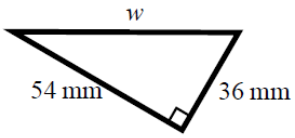


d

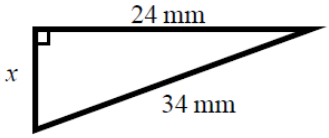


3 Work out the length of the unknown side in each triangle.
Give your answers in surd form.

a



b



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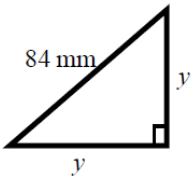
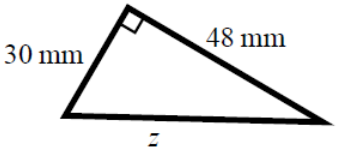


d



4 A rectangle has length 84 mm and width 45 mm.
Calculate the length of the diagonal of the rectangle.
Give your answer correct to 3 significant figures.

Hint

Draw a sketch of the rectangle.

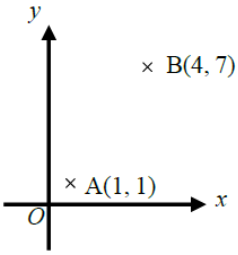
Extend

5 A yacht is 40 km due North of a lighthouse.
A rescue boat is 50 km due East of the same lighthouse.
Work out the distance between the yacht and the rescue boat.
Give your answer correct to 3 significant figures.

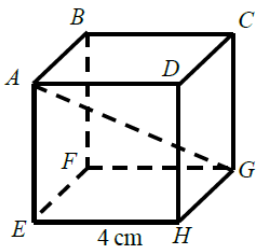
Hint

Draw a diagram using the information given in the question.

6 Points A and B are shown on the diagram.
Work out the length of the line AB.
Give your answer in surd form.



7 A cube has length 4 cm.
Work out the length of the diagonal *AG*.
Give your answer in surd form.



Answers

1 **a** 10.3 cm **b** 7.07 cm

c 58.6 mm **d** 8.94 cm

2 **a** $4\sqrt{3}$ cm **b** $2\sqrt{21}$ cm

c $8\sqrt{17}$ mm **d** $18\sqrt{5}$ mm

3 **a** $18\sqrt{13}$ mm **b** $2\sqrt{145}$ mm

c $42\sqrt{2}$ mm **d** $6\sqrt{89}$ mm

4 95.3 mm

5 64.0 km

6 $3\sqrt{5}$ units

7 $4\sqrt{3}$ cm