

Spherical harmonics

Verify that

$$r^2 \nabla^2 Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi) = -l(l+1)Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi) \quad (1)$$

for selected spherical harmonic functions $Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$.

Since $Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$ is independent of r we have

$$r^2 \nabla^2 Y = \frac{1}{\sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \left(\sin \theta \frac{\partial Y}{\partial \theta} \right) + \frac{1}{\sin^2 \theta} \frac{\partial^2 Y}{\partial \phi^2}$$