MATH 11010: Introduction to Graphing Section 1.1

Graphs provide a way of displaying, interpreting, and analyzing data in a visual format. In many problems, we will consider two variables. Therefore, we will need to have two axes – one for the x variable and another for the y variable. Together these axes will form the **Rectangular Coordinate System**, or **Cartesian Coordinate System**. The horizontal axis is the x-axis and the vertical axis is the y-axis. These two axes divide the xy-plane into four **quadrants** and the intersection of the two axes is called the **origin**. See the following diagram.



Ordered pair: Each point in the plane is called an **ordered pair** and is denoted (x, y). The first number x indicates the point's horizontal location with respect to the y-axis, and the second number y indicates the point's vertical location with respect to the x-axis. Hence, the origin is labeled (0, 0).



Example 1: Plot the following points on the same set of axes:

- The *x*-intercept of a graph is the point where the graph crosses the *x*-axis. This point is (a, 0) where to find *a*, we let y = 0 and solve for *x*.
- The y-intercept of a graph is the point where the graph crosses the y-axis. This point is (0, b) where to find b, we let x = 0 and solve for y.

Example 2: Find the *x*-intercept(s) and *y*-intercept(s) for $4x^2 + 16y^2 = 5$.

• The Distance Formula: The distance d between any two points (x_1, y_1) and (x_2, y_2) is given by

$$d = \sqrt{(x_1 - x_2)^2 + (y_1 - y_2)^2}$$

• The Midpoint Formula: If the endpoints of a segment are (x_1, y_1) and (x_2, y_2) , then the coordinates of the midpoint are

$$\left(\frac{x_1+x_2}{2},\frac{y_1+y_2}{2}\right)$$

Example 3: Given (3, -5) and (1, -9) find:

(a) the distance between these two points.

(b) the midpoint of the line segment connecting these two points.

• The Equation of a Circle: A circle is the set of all points in a plane that are a fixed distance r from a fixed point, the center (h, k). The equation of a circle with center (h, k) and radius r, in standard form, is

$$(x-h)^2 + (y-k)^2 = r^2$$

Example 4: Find the equation of the circle satisfying the given conditions.

(a) center (-4, 7), radius of length 3.

(b) the points (4, -3) and (-6, 9) are endpoints of the diameter.