Euler's Identity

Published: January 3, 2025 • 4 min read

Euler's Identity is often cited as an example of mathematical beauty. It is expressed by the equation:

$$e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$$

where:

1. e is Euler's number, approximately equal to 2.71828, and is the base of natural logarithms.
2. i is the imaginary unit, defined as $\sqrt{-1}$, the foundation of complex numbers.
3. π is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter, approximately equal to 3.14159.
4. 1 and 0 are the multiplicative and additive identities.

Derivation from Euler's Formula

Euler's Identity can be derived from Euler's formula, which states that for any real number x:

$$e^{i\theta} = \cos(\theta) + i\sin(\theta)$$

By substituting θ with π, we get:

$$\begin{aligned} e^{i\pi} &= \cos(\pi) + i\sin(\pi) \\ &= -1 + i \cdot 0 \\ &= -1 \end{aligned}$$

Adding 1 to both sides yields Euler's Identity:

$$e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$$

Geometric Interpretation

In the complex plane, $e^{i\theta}$ traces out a unit circle as θ varies. The point at $\theta = \pi$ corresponds to -1 on the real axis.

Unit Circle Representation

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Re}\left(e^{i\theta}\right) &= \cos(\theta) \\ \mathrm{Im}\left(e^{i\theta}\right) &= \sin(\theta) \end{aligned}$$

Significance

Euler's Identity is celebrated for its elegance, as it connects five fundamental mathematical constants in a single equation. It has implications in various fields, including engineering, physics, and signal processing, particularly in the analysis of waveforms and oscillations.

Applications

Euler's Identity and Euler's formula are widely used in:

1. Electrical engineering, particularly in the analysis of alternating current (AC) circuits.
2. Quantum mechanics, where complex exponentials describe wave functions.
3. Signal processing, for transforming signals between time and frequency domains using Fourier transforms.
4. Control theory, in the design and analysis of control systems.
5. Vibrations and wave analysis, where they help model oscillatory systems.
6. Computer graphics, for rotations and transformations in 2D and 3D spaces.

Related Formulas

Euler's formula leads to many other useful identities:

$$\begin{aligned} \cos(\theta) &= \frac{e^{i\theta} + e^{-i\theta}}{2} \\ \sin(\theta) &= \frac{e^{i\theta} - e^{-i\theta}}{2i} \end{aligned}$$

These allow us to express trigonometric functions in terms of exponentials, which is important in various mathematical and engineering applications.