*7.4. SHEAR AND BENDING MOMENT IN A BEAM

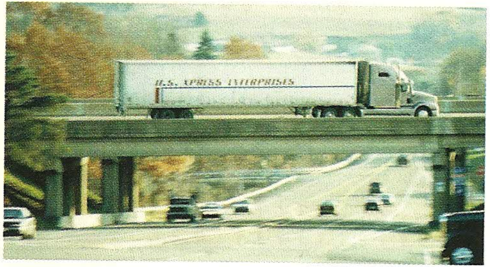


Photo 7.2 The internal forces in the beams of the overpass shown vary as the truck crosses the overpass.

Consider a beam *AB* subjected to various concentrated and distributed loads (Fig. 7.8*a*). We propose to determine the shearing force and bending moment at any point of the beam. In the example considered here, the beam is simply supported, but the method used could be applied to any type of statically determinate beam.

First we determine the reactions at *A* and *B* by choosing the entire beam as a free body (Fig. 7.8*b*); writing $\Sigma M_A = 0$ and $\Sigma M_B = 0$, we obtain, respectively, $\mathbf{R}_B$ and $\mathbf{R}_A$.

To determine the internal forces at *C*, we cut the beam at *C* and draw the free-body diagrams of the portions *AC* and *CB* of the beam (Fig. 7.8*c*). Using the free-body diagram of *AC*, we can determine the shearing force **V** at *C* by equating to zero the sum of the vertical components of all forces acting on *AC*. Similarly, the bending moment **M** at *C* can be found by equating to zero the sum of the moments about *C* of all forces and couples acting on *AC*. Alternatively, we could use the free-body diagram of *CB*† and determine the shearing force **V**′ and the bending moment **M**′ by equating to zero the sum of the

†The force and couple representing the internal forces acting on *CB* will now be denoted by **V**′ and **M**′, rather than by −**V** and −**M** as done earlier, in order to avoid confusion when applying the sign convention which we are about to introduce.

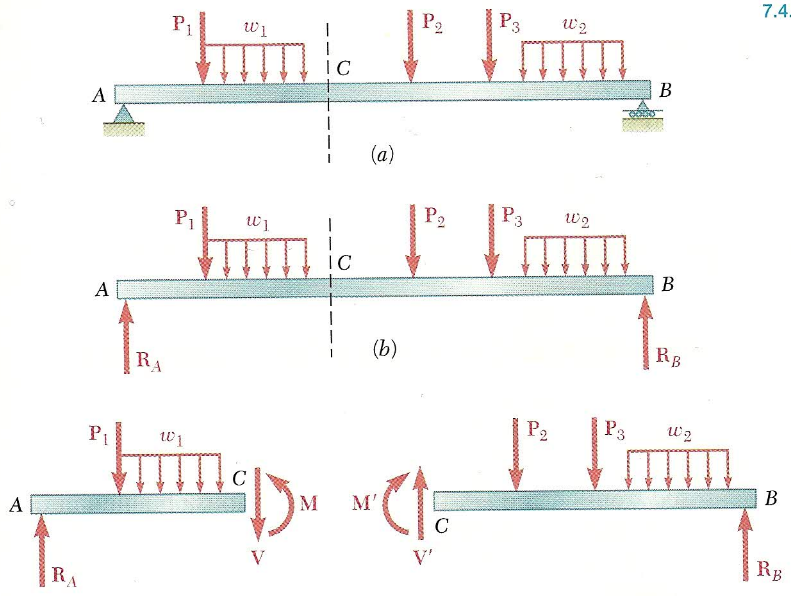


Fig. 7.8

(c)

vertical components and the sum of the moments about C of all forces and couples acting on CB. While this choice of free bodies may facilitate the computation of the numerical values of the shearing force and bending moment, it makes it necessary to indicate on which portion of the beam the internal forces considered are acting. If the shearing force and bending moment are to be computed at every point of the beam and efficiently recorded, we must find a way to avoid having to specify every time which portion of the beam is used as a free body. We shall adopt, therefore, the following conventions:

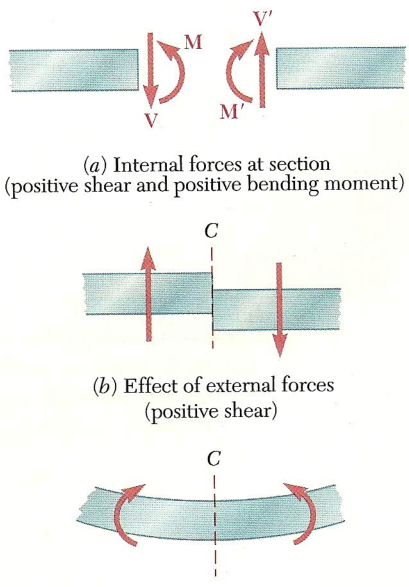
In determining the shearing force in a beam, *it will always be assumed* that the internal forces $\mathbf{V}$ and $\mathbf{V}'$ are directed as shown in Fig. 7.8*c*. A positive value obtained for their common magnitude V will indicate that this assumption was correct and that the shearing forces are actually directed as shown. A negative value obtained for V will indicate that the assumption was wrong and that the shearing forces are directed in the opposite way. Thus, only the magnitude V, together with a plus or minus sign, needs to be recorded to define completely the shearing forces at a given point of the beam. The scalar V is commonly referred to as the *shear* at the given point of the beam.

Similarly, *it will always be assumed* that the internal couples $\mathbf{M}$ and $\mathbf{M}'$ are directed as shown in Fig. 7.8*c*. A positive value obtained for their magnitude M, commonly referred to as the bending moment, will indicate that this assumption was correct, and a negative value will indicate that it was wrong. Summarizing the sign conventions we have presented, we state:

The shear V and the bending moment M at a given point of a beam are said to be positive when the internal forces and couples acting on each portion of the beam are directed as shown in Fig. 7.9a.

These conventions can be more easily remembered if we note that:

1. *The shear at C is positive when the* **external** *forces (loads and reactions) acting on the beam tend to shear off the beam at C as indicated in Fig. 7.9b.*



(*a*) Internal forces at section (positive shear and positive bending moment)

(*b*) Effect of external forces (positive shear)

(*c*) Effect of external forces (positive bending moment)

Fig. 7.9

2. *The bending moment at C is positive when the* **external** *forces acting on the beam tend to bend the beam at C as indicated in Fig. 7.9c.*

It may also help to note that the situation described in Fig. 7.9, in which the values of the shear and of the bending moment are positive, is precisely the situation which occurs in the left half of a simply supported beam carrying a single concentrated load at its midpoint. This particular example is fully discussed in the following section.

*7.5. SHEAR AND BENDING-MOMENT DIAGRAMS

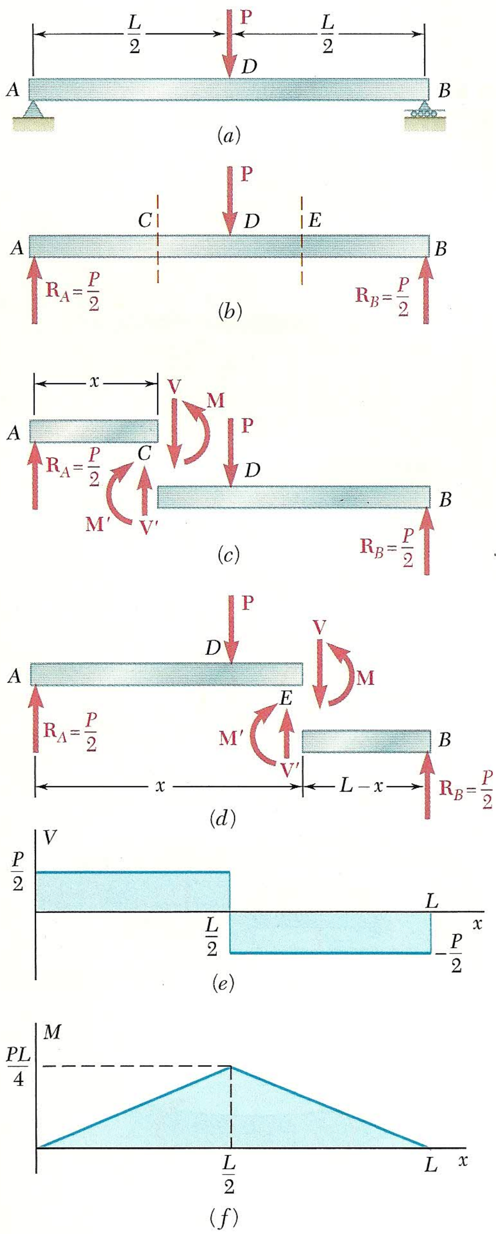


Fig. 7.10

Now that shear and bending moment have been clearly defined in sense as well as in magnitude, we can easily record their values at any point of a beam by plotting these values against the distance x measured from one end of the beam. The graphs obtained in this way are called, respectively, the *shear diagram* and the *bending-moment diagram*. As an example, consider a simply supported beam AB of span L subjected to a single concentrated load **P** applied at its midpoint D (Fig. 7.10*a*). We first determine the reactions at the supports from the free-body diagram of the entire beam (Fig. 7.10*b*); we find that the magnitude of each reaction is equal to $P/2$.

Next we cut the beam at a point C between A and D and draw the free-body diagrams of AC and CB (Fig. 7.10*c*). *Assuming that shear and bending moment are positive,* we direct the internal forces **V** and **V′** and the internal couples **M** and **M′** as indicated in Fig. 7.9*a*. Considering the free body AC and writing that the sum of the vertical components and the sum of the moments about C of the forces acting on the free body are zero, we find $V = +P/2$ and $M = +Px/2$. Both shear and bending moment are therefore positive; this can be checked by observing that the reaction at A tends to shear off and to bend the beam at C as indicated in Fig. 7.9*b* and *c*. We can plot V and M between A and D (Fig. 7.10*e* and *f*); the shear has a constant value $V = P/2$, while the bending moment increases linearly from $M = 0$ at $x = 0$ to $M = PL/4$ at $x = L/2$.

Cutting, now, the beam at a point E between D and B and considering the free body EB (Fig. 7.10*d*), we write that the sum of the vertical components and the sum of the moments about E of the forces acting on the free body are zero. We obtain $V = -P/2$ and $M = P(L - x)/2$. The shear is therefore negative and the bending moment positive; this can be checked by observing that the reaction at B bends the beam at E as indicated in Fig. 7.9*c* but tends to shear it off in a manner opposite to that shown in Fig. 7.9*b*. We can complete, now, the shear and bending-moment diagrams of Fig. 7.10*e* and *f*; the shear has a constant value $V = -P/2$ between D and B, while the bending moment decreases linearly from $M = PL/4$ at $x = L/2$ to $M = 0$ at $x = L$.

It should be noted that when a beam is subjected to concentrated loads only, the shear is of constant value between loads and the bending moment varies linearly between loads, but when a beam is subjected to distributed loads, the shear and bending moment vary quite differently (see Sample Prob. 7.3).

*7.6. RELATIONS AMONG LOAD, SHEAR, AND BENDING MOMENT

When a beam carries more than two or three concentrated loads, or when it carries distributed loads, the method outlined in Sec. 7.5 for plotting shear and bending moment is likely to be quite cumbersome. The construction of the shear diagram and, especially, of the bending-moment diagram will be greatly facilitated if certain relations existing among load, shear, and bending moment are taken into consideration.

Let us consider a simply supported beam AB carrying a distributed load w per unit length (Fig. 7.11a), and let C and C' be two points of the beam at a distance Δx from each other. The shear and bending moment at C will be denoted by V and M, respectively, and will be assumed positive; the shear and bending moment at C' will be denoted by $V + \Delta V$ and $M + \Delta M$.

Let us now detach the portion of beam CC' and draw its free-body diagram (Fig. 7.11b). The forces exerted on the free body include a load of magnitude $w\,\Delta x$ and internal forces and couples at C and C'. Since shear and bending moment have been assumed positive, the forces and couples will be directed as shown in the figure.

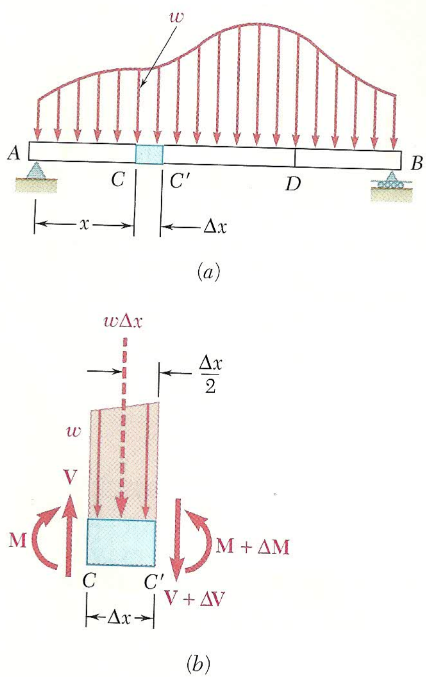


Fig. 7.11

Relations between Load and Shear. We write that the sum of the vertical components of the forces acting on the free body CC' is zero:

$$V - (V + \Delta V) - w\,\Delta x = 0$$
$$\Delta V = -w\,\Delta x$$

Dividing both members of the equation by Δx and then letting Δx approach zero, we obtain

$$\frac{dV}{dx} = -w \tag{7.1}$$

Formula (7.1) indicates that for a beam loaded as shown in Fig. 7.11a, the slope dV/dx of the shear curve is negative; the absolute value of the slope at any point is equal to the load per unit length at that point. Integrating formula (7.1) between points C and D, we obtain

$$V_D - V_C = -\int_{x_C}^{x_D} w\,dx \tag{7.2}$$

$$V_D - V_C = -(\text{area under load curve between } C \text{ and } D) \tag{7.2'}$$

Note that this result could also have been obtained by considering the equilibrium of the portion of beam CD, since the area under the load curve represents the total load applied between C and D.

It should be observed that formula (7.1) *is not valid* at a point where a concentrated load is applied; the shear curve is discontinuous at such a point, as seen in Sec. 7.5. Similarly, formulas (7.2) and (7.2′) cease to be valid when concentrated loads are applied between C and D, since they do not take into account the sudden change in shear caused by a concentrated load. Formulas (7.2) and (7.2′), therefore, should be applied only between successive concentrated loads.

Relations between Shear and Bending Moment. Returning to the free-body diagram of Fig. 7.11*b*, and writing now that the sum of the moments about C' is zero, we obtain

$$(M + \Delta M) - M - V\,\Delta x + w\,\Delta x \frac{\Delta x}{2} = 0$$

$$\Delta M = V\,\Delta x - \tfrac{1}{2}w(\Delta x)^2$$

Dividing both members of the equation by Δx and then letting Δx approach zero, we obtain

$$\frac{dM}{dx} = V \tag{7.3}$$

Formula (7.3) indicates that the slope dM/dx of the bending-moment curve is equal to the value of the shear. This is true at any point where the shear has a well-defined value, that is, at any point where no concentrated load is applied. Formula (7.3) also shows that the shear is zero at points where the bending moment is maximum. This property facilitates the determination of the points where the beam is likely to fail under bending.

Integrating formula (7.3) between points C and D, we obtain

$$M_D - M_C = \int_{x_C}^{x_D} V\,dx \tag{7.4}$$

$$M_D - M_C = \text{area under shear curve between } C \text{ and } D \tag{7.4'}$$

Note that the area under the shear curve should be considered positive where the shear is positive and negative where the shear is negative. Formulas (7.4) and (7.4′) are valid even when concentrated loads are applied between C and D, as long as the shear curve has been correctly drawn. The formulas cease to be valid, however, if a *couple* is applied at a point between C and D, since they do not take into account the sudden change in bending moment caused by a couple (see Sample Prob. 7.7).

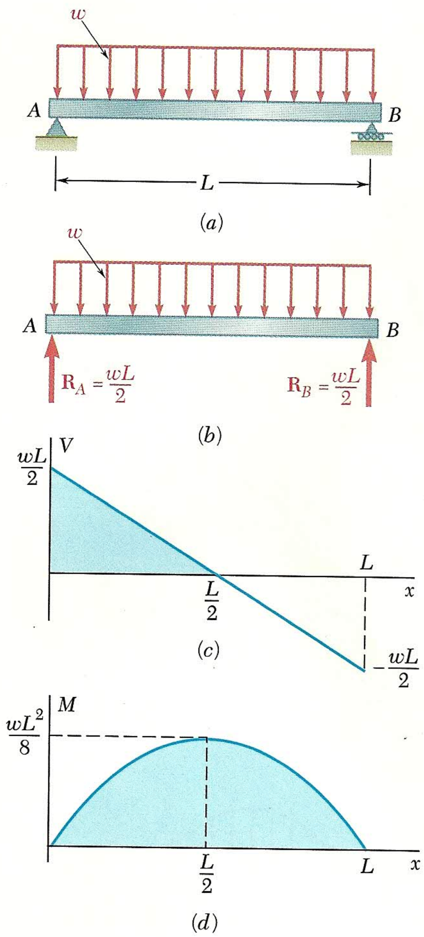


Fig. 7.12

Example. Let us consider a simply supported beam AB of span L carrying a uniformly distributed load w (Fig. 7.12a). From the free-body diagram of the entire beam we determine the magnitude of the reactions at the supports: $R_A = R_B = wL/2$ (Fig. 7.12b). Next, we draw the shear diagram. Close to the end A of the beam, the shear is equal to R_A, that is, to $wL/2$, as we can check by considering a very small portion of the beam as a free body. Using formula (7.2), we can then determine the shear V at any distance x from A. We write

$$V - V_A = -\int_0^x w\,dx = -wx$$

$$V = V_A - wx = \frac{wL}{2} - wx = w\left(\frac{L}{2} - x\right)$$

The shear curve is thus an oblique straight line which crosses the x axis at $x = L/2$ (Fig. 7.12c). Considering, now, the bending moment, we first observe that $M_A = 0$. The value M of the bending moment at any distance from A can then be obtained from formula (7.4); we have

$$M - M_A = \int_0^x V dx$$

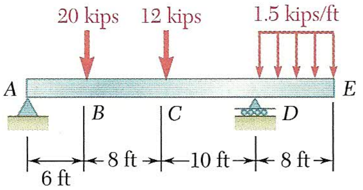
$$M = \int_0^x w\left(\frac{L}{2} - x\right) dx = \frac{w}{2}(Lx - x^2)$$

The bending-moment curve is a parabola. The maximum value of the bending moment occurs when $x = L/2$, since V (and thus dM/dx) is zero for that value of x. Substituting $x = L/2$ in the last equation, we obtain $M_{max} = wL^2/8$.

In most engineering applications, the value of the bending moment needs to be known only at a few specific points. Once the shear diagram has been drawn, and after M has been determined at one of the ends of the beam, the value of the bending moment can then be obtained at any given point by computing the area under the shear curve and using formula (7.4′). For instance, since $M_A = 0$ for the beam of Fig. 7.12, the maximum value of the bending moment for that beam can be obtained simply by calculating the area of the shaded triangle in the shear diagram:

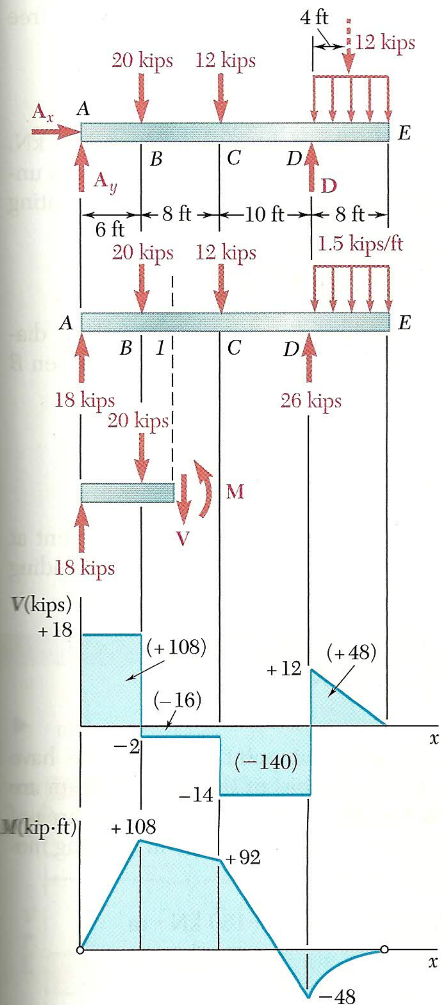
$$M_{max} = \frac{1}{2}\frac{L}{2}\frac{wL}{2} = \frac{wL^2}{8}$$

In this example, the load curve is a horizontal straight line, the shear curve is an oblique straight line, and the bending-moment curve is a parabola. If the load curve had been an oblique straight line (first degree), the shear curve would have been a parabola (second degree), and the bending-moment curve would have been a cubic (third degree). The shear and bending-moment curves will always be, respectively, one and two degrees higher than the load curve. Thus, once a few values of the shear and bending moment have been computed, we should be able to sketch the shear and bending-moment diagrams without actually determining the functions $V(x)$ and $M(x)$. The sketches obtained will be more accurate if we make use of the fact that at any point where the curves are continuous, the slope of the shear curve is equal to $-w$ and the slope of the bending-moment curve is equal to V.



SAMPLE PROBLEM 7.4

Draw the shear and bending-moment diagrams for the beam and loading shown.



SOLUTION

Free-Body: Entire Beam. Considering the entire beam as a free body, we determine the reactions:

$+\circlearrowleft \Sigma M_A = 0$:
$$D(24 \text{ ft}) - (20 \text{ kips})(6 \text{ ft}) - (12 \text{ kips})(14 \text{ ft}) - (12 \text{ kips})(28 \text{ ft}) = 0$$
$$D = +26 \text{ kips} \qquad \mathbf{D} = 26 \text{ kips} \uparrow$$

$+\uparrow \Sigma F_y = 0$: $\quad A_y - 20 \text{ kips} - 12 \text{ kips} + 26 \text{ kips} - 12 \text{ kips} = 0$
$$A_y = +18 \text{ kips} \qquad \mathbf{A}_y = 18 \text{ kips} \uparrow$$

$\xrightarrow{+} \Sigma F_x = 0$: $\quad A_x = 0 \qquad \mathbf{A}_x = 0$

We also note that at both A and E the bending moment is zero; thus two points (indicated by small circles) are obtained on the bending-moment diagram.

Shear Diagram. Since $dV/dx = -w$, we find that between concentrated loads and reactions the slope of the shear diagram is zero (that is, the shear is constant). The shear at any point is determined by dividing the beam into two parts and considering either part as a free body. For example, using the portion of beam to the left of section *1*, we obtain the shear between B and C:

$+\uparrow \Sigma F_y = 0$: $\quad +18 \text{ kips} - 20 \text{ kips} - V = 0 \qquad V = -2 \text{ kips}$

We also find that the shear is $+12$ kips just to the right of D and zero at end E. Since the slope $dV/dx = -w$ is constant between D and E, the shear diagram between these two points is a straight line.

Bending-Moment Diagram. We recall that the area under the shear curve between two points is equal to the change in bending moment between the same two points. For convenience, the area of each portion of the shear diagram is computed and is indicated on the diagram. Since the bending moment M_A at the left end is known to be zero, we write

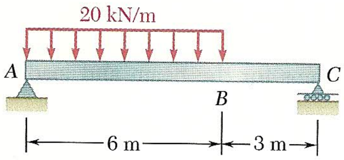
$$\begin{aligned} M_B - M_A &= +108 & M_B &= +108 \text{ kip} \cdot \text{ft} \\ M_C - M_B &= -\ 16 & M_C &= +\ 92 \text{ kip} \cdot \text{ft} \\ M_D - M_C &= -140 & M_D &= -\ 48 \text{ kip} \cdot \text{ft} \\ M_E - M_D &= +\ 48 & M_E &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

Since M_E is known to be zero, a check of the computations is obtained.

Between the concentrated loads and reactions the shear is constant; thus the slope dM/dx is constant, and the bending-moment diagram is drawn by connecting the known points with straight lines. Between D and E, where the shear diagram is an oblique straight line, the bending-moment diagram is a parabola.

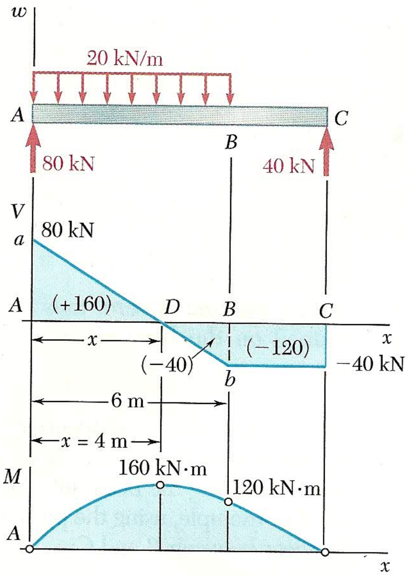
From the V and M diagrams we note that $V_{max} = 18$ kips and $M_{max} = 108$ kip · ft.

SAMPLE PROBLEM 7.5



Draw the shear and bending-moment diagrams for the beam and loading shown, and determine the location and magnitude of the maximum bending moment.

SOLUTION



Free-Body: Entire Beam. Considering the entire beam as a free body, we obtain the reactions

$$\mathbf{R}_A = 80 \text{ kN} \uparrow \qquad \mathbf{R}_C = 40 \text{ kN} \uparrow$$

Shear Diagram. The shear just to the right of A is $V_A = +80$ kN. Since the change in shear between two points is equal to *minus* the area under the load curve between the same two points, we obtain V_B by writing

$$V_B - V_A = -(20 \text{ kN/m})(6 \text{ m}) = -120 \text{ kN}$$
$$V_B = -120 + V_A = -120 + 80 = -40 \text{ kN}$$

Since the slope $dV/dx = -w$ is constant between A and B, the shear diagram between these two points is represented by a straight line. Between B and C, the area under the load curve is zero; therefore,

$$V_C - V_B = 0 \qquad V_C = V_B = -40 \text{ kN}$$

and the shear is constant between B and C.

Bending-Moment Diagram. We note that the bending moment at each end of the beam is zero. In order to determine the maximum bending moment, we locate the section D of the beam where $V = 0$. We write

$$V_D - V_A = -wx$$
$$0 - 80 \text{ kN} = -(20 \text{ kN/m})x$$

and, solving for x: $x = 4 \text{ m}$ ◀

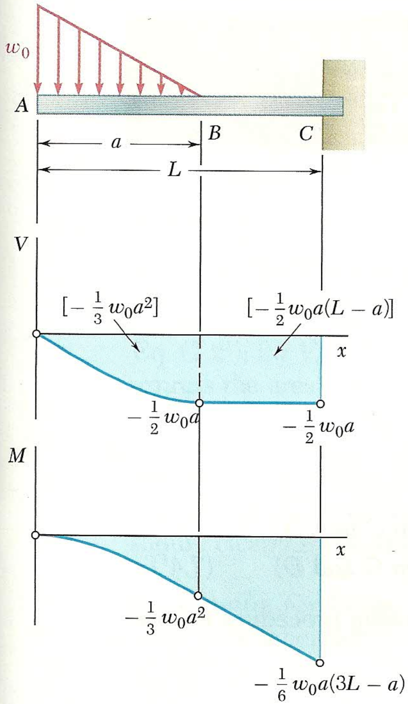
The maximum bending moment occurs at point D, where we have $dM/dx = V = 0$. The areas of the various portions of the shear diagram are computed and are given (in parentheses) on the diagram. Since the area of the shear diagram between two points is equal to the change in bending moment between the same two points, we write

$$M_D - M_A = +160 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m} \qquad M_D = +160 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m}$$
$$M_B - M_D = -\ \ 40 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m} \qquad M_B = +120 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m}$$
$$M_C - M_B = -120 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m} \qquad M_C = 0$$

The bending-moment diagram consists of a parabolic arc followed by a segment of a straight line; the slope of the parabola at A is equal to the value of V at that point.

The maximum bending moment is

$$M_{\max} = M_D = +160 \text{ kN} \cdot \text{m} \quad ◀$$



SAMPLE PROBLEM 7.6

Sketch the shear and bending-moment diagrams for the cantilever beam shown.

SOLUTION

Shear Diagram. At the free end of the beam, we find $V_A = 0$. Between A and B, the area under the load curve is $\frac{1}{2}w_0a$; we find V_B by writing

$$V_B - V_A = -\tfrac{1}{2}w_0a \qquad V_B = -\tfrac{1}{2}w_0a$$

Between B and C, the beam is not loaded; thus $V_C = V_B$. At A, we have $w = w_0$, and, according to Eq. (7.1), the slope of the shear curve is $dV/dx = -w_0$, while at B the slope is $dV/dx = 0$. Between A and B, the loading decreases linearly, and the shear diagram is parabolic. Between B and C, $w = 0$, and the shear diagram is a horizontal line.

Bending-Moment Diagram. We note that $M_A = 0$ at the free end of the beam. We compute the area under the shear curve and write

$$M_B - M_A = -\tfrac{1}{3}w_0a^2 \qquad M_B = -\tfrac{1}{3}w_0a^2$$
$$M_C - M_B = -\tfrac{1}{2}w_0a(L-a)$$
$$M_C = -\tfrac{1}{6}w_0a(3L-a)$$

The sketch of the bending-moment diagram is completed by recalling that $dM/dx = V$. We find that between A and B the diagram is represented by a cubic curve with zero slope at A, and between B and C the diagram is represented by a straight line.