

# STEP III, 2013, Q5 MS

5. Writing  $q^n N$  as  $q q^{n-1} N$ , and employing the permitted assumption, as  $p$  and  $q$  are coprime,  $p$  divides  $q^{n-1} N$ . Repetitions of this argument imply finally that  $p$  divides  $N$ . Letting  $N = pQ_1$ ,  $q^n Q_1 = p^{n-1}$ . Continuing this argument similarly gives the result  $N = kp^n$ . As a consequence,  $q^n k = 1$ , and thus  $q$  and  $k$  must both be 1. Thus if  $\sqrt[n]{N} = \frac{p}{q}$  where  $p$  and  $q$  are coprime, it is rational and can be written in lowest terms, then  $q^n N = p^n$  and so  $q = 1$  and thus  $\sqrt[n]{N}$  is an integer. Otherwise,  $\sqrt[n]{N}$  cannot be written as  $\frac{p}{q}$ , that is, it is irrational.

For (ii), using the same logic as in part (i), as  $b^a$  divides  $a^a d^b$ ,  $b^a$  divides  $d^b$ , so  $d^b = kb^a$ , for some  $k$ . Likewise,  $a^a = k'c^b$ , for some integer  $k'$ , and thus  $k'k = 1$ , so  $k = k' = 1$ , and  $d^b = b^a$ . If  $p$  is a prime factor of  $d$ , then  $p$  divides  $d^b$ , and so  $b^a$  too. Writing  $b^a = bb^{a-1}$ , using the logic of the very first part of the question, if  $p$  does not divide  $b$ ,  $p$  divides  $b^{a-1}$ , and repetition of this argument leads to a contradiction. So  $p$  is a prime factor of  $b$ .  $p^{mb}$  and  $p^{na}$  is the highest power of  $p$  that divides  $d^b = b^a$ . So  $mb = na$ , and  $b = \frac{na}{m}$ . So  $p^n$  divides  $na$ , but as  $a$  and  $b$  are coprime,  $p^n$  divides  $n$  and thus  $p^n \leq n$ . By the given result, this means  $p = 1$ , and as  $b$  is only divisible by 1,  $b = 1$ . If  $r$  is a positive rational  $\frac{a}{b}$ , such that  $r^r = \frac{c}{d}$  is rational, then  $a^a d^b = b^a c^b$  so  $b = 1$  and  $r$  is a positive integer.