

(3) and determine a and b so that u satisfies the boundary conditions $u = 110$ on the circle $x^2 + y^2 = 1$ and $u = 0$ on the circle $x^2 + y^2 = 100$.

16–23 PDEs SOLVABLE AS ODEs

This happens if a PDE involves derivatives with respect to one variable only (or can be transformed to such a form), so that the other variable(s) can be treated as parameter(s). Solve for $u = u(x, y)$:

16. $u_{yy} = 0$

17. $u_{xx} + 16\pi^2 u = 0$

18. $25u_{yy} - 4u = 0$ 19. $u_y + y^2 u = 0$

20. $2u_{xx} + 9u_x + 4u = -3 \cos x - 29 \sin x$

21. $u_{yy} + 6u_y + 13u = 4e^{3y}$

22. $u_{xy} = u_x$ 23. $x^2 u_{xx} + 2xu_x - 2u = 0$

24. **Surface of revolution.** Show that the solutions $z = z(x, y)$ of $yz_x = xz_y$ represent surfaces of revolution. Give examples. *Hint.* Use polar coordinates r, θ and show that the equation becomes $z_\theta = 0$.

25. **System of PDEs.** Solve $u_{xx} = 0, u_{yy} = 0$

12.2 Modeling: Vibrating String, Wave Equation

In this section we model a vibrating string, which will lead to our first important PDE, that is, equation (3) which will then be solved in Sec. 12.3. *The student should pay very close attention to this delicate modeling process and detailed derivation starting from scratch*, as the skills learned can be applied to modeling other phenomena in general and in particular to modeling a vibrating membrane (Sec. 12.7).

We want to derive the PDE modeling small transverse vibrations of an elastic string, such as a violin string. We place the string along the x -axis, stretch it to length L , and fasten it at the ends $x = 0$ and $x = L$. We then distort the string, and at some instant, call it $t = 0$, we release it and allow it to vibrate. The problem is to determine the vibrations of the string, that is, to find its deflection $u(x, t)$ at any point x and at any time $t > 0$; see Fig. 286.

$u(x, t)$ will be the solution of a PDE that is the model of our physical system to be derived. This PDE should not be too complicated, so that we can solve it. Reasonable simplifying assumptions (just as for ODEs modeling vibrations in Chap. 2) are as follows.

Physical Assumptions

1. The mass of the string per unit length is constant (“homogeneous string”). The string is perfectly elastic and does not offer any resistance to bending.
2. The tension caused by stretching the string before fastening it at the ends is so large that the action of the gravitational force on the string (trying to pull the string down a little) can be neglected.
3. The string performs small transverse motions in a vertical plane; that is, every particle of the string moves strictly vertically and so that the deflection and the slope at every point of the string always remain small in absolute value.

Under these assumptions we may expect solutions $u(x, t)$ that describe the physical reality sufficiently well.

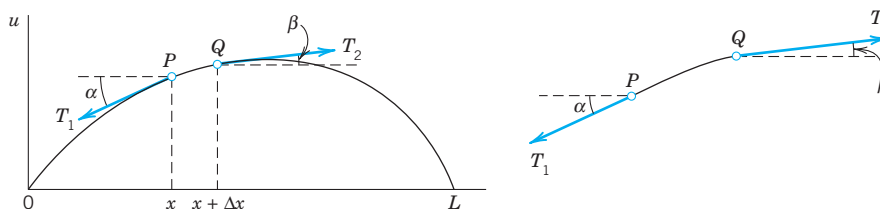


Fig. 286. Deflected string at fixed time t . Explanation on p. 544

Derivation of the PDE of the Model ("Wave Equation") from Forces

The model of the vibrating string will consist of a PDE ("wave equation") and additional conditions. To obtain the PDE, we consider the *forces acting on a small portion of the string* (Fig. 286). This method is typical of modeling in mechanics and elsewhere.

Since the string offers no resistance to bending, the tension is tangential to the curve of the string at each point. Let T_1 and T_2 be the tension at the endpoints P and Q of that portion. Since the points of the string move vertically, there is no motion in the horizontal direction. Hence the horizontal components of the tension must be constant. Using the notation shown in Fig. 286, we thus obtain

$$(1) \quad T_1 \cos \alpha = T_2 \cos \beta = T = \text{const.}$$

In the vertical direction we have two forces, namely, the vertical components $-T_1 \sin \alpha$ and $T_2 \sin \beta$ of T_1 and T_2 ; here the minus sign appears because the component at P is directed downward. By **Newton's second law** (Sec. 2.4) the resultant of these two forces is equal to the mass $\rho \Delta x$ of the portion times the acceleration $\partial^2 u / \partial t^2$, evaluated at some point between x and $x + \Delta x$; here ρ is the mass of the undeflected string per unit length, and Δx is the length of the portion of the undeflected string. (Δ is generally used to denote small quantities; this has nothing to do with the Laplacian ∇^2 , which is sometimes also denoted by Δ .) Hence

$$T_2 \sin \beta - T_1 \sin \alpha = \rho \Delta x \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2}.$$

Using (1), we can divide this by $T_2 \cos \beta = T_1 \cos \alpha = T$, obtaining

$$(2) \quad \frac{T_2 \sin \beta}{T_2 \cos \beta} - \frac{T_1 \sin \alpha}{T_1 \cos \alpha} = \tan \beta - \tan \alpha = \frac{\rho \Delta x}{T} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2}.$$

Now $\tan \alpha$ and $\tan \beta$ are the slopes of the string at x and $x + \Delta x$:

$$\tan \alpha = \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right) \Big|_x \quad \text{and} \quad \tan \beta = \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right) \Big|_{x+\Delta x}.$$

Here we have to write *partial* derivatives because u also depends on time t . Dividing (2) by Δx , we thus have

$$\frac{1}{\Delta x} \left[\left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right) \Big|_{x+\Delta x} - \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right) \Big|_x \right] = \frac{\rho}{T} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2}.$$

If we let Δx approach zero, we obtain the linear PDE

$$(3) \quad \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}, \quad c^2 = \frac{T}{\rho}.$$

This is called the **one-dimensional wave equation**. We see that it is homogeneous and of the second order. The physical constant T/ρ is denoted by c^2 (instead of c) to indicate

that this constant is *positive*, a fact that will be essential to the form of the solutions. “One-dimensional” means that the equation involves only one space variable, x . In the next section we shall complete setting up the model and then show how to solve it by a general method that is probably the most important one for PDEs in engineering mathematics.

12.3 Solution by Separating Variables. Use of Fourier Series

We continue our work from Sec. 12.2, where we modeled a vibrating string and obtained the one-dimensional wave equation. We now have to complete the model by adding additional conditions and then solving the resulting model.

The model of a vibrating elastic string (a violin string, for instance) consists of the **one-dimensional wave equation**

$$(1) \quad \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} \quad c^2 = \frac{T}{\rho}$$

for the unknown deflection $u(x, t)$ of the string, a PDE that we have just obtained, and some **additional conditions**, which we shall now derive.

Since the string is fastened at the ends $x = 0$ and $x = L$ (see Sec. 12.2), we have the two **boundary conditions**

$$(2) \quad (a) \quad u(0, t) = 0, \quad (b) \quad u(L, t) = 0, \quad \text{for all } t \geq 0.$$

Furthermore, the form of the motion of the string will depend on its *initial deflection* (deflection at time $t = 0$), call it $f(x)$, and on its *initial velocity* (velocity at $t = 0$), call it $g(x)$. We thus have the two **initial conditions**

$$(3) \quad (a) \quad u(x, 0) = f(x), \quad (b) \quad u_t(x, 0) = g(x) \quad (0 \leq x \leq L)$$

where $u_t = \partial u / \partial t$. We now have to find a solution of the PDE (1) satisfying the conditions (2) and (3). This will be the solution of our problem. We shall do this in three steps, as follows.

Step 1. By the “**method of separating variables**” or *product method*, setting $u(x, t) = F(x)G(t)$, we obtain from (1) two ODEs, one for $F(x)$ and the other one for $G(t)$.

Step 2. We determine solutions of these ODEs that satisfy the boundary conditions (2).

Step 3. Finally, using **Fourier series**, we compose the solutions found in Step 2 to obtain a solution of (1) satisfying both (2) and (3), that is, the solution of our model of the vibrating string.

Step 1. Two ODEs from the Wave Equation (1)

In the **method of separating variables**, or *product method*, we determine solutions of the wave equation (1) of the form

$$(4) \quad u(x, t) = F(x)G(t)$$