

Griffiths Intro to Quantum Mechanics, Self-Study

Selected Solutions for Griffiths' Intro to Quantum Mechanics (3rd)

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Contents

1	The Wave Equation	1
1.1	Exercises	1
2	Time-Independent Schrodinger Equation	17
2.1	Exercises	17

Preface

TODO blah blah

Chapter 1

The Wave Equation

1.1 Exercises

Exercise 1.3

Consider the gaussian distribution

$$\rho(x) = Ae^{-\lambda(x-a)^2}$$

where A, a, λ are all real constants.

- Find A from integrating the probability density over all reals.

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= A \int_{\mathbb{R}} e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx \\ &= A \left[\int_{-\infty}^0 e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx + \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx \right] \\ &= A \left[- \int_0^{-\infty} e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx + \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx \right] \end{aligned}$$

Make substitution of $u = \sqrt{\lambda}(x-a)$. Evaluate the error function accordingly, and note that the adjusted bounds can be reconstructed as the original's.

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} A \left[- \int_0^{-\infty} e^{-u^2} du + \int_0^{\infty} e^{-u^2} du \right] \\ &= \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} A \left[-\cancel{\text{erf}(-\infty)} + \cancel{\text{erf}(0)} \right] \Rightarrow A = \sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\pi}} \end{aligned}$$

$$\therefore \rho(x) = \sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\pi}} e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2}$$

- Find the first two moments of position and the relevant standard deviation.

$$\begin{aligned} \langle x \rangle &= \sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} x e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx = a \\ \langle x^2 \rangle &= \sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^2 e^{-\lambda(x-a)^2} dx = a^2 + \frac{1}{2\lambda} \\ \sigma_x &= \sqrt{\langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\lambda}} \end{aligned}$$

Where we used the fact that odd integrands over a symmetric interval sum to 0 and that the gamma function can be defined via a convergent improper integral.

Exercise 1.4

Given positive constants A, a, and b:

$$\Psi(x, 0) = \begin{cases} A(x/a), & \text{if } 0 \leq x \leq a, \\ A(b-x)/(b-a), & \text{if } a \leq x \leq b \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

- Normalize Ψ .

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |\Psi(x, t)|^2 dx &= 1 \\ A^2 \left(\int_0^a \frac{x^2}{a^2} dx + \int_a^b \frac{(b-x)^2}{(b-a)^2} dx \right) &= 1 \\ A^2 \left(\frac{a}{3} + \frac{b-a}{3} \right) &= 1 \implies A = \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}} \\ \Psi(x, 0) &= \begin{cases} \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}}(x/a), & \text{if } 0 \leq x \leq a, \\ \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}}(b-x)/(b-a), & \text{if } a \leq x \leq b \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

- Where is particle most likely to be found at $t = 0$? Based on plots, you will see it is most likely at position a.
- Probability of finding particle to the left of a? Check with $b = a$ and $b = 2a$.

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^a \left| \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}}(x/a) \right|^2 dx \\ \int_0^a \frac{3}{b}(x^2/a^2) dx &= \frac{a}{b} \end{aligned}$$

- What is the first moment (expected value) of x?

$$\begin{aligned} \langle x \rangle &= \int_0^b x \Psi(x, t) dx = \int_0^a \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}}(x/a) dx + \int_a^b \sqrt[2]{\frac{3}{b}}(b-x)/(b-a) dx \\ &= \frac{b+2a}{4} \end{aligned}$$



Exercise 1.5MOD

Given positive, real constants A , λ , ω :

$$\Psi(x, t) = Ae^{-\lambda|x| - i\omega t}$$

- Normalize Ψ .

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |\Psi(x, t)|^2 dx &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \Psi^* \Psi = 1 \\ \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} A^2 e^{-2\lambda|x|} e^{-i\omega t} e^{i\omega t} dx &= 1 \\ A^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-2\lambda|x|} dx &= 1 \\ A^2 \left(\int_{-\infty}^0 e^{-2\lambda \cdot (-x)} dx + \int_0^{\infty} e^{-2\lambda \cdot (x)} dx \right) &= 1 \\ A^2 \left(\frac{1}{2\lambda} e^{2\lambda x} \right) \Big|_{-\infty}^0 - A^2 \left(\frac{1}{2\lambda} e^{-2\lambda x} \right) \Big|_0^{\infty} &= 1 \\ \frac{A^2}{\lambda} = 1 &\implies A = \sqrt[2]{\lambda} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi(x, t) &= \sqrt{\lambda} e^{-\lambda|x| - i\omega t} \\ |\Psi(x, t)|^2 &= \Psi^* \Psi = \lambda e^{-\lambda|x| - i\omega t} e^{-\lambda|x| + i\omega t} = \lambda e^{-2\lambda|x|} \end{aligned}$$

- Find the n^{th} moment.

$$\begin{aligned} \langle x^n \rangle &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^n \lambda e^{-2\lambda|x|} dx \\ &= \lambda \left(\int_{-\infty}^0 x^n e^{2\lambda x} + \int_0^{\infty} x^n e^{-2\lambda x} \right) dx \end{aligned}$$

Now note the following is smells like the gamma function, and make substitution of $u = -x$ to change limits (also note that n is positive to extract the alternating negative one):

$$I_{n-} = \int_{-\infty}^0 x^n e^{2\lambda x} dx = \int_{\infty}^0 (-u)^n e^{2\lambda(-u)} (-du) = - \int_{\infty}^0 (-1)^n u^n e^{-2\lambda u} du = (-1)^n \int_0^{\infty} x^n e^{-2\lambda x} dx$$

By using substitution of the type $u = 2\lambda x$ we get,

$$I_{n-} = \frac{(-1)^n}{2\lambda(2\lambda)^n} \int_0^{\infty} e^{-u} u^n du = \frac{(-1)^n}{(2\lambda)^{n+1}} \Gamma(n+1), \quad \text{Re}(n) > -1$$

where the last equation can be used to show the required base case of $I_0 = \frac{1}{2\lambda}$. A similar analysis for the second integrand gives us the combined relation

$$\begin{aligned} \langle x^n \rangle &= \lambda I_n = \lambda(I_{n-} + I_{n+}) \\ &= \lambda \left(\frac{(-1)^n + 1}{(2\lambda)^{n+1}} \right) \Gamma(n+1) \end{aligned}$$

For practical purposes, we see that the first few moments give

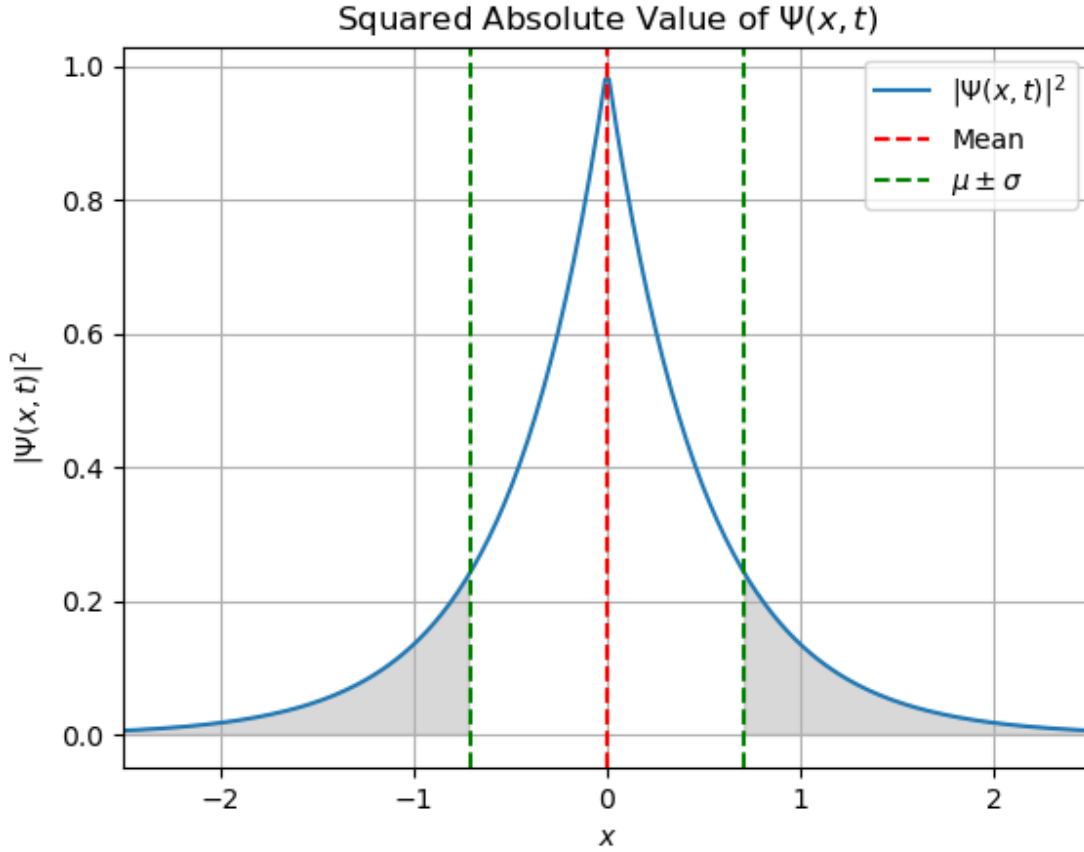
$$\begin{aligned} \langle x \rangle &= 0 \\ \langle x^2 \rangle &= \frac{2\lambda}{8\lambda^3} \Gamma(3) = \frac{1}{2\lambda^2} \\ \langle x^3 \rangle &= 0 \\ \langle x^4 \rangle &= \frac{2\lambda}{32\lambda^5} \Gamma(4) = \frac{3}{8\lambda^4} \end{aligned}$$

- Find standard deviation. Compute probability particle is outside one standard deviation from the mean.

$$\sigma^2 = \langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2 \implies \sigma = \frac{1}{\lambda\sqrt{2}}$$

$$|\Psi(0 \pm \sigma, t)|^2 = |A|^2 e^{-2\lambda\sigma} = \lambda e^{-\sqrt{2}}$$

$$P_{outside} = 1 - P_{inside} = 1 - \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} |\Psi|^2 dx = 1 - |A|^2 \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} e^{-2\lambda|x|} dx = 2\lambda \int_{\sigma}^{\infty} e^{-2\lambda x} dx = e^{-\sqrt{2}}$$



Exercise 1.6

Why can't you do integration-by-parts (IBP) directly in the middle expression of Equation 1.29 – pull the time derivative over into x , note that $\frac{\partial x}{\partial t} = 0$, and conclude that $\frac{\langle x \rangle}{dx} = 0$?

Well, you could but this would not allow us to do IBP over some domain D :

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial x |\Psi|^2}{\partial t} &= \frac{\partial x}{\partial t} |\Psi|^2 + x \frac{\partial |\Psi|^2}{\partial t} = x \frac{\partial |\Psi|^2}{\partial t} \\ \int_{\partial D} x \frac{\partial |\Psi|^2}{\partial t} dx &= \int_{\partial D} \frac{\partial (x |\Psi|^2)}{\partial t} dx \neq (x |\Psi|^2)|_{\partial D} \end{aligned}$$

Exercise 1.7

Calculate $\frac{d\langle p \rangle}{dt}$.

By Ehrenfest's theorem, expectation values are governed by classical laws: $\langle p \rangle = m \langle v \rangle = m \frac{d\langle x \rangle}{dt}$. Recall the time derivatives for the conjugate pairs or derive it yourself. Also note that interchange of differentiation to integration (Leibnitz integral rule) implicitly assumes the (wave) function and its first partial derivative are continuous in time and space (both) in the open neighborhood of $\{x\} \times [a, b]$ for any continuous and differentiable functions a, b. Text assumes all partials continuous, and by extent differentiable (converse not necessarily true). Second order partials assumed continuous for Clairaut's Theorem, C^2 , throughout text.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{d\langle p \rangle}{dt} &= -i\hbar \int \frac{\partial \Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x}}{\partial t} dx \\
 \frac{\partial \Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x}}{\partial t} &= \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial t} \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} + \Psi^* \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x \partial t} \\
 &= \left(\frac{-i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} + \frac{iV(x, t) \Psi^*}{\hbar} \right) \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} + \Psi^* \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left(\frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{iV(x, t) \Psi}{\hbar} \right) / \partial x \\
 &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\frac{\partial^3 \Psi}{\partial x^3} \Psi^* - \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} \right) + \frac{i}{\hbar} \left(V(x, t) \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi^* \frac{\partial V(x, t) \Psi}{\partial x} \right) \\
 &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\frac{\partial^3 \Psi}{\partial x^3} \Psi^* - \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} \right) + \frac{i}{\hbar} \left(V(x, t) \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi^* V(x, t) \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi^* \frac{\partial V(x, t)}{\partial x} \Psi \right) \\
 &= \frac{i}{\hbar} \left(|\Psi|^2 \frac{\partial V(x, t)}{\partial x} \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

Whereby we used IBP twice to drop the first term. Accordingly,

$$\frac{\partial \langle p \rangle}{\partial t} = -i\hbar \frac{i}{\hbar} \int_{\mathbb{R}} -|\Psi|^2 \frac{\partial V}{\partial x} dx = \langle -\frac{\partial V}{\partial x} \rangle$$

Thus, the time derivative of the expectation value of momentum is equal to the position derivative of the expectation value of potential well V.

Exercise 1.8

Suppose we add a constant V_0 to the potential energy. In classical mechanics, this won't change a thing, but what about in quantum mechanics? Show that the function picks up a time-dependent phase factor. What effect does this have on the expectation value of a dynamic variable?

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{i}{\hbar} V(x, t) \Psi(x, t)$$

Set $\zeta(x, t)$ to the wave function holding potential energy $V(x, t) + V_0$ and rewrite to notice a familiar separable PDE,

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial t} &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \zeta}{\partial x^2} - \frac{i}{\hbar} (V(x, t) + V_0) \zeta \\
 \implies \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \zeta}{\partial x^2} - \frac{iV\zeta}{\hbar} &= \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial t} + \frac{iV_0\zeta}{\hbar}
 \end{aligned}$$

We consider the following boundary conditions (BC): $\zeta(\infty, t) = \zeta(-\infty, t) = 0$. We then proceed with letting $\zeta = X(x)T(t)$. Also, for this course, we are dealing mostly with the time-independent wave equation, such

that the potential well is independent of time, $V(x, t) = V(x)$.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \zeta(x, t) &= X(x)T(t) \\
 \zeta(\infty, t) &= X(\infty)T(t) \quad \forall t \implies c_1 = X(\infty) = 0 \\
 \zeta(-\infty, t) &= X(-\infty)T(t) \quad \forall t \implies c_2 = X(-\infty) = 0 \\
 \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 XT}{\partial x^2} - \frac{iV(x)XT}{\hbar} &= \frac{\partial XT}{\partial t} + \frac{iV_0XT}{\hbar} \\
 \frac{i\hbar}{2m} X''T - \frac{iV(x)XT}{\hbar} &= XT' + \frac{iV_0XT}{\hbar} \\
 -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{X''}{X} + V(x) &= \frac{T'}{T} i\hbar - V_0 \\
 k \frac{X''}{X} + V(x) &= \frac{T'}{T} i\hbar - V_0 = E, \text{ up to constant } E, \text{ now decompose to ODEs} \\
 kX'' &= X(E - V(x)), \text{ stop here as we need potential energy specified, else BC gives trivial solutions} \\
 \frac{T'}{T} &= -i \frac{E + V_0}{\hbar}
 \end{aligned}$$

For arbitrary constant C (and thus also ζ_0),

$$\zeta(x, t) = e^{-\frac{i(E+V_0)t}{\hbar} + C} = \zeta_0 e^{-\frac{i(V_0+E)t}{\hbar}}$$

Thus, when plugging this back in to the wave equation (and seeing results from the next chapter!) we note the implication: $\Psi(x, t) = \zeta(x, t)e^{\frac{iV_0}{\hbar}t}$. If we substitute into Equation 1.36, then we see that it remains unchanged. We conclude that this has no effect on the expectation value of a dynamical variable, since the extra phase factor cancels out and is independent of position.

Exercise 1.9MOD

A particle of mass m has the wave function (for positive constants A, a) of

$$\Psi(x, t) = Ae^{-a\frac{mx^2}{\hbar} - ait}$$

- Normalize to find A . Watch video on Gaussian integral if stuck on how to derive it.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi(x, t)|^2 dx &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \Psi dx = 1 \\
 &= A^2 \int_{\mathbb{R}} e^{-\frac{2amx^2}{\hbar}} dx \\
 &= A^2 \sqrt{\frac{\pi\hbar}{2am}} \implies A = \sqrt[4]{\frac{2am}{\pi\hbar}} \\
 \Psi(x, t) &= \sqrt[4]{\frac{2am}{\pi\hbar}} e^{-a\frac{mx^2}{\hbar} - ait}
 \end{aligned}$$

- For which potential energy function, $V(x)$, is this a solution to Schro's wave equation?

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} &= -ia\Psi \\
 \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} &= -\frac{2amx}{\hbar}\Psi \\
 \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} &= \frac{-2am}{\hbar}\left(\Psi + x\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x}\right) \\
 &= \frac{-2am}{\hbar}\left(1 - \frac{2amx^2}{\hbar}\right) \\
 i\hbar\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} &= -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} + V(x)\Psi \\
 V(x) &= i\hbar(-ia\Psi) + \frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\left(1 - \frac{2amx^2}{\hbar}\right)\left(\frac{-2am}{\hbar}\right)\Psi \\
 &= 2a^2mx^2
 \end{aligned}$$

- Find the n^{th} moment.

Recall details in problem 1.5 and note n is a positive constant. Here, we split up the integral as was performed then, for negative infinity to 0 then 0 to positive infinity. This simplifies calculation. We set $C = \frac{2am}{\hbar}$ and use A for constant above.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^n |\Psi(x, t)|^2 dx &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^*[x^n]\Psi dx \\
 &= A^2 \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^n e^{-Cx^2} dx \\
 I_{left} &= \int_{-\infty}^0 x^n e^{-Cx^2} dx = (-1)^n \int_0^{\infty} (x^n) e^{-Cx^2} dx
 \end{aligned}$$

From here, you may use substitution of $u = x^2$, then $z = Cu$, to arrive at:

$$\frac{(-1)^n}{2C^{\frac{n+1}{2}}} \int_0^{\infty} e^{-z} z^{\frac{n-1}{2}} dz = \frac{(-1)^n}{2C^{\frac{n+1}{2}}} \Gamma\left(\frac{n+1}{2}\right)$$

A similar analysis for the positive side results in a similar answer. Combining for the intended integral and substitute back into our original expression:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle x^n \rangle &= \frac{A^2((-1)^n + 1)}{2C^{\frac{n+1}{2}}} \Gamma\left(\frac{n+1}{2}\right) \\
 \langle x \rangle &= 0 \\
 \langle x^2 \rangle &= \frac{1}{2}(2) \sqrt{\frac{2am}{\pi\hbar}} \left(\frac{2am}{\hbar}\right)^{-3/2} \Gamma\left(\frac{3}{2}\right) \\
 &= \frac{\hbar}{4am}
 \end{aligned}$$

- Find the expression for the p^{th} momentum. Note it gives non-trivial position partials for the first five

degrees.

$$\begin{aligned}\langle p^n \rangle &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \left(\frac{\hbar}{i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right)^n \Psi \, dx = \left(\frac{\hbar}{i} \right)^n \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \frac{\partial^n \Psi}{\partial x^n} \\ \langle p \rangle &= 0 \\ \langle p^2 \rangle &= am\hbar\end{aligned}$$

- Find σ_x and σ_p . Is their product consistent with the uncertainty principle?

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma_x &= \sqrt{\langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2} = \frac{\hbar}{4am} \\ \sigma_p &= \sqrt{\langle p^2 \rangle - \langle p \rangle^2} = \sqrt{am\hbar} \\ \sigma_p \sigma_x &= \frac{\hbar}{2} \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}\end{aligned}$$

This implies we have a wave function that barely satisfies the uncertainty principle.

Exercise 1.11

Imagine a mass particle m and energy E in a potential well $V(x)$ sliding back and forth on a frictionless surface between a and b given in Figure 1.10. Classically, the probability of finding particle in range dx is equal to the fraction of time T it takes to get from a to b that it spends on the interval dx , and for speed $v(x)$:

$$\begin{aligned}\rho(x)dx &= \frac{dt}{T} = \frac{\frac{dt}{dx}dx}{T} = \frac{1}{v(x)T}dx \\ T &= \int_0^T dt = \int_a^b \frac{1}{v(x)}dx \\ \Rightarrow \rho(x) &= \frac{1}{v(x)T}\end{aligned}$$

- Use conservation of energy to express speed in terms of potential well and energy.

$$E = U + K = V(x) + \frac{mv(x)^2}{2}$$

- Find the probability density for simple harmonic oscillator, $V(x) = \frac{kx^2}{2}$. Check normalization.

$$\begin{aligned}v(x) &= \pm \sqrt{\frac{2(E - V(x))}{m}} = \pm \sqrt{\frac{2E - kx^2}{m}} \\ \rho(x) &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{2E - kx^2}{m}} \int_{-A}^A \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{2E - kx^2}{m}}} \, dx} \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{2E - kx^2}{m}} \sqrt{\frac{m}{2E}} \int_{-A}^A \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}}} \, dx} \\ &= \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}} \int_0^A \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}}} \, dx}\end{aligned}$$

Now apply a trig substitution to simplify computation; see Paul's online math notes.

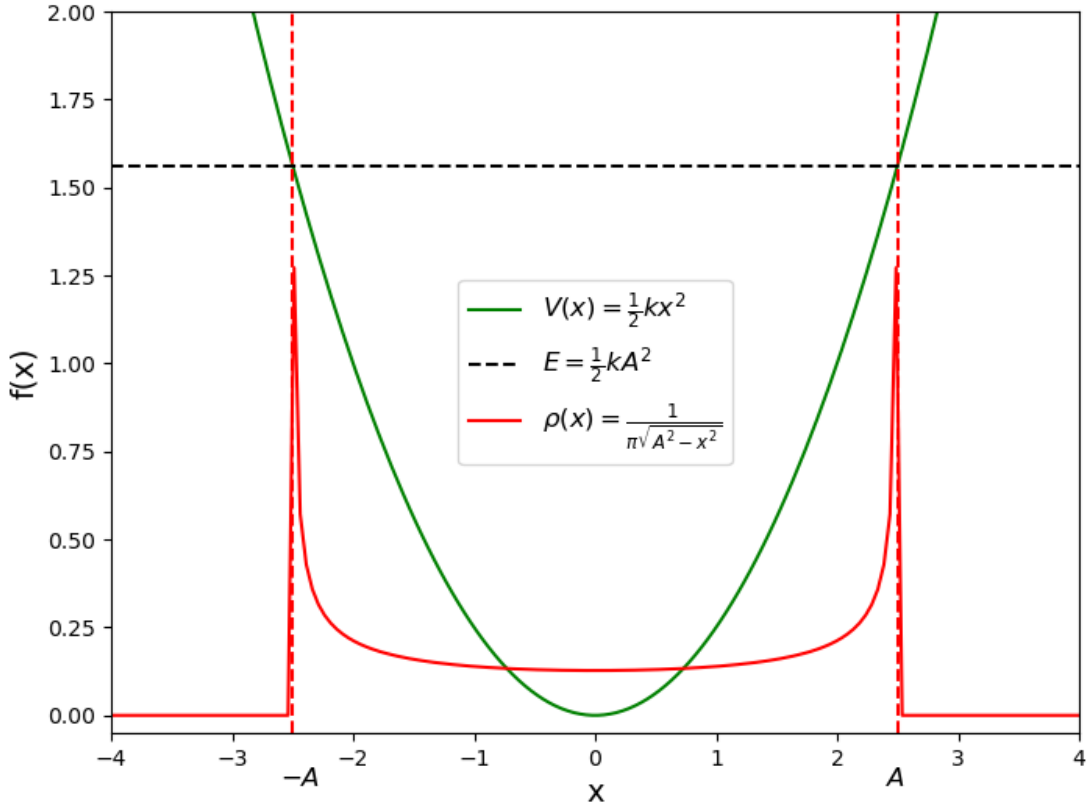
$$\begin{aligned}
 x &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{k}{2E}}} \sin \theta = \sqrt{\frac{2E}{k}} \sin \theta, \quad \theta \in \left[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2} \right] \\
 \cos^2 \theta &= 1 - \sin^2 \theta = 1 - \frac{k}{2E} x^2 \implies \cos \theta = \sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}} \\
 dx &= \sqrt{\frac{2E}{k}} \cos \theta d\theta
 \end{aligned}$$

Where we note that for a SHO, the turning points are at the amplitudes $\pm A$ of the oscillation and apply the familiar trigonometric substitution. We drop \pm to focus on the magnitude of dx .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}} \sqrt{\frac{2E}{k}} \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\sin^{-1} A\sqrt{\frac{k}{2E}}} d\theta} &= \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \frac{kx^2}{2E}} \sqrt{\frac{2E}{k}} \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\sin^{-1} 1} d\theta} \\
 &= \frac{1}{\pi\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}} \\
 \rho(x) &= \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\pi\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}}, & \text{if } -A < x < A, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \\
 \int_{-A}^A \rho(x) dx &= \frac{2}{\pi} \int_0^A \frac{1}{\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}} dx = \frac{2}{\pi} \sin^{-1} \frac{x}{A} \Big|_0^A = 1
 \end{aligned}$$

- Find the first and second expected value of position. Find σ_x . Note that knowing the odd integrand for an even interval yields 0, but can verify with substitution, $u = A^2 - x^2$. It is also helpful to use $x = A \sin \theta$ for the second moment substitution.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle x \rangle &= \int_{-A}^A \frac{x}{\pi\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}} dx / 1 = 0 \\
 \langle x^2 \rangle &= \int_{-A}^A \frac{x^2}{\pi\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}} dx / 1 = \frac{2}{\pi} \left(\frac{-x\sqrt{A^2 - x^2}}{2} + \frac{A^2}{2} \sin^{-1} \frac{x}{A} \right) \Big|_{-A}^A = \frac{A^2}{2} \\
 \sigma_x &= \langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2 \implies \sigma_x = \frac{A}{\sqrt{2}}
 \end{aligned}$$

**Exercise 1.12**

What if we are interested in finding the momenta ($p = mv$) distribution for the classical harmonic oscillator?

- Find the classical probability distribution $\rho(p)$; note that $p \in [-\sqrt{2mE}, \sqrt{2mE}]$. As before, we compute total energy and substitute.

$$\begin{aligned}
 E = U + K &= \frac{kx^2}{2} + \frac{mv(x)^2}{2} = \frac{1}{2}kx^2 + \frac{p(x)^2}{2m} \\
 \Rightarrow x(p) &= \pm \sqrt{\frac{2mE - p^2}{mk}} \\
 dx &= \pm \frac{-p}{mk} \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{2mE - p^2}{mk}}} dp = \mp \frac{p}{mk} \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{2mE - p^2}{mk}}} dp = \mp \frac{p}{mk(2mE - p^2)} dp \\
 \rho(x(p))dx &= \frac{dt}{T} = \frac{\frac{dt}{dx}dx}{T} = \pm \frac{1}{v(x(p))T} dx = \frac{1}{v(x(p))T} \left(\mp \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE - p^2)}} dp \right) \\
 &= \mp \frac{1}{v(p)T} \left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE - p^2)}} dp \right) = \rho(p) \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE - p^2)}} dp \\
 T &= \int_{p(a)}^{p(b)} \mp \frac{1}{v(p)} \underbrace{\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE - p^2)}} dp \right)}_{dx(p)} \\
 \therefore \rho(p) &= \frac{1}{v(p) \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \mp \frac{1}{v(p)} \left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE - p^2)}} dp \right)}
 \end{aligned}$$

Observe $\frac{1}{v(p)} = \frac{dt}{dx(p)}$, and so $\mp C(p) dp \implies \pm dx(p)$. Recall that the net external force equals the change in momentum of a system divided by the time over which it changes. As the particle moves leftward, the change in distance is negative but the change in momentum is positive, so $p(a) = \sqrt{2mE}$ (i.e., it starts to slow down while gaining momentum in the direction of the net restoring force, which pushes the particle in the opposite direction – namely, towards equilibrium where force is net zero.) Similarly, the particle reaches the equilibrium point but has gained momentum, moving past this location, with the restoring force growing to act in the opposite direction to slow the particle and return it to equilibrium; thus, the change in momentum is negative, and so $p(b) = -\sqrt{2mE}$. Energy is conserved if the process repeats ad nauseum without any frictional (damping) forces. To change the limits of integration to the form above, simply note that the inverse relationship holds as expressed in the \mp indication of the integrand. We now drop this entirely to focus on the magnitude of change over the range, $dx(p)$.

$$\begin{aligned}\rho(p) &= \frac{1}{v(p) \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \frac{1}{v(p)} \left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp \right)} \\ &= \frac{1}{\frac{p}{m} \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \frac{1}{\frac{p}{m}} \left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp \right)} \\ &= \frac{1}{\frac{p}{\sqrt{mk}} \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \frac{dp}{\sqrt{2mE-p^2}}}\end{aligned}$$

Make a trigonometric substitution,

$$\begin{aligned}p &= \sqrt{2mE} \sin \theta, \quad \theta \in \left[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2} \right] \\ dp &= \sqrt{2mE} \cos \theta \\ \theta &= \sin^{-1} \frac{p(x)}{\sqrt{2mE}} \\ p^2 &= 2mE \sin^2 \theta \implies 1 - \sin^2 \theta = \cos^2 \theta = 1 - \frac{p^2}{2mE} \\ \therefore 2mE \cos^2 \theta &= 2mE - p^2\end{aligned}$$

Making the substitutions and computing, we see that $\rho(p) = \frac{\sqrt{mk}}{\pi p}$. Also, by using trigonometric substitution, we can show

$$\int \rho(x(p)) dx = \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \rho(p) \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp = \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} \frac{\sqrt{mk}}{\pi p} \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp = 1$$

- Calculate $\langle p \rangle$, $\langle p^2 \rangle$, and σ_p .

$$\begin{aligned}\langle p \rangle &= \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} p \rho(x(p)) dp = \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} p \frac{\sqrt{mk}}{\pi p} \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp = 0 \\ \langle p^2 \rangle &= \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} p^2 \rho(x(p)) dp = \int_{-\sqrt{2mE}}^{\sqrt{2mE}} p^2 \frac{\sqrt{mk}}{\pi p} \frac{p}{\sqrt{mk(2mE-p^2)}} dp = mE \\ \sigma_p &= \sqrt{\langle p^2 \rangle - \langle p \rangle^2} = \sqrt{mE}\end{aligned}$$

- What is the classical uncertainty product $\sigma_x \sigma_p$ for this system? Notice that this product can be as small as you like, classically, simply by sending $E \rightarrow 0$. But in quantum mechanics, the energy of a SHO cannot be less than $\hbar\omega/2$, where $\omega = \sqrt{k/m}$ is the classical frequency. In that case what can you say about the uncertainty product? Recall $\sigma_x = \frac{A}{\sqrt{2}}$ as found previously.

$$\sigma_p \sigma_x = A \sqrt{\frac{mE}{2}}$$

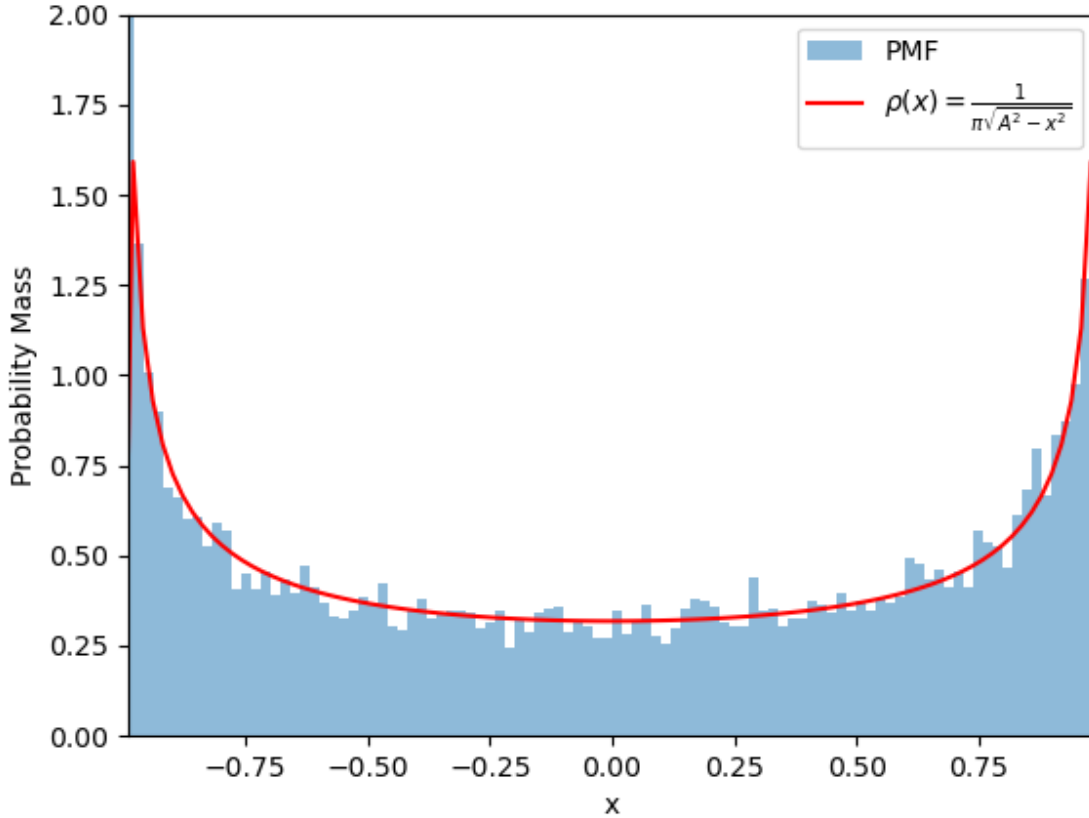
Now, for the quantum case, $E \geq \hbar\omega/2$. Therefore,

$$\sigma_p \sigma_x \geq A \sqrt{\frac{m \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}}{2}} = A \frac{\sqrt{\hbar\omega m}}{2}$$

With a more precisely determined amplitude of oscillation, the more precisely we can determine a particle's position and the less precisely we can determine its momentum. Conversely, with a more precisely determined particle frequency, the more precisely we can determine its momentum and the less precisely we can determine its position.

Aside: From the de Broglie relation, $\lambda = \frac{2\pi\hbar}{p}$. Also note $f = \frac{c}{\lambda}$. This shows that particles with higher momentum have a higher frequency.

Exercise 1.13



Experimental results agree with analytical expression.

Exercise 1.14

Let $P_{ab}(t)$ be the probability of finding the particle in the range $(a < x < b)$, at time t .

- Show that

$$\frac{dP_{ab}}{dt} = J(a, t) - J(b, t)$$

where

$$J(x, t) \equiv \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} - \Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} \right)$$

What are the units of $J(x, t)$? Comment: J is called the probability current, because it tells you the rate at which probability is “flowing” past point x . If $P_{ab}(t)$ is increasing, then the more probability is flowing into the region at one end than flows out the other.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dP_{ab}}{dt} &= \frac{d}{dt} \int_a^b |\Psi|^2 dx = \int_a^b \frac{\partial \Psi^* \Psi}{\partial t} dx \\ &= \int_a^b \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} \Psi^* + \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial t} dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \Psi^* \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} \Psi dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_a^b \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} + \Psi^* \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} \Psi - \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_a^b \frac{\partial \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} \right)}{\partial x} dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial b} - \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial b} \right) - \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial a} - \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial a} \right) \\ &= J(b, t) - J(a, t) \end{aligned}$$

Probabilities don't have a dimension, so then J must have units of 1/time, or s^{-1} , since this is a change in probability per change in time.

- Find the probability current for the wave function to 1.9.

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi(x, t) &= \sqrt{\frac{2am}{\pi\hbar}} e^{-a\frac{mx^2}{\hbar} - ait} = f(x)e^{-ait} \\ \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} &= f(x)e^{-ait} \frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x} e^{ait} = f(x) \frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x} = \Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} \\ \therefore J(x, t) &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

Thus, we see a net zero probability flow in and out of this region: the probability of finding particle at position x is a constant over this region should we have probability current of 0.

Exercise 1.15

Show that

$$\frac{d}{dt} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \Psi dx = 0$$

for any two (normalizable) solutions to Schrod (with the same $V(x)$), Ψ_1 , and Ψ_2 .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{d}{dt} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \Psi \, dx &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{\partial \Psi^* \Psi}{\partial t} \, dx \\
 &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\frac{\partial \Psi_1^*}{\partial t} \Psi_2 + \Psi_1^* \frac{\partial \Psi_2}{\partial t} \right) \, dx \\
 &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(-\frac{\partial^2 \Psi_1^*}{\partial x^2} \Psi_2 + \frac{iV\Psi_1^*}{\hbar} \Psi_2 + \frac{\partial^2 \Psi_2}{\partial x^2} \Psi_1^* - \frac{iV\Psi_2}{\hbar} \Psi_1^* \right) \, dx \\
 &= -\frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\frac{\partial^2 \Psi_1^*}{\partial x^2} \Psi_2 - \frac{\partial^2 \Psi_2}{\partial x^2} \Psi_1^* \right) \, dx \\
 &= -\frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\underbrace{\frac{\partial \Psi_1^*}{\partial x} \Psi_2}_{=0} \Big|_{-\infty}^{\infty} - \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{\partial \Psi_1^*}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \Psi_2}{\partial x} \, dx - \underbrace{\frac{\partial \Psi_2}{\partial x} \Psi_1^*}_{=0} \Big|_{-\infty}^{\infty} + \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{\partial \Psi_1^*}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \Psi_2}{\partial x} \, dx \right) \, dx = 0
 \end{aligned}$$

QED

Exercise 1.16

A particle is represented (at time $t = 0$) by wave function

$$\Psi(x, 0) = \begin{cases} A(a^2 - x^2), & \text{if } -a \leq x \leq a, \\ \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

- Determine normalization constant A .

$$1 = |A|^2 \int_{-a}^a (a^2 - x^2) \, dx \implies A = \frac{1}{4a^2} \sqrt{\frac{15}{a}}$$

- What is the expectation value of x ?

$$\langle x \rangle = \int_{-a}^a x |\Psi|^2 \, dx = 0, \text{ odd integrand}$$

- What is the expectation value of p ? Note that you cannot get it from $\langle p \rangle = m \frac{d\langle x \rangle}{dt}$. Why? Since we only know $\langle x \rangle$ at $t = 0$, we cannot calculate this directly; we would need a Ψ valid for $\forall t$.

$$\langle p \rangle = -i\hbar |A|^2 \int_{-a}^a (a^2 - x^2) \frac{d(a^2 - x^2)}{dx} \, dx = 0, \text{ odd integrand}$$

- What is the expectation value of x^2 ?

$$\langle x^2 \rangle = \int_{-a}^a x^2 |\Psi|^2 \, dx = \frac{a^2}{7}$$

- What is the expectation value of p^2 ?

$$\langle p^2 \rangle = -i\hbar |A|^2 \int_{-a}^a (a^2 - x^2) \frac{d^2(a^2 - x^2)}{dx^2} \, dx = \frac{5\hbar^2}{2a^2}$$

- Find the uncertainty in x and the uncertainty in p . Check this is consistent with the uncertainty principle.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \sigma_x &= \sqrt{\langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2} = \frac{a}{\sqrt{7}} \\
 \sigma_p &= \sqrt{\langle p^2 \rangle - \langle p \rangle^2} = \sqrt{\frac{5}{2}} \frac{\hbar}{a} \\
 \sigma_x \sigma_p &= \sqrt{\frac{10}{7}} \frac{\hbar}{2} \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}
 \end{aligned}$$

Exercise 1.17

Suppose you want to describe an unstable particle, that spontaneously disintegrates with a “lifetime of τ ”. In that case the total probability of finding the particle somewhere should not be constant, but should decrease at (say) an exponential rate:

$$P(t) \equiv \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi(x, t)|^2 dx = e^{-\frac{t}{\tau}}$$

A crude way of achieving this result is as follows. In Equation 1.24 we tacitly assumed to the conservation of probability enshrined in Equation 1.27. What if we assign to V an imaginary part:

$$V = V_0 - i\Gamma,$$

where V_0 is the true potential energy and Γ is a positive real constant?

- Show that (in place of Equation 1.27) we now get

$$\frac{dP}{dt} = -\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar}P$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{i}{\hbar} (V_0 - i\Gamma) \Psi = \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \frac{i}{\hbar} V_0 \Psi - \frac{\Gamma}{\hbar} \Psi \\ \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial t} &= -\frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} + \frac{i}{\hbar} (V_0 + i\Gamma) \Psi^* = -\frac{i\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} + \frac{i}{\hbar} V_0 \Psi^* - \frac{\Gamma}{\hbar} \Psi^* \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dP}{dt} &= \frac{d}{dt} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi|^2 dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \Psi \Psi^* dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial t} \Psi \right) dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} - \Psi \frac{\partial^2 \Psi^*}{\partial x^2} \right) dx - \frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \Psi^* \Psi dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} \right) \right) dx - \frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi|^2 dx \\ &= \frac{i\hbar}{2m} \left(\Psi^* \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} - \Psi \frac{\partial \Psi^*}{\partial x} \right) \Big|_{\mathbb{R}}^0 - \frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} P(t) \\ &= -\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} P(t) \end{aligned}$$

QED

- Solve for $P(t)$, and find the lifetime of the particle in terms of Γ .

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dP(t)}{P(t)} &= -\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} dt \\ \ln(P(t)) &= -\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t + C \implies P(t) = K e^{-\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \\ P(0) &= 1 = K \\ \therefore P(t) &= e^{-\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \equiv e^{-\frac{t}{\tau}} \implies \tau = \frac{\hbar}{2\Gamma} \end{aligned}$$

Exercise 1.18

Very roughly speaking, quantum mechanics is relevant when the de Broglie wavelength of the particle in question (\hbar/p) is greater than the characteristic size of the system d . In thermal equilibrium at (Kelvin) temperature T , the average kinetic energy of a particle is

$$\frac{p^2}{2m} = \frac{3}{2} k_B T,$$

where k_B is the Boltzmann's constant, so the typical wavelength is

$$\lambda = \frac{h}{\sqrt{3mk_BT}}$$

The purpose of this problem is to determine which systems will have to be treated quantum mechanically, and which can be safely described classically.

- **Solids.** The lattice spacing in a typical solid is around $d = 0.3$ nm. Find the temperature below which the unbound electrons in a solid are quantum mechanical. Below what temperature are the nuclei in a solid quantum mechanical? (Use silicon as an example).

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda &= \frac{h}{\sqrt{3mk_BT}} > d \implies T < \frac{h^2}{3mk_B d^2} \\ T_e &< 1.3 \times 10^5 K \\ T_{Si_{nuclei, solid}} &< 2.5 K\end{aligned}$$

Where we have used $d = 0.3 \times 10^{-9}$ m, $m_{Si_{nuclei}} = 28.086m_p = 28.086 \times 1.7 \times 10^{-27}$ kg and $m_e = 9.8 \times 10^{-31}$ kg.

Moral: The free electrons in a solid are always quantum mechanical; the nuclei are generally not quantum mechanical. The same goes for liquids (for which the interatomic spacing is roughly the same), with the exception of helium below 4 K.

- **Gases.** For what temperatures are the atoms in an ideal gas at pressure P quantum mechanical? Obviously (for the gas to show quantum mechanical behavior) we want the mass to be as small as possible, and pressure to be as large as possible. Put in the numbers for monoatomic hydrogen at atmospheric pressure. Is hydrogen in outer space (where the interatomic spacing is about one centimeter and the temperature around 3 K) quantum mechanical?

We assume volume occupied by one molecule ($N = 1$) as a cubic box, $V = d^3$.

$$\begin{aligned}PV &= Nk_BT \implies d = \sqrt[3]{\frac{k_BT}{P}} \\ \lambda &= \frac{h}{\sqrt{3mk_BT}} > d \implies T < \frac{1}{k_B} \left(\frac{h^2}{3m} \right)^{3/5} P^{2/5} \\ T_e &< 2.8 K \\ T_{H_{nuclei, gas}} &< 6.3 \times 10^{-14} K\end{aligned}$$

Where we have used $d = 1 \times 10^{-2}$ m, $m_{H_{nuclei}} = 4.003m_p = 4.003 \times 1.7 \times 10^{-27}$ kg, $P = 1 \text{ atm} = 101,325$ Pa. We observe that at 3 K (monoatomic) hydrogen will behave classically and the electrons will also operate in the classical regime.

Chapter 2

Time-Independent Schrodinger Equation

2.1 Exercises

Exercise 2.1MOD

Prove the following:

- For normalizable solutions, the separation constant E must be real. Hint: take $E = E_0 + i\Gamma$, for real constants Γ, E_0 .

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi|^2 dx = 1$$

$$\begin{aligned}\Psi(x, t) &= \psi(x) e^{-\frac{i(E_0 + i\Gamma)}{\hbar} t} \\ |\Psi(x, t)|^2 &= \Psi^* \Psi = \psi^* e^{\frac{iE_0}{\hbar} t} e^{\frac{\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \psi e^{-\frac{iE_0}{\hbar} t} e^{-\frac{\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \\ &= \psi^* \psi e^{\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} = |\psi(x)|^2 e^{\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \\ \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\Psi|^2 dx &= e^{\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\psi(x)|^2 dx = 1 \quad \forall t \iff e^{\frac{2\Gamma}{\hbar} t} = C \implies \Gamma = 0\end{aligned}$$

- The time-independent wave function $\psi(x)$ can always be taken to be real (unlike $\Psi(x, t)$). This doesn't mean that every solution to the time-ind. Schro equation is real; what it says is that if you've got one that is not, it can always be expressed as a linear combination of solutions (with the same energy) that are. So you might as well stick to ψ s that are real.

$$\begin{aligned}f(x) &= a + ib, \quad a, b \in \mathbb{R} \\ f(x) + f^*(x) &= 2a \implies a = \frac{f(x) + f^*(x)}{2} \\ f(x) - f^*(x) &= 2ib \implies b = -i \frac{f(x) - f^*(x)}{2} \\ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + (V(x) - E)\psi(x) &= 0 = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi^*}{dx^2} + (V(x) - E)\psi^*(x)\end{aligned}$$

This last line shows the form for linear, homogeneous ODEs for which their weighted sum also serves as a solution to the original ODE. To get the values for the constants c , then we can use $c_1 = c_2 = 1/2$ values for real solutions implied by a , or $c_1 = -i/2, c_2 = i/2$ for real solutions implied by b as well:

$$f(x) = \psi(x) = c_1\psi(x) + c_2\psi^*(x)$$

If $\psi(x)$ did not have any imaginary term(s), then one would pick any real constants to produce a real solution. Hence, if the solutions for the complex conjugate and the conjugate satisfy the time-ind. Schro for real $E, V(x)$, any linear combination of these will also follow suit. Note that

$$\psi = \frac{1}{2}((\psi + \psi^*) + i(-i(\psi - \psi^*)))$$

which shows ψ can be written as a linear combination of two real solutions $\psi + \psi^*$ and $i(\psi - \psi^*)$. Recall that the complex number system extends the real numbers with the imaginary unit i satisfying $i^2 = -1$.

- If $V(x)$ is an even function (i.e., $V(-x) = V(x)$), then $\psi(x)$ can always be taken to be either even or odd.

$$\begin{aligned} x = -y &\implies -\frac{dy}{dx} = 1 \\ \frac{d\psi(x)}{dx} &= \frac{d\psi(-y)}{d(-y)} \frac{d(-y)}{dx} \overset{1}{=} -\frac{d\psi(-y)}{dy} \\ \frac{d^2\psi(x)}{dx^2} &= \frac{d}{dx} \frac{d\psi}{dx} = -\frac{d}{dx} \frac{d(-y)}{dx} \overset{1}{=} \frac{d}{d(-y)} \frac{d\psi(-y)}{dy} = \frac{d^2\psi(-y)}{dy^2} \end{aligned}$$

Now substitute as needed,

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi(-y)}{d(-y)^2} + (V(-y) - E)\psi(-y) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi(x)}{dx^2} + (V(x) - E)\psi(x) = 0$$

As before, we get a linear ODE for the even-odd pair whose weighted sum also produces a real solution as discussed prior

$$\psi(x) = c_1\psi(-x) + c_2\psi(x)$$

Thus, any (real) solution can be expressed as a linear combination of even or odd solutions given an even potential well function with $c_1 = c_2 = 1$ producing a possible even function or $c_1 = -1, c_2 = 1$ producing a possible odd function,

$$f_e = \frac{f(x) + f(-x)}{2}, \quad f_o = \frac{f(x) - f(-x)}{2}$$

It's important to note that when dealing with a real physical system, the wave function is generally a complex-valued function. However, the even and odd classifications refer to the symmetry properties of the real part of the wave function. We add the “wobble factor” when including time domain considerations that gets us into imaginary land.

- Does the prior statement hold for an odd potential function?

Here, the probability density of finding the particle is opposite on both sides of the origin. This occurs when the particle's state possesses spatial asymmetry. The statement does not hold for an odd potential well function, where we would strictly need an odd wave function $\psi(x) = -\psi(-x)$ to maintain the proper relation above; an even wave function would contradict the antisymmetric nature of the potential function in this case.

Exercise 2.2

Show that E must exceed the minimum value of $V(x)$, for every normalizable solution to the time-ind Schro. What is the classical analog to this statement?

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + V(x)\psi = E\psi$$

Assume that there exists a normalizable solution $\psi(x)$ to the time-independent Schrödinger equation with energy E that satisfies $E \leq V(x)_{min}$, where $V(x)_{min}$ is the minimum value of the potential energy function $V(x)$. Then we can write:

$$E\psi = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + V(x)\psi \leq V(x)_{min}\psi$$

Dividing both sides by ψ and rearranging, we get:

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + (V(x) - V(x)_{min})\psi \leq 0$$

Since ψ is normalizable, it must approach zero as x approaches infinity or negative infinity; if we knew the function of $V(x)$ and set $D = V(x) - V(x)_{min}$ and solved for $\psi(x)$, we would get an expression in terms of x :

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + D\psi = k, \quad k \in \mathbb{R} \text{ (in Joules, } \psi \text{ dimensionless!)} \\ \psi(x) = \begin{cases} c_1 e^{-\frac{\sqrt{2Dm}}{\hbar}x} + c_2 e^{\frac{\sqrt{2Dm}}{\hbar}x} & \text{if } k = 0 \\ c_1 e^{-\frac{\sqrt{2Dm}}{\hbar}x} + c_2 e^{\frac{\sqrt{2Dm}}{\hbar}x} - \frac{|k|}{D} & \text{if } k < 0 \end{cases}$$

Both cases allow us to find constants for the normalization condition to hold. When $x \rightarrow \infty$ then $\psi(x) \rightarrow \infty$. When $x \rightarrow -\infty$ then $\psi(x) \rightarrow -\infty$. This implies that any further derivatives have the same sign in these regions. By indicating the negation, we are counteracting the growth of ψ to “head back” towards 0, therefore, the negated second derivative term must be zero (when $\psi = 0$) or negative (substituting in $\pm\infty$ always yields a positive second derivative and we need a real solution – $D > 0$ as we shall soon see) for all values of x ,

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} \leq 0$$

Combining this with the previous inequality, we get:

$$D = (V(x) - V(x)_{min}) \leq 0$$

But this contradicts the fact that $V(x)_{min}$ is the minimum value of $V(x)$, which means that $V(x) - V(x)_{min}$ is non-negative for all values of x . Also note this would otherwise produce complex-valued solutions to $\psi(x)$. Therefore, our initial assumption that $E \leq V(x)_{min}$ must be false, and we can conclude that E must exceed the minimum value of $V(x)$ for every normalizable solution to the time-independent Schrödinger equation.

If the energy is equal to or less than the potential energy at a certain point, the particle would be confined to that region (held by an “infinite force”) and unable to escape. This situation would violate the classical principle of conservation of energy, which states that the total energy of a system is conserved and cannot be created or destroyed. In this case, the particle would have less energy than the potential energy barrier, and therefore, energy conservation would be violated. A more sophisticated analysis can be done by showing this violates the principle of least action: the particle would be in a region where its kinetic energy is negative or zero, leading to an imaginary or zero action. However, the principle of least action requires that the action be minimized, which corresponds to a real, non-zero value (proof beyond scope of intro course).