

Problem 1)

Find the Laplace transform of the following function:

$$I(t) = t^n e^{-at}, \quad a > 0 \text{ and even } n. \quad (1)$$

The Laplace transform of a function $f(t)$ is generally given as

$$\mathcal{L}\{f(t)\} = \int_0^\infty f(t) e^{-st} dt, \quad (2)$$

where the values of s are such that the integral is convergent. Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}\{I(t)\} &= \int_0^\infty t^n e^{-(a+s)t} dt = (-1)^n \frac{d^n}{d(a+s)^n} \int_0^\infty e^{-(a+s)t} dt \\ &= (-1)^n \frac{d^n}{d(a+s)^n} \frac{1}{a+s} = \frac{n!}{(a+s)^{n+1}}. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

This matches the result we have in our library. That is, $\mathcal{L}\{t^n\} = n!/s^{n+1}$ and for a general function $f(t)$, $\mathcal{L}\{f(t)e^{-at}\} = F(s+a)$. Collecting these results, we end up with the same solution, which is that

$$\mathcal{L}\{t^n e^{-at}\} = \frac{n!}{(s+a)^{n+1}}. \quad (4)$$

Problem 2)

Solve the following equation by the Laplace transform

$$\ddot{y} + 2\lambda\dot{y} + \omega_0^2 y = 0, \quad (5)$$

where $y(0) = 0$ and $\dot{y}(0) = v$.

If we take the Laplace transform of the equation¹, we find

$$\mathcal{L}\{\ddot{y} + 2\lambda\dot{y} + \omega_0^2 y\} = [s^2 Y(s) - sv] + 2\lambda[sY(s)] + \omega_0^2 Y(s) = 0. \quad (6)$$

Solving for $Y(s)$ gives

$$Y(s) = \frac{sv}{s^2 + 2\lambda s + \omega_0^2} = \frac{sv}{(s+\lambda)^2 + (\omega_0^2 - \lambda^2)}. \quad (7)$$

From our “library” we have

$$\mathcal{L}\{e^{-at} \cos bt\} = \frac{s+a}{(s+a)^2 + b^2} \quad (8)$$

$$\mathcal{L}\{e^{-at} \sin bt\} = \frac{b}{(s+a)^2 + b^2}. \quad (9)$$

¹Strictly speaking, this means that if we have a differential equation $Df = g$, where D is a linear differential operator, then its “Laplace transform” is $\mathcal{L}\{Df\} = G(s)$.

Thus, if we write $a = \lambda$ and $b = \sqrt{\omega_0^2 - \lambda^2}$, then

$$Y(s) = v \left[\frac{s + a}{(s + a)^2 + b^2} - \frac{a}{(s + a)^2 + b^2} \right]. \quad (10)$$

Problem 3)

A unit vector $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$ makes angles θ and α with the Cartesian axes z and x , respectively, and a unit vector $\hat{\mathbf{n}}'$ makes angles θ' and α' with z and x , respectively. Find $\cos \varphi$, where φ is the angle between $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{n}}'$.

Problem 4)

Find a scalar function $\varphi(r)$ of $r = |\vec{\mathbf{r}}|$ which satisfies the equation

$$\vec{\nabla} \cdot [\varphi(r)\vec{\mathbf{r}}] = 0. \quad (11)$$

Problem 5)

Calculate the following: (1) $\vec{\nabla} \cdot [(\vec{\mathbf{a}} \cdot \vec{\mathbf{r}})\vec{\mathbf{b}}]$, (2) $\vec{\nabla} \times [(\vec{\mathbf{a}} \cdot \vec{\mathbf{r}})\vec{\mathbf{b}}]$, (3) $\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{\mathbf{a}} \times \vec{\mathbf{r}}$, (4) $\vec{\nabla} \times (\vec{\mathbf{a}} \times \vec{\mathbf{r}})$, (5) $\vec{\nabla} \cdot [\vec{\mathbf{r}} \times (\vec{\mathbf{a}} \times \vec{\mathbf{r}})]$, where $\vec{\mathbf{a}}$ and $\vec{\mathbf{b}}$ are constant vectors.