

§ 2.2: Homogeneous CHARACTERISTIC EQUATIONS WITH COMPLEX ROOTS

BOYCE 3.3

Recall 2.2.1 We are looking at linear 2nd-order homogeneous DEs with constant coefficients: ~~with~~

$$ay'' + by' + cy = 0$$

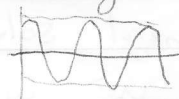
What happens when the roots of the characteristic equation  $ar^2 + br + c = 0$  are complex?

Example 2.2.2: Consider  $y'' + y = 0$

For the general solution, we want two functions whose double derivative is  $-$ (the original function).

$\Rightarrow \sin(t)$  &  $\cos(t)$  fit, so general solution is

$$y = c_1 \sin(t) + c_2 \cos(t).$$



solution plot.

Let's try the method from the last lecture:

$$y = e^{rt} \Rightarrow r^2 e^{rt} + e^{rt} = 0$$

$$\text{So } r^2 + 1 = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow r = \pm \sqrt{-1}, \text{ i.e. } r = \pm i$$

$$\text{Thus } y = c_1 e^{it} + c_2 e^{-it}.$$

How do we reconcile these two different-looking solutions?

- They are actually the same function, just written differently!

Recall 2.2.3:  $e^{it} = \cos(t) + i \sin(t)$  : Euler's Formula.

$$\Rightarrow e^{-it} = \cos(-t) + i \sin(-t) = \cos(t) - i \sin(t).$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hence } y = c_1 e^{it} + c_2 e^{-it} &= c_1 (\cos(t) + i \sin(t)) + c_2 (\cos(t) - i \sin(t)) \\ &= (c_1 + c_2) \cos(t) + i(c_1 - c_2) \sin(t) \\ &= C_1' \cos(t) + C_2' \sin(t), \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{where } C_1' = c_1 + c_2 \text{ \& } C_2' = i(c_1 - c_2).$$

So the "guess-and-check" method with  $e^{it}$  still works; however, we have to use complex numbers in both our exponents & our coefficients.

Example 2.2.4: Solve the IVP

$$y'' + y' + \frac{37}{4}y = 0, \quad y(0) = 2, \quad y'(0) = 8$$

we can't just guess  $\cos(t)$  &  $\sin(t)$  anymore, so let's look at the characteristic equation:

$$r^2 + r + \frac{37}{4} = 0$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Quadratic formula: } r &= \frac{-1 \pm \sqrt{1 - 37}}{2} = \frac{-1 \pm \sqrt{-36}}{2} \\ &= \frac{-1 \pm \sqrt{-9}}{2} \\ &= -\frac{1}{2} \pm 3i \end{aligned}$$

So the two roots are  $r_1 = -\frac{1}{2} + 3i$ ,  $r_2 = -\frac{1}{2} - 3i$

$\Rightarrow$  the general solution is

$$\begin{aligned} y &= c_1 e^{(-\frac{1}{2} + 3i)t} + c_2 e^{(-\frac{1}{2} - 3i)t} \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (c_1 e^{i3t} + c_2 e^{-i3t}) \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (c_1 (\cos(3t) + i\sin(3t)) + c_2 (\cos(3t) - i\sin(3t))) \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} ((c_1 + c_2) \cos(3t) + i(c_1 - c_2) \sin(3t)) \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (c'_1 \cos(3t) + c'_2 \sin(3t)) \end{aligned}$$

where  $c'_1 = c_1 + c_2$ ,  $c'_2 = i(c_1 - c_2)$

Is:  $y(0) = 2 \Rightarrow 2 = 1 \cdot (c_1 + 0) \Rightarrow c_1 = 2$

$$\begin{aligned} y' &= -\frac{1}{2} e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (c_1 \cos(3t) + c_2 \sin(3t)) + 3e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (-c_1 \sin(3t) + c_2 \cos(3t)) \\ &= e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} ([-\frac{1}{2}c_1 + 3c_2] \cos(3t) + [-3c_1 - \frac{1}{2}c_2] \sin(3t)) \end{aligned}$$

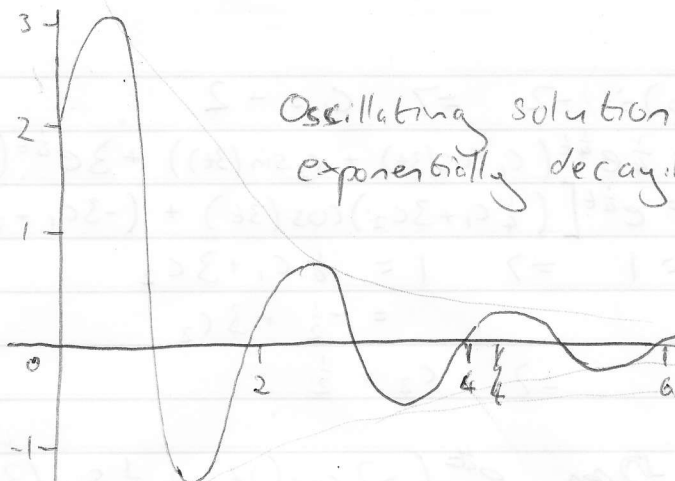
so  $y'(0) = 0 \Rightarrow 8 = 1 \cdot ([-\frac{1}{2}c_1 + 3c_2])$

$$\Rightarrow 8 = -1 + 3c_2$$

$$\Rightarrow c_2 = 3$$

Hence the solution is

$$y = e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} (2 \cos 3t + 3 \sin 3t)$$

Plot:

Oscillating solution with exponentially decaying amplitude.

Case 2.2.5:  $ay'' + by' + cy = 0$   
 has CE  $ar^2 + br + c = 0$

with roots  $r = -\frac{b}{2a} \pm \frac{1}{2a} \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac} = -\frac{b}{2a} \pm \sqrt{\left(\frac{b}{2a}\right)^2 - \frac{c}{a}}$

If  $b^2 - 4ac < 0$ , then the equation has complex roots.

Note that we may always have two complex roots as

$$r_1 = \lambda + i\omega \quad \text{and} \quad r_2 = \lambda - i\omega$$

where  $\lambda, \omega \in \mathbb{R}$ .

The general solution is

$$y = c_1 e^{(\lambda + i\omega)t} + c_2 e^{(\lambda - i\omega)t}$$

which we can always write as

$$y = e^{\lambda t} (c_1 \cos(\omega t) + c_2 \sin(\omega t))$$

(Different  $c_1, c_2$ )

$\lambda$  is called the amplitude or growth,  $\omega$  is the angular frequency of the system.

Example 2.2.6: Solve the IVP

$$16y'' - 8y' + 145y = 0, \quad y(0) = -2, \quad y'(0) = 1$$

$$\text{CE: } 16r^2 - 8r + 145 = 0 \Rightarrow r = \frac{1}{4} \pm \frac{1}{32} \sqrt{64 - 9280}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{1}{4} \pm \frac{1}{32} \cdot 96i \\ &= \frac{1}{4} \pm i \cdot 3 \end{aligned}$$

So here  $\lambda = \frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\omega = 3$ , &  $r_1, r_2 = \lambda \pm i\omega$ .

Hence General solution is  $y = e^{\frac{1}{4}t} (c_1 \cos(3t) + c_2 \sin(3t))$

ICs:  $y(0) = -2 \Rightarrow C_1 = -2$

$$y' = \frac{1}{4}e^{\frac{1}{4}t}(C_1 \cos(3t) + C_2 \sin(3t)) + 3e^{\frac{1}{4}t}(-C_1 \sin(3t) + C_2 \cos(3t))$$

$$= e^{\frac{1}{4}t} \left[ \left( \frac{1}{4}C_1 + 3C_2 \right) \cos(3t) + (-3C_1 + \frac{1}{4}C_2) \sin(3t) \right]$$

$$y'(0) = 1 \Rightarrow 1 = \frac{1}{4}C_1 + 3C_2$$

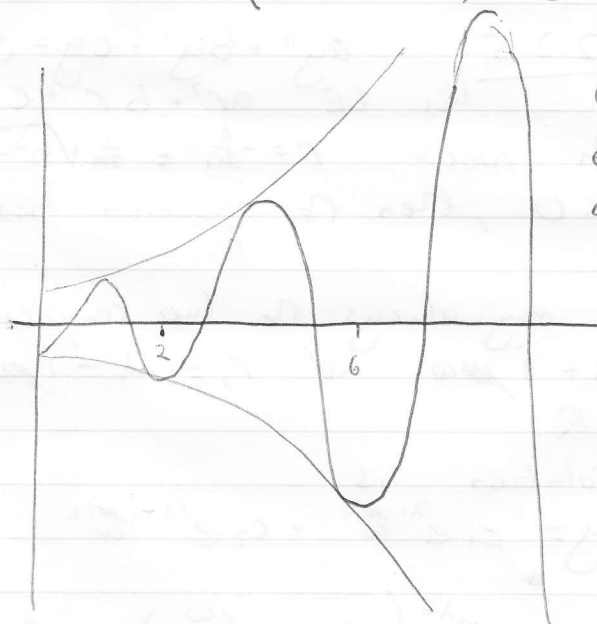
$$= -\frac{1}{2} + 3C_2$$

$$\Rightarrow C_2 = \frac{1}{2}$$

angular frequency

so  $y = e^{\frac{1}{4}t}(-2 \cos(3t) + \frac{1}{2} \sin(3t))$

Plot:



Oscillating solution with exponentially growing amplitude.

General Behaviour 2.2.6: Any solution to  $ay'' + by' + cy = 0$ , where  $a^2 + b^2 + c = 0$  has complex roots, will:

- Oscillate with angular frequency  $\omega = \frac{1}{2a} \sqrt{4ac - b^2}$
- Grow or decay exponentially according to amplitude  $\lambda = -\frac{b}{2a}$ :
  - if  $\lambda < 0$ , solutions decay  $\rightarrow 0$
  - if  $\lambda > 0$ , solutions grow in amplitude exponentially
  - if  $\lambda = 0$ , solutions have constant amplitude.

c.f.  $y = e^{\lambda t} (C_1 \cos(\omega t) + C_2 \sin(\omega t))$