

CH 5 - Applications of Derivatives

Luke Lu • 2025-11-05

Related Rates

💡 **Tip** — Steps for Related Rates Questions

1. Draw diagram
2. Identify **changing** quantities
3. Find **constant** quantities (if possible)
4. Derive equations relating the quantities that are changing
5. **Implicitly differentiate** the key equations
6. Solve for the desired rate of change, substituting in known quantities.
7. **Concluding statement** (and also check units)

Example:

1. Laindon is taking a hot air balloon ride. A giant fan is blowing hot air into the balloon in a rate of $200 \frac{\text{m}^3}{\text{min}}$. Assuming that at any given point in time the balloon sphere, find the rate at which the radius of the balloon is changing when the diameter is 12 m.

ANS:

1. Picture: The problem is trivial so the graph is omitted
 2. Changing variable: Volume(m^3), Radius(m), time(t)
 3. Constant quantities: $\frac{dV}{dt} = 200 \frac{\text{m}^3}{\text{min}}$
 4. Key Equation: $V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3(t)$
 5. Implicit Differentiation: $\frac{dV}{dt} = 4\pi r^2(t) \cdot \frac{dr}{dt}$
 6. $\left. \frac{dr}{dt} \right|_{r=6} = \frac{1}{4\pi(6)^2} \cdot 200 = \frac{200}{144\pi} = \frac{25}{18\pi} \frac{\text{m}}{\text{min}}$
 7. Concluding statement: When the diameter of the balloon is 12m, the rate of change of the radius is expanding by $\frac{25}{18\pi} \frac{\text{m}}{\text{min}}$
2. The construction workers building M4 accidentally left a 20 foot ladder propped up against a concrete wall that is 80 feet in height. The base of the ladder begins to slide away from the wall at a rate of 2ft/sec, and the top begins to move down as a result. When the base of the ladder is 14 ft from the wall, how fast is the top of the ladder sliding down the wall?

ANS:

1. Picture is omitted and left as an exercise for the reader
2. Changing variable: Distance from wall of base of ladder (m), Height where ladder touches the wall (m)
3. Constant quantities : $\frac{dx}{dt} = 2$
4. Key Equation: $x^2 + y^2 = 20^2$

5. Implicit Differentiation: $2x \frac{dx}{dt} + 2y \frac{dy}{dt} = 0 \implies \frac{dy}{dt} = -\frac{x}{y} \frac{dx}{dt}$

6. $\frac{dy}{dt} = -\frac{14}{\sqrt{400-14^2}} \cdot 2 = -\frac{14}{\sqrt{51}} \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{sec}}$

7. Concluding statement: When the base of ladder is 14cm, the top of the ladder is falling at a speed of $\frac{14}{\sqrt{51}} \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{sec}}$