

Problem 15: Find the equation, in polar coordinates, of the line passing through  $(x_1, y_1)$  with slope  $m$ .

(Source: AoPS Calculus)

We can start with the equation of this line in point-slope form.

$$y - y_1 = m(x - x_1)$$

Now we can substitute  $r \sin \theta$  for  $y$  and  $r \cos \theta$  for  $x$ .

$$r \sin \theta - y_1 = m(r \cos \theta - x_1)$$

We can manipulate this equation to get  $r$  as a function of  $\theta$ .

$$\begin{aligned} r \sin \theta - y_1 &= m(r \cos \theta - x_1) \\ r \sin \theta - y_1 &= mr \cos \theta - mx_1 \\ r \sin \theta - mr \cos \theta &= y_1 - mx_1 \\ r(\sin \theta - m \cos \theta) &= y_1 - mx_1 \\ r &= \frac{y_1 - mx_1}{\sin \theta - m \cos \theta} \end{aligned}$$

Thus the equation of the line, in polar coordinates, is

$$\boxed{r = \frac{y_1 - mx_1}{\sin \theta - m \cos \theta}}$$