

Exemplar Problem

Conic Section

28. Find the equation of each of the following parabolas

(a) Directrix $x = 0$, focus at $(6, 0)$

Ans: Let there be a point $P(h, k)$ on the parabola. According to the definition of a parabola: -

Distance between the point P and the focus = Perpendicular distance between the point and the directrix.

Using the distance formula the distance between P and the focus is $\sqrt{(h - 6)^2 + (k - 0)^2}$.

The perpendicular distance from the point P to the line $x = 0$ is $\left| \frac{(h \times 1) + (0 \times k) + 0}{\sqrt{(1)^2 + (0)^2}} \right|$

$$\Rightarrow \sqrt{(h - 6)^2 + (k - 0)^2} = \left| \frac{(h \times 1) + (0 \times k) + 0}{\sqrt{(1)^2 + (0)^2}} \right|$$

$$\Rightarrow \sqrt{(h - 6)^2 + k^2} = |h|$$

Squaring both the sides and simplifying,

$$\Rightarrow (h - 6)^2 + k^2 = h^2$$

$$\Rightarrow h^2 + 36 - 12h + k^2 = h^2$$

$$\Rightarrow k^2 = 12(h - 3)$$

Replacing h with x and k with y gives the equation of the parabola as,

$$\Rightarrow y^2 = 12(x - 3)$$

(b) Vertex at (0, 4), focus at (0, 2)

Ans:

Here the vertex is at (0, 4) and the focus is at (0, 2) that means the equation of the parabola is of the form $(x - h)^2 = 4a(y - k)$ (known as the vertex form), where (h, k) is the vertex and $(h, a + k)$ is the focus. So the equation of the parabola is,

$$\Rightarrow (x - 0)^2 = 4a(y - 4)$$

$$\Rightarrow x^2 = 4a(y - 4)$$

Equating the y coordinate of focus,

$$\Rightarrow a + k = 2$$

$$\Rightarrow a + 4 = 2$$

$$\Rightarrow a = -2$$

Therefore, the equation of the parabola is $x^2 = -8(y - 4)$.

(c) Focus at (-1, -2), directrix $x - 2y + 3 = 0$

Ans:

Let there be a point $P(h, k)$ on the parabola.

The distance between P and the focus is $\sqrt{(h - (-1))^2 + (k - (-2))^2}$.

The perpendicular distance from the point P to the line $x - 2y + 3 = 0$ is $\left| \frac{(h \times 1) + ((-2) \times k) + 3}{\sqrt{(1)^2 + (-2)^2}} \right|$

$$\Rightarrow \sqrt{(h - (-1))^2 + (k - (-2))^2} = \left| \frac{(h \times 1) + ((-2) \times k) + 3}{\sqrt{(1)^2 + (-2)^2}} \right|$$

$$\Rightarrow \sqrt{(h + 1)^2 + (k + 2)^2} = \left| \frac{h - 2k + 3}{\sqrt{5}} \right|$$

Squaring both the sides and simplifying,

$$\Rightarrow (h + 1)^2 + (k + 2)^2 = \frac{(h - 2k + 3)^2}{5}$$

$$\Rightarrow 5h^2 + 5 + 10h + 5k^2 + 20 + 20k = h^2 + 4k^2 + 9 - 4kh - 12k + 6h$$

$$\Rightarrow 4h^2 + k^2 + 4h + 32k + 4kh + 16 = 0$$

Replacing h with x and k with y gives the equation of the parabola as,

$$\Rightarrow 4x^2 + y^2 + 4x + 32y + 4xy + 16 = 0$$