

Math 240 — Project 2 Prompt

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Objective:

In this project, you will write a Python program to implement the Euler method and Runge-Kutta for solving an ordinary differential equation (ODE). You will apply the method to a real-world scenario and estimate the error of the Euler method. Then you will compare your estimate to an exact solution.

1. ODE Definition:

- Solve the following initial value problem (IVP) which models population growth with a carrying capacity (logistic growth):

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = ry \left(1 - \frac{y}{K}\right), \quad y(0) = y_0$$

where:

- r is the growth rate,
- K is the carrying capacity of the environment (the maximum population allowable),
- y_0 is the initial population size at $t = 0$.

The logistic growth model is used in biology, ecology, and other fields to describe how populations grow in an environment with limited resources.

- Construct example parameters from a real-world case relevant to a field you care about. For example,

$$r = 0.2, \quad K = 500, \quad y_0 = 50$$

translates to a growth rate of 20%, with a capacity of $K = 500$, and an initial population of 50.

2. Euler Method Implementation:

- Implement the Euler method to approximate the solution to the logistic growth model over a specified time interval $[t_0, t_f]$.
- The Euler update rule is given by:

$$y_{i+1} = y_i + hf(t_i, y_i)$$

where h is the step size, and y_i is the approximate solution at time t_i .

- Implement the method for 5 different step sizes.

3. Runge-Kutta Method Implementation:

- Implement the 4th-order Runge-Kutta method (RK4) to approximate the solution to the logistic growth model over a specified time interval $[t_0, t_f]$.
- The RK4 update rule is given by:

$$y_{n+1} = y_n + \frac{h}{6}(k_1 + 2k_2 + 2k_3 + k_4)$$

where:

$$k_1 = f(t_n, y_n), \quad k_2 = f(t_n + \frac{h}{2}, y_n + \frac{h}{2}k_1)$$

$$k_3 = f(t_n + \frac{h}{2}, y_n + \frac{h}{2}k_2), \quad k_4 = f(t_n + h, y_n + hk_3)$$

Here, h is the step size, and $f(t, y) = ry(1 - y/K)$.

4. **Exact Solution:** For the logistic growth equation, the exact solution is known and given by:

$$y(t) = \frac{Ky_0 e^{rt}}{K + y_0(e^{rt} - 1)}$$

Use this exact solution to compare against your Euler and RK4 approximation.

5. **Report:** Write a brief report explaining:

- The ODE being solved and its real-world application,
- How the Runge-Kutta and Euler methods were implemented,
- A discussion of the error behavior as the step size changes for both methods,
- Observations on the efficiency and accuracy of the RK4 method compared to the Euler method.