1.3 – Standing Waves

Standing waves are waves with equally spaced points of zero vibration. An example is the kind of wave that can be seen when a rubber band fixed at both sides is excited. The points of zero vibration are called nods. And the points of maximum vibration are called antinodes. A standing wave is usually formed when an incident wave and a reflected wave are superposed. Consider a wave of the form $y_i = A_1 \cos(\omega t - Kx - \phi)$ reflected from a boundary between two medium (or obstacles) a distance of L from the source. When an incident wave and a reflected wave meet at a distance x from the source, the incident wave would have travelled a distance x and the reflected wave would have travelled a distance of L + (L - x) = 2L - x. As stated in the previous chapter, a reflected will have a phase change of π on reflection if the medium from which it is reflected is denser that it's medium and there will be no phase change if reflected from a less dense medium. Let's consider both separate.

Case 1: wave reflected from a more dense medium

let y_r be the reflected wave.

If
$$y_i = A_1 \cos(\omega t - Kx - \phi)$$
 then $y_r = A_2 \cos(K(2L - x) - \omega t + \phi + \pi)$

and the net wave y_{net} is given by

$$y_{net} = y_i + y_r = A_1 \cos(Kx - \omega t + \phi) + A_2 \cos(K(2L - x) - \omega t + \phi + \pi)$$

and multiplying the argument of the cosine by -1 (remember $\cos(-x) = \cos x$)

$$y_{net} = A_1 \cos(Kx - \omega t + \phi) + A_2 \cos(\omega t - K(2L - x) - \phi - \pi)$$

At a given location x, (x = constant) these two waves are harmonic oscillators with phase angles

$$\beta_{1}' = Kx + \varphi_{1} \quad and \quad \beta_{2}' = K(2L - x) + \varphi + \pi$$

$$y_{net} = A_{1} \cos(Kx - \beta_{1}') + A_{2} \cos(\omega t - \beta_{2}')$$

$$= A \cos(\omega t - \delta)$$

Where
$$A = \sqrt{A_1^2 + A_2^2 + 2A_1A_2\cos(\beta_2' - \beta_1')}$$

$$\delta = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{A_1 \sin \beta_1' + A_2 \sin \beta_2'}{A_1 \cos \beta_1' + A_2 \cos \beta_2'} \right)$$

$$\beta'_{2} - \beta'_{1} = K(2L - x) + \phi + \pi - (Kx + \phi)$$

$$= 2KL - Kx + \phi + \pi - Kx - \phi$$

$$= 2KL - 2Kx + \pi$$

$$= 2K(L - x) + \pi$$

For simplicity, let's assume that the wave is reflected 100% (even though some of it may be transmitted) so that $A_1 = A_2$

$$A = \sqrt{A_1^2 + A_2^2 + 2A_1 A_2 \cos(\beta_2' - \beta_1')}$$

$$= \sqrt{2A_1^2 + 2A_1^2 \cos(2K(L-x) + \pi)}$$

$$= A_1 \sqrt{2(1 - \cos(2K(L-x)))}$$
But
$$\frac{1 - \cos 2\theta}{2} = \sin^2 \theta$$

$$A = A_1 \sqrt{4\sin^2(K(L-x))}$$

$$A = 2A_1 |\sin(K(L-x))|$$

With this as an amplitude, the net wave is given by

$$y_{net} = 2A_1 \left| \sin(K(L-x)) \right| \cos(\omega t - \delta)$$

This shows that the amplitude of the harmonic oscillators is a function of position, *x*. And since the amplitude varies like a sine, there are going to be points with zero amplitude or no vibration. These are the points called the nodes of the waves. And of course the points where sine has a maximum are the antinode points.

Distance between Consecutive Nodes

The nodes are the values of x for which

$$\sin\left(K(L-x)\right) = 0 \implies K(L-x) = m\pi \quad \text{where m is integer}$$
 With
$$K = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}$$

$$\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}(L-x_m) = m\pi$$

$$L-x_m = \frac{1}{2}m\lambda$$

$$x_m = L - \frac{1}{2}m\lambda$$

(Location of the m^{th} node with x_0 represents the reflection point)

The distance between consecutive node equal to $\begin{vmatrix} x_{m+1} - x_m \end{vmatrix}$

$$\begin{vmatrix} x_{m+1} - x_m \end{vmatrix} = \left| \left(L - \frac{m+1}{2} \lambda \right) - \left(L \frac{m}{2} \lambda \right) \right| = \left| \left(\frac{m+1}{2} - \frac{m}{2} \right) \lambda \right| = \frac{\lambda}{2}$$

$$\begin{vmatrix} x_{m+1} - x_m &= \frac{\lambda}{2} \end{vmatrix}$$

(The distance between two consecutive nodes is half of the wave length of the wave)

Amplitude at Point of Reflection

At the point of reflection x = L

$$A = 2A_1 \left| \sin(K(L-x)) \right|$$

$$A \Big|_{x=L} = 2A_1 \left| \sin K(L-L) \right| = 0$$

Therefore the point of refection is a node

Boundary Conditions

Boundary conditions restrict the wavelengths of waves that can exist as standing wave in a medium we will consider two very common boundary conditions.

1. The other end (x = 0) also required to be a node

That is the standing wave will have nodes at both ends. An example of this is a standing wave is a string where both ends are fixed.

This condition

Since
$$A = 2A_1 \left| \sin(K(L-x)) \right|$$
$$\sin(K(L-0)) = 0$$
$$\sin(KL) = \sin\left(\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}L\right) = 0$$
$$\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}L = n\pi$$
$$\lambda = \frac{2L}{n}$$

(Where n is integer (positive) and is wavelength corresponding to n)

This means the only wavelength that can form standing wave in a standing wave of length L are

only
$$\lambda_1 = \frac{2L}{1}$$
, $\lambda_2 = \frac{2L}{2} = L$, $\lambda_3 = \frac{2L}{3}$, $\lambda_4 = \frac{2L}{4} = \frac{L}{2}$, ... and so on.

Since the speed of a wave depends on the properties of the medium only and the frequency of the wave is given as, the frequencies that can exist as a standing wave are also restricted

$$f_n = \frac{V}{\lambda_n} = \frac{V}{\left(2L/n\right)} = n\left(\frac{V}{2L}\right)$$
 (n positive integer)

$$f_n = n \left(\frac{V}{2L} \right)$$
 $n = 1, 2, 3, \dots$

 $f_n \to n^{th}$ frequency that can be exist as a standing wave.

The standing wave whose frequency is called the nth harmonic of the standing one. The first harmonic is also called the fundamental harmonic with

$$n=1$$
 $f_1 = \frac{V}{2L}$ fundamental frequency
$$\boxed{f_n = nf_1}$$

This shows that the frequencies of all the harmonics of a standing wave are integral multiples of the fundamental frequency, f_1 .

Number of Loops (N)

The part of the standing wave between two consecutive nodes is called a loop. The number of loops for the harmonic can be obtained by dividing the length of the standing wave (L) by the size

of one loop
$$\left(\frac{\lambda_n}{2}\right)$$

$$N = \frac{L}{\lambda_n/2} = \frac{L}{\left(\frac{L}{n}\right)} = n \quad \left(using \, \lambda_n = \frac{2L}{n}\right)$$

$$\boxed{N = n} \quad (The \, n^{th} \, harmonic \, contains \, n \, loops)}$$

Example

A wave of the form $y = 5\cos(4\pi - 20\pi t)$ is reflected from a boundary (*obstacle*) 2m away from the point where it is initiated. If the wave is reflected 100%.

- a) Calculate the amplitude of the harmonic oscillation of a particle located at an antinode.
- b) Determine the size of one loop of the standing wave (that is distance between consecutive nodes)
- c) Determine location of the nodes
- d) Determine the number of loops
- e) Calculate the amplitude of the harmonic oscillation of a particle located at x=0.4m

Solution

a) At an antinode the amplitude is maximum. $A_1 = 5$

$$A = 2A_1 \left| \sin \left(K \left(L - x \right) \right) \right|$$

The maximum value of A occurs when sin[K(L-x)] = 1 because maximum of a sine function is 1.

$$A_{max} = 2A_1 = 2(5) = 10m$$

b)
$$K = 4\pi \ K = 4\pi = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} \implies \lambda = \frac{1}{2} = 0.5$$
 $\left| x_{m+1} - x_m \right| = \frac{\lambda}{2} = \frac{0.5}{2} = 0.25$

c)
$$L = 2m$$
; $\lambda = 0.5m$
 $x_m = L - \frac{1}{2}m\lambda = 2 - 0.25m$

$$x_0 = 2m$$
; $x_1 = 1.75m$; $x_2 = 1.5m$; $x_3 = 1.25$; $x_4 = 1m$; $x_5 = 0.75m$; $x_6 = 0.5m$ $x_7 = 0.25m$; $x_8 = 0$

d) Since the size of one loop is $\lambda/2$

$$N = \frac{L}{\left(\frac{\lambda}{2}\right)} = \frac{2L}{\lambda} = \frac{2(2)}{0.5} = \frac{8loops}{2}$$

e)
$$x = 0.4 \text{m}$$
 $\lambda = 0.5 \text{m}$ $L = 2 \text{m}$ $N = 8$ $K = 4 \pi$

$$A = 2A_1 \left| \sin(K(L - x)) \right|$$

$$A \Big|_{x=0.4} = 2(5) \left| \sin(4\pi(2 - 0.4)) \right|$$

$$= 9.5 \text{ m}$$

Example

Consider a standing wave formed in a string of length 4m fixed at both of its ends. The mass of the string is 0.02 kg. There is a tension of 100 N in the string.

- a) Determine the wavelengths of the first 3 harmonics
- b) Determine the speed of the wave in the string
- c) Determine the frequencies of the first 3 harmonics
- d) Calculate the wavelength and frequency of the 15th harmonic.

Solution

a)
$$L = 4m$$
; $\lambda_n = \frac{2L}{n}$
 $\lambda_1 = \frac{2(4)}{1} = 8m$
 $\lambda_2 = \frac{2(4)}{2} = 4m$
 $\lambda_3 = \frac{2(4)}{3} = \frac{8}{3}m$

b) T=100N l=4m m=0.02K

$$v = \sqrt{T/\mu}$$

$$\mu = \frac{m}{l} = \frac{0.02}{4} = 0.005 \frac{kg}{m}$$

$$\therefore v = \sqrt{100/0.005} = 141 \frac{m}{s}$$

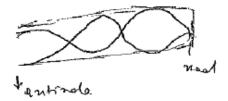
c)
$$f_1 = \frac{v}{\lambda_1} = \frac{141}{8} = \frac{17.6 \, Hz}{}$$

d)
$$f_{15} = 15f_1 = 15(17.6) = 264 \text{ Hz}$$

e)
$$\lambda_{15} = \frac{v}{f_{15}} = \frac{141}{264} = 0.534 \text{ m}$$

2. The x = 0 end required to be an Antinode

Remember the other end (*the reflection end is a node*). Therefore this is a standing wave with a node on one side end and an antinode on the other end. An example of this is sound resonance in a tube closed on one end. It will have an antinode on the open end and a node on the closed end.



Since $A = 2A_1 |\sin(K(L-x))|$ for an antinode the value of the sine should be one because the maximum of sine is one.

$$A\Big|_{x=0} = A_{\max} = 2A_1$$

$$\sin(K(L-x))\Big|_{x=0} = 1$$

$$\sin(KL) = 1 \implies KL = \frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{3\pi}{2}, \frac{5\pi}{2}, \dots = \frac{2n-1}{2}\pi$$

$$K_n L = \left(\frac{2n-1}{2}\right)\pi \quad but \quad K_n = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda_n}$$

$$\frac{2\pi}{\lambda_n} L = \left(\frac{2n-1}{2}\right)\pi$$

$$\lambda_n = \frac{4L}{2n-1} \quad (Allowed wavelength when one end is node and the other end is an antinode)$$

This implies that the only waves that can exist in a standing wave of length L with a node on one end and an antinode on the other end are waves with wavelengths and so on.

$$\lambda_1 = \frac{4L}{2(1)-1} = 4L$$
, $\lambda_2 = \frac{4L}{2(2)-1} = \frac{4L}{3}$, $\lambda_3 = \frac{4L}{2(3)-1} = \frac{4L}{5}$, ... and so on.

If the speed of the wave is v (the speed depends only on the properties of the medium), then the allowed frequencies are given by

$$\underline{\left|f_n = \frac{V}{\lambda_n} = \frac{V}{\left(\frac{4L}{(2n-1)}\right)} = \frac{(2n-1)\frac{V}{4L}}{\left(\frac{4L}{(2n-1)}\right)}}$$

Since, $f_1 = \frac{V}{4L}$, this also may be written in terms of the fundamental frequency f_1 , as

$$f_n = (2n-1)f_1 \quad where \quad f_1 = \frac{V}{4L}$$

Number of loops (N):
$$|N| = \frac{L}{\lambda_n/2} = \frac{L}{\frac{1}{2} \frac{4L}{2n-1}} = \frac{2n-1}{2}$$

The nth harmonic has $\frac{2n-1}{2}$ loops when one end is a node & the other antinode.

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Example

Consider sound resonance (*standing wave*) formed in a pipe open at one end closed at the other end. Its length is 0.5m. Assume the temperature is 20°C.

- a) Calculate the wave lengths of the first 3 harmonics
- b) Calculate the frequencies of the first 3 harmonics
- c) Calculate the wavelength and frequency of the 4th harmonic

Solution

a) The sound resonance will have a node at the closed end & antinode at the open end.

$$\lambda_n = \frac{4L}{2n-1} = \frac{4(0.5)}{2n-1} = \frac{2}{2n-1}$$

$$\lambda_1 = \frac{2}{2(1)-1} = 2m; \quad \lambda_2 = \frac{2}{2(2)-1} = \frac{2}{3}m; \quad \lambda_3 = \frac{2}{2(3)-1} = \frac{2}{5}m;$$

b)
$$T = 20^{\circ}C = 293^{\circ}K$$

 $V = 331\sqrt{\frac{293}{273}} = 343$
 $f_1 = \frac{V}{\lambda_1} = \frac{243}{2} \approx 172 \text{ Hz}$
 $f_n = (2n-1)f_1$
 $f_2 = (4-1)(172) = 516 \text{ Hz}$
 $f_3 = (6-1)(172) = 860 \text{ Hz}$

c)
$$f_n = (2n-1)f_1$$

 $f_{11} = (2(11)-1)f_1 = (21)(172) = 3612 \text{ Hz}$
 $\lambda_{11} = \frac{V}{f_{11}} = \frac{343}{3612} = 0.095 \text{ m}$

Case 2: Wave Reflected from a less Dense Medium

In this case there is no phase shift on reflection. Therefore if the incident wave y_i is given by

$$y_i = A_1 \cos(Kx - \omega t + \phi)$$

Then the reflected wave is given by $y_r = A_2 \cos(K(2L - x) - \omega t + \phi)$

As shown before the amplitude of the net wave is given by

$$A = \sqrt{A_1^2 + A_2^2 + 2A_1A_2\cos(\beta_2' - \beta_1')}$$
Where $\beta_1' = Kx + \phi$ $\beta_2' = K(2L - x) + \phi$

$$\beta_2' - \beta_1' = 2K(L - x)$$

And assuming the wave is reflected 100% $\left(A_1 = A_L\right)$

$$A = \sqrt{A_1^2 + A_1^2 + 2A_1^2 \cos(2K(L-x))}$$

$$= \sqrt{2} |A_1| \sqrt{1 + \cos(2K(L-x))}$$

$$= \sqrt{2}A_1 \sqrt{2\cos^2(K(L-x))}$$

$$\left(\cos^2 x = \frac{1 + \cos 2x}{2}\right)$$

 $A = 2A_1 \cos(K(L-x))$ (Amplitude of a standing wave for the case where the wave is reflected from a less dense medium)

At the reflection point $X = L \& A \Big|_{X=L} = 2A_1 \cos(0) = 2A_1$ which is the maximum amplitude. Therefore the reflection points is an antinode

Boundary Conditions

Requiring the x = 0 and to be a node will result in a node in one end and an antinode in the other end which has been discussed already. So here we will discuss only the case where the x = 0 end is required to an antinode. That is case where both ends are antinodes. An example is sound resonance formed in a pipe open at both ends. With a similar analysis, it can be shown that the equations for the case where both ends are antinodes are identical to the case where both ends are nodes.

$$\lambda_{n} = \frac{2L}{n}$$

$$f_{n} = n\left(\frac{V}{2L}\right)$$

$$f_{1} = \frac{V}{2L}$$

$$f_{n} = nf_{1}$$

$$N = n$$

Equations for the case where both ends are antinodes



Example

Consider sound resonance (*standing waves*) in a 2m pipe open at both ends. Assume temperature is 20°C. Calculate the wavelength and frequency of the 8th harmonic.

Solution

$$L = 2m$$
; $T = 20^{\circ}C = 293^{\circ}K$

For a pipe open at both ends, both ends are anitnodes

$$f_1 = \frac{V}{2L}$$

$$V = \left(\sqrt{\frac{T}{273}}\right) 331 = 331 \sqrt{\frac{293}{273}} = 343 \, \frac{m}{s}$$

$$\therefore f_1 = \frac{343}{2(2)} = 85.7 Hz$$

$$f_n = nf_1 \implies f_8 = 8f_1 = 8(85.7) = 426.7 Hz$$

$$\lambda_8 = \frac{V}{f_9} = \frac{343}{426.7} = 0.8 m$$

A Beat

A beat is a wave with points of zero vibration which for a given location are separated by equal intervals of time, for example sound waves, at a given location, the event of no sound will be separated by equal intervals of time. The wave between two consecutive events of zero vibration is called a beat. The time taken for a beat is called the beat period and the number of beats heard per second is called the beat frequency.

A beat is formed when two waves with close frequencies interfere. Consider two interfering waves of

frequencies w_1 and w_2 such that $\frac{\left| w_1 - w_2 \right|}{w_1} < t$

$$y_1 = A\cos(K_1x - \omega_1t)$$
 and $y_2 = A\cos(K_2x - \omega_2t)$

(for simplicity we are assuming both waves have the same amplitude). Since the waves are travelling in the same medium they will have the same speed, v_i that $v = \frac{\omega_1}{K_1} = \frac{\omega_2}{K_2}$

$$y_{net} = y_1 + y_2$$

= $A \cos(K_1 x - \omega_1 t) + A \cos(K_2 x - \omega_2 t)$
= $A[\cos(K_1 x - \omega_1 t) + \cos(K_2 x - \omega_2 t)]$

Before we proceed let's review a trignometric relationship that will help us combine the two into one term.

Brief Review of a Trigonometric Identity

$$\cos(a+b) = \cos(a)\cos(b) - \sin(a)\sin(b)$$

$$\cos(a - b) = \cos(a)\cos(b) + \sin(a)\sin(b)$$

Adding these equations

$$cos(a + b) + cos(a - b) = 2 cos(a) cos(b)$$
 equation.1

Now let's transform the variables a and b into variables x and y using the equations

$$x = a + b$$

$$y = a - b$$

Sdding these equations results in

$$2a = x + y$$
 or $a = \frac{x + y}{2}$

Subtracting these equations results in

$$2b = x - y$$
 or $b = \frac{x - y}{2}$

Therefore equation 1 in terms of the variables x and y becomes

$$\cos(x) + \cos(y) = 2\cos\left(\frac{x+y}{2}\right)\cos\left(\frac{x-y}{2}\right)$$

end of review

Using this formula, y_{net} can be expressed as a simple term

$$y_{net} = A\{\cos[K_1 x - \omega_1 t] + \cos[K_2 x - \omega_2 t]\}$$

$$=2A\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1+K_2}{2}\right)x-\left(\frac{\omega_1+\omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1-K_2}{2}\right)x-\left(\frac{\omega_1-\omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]$$

As can be seen from this equation the effect of the interference of two waves of close frequencies is the product of a high frequency wave $\left(\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1+K_2}{2}\right)x-\left(\frac{\omega_1+\omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]\right)$ and a low frequency wave

$$\left(\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1-K_2}{2}\right)x-\left(\frac{\omega_1+\omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]\right)$$
. The result is tracelling wave packets (*beats*) where the amplitude

of the high frequency vibrations are controlled by the low frequency wave.

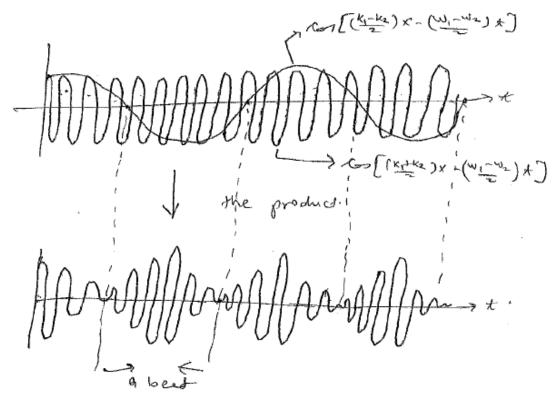
At a particular location, the two waves and their product (*the net wave*) may be diagrammatically represented as follows

As can be seen from here there are two beats in one cycle of the low frequency wave. That is the beat frequency $\left(f_b\right)$ is twice the frequency of the low frequency wave. Since the frequency of the law

frequency wave is given by $\frac{|f_1 - f_2|}{2}$, it follows that

$$f_b = |f_1 - f_2|$$

(the beat frequency, which is the number of beats per second is equal to the difference of the frequencies of the interfering wave)



And since the beat period (T_b), time taken for one beat, is equal to $\frac{1}{\delta_b}$

$$T_b = \frac{1}{|f_1 - f_2|}$$

Example

Consider the interference of the following two waves: $y_1 = 2\cos(2x - 200t)$ and

$$y_2 = 2\cos(2.02x - 202t)$$
.

- a) Express the net wave (beat) as a product of two waves.
- b) Calculate the number of beats per second
- c) How long does one beat take?

Solution

a)
$$K_1=2$$
, $\omega_1=200$, $K_2=2.02$, $\omega_2=202$, $A=2$

$$y_{net} = 2A\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1 - K_2}{2}\right)x - \left(\frac{\omega_1 - \omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]\cos\left[\left(\frac{K_1 + K_2}{2}\right)x - \left(\frac{\omega_1 + \omega_2}{2}\right)t\right]$$

$$= 2(2)\cos\left[\left(\frac{.02}{2}\right)x + \left(\frac{2}{2}\right)t\right]\cos\left[\left(\frac{4.02}{2}\right)x - \left(\frac{402}{2}\right)t\right]$$

$$= 4\cos[.01x - t]\cos[2.01x - 201t]$$

$$= 4\cos[.01x - t]\cos[2.01x - 201t]$$

b)
$$f_b = |f_1 - f_2| = \left| \frac{\omega_1}{2\pi} - \frac{\omega_2}{2\pi} \right| = \frac{1}{2\pi} |\omega_1 - \omega_2| = \frac{1}{2\pi} |200 - 202| = \frac{2}{2\pi} \approx 0.318 Hz$$

c)
$$T_b = \frac{1}{f_b} = \frac{1}{1/\pi} = \pi$$

Example

When a sound of frequency 1000Hz interferes with sound of unknown frequency 2 beats can be heard in 5 seconds.

- a) Calculate the two possible frequencies of the unknown wave.
- b) If both waves have amplitude of 159m and the temperature is 20°C, express the beat as a product of two waves (just for one of the unknown frequency)

Solution

a)
$$f_1 = 1,000Hz$$
; $f_b = \frac{2beats}{5 \text{ sec}} = 0.4Hz$
 $f_b = |f_1 - f_2|$
 $f_1 - f_2 = \pm f_b$
 $f_2 = f_1 \pm f_b = 1000 \pm 0.4$

b)
$$\omega_1 = 2\pi f_1 = 2,000\pi \ rad \ / \ s;$$
 $\omega_1 = 2\pi f_2 = 200.8\pi \ rad \ / \ s;$ $A = 10^{-9}$

$$T = 20^{\circ}\text{C} = 293^{\circ}\text{K}$$

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{T}{273}} = \sqrt{\frac{293}{273}} = 343 \ m \ / \ s$$

$$K_1 = \frac{\omega_1}{v} = \frac{2000\pi}{343} = 5.83\pi \ / \ m = 18.318 \ / \ m$$

$$y_{net} = 2A \cos \left[\left(\frac{K_1 - K_2}{2} \right) x - \left(\frac{\omega_1 - \omega_2}{2} \right) t \right] \cos \left[\left(\frac{K_1 + K_2}{2} \right) x - \left(\frac{\omega_1 + \omega_2}{2} \right) t \right]$$

$$y_{net} = 2 \times 10^{-9} \cos[.004x - 1.25t] \cos[18.32x - 6284t]$$