

Particular solution of a linear differential equation

We want to find a particular solution of the differential equation:

$$(E) \quad a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = f ,$$

when f has a good form.

We denote by (EC) the characteristic equation associated with:

$$(EC) \quad a_n r^n + a_{n-1} r^{n-1} + \dots + a_1 r + a_0 = 0 .$$

When f is the sum of functions $f = f_1 + f_2$, we search for two particular solutions y_1 and y_2 of

$$(E_1) \quad a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = f_1 ,$$

$$(E_2) \quad a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = f_2 ,$$

respectively. A particular solution of (E) is $y_p = y_1 + y_2$. We then consider the following three cases:

Case I: $f = P$ with P a polynomial

We search for a particular solution of the form:

$$y_p = \begin{cases} Q & \text{if } a_0 \neq 0 \\ xQ & \text{if } a_0 = 0, a_1 \neq 0 \\ \vdots & \\ x^n Q & \text{if } a_{n-1} = \dots = a_0 = 0 \quad i.e. \quad a_n y^{(n)} = P, \end{cases}$$

where Q is a polynomial with $d^\circ Q = d^\circ P$.

Case II: $f(x) = e^{\alpha x} P(x)$, α a non zero real

We search for a particular solution of the form:

$$y_p(x) = \begin{cases} Q(x)e^{\alpha x} & \text{if } \alpha \text{ is not a root of } (EC) \\ xQ(x)e^{\alpha x} & \text{if } \alpha \text{ is an unrepeated root of } (EC) \\ \vdots & \\ x^k Q(x)e^{\alpha x} & \text{if } \alpha \text{ is a root of multiplicity } k \text{ of } (EC), \end{cases}$$

where Q is a polynomial with $d^\circ Q = d^\circ P$.

This case includes the case $f(x) = e^{\alpha x}$.

Case III: $f(x) = e^{\alpha x} P(x)(K_1 \cos(\beta x) + K_2 \sin(\beta x))$, β a non zero real, α could be zero

We search for a particular solution of the form:

$$y_p = \begin{cases} e^{\alpha x} (Q_1(x) \cos(\beta x) + Q_2(x) \sin(\beta x)) & \text{if } \alpha + i\beta \text{ is not a root of } (EC) \\ e^{\alpha x} x (Q_1(x) \cos(\beta x) + Q_2(x) \sin(\beta x)) & \text{if } \alpha + i\beta \text{ is a single root of } (EC) \\ \vdots & \\ e^{\alpha x} x^k (Q_1(x) \cos(\beta x) + Q_2(x) \sin(\beta x)) & \text{if } \alpha + i\beta \text{ is root of multiplicity } k \text{ of } (EC), \end{cases}$$

where Q_1 and Q_2 are two polynomials with $d^\circ Q_1 = d^\circ Q_2 = d^\circ P$.

The cases where f is either of the form $\cos(\beta x)$ or $\sin(\beta x)$ is also included above.