

MATHEMATICS ANALYSIS AND
APPROACHES HL
Producing the IB Logo with the Fourier Series

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1 Rationale

I have shown interest in visual arts done through the means of software, with particular experience in 3D modelling and animation in Blender and Cinema 4D.

I never was experienced with drawing, therefore producing digital art on a 2D plane using artistic skill was not of interest to me. However, something that I came across online was the use of the Fourier Series in order to produce vector art, which instantly intrigued me.

While vector art files such as those with the file extension ".svg" relate to mathematics in the sense that it contains multiple graphed mathematical relationships in order to produce an image, the method of using the Fourier Series to produce similar art is more mathematically intriguing, as it proves use just one expression to produce the same result done by the numerous mathematical relationships.

2 Aim

The objective of this investigation is to link Fourier series with complex numbers to create a single series that is capable of reproducing the IB logo on the Argand plane.

3 Plan of Action

This exploration focuses on the following areas of math:

- Integral Calculus
- Series
- Trigonometry
- Complex Analysis
- Vectors

4 Background Information

4.1 Overarching idea of the Fourier Series

A periodic function is one where the output for a particular input equals to the output for the sum of the same input and the value of the function's period. This can be represented mathematically as:

$$f(x) = f(x + P)$$

where $P =$ the period of the function

The sine wave is widely known for being a periodic function for the ease of graphing a sinusoidal wave. However, there are periodic functions that are difficult to graph with an algebraic expression, such as one that alternates between 1 and -1 or one that is shaped as a zig-zag.

This is the motivation behind the Fourier Series, which is to be able to represent period functions that normally can't be represented by an algebraic function.

The idea behind the Fourier Series is to take an infinite sum of varying sinusoidal functions such that a desired periodic function is produced.

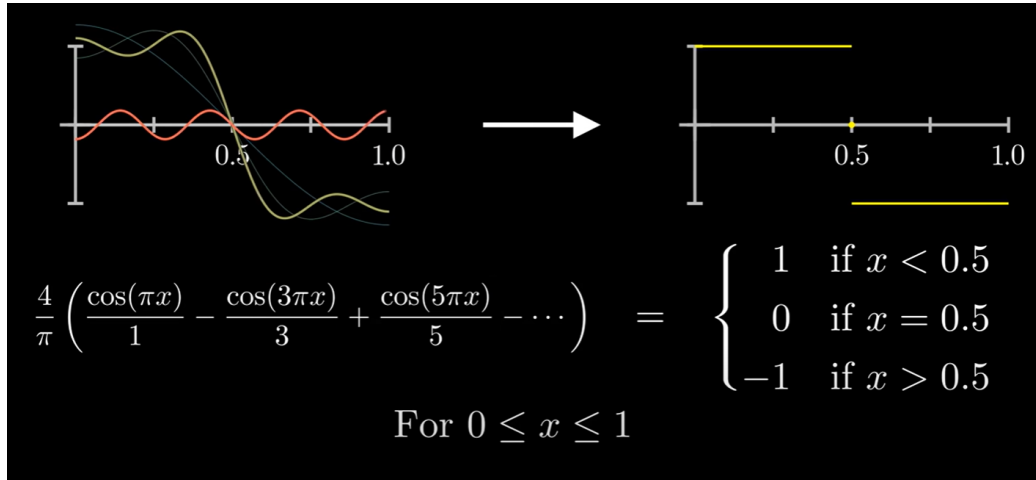


Figure 1: Visualization of the mechanism of the Fourier Series (Sanderson, 2019). The yellow line is the periodic function resulting from the previous iteration, the red line is the sinusoidal function to be added in the next iteration.

4.2 Idea of drawing with the Fourier series explained with the Cartesian Plane

The rule is for eligible drawings to be any that can be drawn by starting at one point on a cartesian plane and, without lifting the hypothetical plane throughout the entire sketch, return to the exact same point.

Defining the variable t as time, $t = 0$ will represent the point in time where the drawing began and $t = 1$ will represent the point in time where the drawing ended.

Each point of the drawing on the plane will be defined by $P(x(t), y(t))$, where $x(t)$ and $y(t)$ are both functions with an input of t that indicates the coordinates after some amount of time passed of the pen's progress through the drawing.

Assuming that any function can be represented as a Fourier Series, then $x(t)$ and $y(t)$ can be any function and therefore, by extracting the coordinates on a graph of any drawing obeying the rule described earlier, the Fourier Series of $x(t)$ and $y(t)$ can be determined and therefore produce the desired drawing for $t \in [0, 1]$

As a simple example that does not require a Fourier Series, we can take a unit circle defined by $x^2 + y^2 = 1$ as the drawing. It quickly becomes evident of what $x(t)$ and $y(t)$ are, as since it is a circle, then $x(t) = \cos(2\pi t)$ and $y(t) = \sin(2\pi t)$.

4.3 Enriched application to draw on the Argand Plane

Euler's formula is defined to be

$$e^{it} = \cos(t) + i \sin(t) \tag{1}$$

Given that both the cosine function and the sine function are included in this formula, a connection between this formula and the Fourier Series becomes evident. The two sinusoidal functions in the formula are the core behind applying the Fourier Series to the Argand Plane.

It is easier to think of Euler's formula to be a vector on the Argand Plane (Sanderson, 2019). With just the formula given above, we have a vector with a length of 1 that rotates counterclockwise when the value that e is raised to is positive and clockwise when the value is negative.

Let's add n and 2π to the exponent in Equation (1) such that we have $e^{n \cdot 2\pi i t}$. The purpose of 2π is to simplify what defines a revolution, as now, for every unit of time that t passes, a revolution will be completed. $n, n \in \mathbb{Z}$ will define the frequency and directionality of the rotation of the vector. If $n > 0$, then the vector will rotate counterclockwise and vice versa. If $n = 2$, then the vector would rotate by 2 revolutions for every unit of time that passes.

Lastly, let's multiply the entire exponent by the variable c_n to get $c_n e^{n \cdot 2\pi i t}$. This will not only allow for the vector to be scaled but also for the starting rotation of the vector to be defined. Let's temporarily define c_n to be:

$$c_n = A \cdot z$$

A will indicate the factor to which the vector will be scaled by. Because the original length of the vector was 1, then the factor will directly indicate the length of the vector.

z will indicate the starting rotation of the vector, which would be $e^{i\theta}$, where θ is the starting rotation angle in radians.

It could be imagined that the final Fourier Series that produces a desired drawing is the sum of multiple vectors of different magnitudes rotating at different frequencies indicated by $n, n \in \mathbb{Z}$. Therefore, if $f(t)$ is defined to be the function that represents the drawing, this can be expressed mathematically as:

$$f(t) = \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} c_n e^{n \cdot 2\pi i t} \quad (2)$$

The main concern as of right now is how the value of c_n will be determined for a specific drawing.

The easiest way to start off is by first considering $c_0 e^{0 \cdot 2\pi i t}$. This can be simplified into c_0 , but what does this mean? This is the vector that is rotating at a frequency of 0, which means that it is static. It can therefore be defined to be the "centre of mass" (Sanderson, 2019) of the entire function.

If we take discrete intervals of t and obtain the value of $f(t)$, then by taking the average of all those values, we obtain a complex number close to c_0 . This is illustrated by Figure 2.

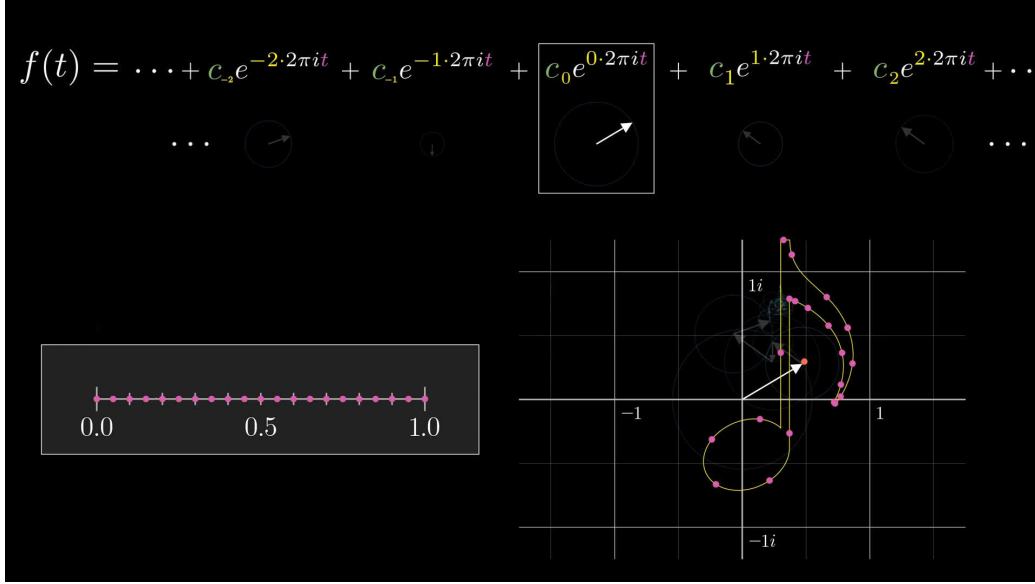


Figure 2: Averaging points throughout $f(t)$ illustrated (Sanderson, 2019). The number line represent t , and the red dots on the musical note represent the resulting values of $f(t)$

With finer and finer intervals of t , the result becomes more and more accurate to the value of c_0 , therefore it can be said that:

$$c_0 = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \sum_{t=0}^{\frac{1}{\Delta t}} f(t \cdot \Delta t) \Delta t \quad (3)$$

From Equation **(3)**, c_0 can ultimately be expressed as:

$$c_0 = \int_0^1 f(t) dt \quad (4)$$

$$c_n = \int_0^1 f(t) e^{-n \cdot 2\pi i t} dt \quad (5)$$

All concepts of this section come from (Sanderson, 2019)

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