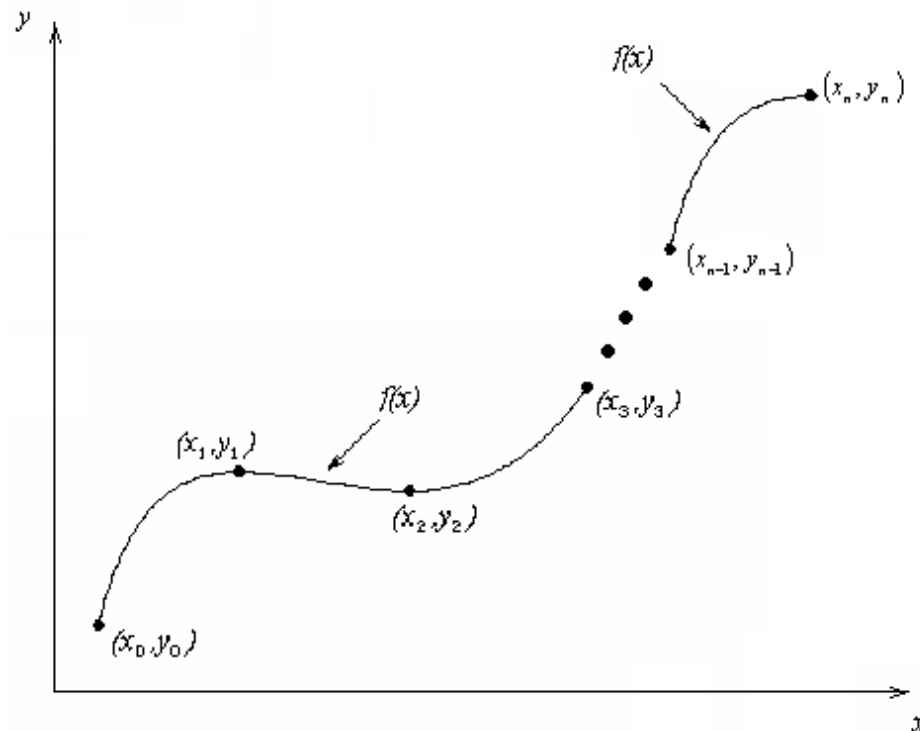# What is a Spline?

- A spline is a function that consisting of simple functions joined together.

- As with polynomial functions, splines are used to interpolate tabulated data as well as functions.

- A spline is different from a polynomial interpolation, which consists of a single well defined function that approximates a given shape; splines are normally **piecewise polynomial**.

What is a spline function ?

Given (x_0, y_0), (x_1, y_1), …… (x_n, y_n), find the value of 'y' at a value of 'x' that is not given.

What is a spline function ?
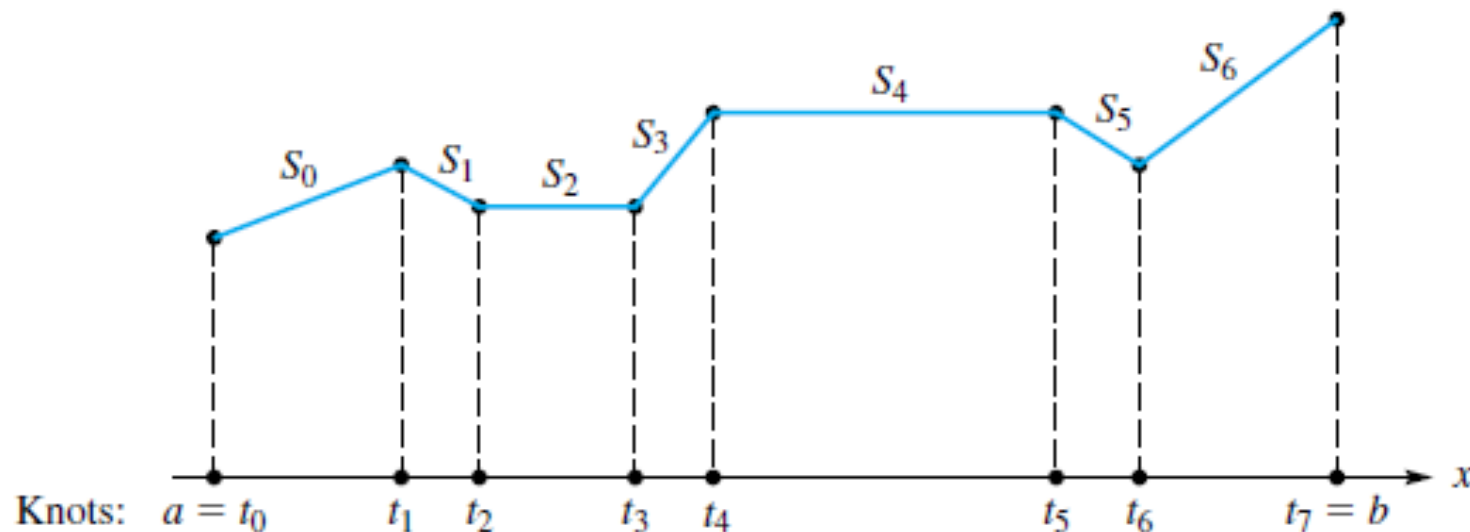
- A simple example is the **polygonal** function (or spline of degree 1), whose pieces are linear polynomials joined together to achieve **continuity**, as in figure. The points t_0, $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ at which the function changes its character are termed **knots** in the theory of splines.

Why Splines ?

- Splines are used to approximate complex functions and shapes.

- Drawbacks of higher order polynomials in interpolating functions.

- Splines are normally piecewise polynomials so provides better approximation then polynomial interpolatings.

Why Splines ?

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{1 + 25x^2}$$

Table : Six equidistantly spaced points in [-1, 1]

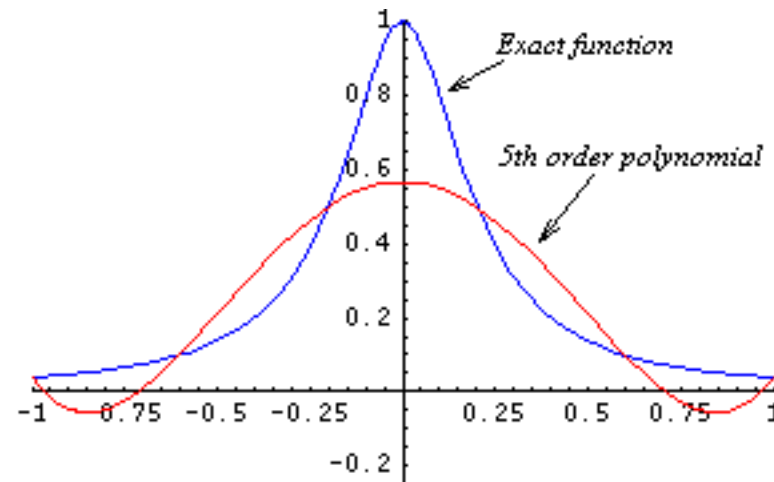| x	$y = \dfrac{1}{1 + 25x^2}$
-1.0	0.038461
-0.6	0.1
-0.2	0.5
0.2	0.5
0.6	0.1
1.0	0.038461

Figure : 5th order polynomial vs. exact function
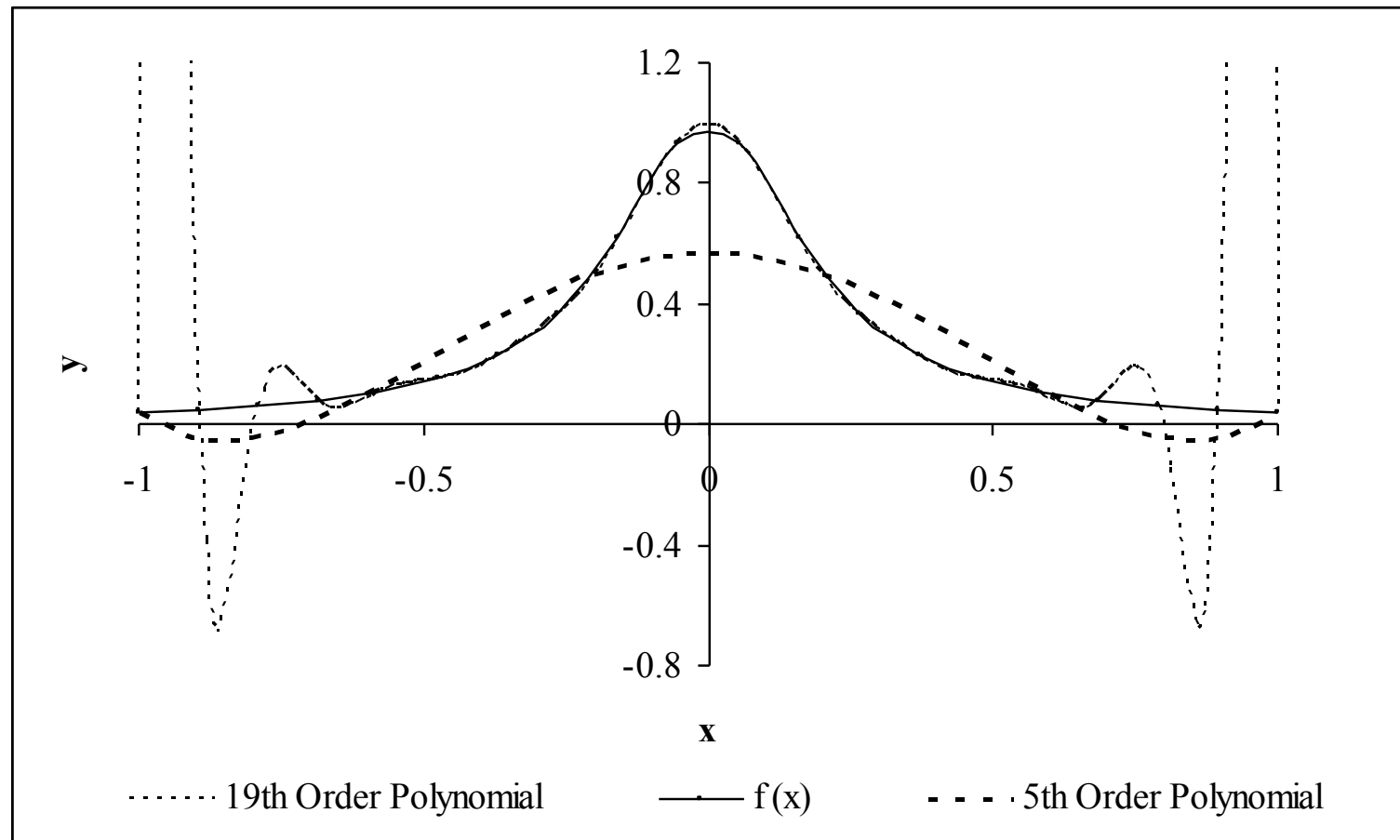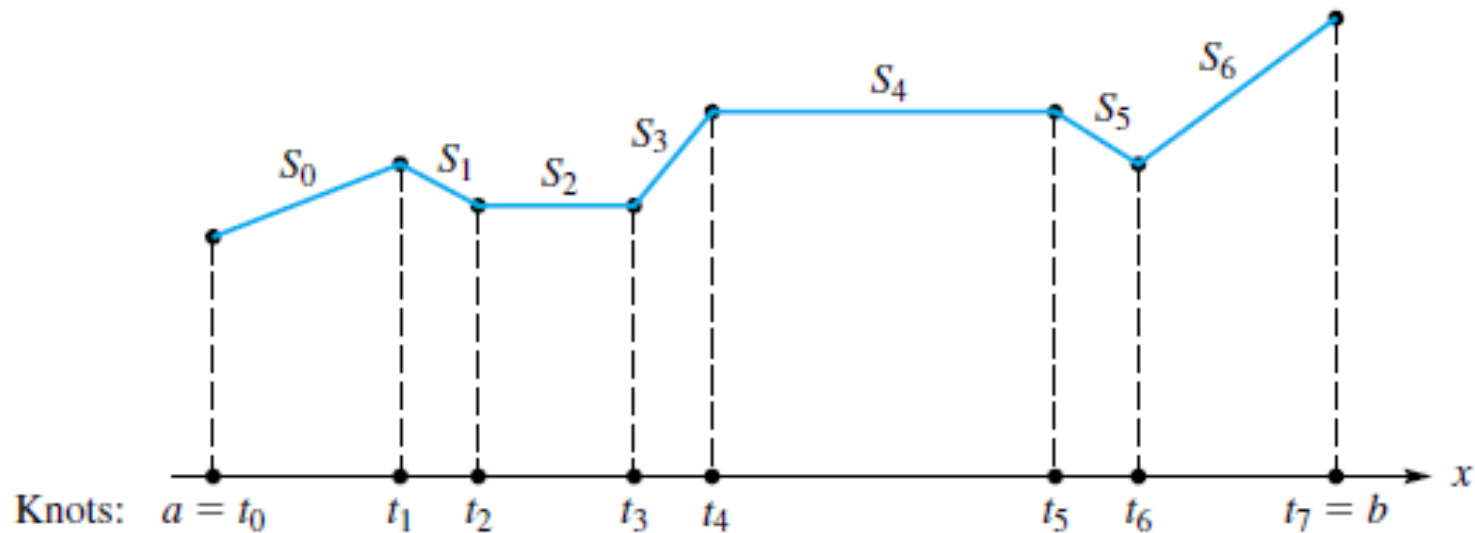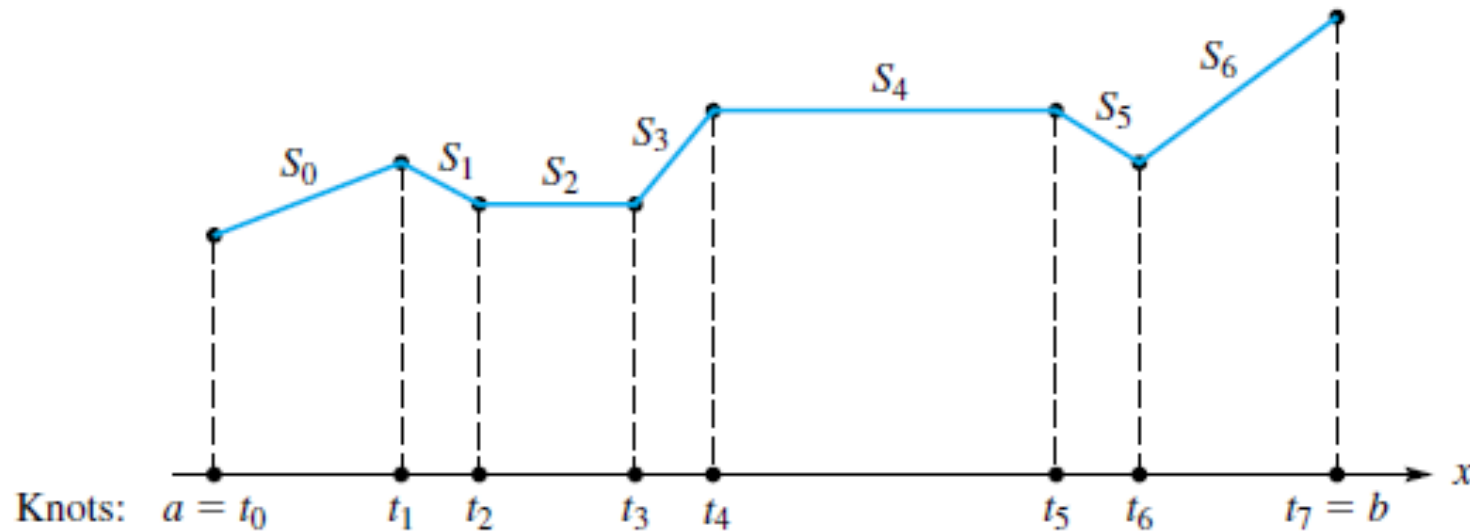
Why Splines ?

Figure : Higher order polynomial interpolation is a bad idea

First Degree Splines

- Splines make use of partitions, which are a way of cutting an interval into a number of subintervals.

- The spline functions of degree 1 can be used for interpolation

First Degree Splines

A function S is called a **spline of degree 1** if:

1. The domain of S is an interval $[a, b]$.
2. S is **continuous** on $[a, b]$.
3. There is a partitioning of the interval $a = t_0 < t_1 < \cdots < t_n = b$ such that S is a linear polynomial on each subinterval $[t_i, t_{i+1}]$.

First Degree Splines

$$f(x) = f(x_0) + \frac{f(x_1) - f(x_0)}{x_1 - x_0}(x - x_0), \qquad x_0 \le x \le x_1$$

$$= f(x_1) + \frac{f(x_2) - f(x_1)}{x_2 - x_1}(x - x_1), \qquad x_1 \le x \le x_2$$

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$$= f(x_{n-1}) + \frac{f(x_n) - f(x_{n-1})}{x_n - x_{n-1}}(x - x_{n-1}), \quad x_{n-1} \le x \le x_n$$

Note the terms of

$$\frac{f(x_i) - f(x_{i-1})}{x_i - x_{i-1}}$$

in the above function are simply slopes between x_{i-1} and x_i.

Example

The upward velocity of a rocket is given as a function of time in table.

Find the velocity at t=16 seconds using linear splines.

Table : Velocity as a function of time

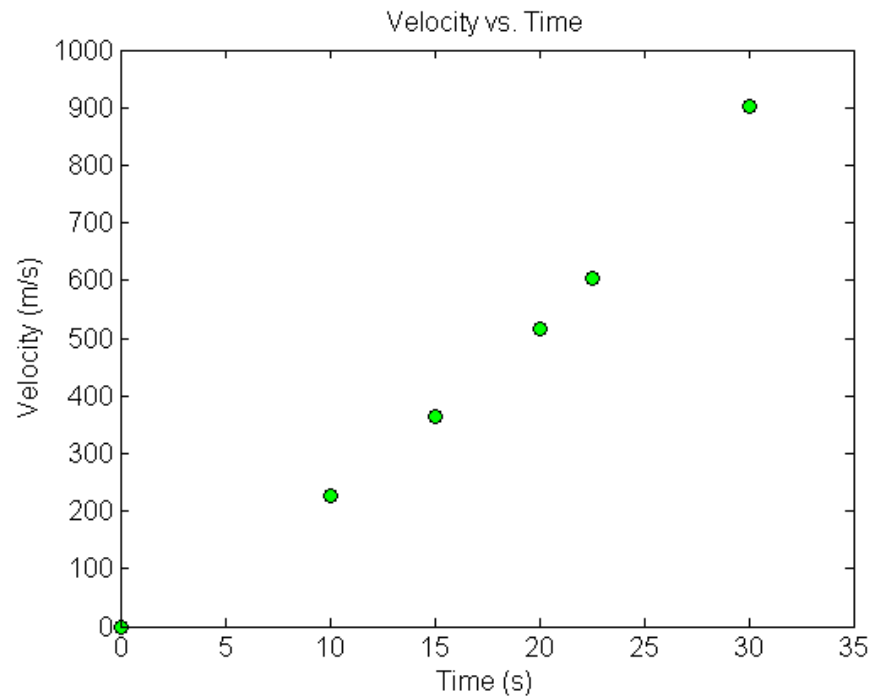| t (s)	$v(t)$ (m/s)
0	0
10	227.04
15	362.78
20	517.35
22.5	602.97
30	901.67

Figure : Velocity vs. time data for the rocket example

Linear Splines

$t_0 = 15,$ $\qquad v(t_0) = 362.78$
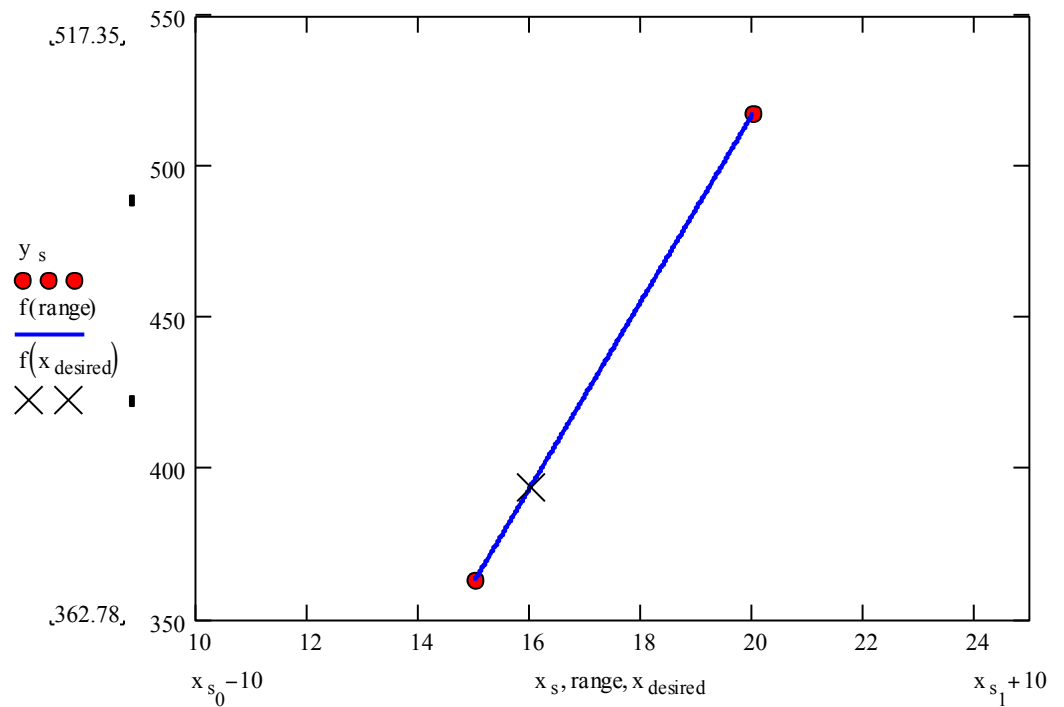
$t_1 = 20,$ $\qquad v(t_1) = 517.35$

$$v(t) = v(t_0) + \frac{v(t_1) - v(t_0)}{t_1 - t_0}(t - t_0)$$

$$= 362.78 + \frac{517.35 - 362.78}{20 - 15}(t - 15)$$

$$v(t) = 362.78 + 30.913(t - 15)$$

At $t = 16,$

$$v(16) = 362.78 + 30.913(16 - 15)$$

$$= 393.7 \text{ m/s}$$

Quadratic Splines

A function Q is a **second-degree spline** if it has the following properties

A function Q is called a **spline of degree 2** if:

1. The domain of Q is an interval **[a, b]**.
2. Q and Q' are continuous on **[a, b]**.
3. There are points t_i (called **knots**) such that $a = t_0 < t_1 < \cdots < t_n = b$ and Q is a polynomial of degree at most 2 on each subinterval $[t_i, t_{i+1}]$.

Quadratic Splines

Given $(x_0, y_0), (x_1, y_1), \ldots, (x_{n-1}, y_{n-1}), (x_n, y_n)$, fit quadratic splines through the data. The splines are given by

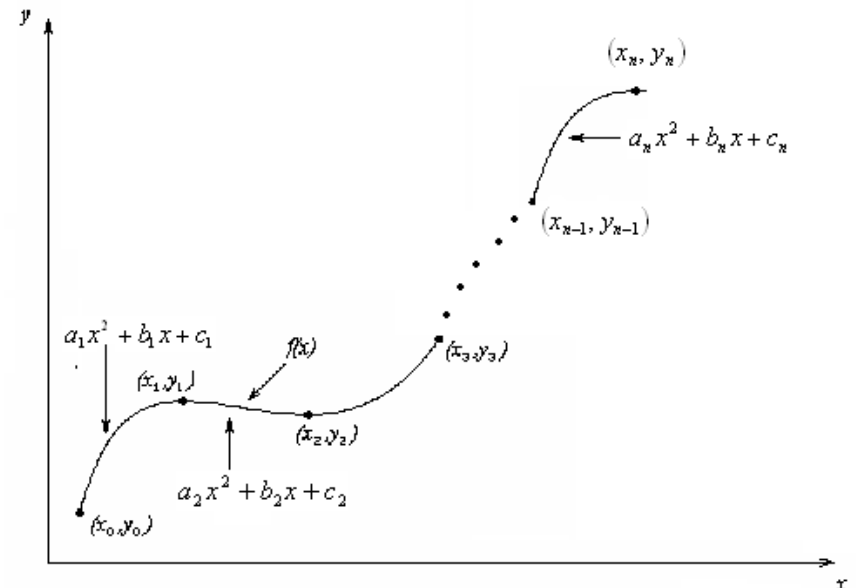$$f(x) = a_1 x^2 + b_1 x + c_1, \qquad x_0 \leq x \leq x_1$$

$$= a_2 x^2 + b_2 x + c_2, \qquad x_1 \leq x \leq x_2$$

.

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$$= a_n x^2 + b_n x + c_n, \qquad x_{n-1} \leq x \leq x_n$$

Find a_i, b_i, c_i, $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$

Quadratic Splines

Each quadratic spline goes through two consecutive data points

$$a_1 x_0{}^2 + b_1 x_0 + c_1 = f(x_0)$$

$$a_1 x_1{}^2 + b_1 x_1 + c_1 = f(x_1)$$

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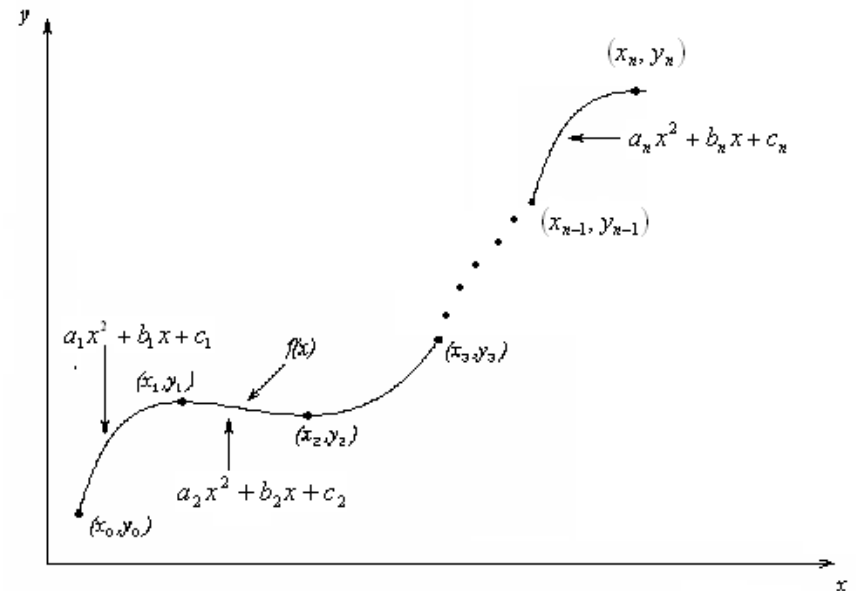
$$a_i x_{i-1}{}^2 + b_i x_{i-1} + c_i = f(x_{i-1})$$

$$a_i x_i{}^2 + b_i x_i + c_i = f(x_i)$$

.

.

$$a_n x_{n-1}{}^2 + b_n x_{n-1} + c_n = f(x_{n-1})$$

$$a_n x_n{}^2 + b_n x_n + c_n = f(x_n)$$

This condition gives 2n equations

Quadratic Splines

The first derivatives of two quadratic splines are continuous at the interior points.

For example, the derivative of the first spline

$$a_1 x^2 + b_1 x + c_1 \quad \text{is} \quad 2a_1 x + b_1$$
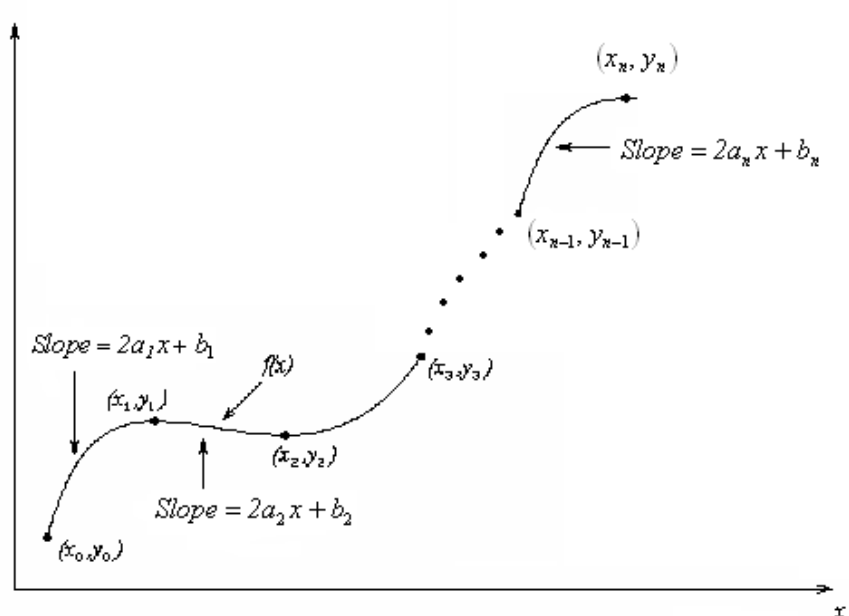
The derivative of the second spline

$$a_2 x^2 + b_2 x + c_2 \quad \text{is} \quad 2a_2 x + b_2$$

and the two are equal at $x = x_1$ giving

$$2a_1 x_1 + b_1 = 2a_2 x_1 + b_2$$

$$2a_1 x_1 + b_1 - 2a_2 x_1 - b_2 = 0$$

Quadratic Splines

Similarly at the other interior points,

$$2a_2x_2 + b_2 - 2a_3x_2 - b_3 = 0$$
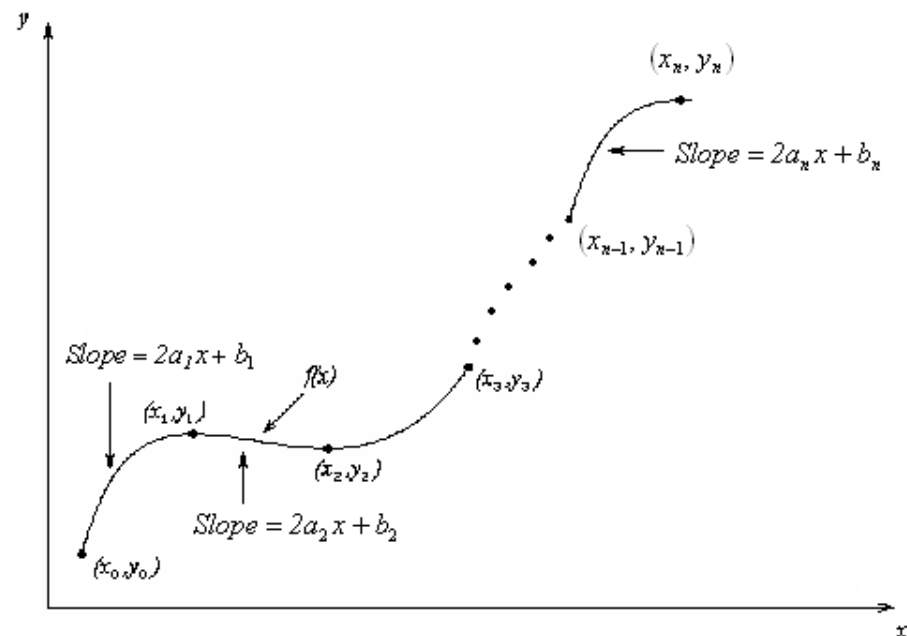
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$$2a_ix_i + b_i - 2a_{i+1}x_i - b_{i+1} = 0$$

.

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.

$$2a_{n-1}x_{n-1} + b_{n-1} - 2a_nx_{n-1} - b_n = 0$$

We have (n-1) such equations. The total number of equations is $(2n) + (n-1) = (3n-1)$.

We can assume that the first spline is linear, that is $a_1 = 0$ Not ideal solution, in this example, this is used for a demonstration purpose.

Instead: we can use boundary conditions: i.e. set f'(x0)=0; f'(xn)=0.

Quadratic Splines

This gives us '3n' equations and '3n' unknowns. Once we find the '3n' constants, we can find the function at any value of 'x' using the splines,

$$f(x) = a_1 x^2 + b_1 x + c_1, \qquad x_0 \le x \le x_1$$

$$= a_2 x^2 + b_2 x + c_2, \qquad x_1 \le x \le x_2$$

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$$= a_n x^2 + b_n x + c_n, \qquad x_{n-1} \le x \le x_n$$
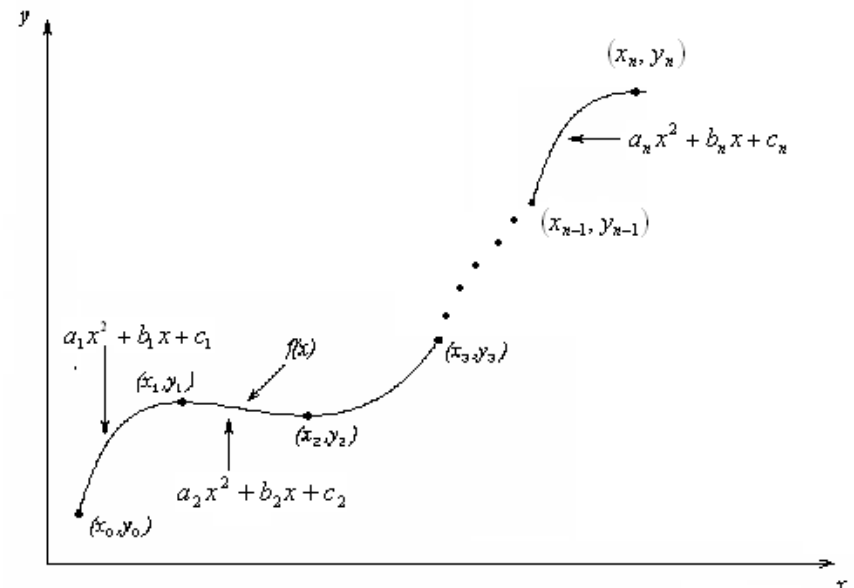
Quadratic Spline Example

The upward velocity of a rocket is given as a function of time. Using quadratic splines

a) Find the velocity at t=16 seconds

b) Find the acceleration at t=16 seconds

c) Find the distance covered between t=11 and t=16 seconds

Table : Velocity as a function of time

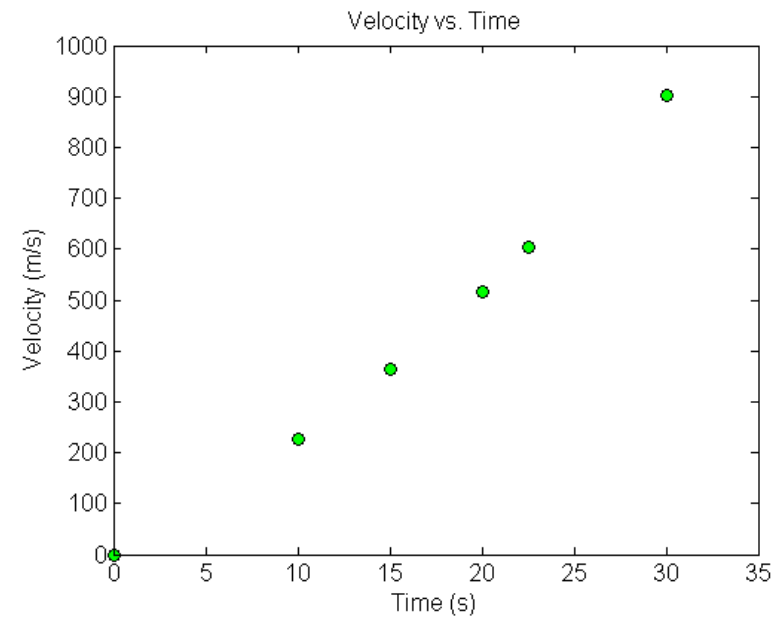| t (s)	$v(t)$ (m/s)
0	0
10	227.04
15	362.78
20	517.35
22.5	602.97
30	901.67

Figure : Velocity vs. time data for the rocket example

Solution

$$v(t) = a_1 t^2 + b_1 t + c_1, \qquad 0 \le t \le 10$$

$$= a_2 t^2 + b_2 t + c_2, \quad 10 \le t \le 15$$

$$= a_3 t^2 + b_3 t + c_3, \quad 15 \le t \le 20$$

$$= a_4 t^2 + b_4 t + c_4, \quad 20 \le t \le 22.5$$

$$= a_5 t^2 + b_5 t + c_5, \quad 22.5 \le t \le 30$$

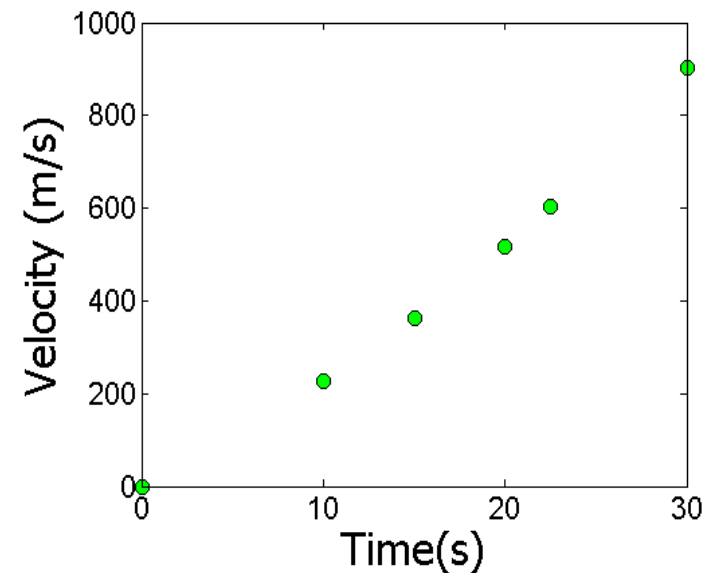Let us set up the equations

Each Spline Goes Through Two Consecutive Data Points

$$v(t) = a_1 t^2 + b_1 t + c_1, \qquad 0 \le t \le 10$$

$$a_1 (0)^2 + b_1 (0) + c_1 = 0$$

$$a_1 (10)^2 + b_1 (10) + c_1 = 227.04$$

Each Spline Goes Through Two Consecutive Data Points

t	v(t)
s	m/s
0	0
10	227.04
15	362.78
20	517.35
22.5	602.97
30	901.67

$$a_2(10)^2 + b_2(10) + c_2 = 227.04$$

$$a_2(15)^2 + b_2(15) + c_2 = 362.78$$

$$a_3(15)^2 + b_3(15) + c_3 = 362.78$$

$$a_3(20)^2 + b_3(20) + c_3 = 517.35$$

$$a_4(20)^2 + b_4(20) + c_4 = 517.35$$

$$a_4(22.5)^2 + b_4(22.5) + c_4 = 602.97$$

$$a_5(22.5)^2 + b_5(22.5) + c_5 = 602.97$$

$$a_5(30)^2 + b_5(30) + c_5 = 901.67$$

Derivatives are Continuous at Interior Data Points

$$v(t) = a_1 t^2 + b_1 t + c_1, \; 0 \le t \le 10$$

$$= a_2 t^2 + b_2 t + c_2, \; 10 \le t \le 15$$

$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(a_1 t^2 + b_1 t + c_1\right)\Bigg|_{t=10} = \frac{d}{dt}\left(a_2 t^2 + b_2 t + c_2\right)\Bigg|_{t=10}$$

$$\left(2a_1 t + b_1\right)\big|_{t=10} = \left(2a_2 t + b_2\right)\big|_{t=10}$$

$$2a_1(10) + b_1 = 2a_2(10) + b_2$$

$$20a_1 + b_1 - 20a_2 - b_2 = 0$$

Derivatives are Continuous at Interior Data Points

At t=10

$$2a_1(10) + b_1 - 2a_2(10) - b_2 = 0$$

At t=15

$$2a_2(15) + b_2 - 2a_3(15) - b_3 = 0$$

At t=20

$$2a_3(20) + b_3 - 2a_4(20) - b_4 = 0$$

At t=22.5

$$2a_4(22.5) + b_4 - 2a_5(22.5) - b_5 = 0$$

Last Equation $a_1 = 0$

Final Set of Equations

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
100 & 10 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 100 & 10 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 225 & 15 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 225 & 15 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 400 & 20 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 400 & 20 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 506.25 & 22.5 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 506.25 & 22.5 & 1 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 900 & 30 & 1 \\
20 & 1 & 0 & -20 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 30 & 1 & 0 & -30 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 40 & 1 & 0 & -40 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 45 & 1 & 0 & -45 & -1 & 0 \\
1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
a_1 \\ b_1 \\ c_1 \\ a_2 \\ b_2 \\ c_2 \\ a_3 \\ b_3 \\ c_3 \\ a_4 \\ b_4 \\ c_4 \\ a_5 \\ b_5 \\ c_5
\end{bmatrix}
=
\begin{bmatrix}
0 \\ 227.04 \\ 227.04 \\ 362.78 \\ 362.78 \\ 517.35 \\ 517.35 \\ 602.97 \\ 602.97 \\ 901.67 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0
\end{bmatrix}
$$

Coefficients of Spline

i	a_i	b_i	c_i
1	0	22.704	0
2	0.8888	4.928	88.88
3	−0.1356	35.66	−141.61
4	1.6048	−33.956	554.55
5	0.20889	28.86	−152.13

Final Solution

$$v(t) = 22.704t, \qquad\qquad 0 \le t \le 10$$

$$= 0.8888t^2 + 4.928t + 88.88, \qquad 10 \le t \le 15$$

$$= -0.1356t^2 + 35.66t - 141.61, \qquad 15 \le t \le 20$$

$$= 1.6048t^2 - 33.956t + 554.55, \qquad 20 \le t \le 22.5$$

$$= 0.20889t^2 + 28.86t - 152.13, \qquad 22.5 \le t \le 30$$
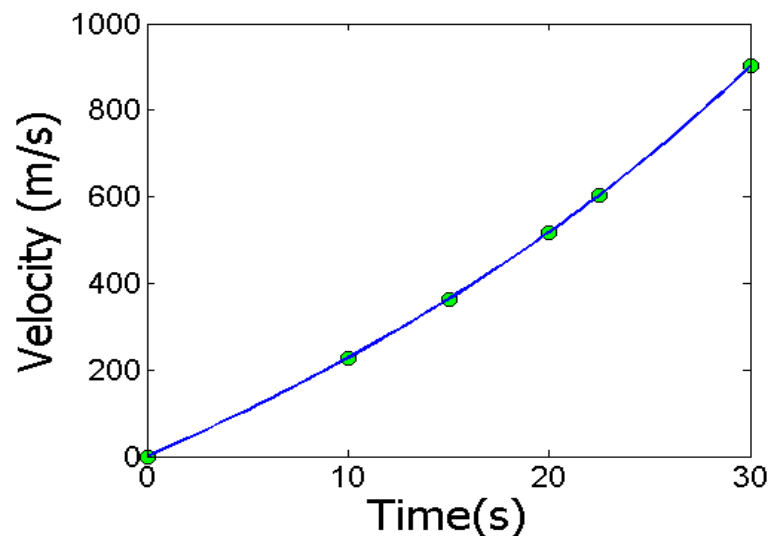
Velocity at a Particular Point

a) Velocity at t=16

$$v(t) = 22.704t, \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad 0 \le t \le 10$$
$$= 0.8888t^2 + 4.928t + 88.88, \qquad\quad 10 \le t \le 15$$
$$= -0.1356t^2 + 35.66t - 141.61, \qquad 15 \le t \le 20$$
$$= 1.6048t^2 - 33.956t + 554.55, \qquad 20 \le t \le 22.5$$
$$= 0.20889t^2 + 28.86t - 152.13, \qquad 22.5 \le t \le 30$$

$$v(16) = -0.1356(16)^2 + 35.66(16) - 141.61$$
$$= 394.24 \text{ m/s}$$