An **ordinary differential equation**(ODE) has 1 independent variable but a **partial differential equation (PDE)** has more than 1 independent variable. An ODE is therefore a special case of a **PDE**.

In mathematics, a **partial differential equation (PDE)** is a differential equation that contains unknown multivariable functions and their partial derivatives. (A special case is ordinary differential equations (ODEs), which deal with functions of a single variable and their derivatives.)