

Advanced Engineering Mathematics Ordinary Differential Equations Notes

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1 Introduction to Differential Equations

1.1 Definitions and Terminology

- An equation containing the derivatives of one or more dependent variables, with respect to one or more independent variables, is said to be a **differential equation** (DE)

- An **ordinary DE** (ODE) is a DE that contains only ordinary (i.e. non-partial) derivatives of one or more functions with respect to a single independent variable
- A **partial DE** is a DE that contains only partial derivatives of one or more functions of two or more independent variables
- The **order** of a DE is the order of the highest derivative in the equation
- First order ODEs are sometimes written in the **differential form**

$$M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$$

- n -th order ODEs in one dependent variable can be expressed by the **general form**

$$F(x, y, y', \dots, y^{(n)}) = 0$$

- It's possible to solve ODEs in the general form uniquely for the highest derivative $y^{(n)}$ in terms of the other $n + 1$ variables, allowing them to be expressed in the **normal form**

$$\frac{d^n y}{dx^n} = f(x, y, y', \dots, y^{(n-1)})$$

- An n -th order ODE is said be **linear** in the variable y if it can be expressed in the form

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y - g(x) = 0$$

i.e. the dependent variable y and all of its derivatives aren't raised to a power or used in nonlinear functions like e^y or $\sin y$, and the coefficients a_0, a_1, \dots, a_n depend at most on the independent variable x

- A **nonlinear** ODE is one that is not linear
- A **solution** to an ODE is a function ϕ , defined on an interval I and possessing at least n derivatives that are continuous on I , such that

$$F(x, \phi(x), \phi'(x), \dots, \phi^n(x)) = 0 \text{ for all } x \text{ in } I.$$

- The **interval of definition**, **interval of validity**, or the **domain** of a solution is the interval over which the solution is valid
- A solution of a DE that is 0 on an interval I is said to be a **trivial solution**
- Because solutions to DEs must be differentiable over their interval of validity, discontinuities, etc. must be excluded from the interval
- An **explicit solution** to an ODE is one where the dependent variable is expressed solely in terms of the independent variable and constants

- An **implicit solution** to an ODE is a relation $G(x, y) = 0$ over an interval I provided there exists at least one function ϕ that satisfies the relation as well as the ODE on I
- When solving a first-order ODE we usually obtain a solution containing a single arbitrary constant or parameter c . A solution containing an arbitrary constant represents a set of solutions called a **one-parameter family of solutions**
- When solving an n -th order DE we usually obtain an **n -parameter family of solutions**
- A solution of a DE that is free from arbitrary parameters is called a **particular solution**
- A **singular solution** is a solution to a DE that isn't a member of a family of solutions
- A **system of ODEs** is two or more equations involving the derivatives of two or more unknown functions of a single independent variable. A solution of such a system is a differentiable function for each equation defined on a common interval I that satisfy each equation of the system on that interval

1.2 Initial Value Problems

- An **initial value problem** is the problem of solving a DE with some given **initial conditions**, e.g. solve

$$\frac{d^n y}{dx^n} = f(x, y, y', \dots, y^{(n-1)})$$

subject to

$$y(x_0) = y_0, y'(x_0) = y_1, \dots, y^{(n-1)}(x_0) = y_{n-1}$$

- The domain of $y = f(x)$ differs depending on how it's considered:
 - As a function its domain is all real numbers for which it's defined
 - As a solution of a DE its domain is a single interval over which it's defined and differentiable
 - As a solution of an initial value problem its domain is a single interval over which it's defined, differentiable, and contains the initial conditions
- An initial value problem may not have any solutions. If it does it may have multiple.

- First-order initial value problems of the form

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f(x, y)$$

$$y(x_0) = y_0$$

are guaranteed to have a unique solution over an interval I containing x_0 if $f(x, y)$ and $\partial f/\partial y$ are continuous

1.3 Differential Equations as Mathematical Models

- A **mathematical model** is a mathematical description of a system or phenomenon
- The **level of resolution** of a model determines how many variables are included in the model
- A simple model of the growth of a population P is

$$\frac{dP}{dt} = kP$$

where $k > 0$

- A simple model of radioactive decay of an amount of substance A is

$$\frac{dA}{dt} = kA$$

where $k < 0$

- Newton's empirical law of cooling/warming states that the rate of change of the temperature of a body is proportional to the difference between the temperature of the body and the temperature of the surrounding medium

$$\frac{dT}{dt} = k(T - T_m)$$

2 First-Order Differential Equations

2.1 Solution Curves Without a Solution

- An ODE in which the independent variable doesn't appear is said to be **autonomous**, e.g.

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f(y)$$

- A real number c is a **critical/equilibrium/stationary point** of an autonomous DE if it is a zero of f
- If c is a critical point of an autonomous DE, then $y(x) = c$ is a solution

- A solution of the form $y(x) = c$ is called an **equilibrium solution**
- We can draw several conclusions about the solutions of an autonomous DE with n critical points and $n + 1$ subregions bounded by the critical points:
 - If (x_0, y_0) is in a subregion, it remains in that subregion for all x
 - By continuity, $f(y) < 0$ or $f(y) > 0$ for all y in a subregion and thus $y(x)$ can't have maximum/minimum points or oscillate
 - If $y(x)$ is bounded above by a critical point c_1 , it must approach $y(x) = c_1$ as $x \rightarrow -\infty$ or $x \rightarrow \infty$
 - If $y(x)$ is bounded above and below by critical points c_1 and c_2 , it must approach $y(x) = c_1$ as $x \rightarrow -\infty$ and $y(x) = c_2$ as $x \rightarrow \infty$ or vice versa
 - If $y(x)$ is bounded below by a critical point c_1 , it must approach $y(x) = c_1$ as $x \rightarrow -\infty$ or $x \rightarrow \infty$

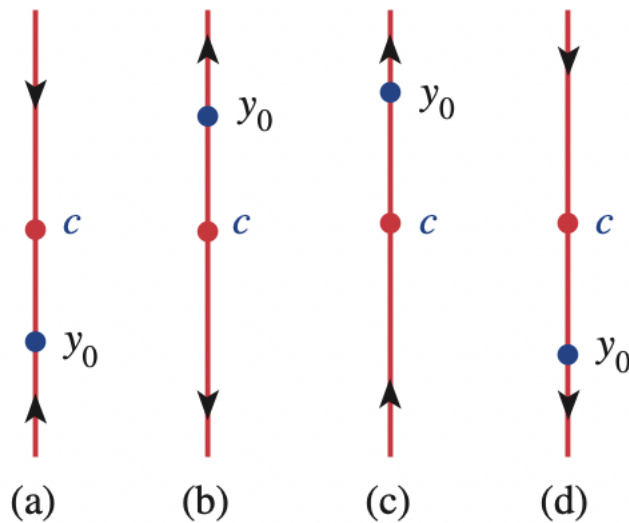


FIGURE 2.1.8 Critical point c is an attractor in (a), a repeller in (b), and semi-stable in (c) and (d)

- If $y(x)$ is a solution of an autonomous differential equation $dy/dx = f(y)$, then $y_1(x) = y(x - k)$, where k is a constant, is also a solution

2.2 Separable Equations

- A first-order ODE of the form

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = g(x)h(y)$$

is said to be **separable** or to have **separate variables**

- A separable first-order ODE can be solved by dividing both sides by $h(y)$ then integrating both sides with respect to x

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dy}{dx} &= g(x)h(y) \\ \frac{1}{h(y)} \frac{dy}{dx} &= g(x) \\ \int \frac{1}{h(y)} \frac{dy}{dx} dx &= \int g(x) dx \\ \int \frac{1}{h(y)} dy &= \int g(x) dx \\ H(y) &= G(x) + c\end{aligned}$$

- Care should be taken when dividing by $h(y)$ as it removes constant solutions $y = r$ where $h(r) = 0$

2.3 Linear Equations

- A first-order DE of the form

$$a_1(x) \frac{dy}{dx} + a_0(x)y = g(x)$$

or in standard form

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + P(x)y = f(x)$$

is said to be a **linear equation** in the dependent variable y

- When $g(x) = 0$ or $f(x) = 0$ the linear equation is said to be **homogeneous** and is solvable via separation of variables, otherwise it is **nonhomogeneous**
- The nonhomogeneous linear equation's solution is the sum of two solutions $y = y_c + y_p$ where y_c is a solution of the associated homogeneous equation

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + P(x)y = 0$$

and y_p is a particular solution of the nonhomogeneous equation

- Nonhomogeneous linear equations can be solved via **variation of parameters**:
 1. Put it into standard form
 2. Determine the **integrating factor** $e^{\int P(x) dx}$
 3. Multiply by the integrating factor
 4. Recognise that the left hand side of the equation is the derivative of the product of the integrating factor and y
 5. Integrate both sides of the equation
 6. Solve for y
- The **general solution** of a DE is a family of solutions that contains all possible solutions (except singular solutions)
- A term $y = f(x)$ in a solution is called a **transient term** if $f(x) \rightarrow 0$ as $x \rightarrow \infty$
- When either $P(x)$ or $f(x)$ is a piecewise-defined function the equation is then referred to as a **piecewise-linear differential equation** that can be solved by solving each interval in isolation then choosing appropriate constants to ensure the overall solution is continuous
- The **error function** and **complementary error function** are defined

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{erf} x + \operatorname{erfc} x &= 1 \\ \left(\frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_0^x e^{-t^2} dt \right) + \left(\frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_x^\infty e^{-t^2} dt \right) &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

2.4 Exact Equations

- The **differential** of a function $z = f(x, y)$ is

$$dz = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} dx + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} dy$$

- A differential expression $M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy$ is an **exact differential** in the region R of the xy -plane if it corresponds to the differential of some function $f(x, y)$
- A first-order DE of the form

$$M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$$

is said to be an **exact equation** if the expression on the left side is an exact differential

- A necessary and sufficient condition that $M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy$ be an exact differential is

$$\frac{\partial M}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial N}{\partial x}$$

- Exact differentials can be solved by

1. Integrating $M(x, y)$ with respect to x to find an expression for $f(x, y)$

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial f}{\partial x} &= M(x, y) \\ f(x, y) &= \int M(x, y) dx + g(y)\end{aligned}$$

2. Differentiating $f(x, y)$ with respect to y and equating it to $N(x, y)$ to find $g'(y)$

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial f}{\partial y} &= N(x, y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \int M(x, y) dx + g'(y) \\ g'(y) &= N(x, y) - \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \int M(x, y) dx\end{aligned}$$

3. Integrating $g'(y)$ with respect to y to find $g(y)$ and substituting it into $f(x, y)$
4. Equating $f(x, y)$ with an unknown constant c

- x and y can be swapped in the steps above (i.e. you can start by integrating $N(x, y)$ with respect to y , etc.)
- A nonexact DE $M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$ can sometimes be transformed into an exact DE by finding an appropriate integrating factor

- If $(M_y - N_x)/N$ is a function of x alone, then an integrating factor is

$$\mu(x) = e^{\int \frac{M_y - N_x}{N} dx}$$

- If $(N_x - M_y)/M$ is a function of y alone, then an integrating factor is

$$\mu(y) = e^{\int \frac{N_x - M_y}{M} dy}$$

2.5 Solutions by Substitution

- A function $f(x, y)$ is said to be a **homogeneous function** of degree α if

$$f(tx, ty) = t^\alpha f(x, y)$$

- A first-order DE of the form

$$M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$$

is said to be **homogeneous** if both M and N are homogeneous functions of the same degree

- To solve a homogeneous first-order DE:

1. Rewrite it as

$$M(x, y) = x^\alpha M(1, u) \text{ and } N(x, y) = x^\alpha N(1, u) \text{ where } u = y/x$$

or

$$M(x, y) = y^\alpha M(v, 1) \text{ and } N(x, y) = y^\alpha N(v, 1) \text{ where } v = x/y$$

2. Substitute $y = ux$ and $dy = u dx + x du$ or $x = vy$ and $dx = v dy + y dv$ as appropriate
3. Solve the resulting first-order separable DE
4. Substitute $u = y/x$ or $v = x/y$ as appropriate

- The DE

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + P(x)y = f(x)y^n$$

where n is any real number is called **Bernoulli's equation**

- For $n = 0$ and $n = 1$ Bernoulli's equation is linear

- To solve Bernoulli's equation for $n \neq 0$ and $n \neq 1$:

1. Substitute $y = u^{1/(1-n)}$ and $\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{d}{dx}(u^{1/(1-n)})$
2. Solve the resulting linear equation
3. Substitute $u = y^{n-1}$

- A DE of the form

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f(Ax + By + C)$$

can always be reduced to an equation with separable variables by means of the substitution

$$u = Ax + By + C, B \neq 0$$

2.6 A Numerical Method

- Approximate values for points on a solution curve near an initial point can be calculated via a **linearization** of the solution curve — a straight line that has the same slope as the initial point and passes through it
- **Euler's method** approximates a solution curve by iteratively stepping along its linearizations

$$y_{n+1} = y_n + hf(x_n, y_n)$$

where h is the **step size**

2.9 Modeling with Systems of First-Order DEs

- In a system of DEs

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = g_1(t, x, y)$$

and

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = g_2(t, x, y)$$

if g_1 and g_2 are linear in x and y , i.e.

$$g_1(t, x, y) = c_1x + c_2y + f_1(t)$$

and

$$g_2(t, x, y) = c_3x + c_4y + f_2(t)$$

it is said to be a **linear system**

3 Higher-Order Differential Equations

3.1 Theory of Linear Equations

- An **n th-order initial-value problem (IVP)** is to solve

$$a_n(x)\frac{d^n y}{dx^n} + a_{n-1}(x)\frac{d^{n-1}y}{dx^{n-1}} + \cdots + a_1(x)\frac{dy}{dx} + a_0(x)y = g(x)$$

subject to

$$y(x_0) = y_0, y'(x_0) = y_1, \dots, y^{(n-1)}(x_0) = y_{n-1}$$

- If $a_n(x)$, $a_{n-1}(x)$, \dots , $a_1(x)$, $a_0(x)$, and $g(x)$ are continuous on an interval I and $a_n(x) \neq 0$ for every x in the interval, then a unique solution exists for the above IVP for every $x = x_0$ within the interval
- An **initial value problem** is when all of the constraints are located at the same point while a **boundary value problem** is when they're at different points
- Boundary value problems may have many, one, or no solutions
- When $g(x) = 0$ the DE is said to be **homogeneous**, otherwise it's **non-homogeneous**
- The symbol D is called a **differential operator** because it transforms a differentiable function into another function

$$Dy = \frac{dy}{dx}$$

- Higher-order derivatives can be expressed as

$$D^n = \frac{d^n y}{dx^n}$$

- An **n th-order differential operator** is defined to be

$$L = a_n(x)D^n + a_{n-1}(x)D^{n-1} + \cdots + a_1(x)D + a_0(x)$$

- As a consequence of the properties of differentiation

$$D(cf(x)) = cDf(x)$$

and

$$D\{f(x) + g(x)\} = Df(x) + Dg(x)$$

- The superposition principle for homogeneous linear n th-order differential equation states that if y_1, y_2, \dots, y_k are solutions of the equation on an interval I then the linear combination

$$y = c_1 y_1(x) + c_2 y_2(x) + \cdots + c_k y_k(x)$$

where c_i are arbitrary constants is also a solution on the interval

- A set of functions $f_1(x), f_2(x), \dots, f_n(x)$ is said to be **linearly dependent** on an interval I if there exists constants c_1, c_2, \dots, c_n , not all zero, such that

$$c_1 f_1(x) + c_2 f_2(x) + \cdots + c_n f_n(x) = 0$$

for every x in the interval. Otherwise it is said to be **linearly independent**

- The **Wronskian** of a set of n functions that are $n - 1$ times differentiable is defined as

$$W(f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n) = \begin{vmatrix} f_1 & f_2 & \cdots & f_n \\ f_1' & f_2' & \cdots & f_n' \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ f_1^{(n-1)} & f_2^{(n-1)} & \cdots & f_n^{(n-1)} \end{vmatrix}$$

- If y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n are n solutions to a homogeneous linear n th-order differential equation on an interval I then the set of solutions is **linearly independent** on I iff $W(y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n) \neq 0$ for every x in the interval
- Any set of n linearly independent solutions of a homogeneous linear n th-order differential equation on an interval I is said to be a **fundamental set of solutions** on the interval

- If y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n are a fundamental set of solutions of a homogeneous linear n th-order DE on an interval I then the **general solution** of the equation on the interval is

$$y = c_1 y_1(x) + c_2 y_2(x) + \dots + c_n y_n(x)$$

where c_i are arbitrary constants

- Another way of saying the above is that any solution on the interval can be expressed as a linear combination of the fundamental set of solutions
- A linear combination of a fundamental set of solutions of a homogeneous linear n th-order DE

$$y_c(x) = c_1 y_1(x) + c_2 y_2(x) + \dots + c_n y_n(x)$$

is called the **complementary function** of associated nonhomogeneous DEs

- If y_p is any particular solution to a nonhomogeneous linear n th-order DE on an interval I and y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n are a fundamental set of solutions of the associated homogeneous DE on I , then the **general solution** of the equation on the interval is

$$y = c_1 y_1(x) + c_2 y_2(x) + \dots + c_n y_n(x) + y_p(x)$$

where c_i are arbitrary constants

- Another way of saying the above is that any solution on the interval can be expressed as $y = y_c + y_p$
- The superposition for nonhomogeneous linear n th-order differential equations states that if $y_{p_1}, y_{p_2}, \dots, y_{p_k}$ are k particular solutions of a nonhomogeneous linear n th-order differential equation on an interval I corresponding, in turn, to k distinct functions g_1, g_2, \dots, g_k , then

$$y_p(x) = y_{p_1}(x) + y_{p_2}(x) + \dots + y_{p_k}(x)$$

is a particular solution of

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_0(x)y = g_1(x) + g_2(x) + \dots + g_k(x)$$

3.2 Reduction of Order

- The **reduction of order** method requires knowledge of one non-trivial solution and comprises the following steps:

1. Recognise that the ratio of two linearly independent functions isn't constant, i.e.

$$u(x) = \frac{y_1(x)}{y_2(x)} \text{ or } y_2(x) = u(x)y_1(x)$$

2. Substitute $y_2(x) = u(x)y_1(x)$ into the DE — this will result in a DE involving only u'' and u' which can be treated as a linear first-order DE in $u' = w$
 3. Solve for w
 4. Substitute $w = u'$
 5. Integrate to find u
 6. Multiply by y_1 to find y_2
- A formula for the above on a DE in standard form

$$y'' + P(x)y' + Q(x)y = 0$$

is

$$y_2 = y_1(x) \int \frac{e^{-\int P(x) dx}}{y_1^2(x)} dx$$

3.3 Homogeneous Linear Equations with Constant Coefficients

- All solutions to homogenous linear DEs

$$a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \cdots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = 0$$

where a_i are real constants and $a_n \neq 0$ are either exponential functions or constructed from exponential functions

- Substituting a solution $y = e^{mx}$ we find

$$e^{mx}(a_n m^n + a_{n-1} m^{n-1} + \cdots + a_1 m + a_0) = 0$$

where the term in brackets is called the **auxiliary equation** of the DE

- Thus, the solution $y = e^{mx}$ is valid if m is a root of the auxiliary equation
- Real roots correspond to solutions of the form

$$y = ce^{mx}$$

- Complex roots $\alpha \pm i\beta$ correspond to solutions of the form

$$y_1 = c_1 e^{\alpha x} \cos \beta x \text{ and } y_2 = c_2 e^{\alpha x} \sin \beta x$$

- A root m of multiplicity k corresponds to the solutions

$$e^{mx}, xe^{mx}, x^2 e^{mx}, \dots, x^{k-1} e^{mx}$$

3.4 Undetermined Coefficients

- The **method of undetermined coefficients** may be used to find a particular solution to nonhomogenous linear differential equations where the input function is comprised of constants, polynomials, exponentials $e^{\alpha x}$, sines, and cosines
- To apply the method you:
 1. Solve the associated homogeneous equation
 2. Assume the particular solution has the same form as the input function
 3. If a term in the proposed solution is present in the complementary function, multiply it by x^n where n is the smallest positive integer that removes the duplication
 4. Substitute the proposed solution into the DE
 5. Solve for the unknown constants

TABLE 3.4.1 Trial Particular Solutions

$g(x)$	Form of y_p
1. 1 (any constant)	A
2. $5x + 7$	$Ax + B$
3. $3x^2 - 2$	$Ax^2 + Bx + C$
4. $x^3 - x + 1$	$Ax^3 + Bx^2 + Cx + E$
5. $\sin 4x$	$A \cos 4x + B \sin 4x$
6. $\cos 4x$	$A \cos 4x + B \sin 4x$
7. e^{5x}	Ae^{5x}
8. $(9x - 2)e^{5x}$	$(Ax + B)e^{5x}$
9. $x^2 e^{5x}$	$(Ax^2 + Bx + C)e^{5x}$
10. $e^{3x} \sin 4x$	$Ae^{3x} \cos 4x + Be^{3x} \sin 4x$
11. $5x^2 \sin 4x$	$(Ax^2 + Bx + C) \cos 4x + (Ex^2 + Fx + G) \sin 4x$
12. $xe^{3x} \cos 4x$	$(Ax + B)e^{3x} \cos 4x + (Cx + E)e^{3x} \sin 4x$

3.5 Variation of Parameters

- The **method of variation of parameters** can be used to find a particular solution of a nonhomogeneous linear n th-order DE
- To apply the method you:
 1. Solve the homogeneous equation to find the complementary function
 2. Assume the solution has the form

$$y_p = u_1(x)y_1(x) + \cdots + u_n(x)y_n(x)$$

where n is the order of the equation and y_i are the fundamental set of solutions from the complementary equation

3. Convert to standard form by dividing by the leading coefficient

$$y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \cdots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = f(x)$$

4. Solve the system of linear equations

$$\begin{aligned}
 y_1 u'_1 + \cdots + y_n u'_n &= 0 \\
 y'_1 u'_1 + \cdots + y'_n u'_n &= 0 \\
 &\vdots \\
 y_1^{(n-1)} u'_1 + \cdots + y_n^{(n-1)} u'_n &= 0 \\
 y_1^{(n)} u'_1 + \cdots + y_n^{(n)} u'_n &= f(x)
 \end{aligned}$$

via Cramer's method:

(a) Compute the Wronskian of y_i

$$W = \begin{vmatrix} y_1 & \cdots & y_n \\ y'_1 & \cdots & y'_n \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ y_1^{(n)} & \cdots & y_n^{(n)} \end{vmatrix}$$

(b) Compute u'_i for $i = 1, \dots, n$ where

$$u'_i = \frac{W_i}{W}$$

and W_i is the determinant of the matrix formed by replacing the i th column of the Wronskian matrix with the column vector

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \\ f(x) \end{bmatrix}$$

5. Integrate each u'_i to find u_i

3.6 Cauchy-Euler Equations

- A **Cauchy-Euler equation** is a linear differential equation of the form

$$a_n x^n \frac{d^n y}{dx^n} + a_{n-1} x^{n-1} \frac{d^{n-1} y}{dx^{n-1}} + \cdots + a_1 x \frac{dy}{dx} + a_0 y = g(x)$$

- To solve a homogeneous Cauchy-Euler equation you:

1. Assume the equation has a solution of the form $y = x^m$, giving

$$\begin{aligned}
 a_n x^n \frac{d^n y}{dx^n} &= a_n x^n m(m-1)(m-2) \cdots (m-n+1) x^{m-n} \\
 &= a_n m(m-1)(m-2) \cdots (m-n+1) x^m
 \end{aligned}$$

and the equation then becomes

$$f(m)x^m = 0$$

where $f(m)$ is a polynomial in m known as the auxiliary or characteristic equation, the roots of which form the general solution

2. Solve the auxiliary equation where

– A real root m corresponds to a solution

$$y = cx^m$$

– Complex roots $\alpha \pm i\beta$ correspond to solutions

$$x^\alpha (c_1 \cos(\beta \ln x) + c_2 \sin(\beta \ln x))$$

– A root m of multiplicity k corresponds to solutions

$$x^m, x^m \ln x, x^m (\ln x)^2 \dots, x^m (\ln x)^{k-1}$$

- To solve a nonhomogeneous Cauchy-Euler equation you:
 1. Solve the associated homogeneous equation
 2. Find a particular solution via variation of parameters

3.7 Nonlinear Equations

- The superposition principle does not hold for nonlinear equations
- Nonlinear second order DEs of the form $F(x, y', y'') = 0$ where y is missing can sometimes be solved by:
 1. Substitute $u = y'$ (and thus $u' = y''$)
 2. Solve the resulting DE for u
 3. Integrate to find y
- Nonlinear second order DEs of the form $F(y, y', y'') = 0$ where x is missing can sometimes be solved by:
 1. Substitute $u = y'$ and

$$y'' = \frac{du}{dy} \frac{dy}{dx} = u \frac{du}{dy}$$

2. Solve the resulting DE for u
 3. Integrate to find y
- Nonlinear initial-value problems can sometimes be solved by substituting the initial conditions into a Taylor series centred at x_0 . The initial conditions can also be substituted into subsequent derivatives to add further terms to the series