

MATH 238 Homework 3

Brendan Tea

January 27, 2026

Homework for Section 2.3: 50 points

It is usually easier to do the homework on paper and then type the solutions in the latex document compiling frequently to catch the errors early! Each of the q ordinary differential equation in first-order linear and will be referred to as a equation.

1. (2 points) On what rectangular regions does the equation below possess a unique solution?

$$a_1(x) \frac{dy}{dx} + a_0(x)y = q(x)$$

SOLUTION: A unique solution exists when both $\frac{a_0(x)}{a_1(x)}$ and $\frac{q(x)}{a_1(x)}$ are both continuous. In a rectangular region, it would be $R = [a, b] \times [c, d]$ where $a_1(x) \neq 0$ and $a_1(x), a_0(x), q(x)$ are continuous.¹

2. (2 points) On what rectangular regions does the equation below possess a unique solution?

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + p(x)y = q(x)$$

SOLUTION: A unique solution exists in a standard first order linear equation when $p(x)$ and $q(x)$ are both continuous. In a rectangular region, it would be $R = [a, b] \times [c, d]$ where both $p(x), q(x)$ are continuous.

¹If $a_1(x) \neq 0$ and $a_1(x), a_0(x), q(x)$ are continuous, then $\frac{a_0(x)}{a_1(x)}$ and $\frac{q(x)}{a_1(x)}$ are also continuous.

3. (6 points) Solve the equation below

$$\frac{dP}{dt} + 5tP = P + 2t - 2$$

SOLUTION: To approach this problem, we must first put it into the standard first order linear equation $y' + P(x)y = H(x)$. After that, we will find the integrating factor $\mu(x)$.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{dP}{dt} + 5tP &= P + 2t - 2 & \mu(t)P &= \int e^{\frac{5t^2}{2}-t}(2t-2)dt \\
 \frac{dP}{dt} + (5t-1)P &= 2t-2 & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \int e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}(2t-2)dt \\
 P(t) &= 5t-1, \quad H(t) = 2t-2 & u = t - \frac{1}{5} \implies t = u + \frac{1}{5} \\
 \mu(t) &= e^{\int P(t)dt} & dt = du, \quad (2t-2) &= (2u - \frac{8}{5}) \\
 \mu(t) &= e^{\int 5t-1 dt} & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \int \left(2u - \frac{8}{5}\right) e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} du \\
 \mu(t) &= e^{\frac{5t^2}{2}-t} & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \left(\int 2ue^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} du - \frac{8}{5} \int e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} du\right) \\
 \mu(t) &= e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{2}{5}t+\frac{1}{25})-\frac{1}{10}} & v = u^2 \implies dv = 2u du \\
 \text{We don't care about the constant } e^{-\frac{1}{10}} & & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \int e^{\frac{5}{2}v} dv - \frac{8}{5} \int e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} du \\
 \implies \mu(t) &= e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2} & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \frac{2}{5}e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} - \frac{8}{5} \int e^{\left(\sqrt{\frac{5}{2}}u\right)^2} du \\
 \mu(t) \left(\frac{dP}{dt} + (5t-1)P \right) &= \mu(t)(2t-2) & m = \sqrt{\frac{5}{2}}u \implies \sqrt{\frac{2}{5}}dm = du \\
 \implies \frac{d}{dt}(\mu(t)P) &= \mu(t)(2t-2) & e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \frac{2}{5}e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} - \frac{8}{5} \int e^{m^2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{5}}dm \\
 \int \frac{d}{dt}(\mu(t)P)dt &= \int \mu(t)(2t-2)dt & & \\
 \mu(t)P &= \int e^{\frac{5t^2}{2}-t}(2t-2)dt & &
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Remark: } \text{erfi}(x) &= \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_0^x e^{t^2} dt \\
 C \cdot \text{erfi}(x) &= C \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_0^x e^{t^2} dt = \int e^{m^2} du \\
 C &= \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \implies e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \frac{2}{5}e^{\frac{5}{2}u^2} - \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2} \frac{8}{5} \sqrt{\frac{2}{5}} \text{erfi}(m) + C \\
 e^{\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}P &= \frac{2}{5}e^{\frac{5}{2}(t-\frac{1}{5})^2} - \frac{4}{5} \sqrt{\frac{2\pi}{5}} \text{erfi}\left(\sqrt{\frac{5}{2}}\left(t^2 - \frac{1}{5}\right)\right) + C \\
 \boxed{P = \frac{2}{5} - \frac{4}{5} \sqrt{\frac{2\pi}{5}} \text{erfi}\left(\sqrt{\frac{5}{2}}\left(t^2 - \frac{1}{5}\right)\right) e^{-\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2} + C e^{-\frac{5}{2}(t^2-\frac{1}{5})^2}}
 \end{aligned}$$

4. (7 points) Solve the equation below

$$2L \frac{di}{dt} + 3Ri = E, i(0) = i_0$$

where L, R and E are constants.

SOLUTION:

$$\begin{aligned} 2L \frac{di}{dt} + 3Ri &= E, i(0) = i_0 \\ \frac{di}{dt} + \frac{3R}{2L}i &= \frac{E}{2L} \\ \mu(t) &= e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mu(t) \left(\frac{di}{dt} + \frac{3R}{2L}i = \frac{E}{2L} \right) \\ \Rightarrow \frac{d}{dt}(e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t}i) = e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t} \frac{E}{2L} \\ e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t}i = \int e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t} \frac{E}{2L} dt \\ e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t}i = \frac{2L}{3R} e^{\frac{3R}{2L}t} \frac{E}{2L} + C \\ i(t) = \frac{E}{3R} + Ce^{-\frac{3R}{2L}t} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} i(0) &= i_0 = \frac{E}{3R} + C \\ C &= i_0 - \frac{E}{3R} \\ \Rightarrow \boxed{i(t) = \frac{E}{3R} + \left(i_0 - \frac{E}{3R} \right) e^{-\frac{3R}{2L}t}} \end{aligned}$$

5. (7 points) Solve the equation below

$$\cos^2 x \sin x \frac{dy}{dx} + (\cos^3 x) y = 4$$

SOLUTION:

$$\begin{aligned} \cos^2 x \sin x \frac{dy}{dx} + (\cos^3 x) y &= 4 \\ \frac{dy}{dx} + (\cot x) y &= 4 \sec^2 x \csc x \\ \mu(x) &= e^{\ln |\sin x|} = \sin x \\ \mu(x) \left(\frac{dy}{dx} + (\cot x) y = 4 \sec^2 x \csc x \right) \\ \Rightarrow \frac{d}{dx}(e^{\sin x} y) &= \sin x 4 \sec^2 x \csc x \\ y \sin x &= \int \sec^2 x dx \\ y \sin x &= \tan x + C \\ \Rightarrow \boxed{y(x) = 4 \sec x + C \csc x} \end{aligned}$$

6. (10 points) Solve the equation below

$$(x+1)\frac{dy}{dx} + (x+2)y = 2xe^{-x}$$

SOLUTION:

$$(x+1)\frac{dy}{dx} + (x+2)y = 2xe^{-x}$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + \frac{x+2}{x+1}y = \frac{2xe^{-x}}{x+1}$$

$$\mu(x) = e^{\int \frac{x+2}{x+1} dx}$$

$$\mu(x) = e^{\int \frac{x+1+1}{x+1} dx}$$

$$\mu(x) = e^{\int 1 + \frac{1}{x+1} dx}$$

$$\mu(x) = e^{x+\ln|x+1|} = (x+1)e^x$$

$$\mu(x) \left(\frac{dy}{dx} + \frac{x+2}{x+1}y = \frac{2xe^{-x}}{x+1} \right)$$

$$((x+1)e^x) \left(\frac{dy}{dx} + \frac{x+2}{x+1}y = \frac{2xe^{-x}}{x+1} \right)$$

$$\implies \frac{d}{dx} ((x+1)e^x y) = \cancel{(x+1)e^x} \frac{2xe^{-x}}{\cancel{x+1}}$$

$$(x+1)e^x y = \int 2x dx$$

$$\implies \boxed{y = \frac{x^2 + C}{(x+1)e^x}}$$

7. (16 points) Solve the equation below

$$\frac{dy}{dx} + 6xy = f(x)$$

where

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} x^2 & x < 1 \\ 2x - 1 & x \geq 1 \end{cases}$$

Graph the right side and one of the the solutions on separate graphs.

SOLUTION:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dy}{dx} + 6xy &= x^2, \quad x < 1 \\ \mu(x) &= e^{3x^2} \\ \frac{d}{dx}(e^{3x^2}y) &= e^{3x^2}x^2 \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \int e^{3x^2}x^2 dx \\ u = x, dv &= xe^{3x^2}dx \\ du = dx, v &= \frac{1}{6}e^{3x^2} \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \frac{1}{6}xe^{3x^2} - \int \frac{1}{6}e^{3x^2}dx, \quad u = \sqrt{3}x, \quad \frac{du}{\sqrt{3}} = dx \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \frac{1}{6}xe^{3x^2} - \frac{1}{12}\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{3}}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x) \\ \Rightarrow y(x) &= \frac{x}{6} - \frac{\sqrt{\pi}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x)}{12\sqrt{3}e^{3x^2}} + C_2e^{-3x^2}, \quad x < 1 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dy}{dx} + 6xy &= 2x - 1, \quad x \geq 1 \\ \mu(x) &= e^{3x^2} \\ \frac{d}{dx}(e^{3x^2}y) &= e^{3x^2}(2x - 1) \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \int e^{3x^2}(2x - 1)dx \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \int 2xe^{3x^2} - e^{3x^2}dx \\ e^{3x^2}y &= \frac{1}{3}e^{3x^2} - \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{3}}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x) + C \\ \Rightarrow y(x) &= \frac{1}{3} - \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{3}}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x)e^{-3x^2} + C_1e^{-3x^2}, \quad x \geq 1 \end{aligned}$$

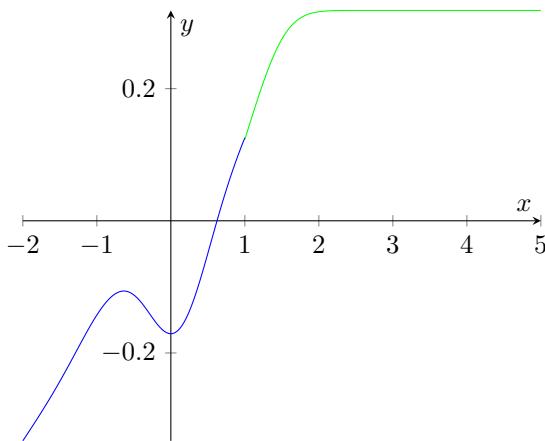


Figure 1: Graph of both solution curves when $C_1 = 0$, $C_2 = -0.170920506876$ using numeric methods.

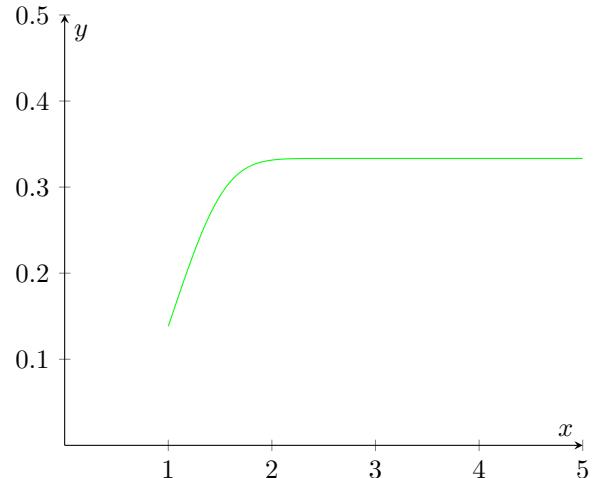


Figure 2: Right Graph of solution curve when $C_1 = 0$. We can use this to find $y(1) \approx 0.12312177618$

$$y(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{x}{6} - \frac{\sqrt{\pi}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x)}{12\sqrt{3}e^{3x^2}} + C_2e^{-3x^2} & x < 1 \\ \frac{1}{3} - \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{3}}\operatorname{erfi}(\sqrt{3}x)e^{-3x^2} + C_1e^{-3x^2} & x \geq 1 \end{cases}$$