

Math 1060 ~ Trigonometry

15 The Law of Sines

Learning Objectives

In this section you will:

- Use the Law of Sines to solve oblique triangles.
- Distinguish between ASA, AAS and SSA triangles.
- Determine the existence of, and values for, multiple solutions of oblique triangles.
- Determine when given criteria will not result in a triangle.
- Find the area of an oblique triangle using the sine function.
- Solve applied problems using the Law of Sines.

$$\sin^2 u + \cos^2 u = 1$$

$$\sin 2u = 2 \sin u \cos u$$

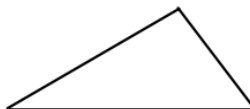
$$\frac{a}{\sin A} = \frac{b}{\sin B} = \frac{c}{\sin C}$$

$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2 - 2ab \cos C$$

We will now apply our techniques to oblique triangles, those with no right angle.

It is important to label sides and angles of a triangle in a specific way.

Label the vertices A,B,C and the sides opposite them a,b,c respectively and the angles α,β,γ respectively.



The Law of Sines states that given any triangle ABC, $\frac{a}{\sin \alpha} = \frac{b}{\sin \beta} = \frac{c}{\sin \gamma}$.

It may also be stated this way: $\frac{\sin \alpha}{a} = \frac{\sin \beta}{b} = \frac{\sin \gamma}{c}$

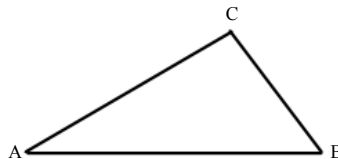
We will prove it here.

Given: $\triangle ABC$

Prove: $\frac{a}{\sin \alpha} = \frac{b}{\sin \beta}$

Draw altitude $\overline{CD} \perp \overline{AB}$

Let $CD = h$



In $\triangle ACD$, $\sin \alpha =$

In $\triangle BCD$, $\sin \beta =$

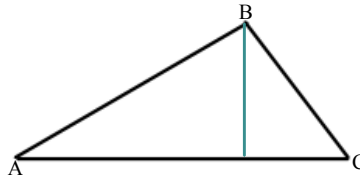
Solve each for h and set them equal to each other.

Area of a Triangle:

There are two alternate formulas for the area of a triangle.

We will prove the first one.

$$A = \frac{1}{2}ab\sin\gamma$$



Ex 1: Given triangle KLM, with $m = 6$ cm and the angle at L measuring 40° and the angle at K measuring 75° , solve for the remaining parts of the triangle and find the area.

Ex 2: Given triangle PQR, with the angle at P measuring 120° , the angle at Q measuring 30° and $p = 10$ ft, solve for the remaining parts.

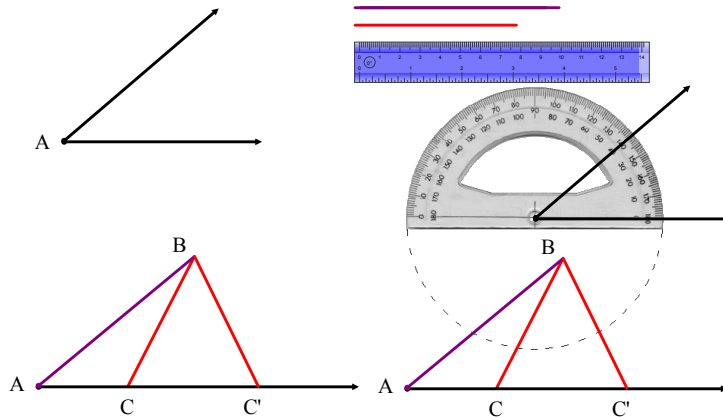
Ex 3: Think back to your congruence postulates in Geometry, ASA, AAS, SAS, SSS and identify each problem above with its postulate.

Let's address the dreaded SSA postulate.

Ex 4: If $\sin(\alpha) = 0.5$ in triangle ABC, what is the measure of the angle at vertex A?

Ambiguous Case: Here is an example that leads to two different triangles in the case of SSA.

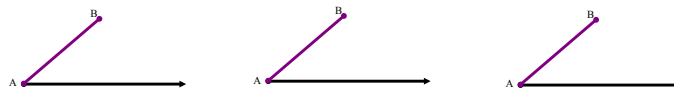
Given $\triangle ABC$ with $\alpha = 40^\circ$, $c = 10$ cm, and $a = 8$ cm, solve for the other parts.



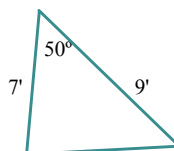
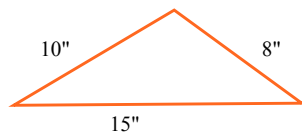
More Ambiguity

Ex 5: In the previous example, consider each of these.

- a) What if $a = 2$ cm?
- b) Is there a value for a which produces exactly one triangle?
- c) What if $a = 10$ cm?



Now think about the other two postulates, SSS and SAS. Can we use the Law of Sines to solve for parts on these?



It becomes necessary to have another law.

** The app used in this lesson is at this link:

<https://www.geogebra.org/m/CvtkyRM5>