

Note: In this problem set, expressions in green cells match corresponding expressions in the text answers.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

Intro. The standard way to get an interpolating function in Mathematica is to ask for it. However, as I discuss in problem 7, there may be a better way, since the nonavailability of the equation for the interpolated function is a decided disadvantage. What I do here is to call an interpolated function, then use it to manufacture a list of 200 points, then employ the **Fit** command to design a function which mimics the interpolated function, giving it the assignment of developing a curve from the 200 sample points, leveraging the advantage of its 20-exponent variable span in creating the curve. I thought this was smart when I did it, but I now think it is junk.

```
data = {{0, 0}, {0.1, .3}, {0.5, .6}, {1, -.2}, {2, 3}}
{{0, 0}, {0.1, 0.3}, {0.5, 0.6}, {1, -0.2}, {2, 3}}
```

```
f = Interpolation[data]
```

```
InterpolatingFunction[ Domain[{0., 2.}]
Output: scalar ]
```

```
datai = Table[{n, f[n]}, {n, 0, 2, 0.01}];
```

The interpolating polynomial is extremely long and cumbersome-looking. Just sticking it in [here](#).

```
ip = InterpolatingPolynomial[datai, x];
```

```
tf = Fit[datai, {x20, x19, x18, x17, x16, x15, x14,
x13, x12, x11, x10, x9, x8, x7, x6, x5, x4, x3, x2, x, x0}, x]
0.00101515 + 3.22001 x + 11.1129 x2 - 346.654 x3 + 3852.28 x4 - 25 880.5 x5 +
114 305. x6 - 348 455. x7 + 755 491. x8 - 1.18323 × 106 x9 + 1.33993 × 106 x10 -
1.07486 × 106 x11 + 569 043. x12 - 147 155. x13 - 37 781.9 x14 + 55 021.7 x15 -
25 820.5 x16 + 6817.26 x17 - 1021.29 x18 + 71.9705 x19 - 0.901307 x20
```

```
lm = LinearModelFit[data, {x4, x3, x2, x, x0}, x];
```

```
p1 = ListPlot[data, PlotStyle → Red, Filling → Bottom, ImageSize → 400];
```

```
p2 = Plot[lm[x], {x, 0, 2},
ImageSize → 400, PlotStyle → {Blue, Thickness[0.002]}];
```

```
p3 = Plot[f[x], {x, 0, 2}, ImageSize → 400,
PlotStyle → {Orange, Thickness[0.002]}];
```

```
p4 = Plot[tf, {x, 0, 2}, ImageSize → 400,
PlotStyle → {Green, Thickness[0.002]}];
```

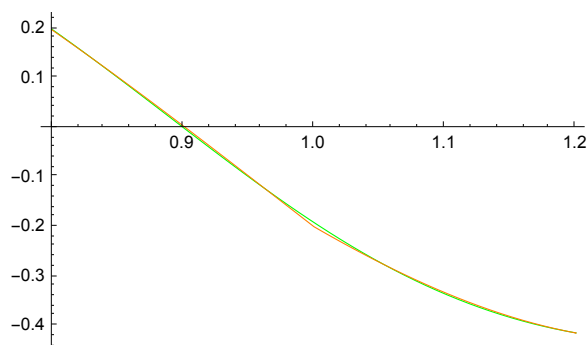
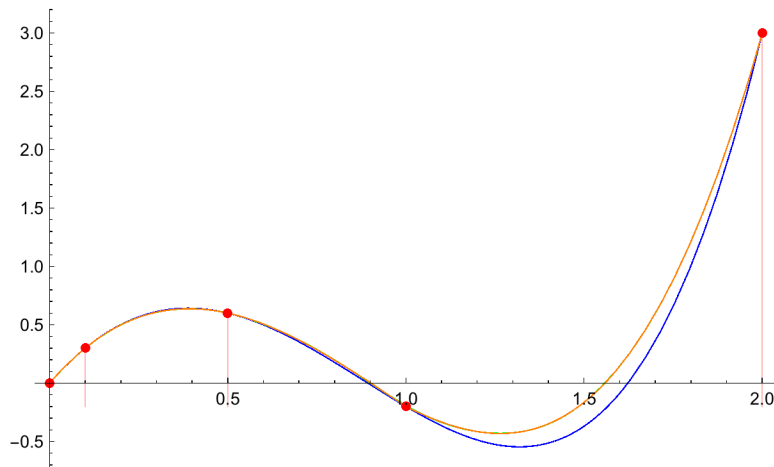
```

p5 = Plot[tf, {x, 0.8, 1.2},
  ImageSize → 300, PlotStyle → {Green, Thickness[0.002]}];
p6 = Plot[f[x], {x, 0.8, 1.2},
  ImageSize → 300, PlotStyle → {Orange, Thickness[0.002]}];

```

The blue of the unsophisticated linear model fit, `lm`, takes a different path than the interpolated function `f`, as shown on the left plot. The ornate fit function `tf`, with all its exponents, is not seen in the left chart, where at the presentation scale it is totally hidden by the interpolating curve `f`, and only peeks out in the right chart, where it emerges to smooth a visible corner in `f`. That visible orange corner, I believe, is evidence that the interpolation function assembles a sequence of piecewise functions to do the job, using as many as it finds necessary.

```
Row[{Show[{p2, p4, p3, p1}], Show[{p5, p6}]}]
```



1. Linear interpolation. Calculate $p_1[x]$ in example 1 and from it $\text{Log}[9.3]$.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

The real substance of problem 1 is just a log, worked out by hand according to the very similar example 1 on p. 810 and amounting to

$$0.4(\text{Log}[9.0]) + 0.6(\text{Log}[9.5]) =$$

```
.4 (2.1972) + .6 (2.2513)
```

```
2.22966
```

```
N[Log[9.3] - %]
```

```
0.0003544
```

The error, noted above, is not listed in the text answer.

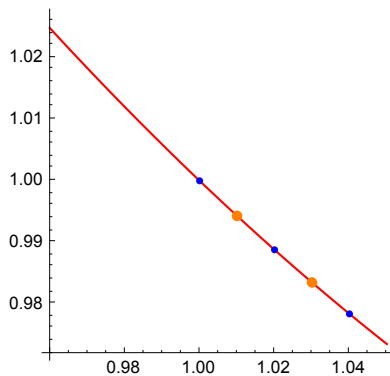
3. Quadratic interpolation. Gamma function. Calculate the Lagrange polynomial $p_2(x)$ for the values $\Gamma[1.00]=1.0000$, $\Gamma[1.02]=0.9888$, $\Gamma[1.04]=0.9784$ of the gamma function ((24) in appendix A3.1) and from it approximations of $\Gamma[1.01]$ and $\Gamma[1.03]$.

As can be seen, I elected to use an **InterpolatingPolynomial** instead of a Lagrange method.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

```
inpp[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[
  {{1.00, 1.000}, {1.02, 0.9888}, {1.04, 0.9784}}, x]
0.9784 + (-0.54 + 1. (-1. + x)) (-1.04 + x)
```

```
Plot[inpp[x], {x, 0.96, 1.05}, ImageSize -> 200,
  PlotStyle -> {Red, Thickness[0.006]}, AspectRatio -> 1,
  Epilog -> {{Blue, PointSize[0.02], Point[{1.00, 1.000}]},
    {Blue, PointSize[0.02], Point[{1.02, 0.9888}]},
    {Blue, PointSize[0.02], Point[{1.04, 0.9784}]},
    {Orange, PointSize[0.03], Point[{1.01, 0.9943}]},
    {Orange, PointSize[0.03], Point[{1.03, 0.9835}]}}]
```



```
inpp[1.01]
```

```
0.9943
```

```
inpp[1.03]
```

```
0.9835
```

The green cells above match the answers in the text. The function plot looks almost linear in the small interval.

5. Linear and quadratic interpolation. Find $e^{-0.25}$ and $e^{-0.75}$ by linear interpolation of e^{-x} with $x_0=0$, $x_1=0.5$, $x_2=1$ and from it $e^{-0.25}$ and $e^{-0.75}$. Compare the errors. Use 4S-values of e^{-x} .

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

First look at the answers I will be looking for.

```
f[x_] = e-x
e-x
```

```
f[0.25]
0.778801
```

```
f[0.75]
0.472367
```

I'm only working with the three points. Just to take a look at their range,

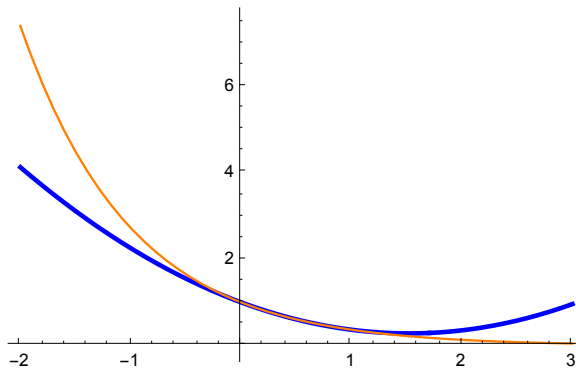
```
Table[{x, f[x]}, {x, {0, 0.5, 1}}]
{{0, 1}, {0.5, 0.606531}, {1,  $\frac{1}{e}$ }}
```

I can create the IP. Preserving values expressed in function form makes it much more accurate than pasting in the above output.

```
inpp2[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[{ {0, 1}, {0.5, f[0.5]}, {1,  $\frac{1}{e}$ } }, x]
 $\frac{1}{e} + \left(-1 + \frac{1}{e} + 0.309636 x\right) (-1 + x)$ 
```

And plot it. Thankfully it is interpolation, not extrapolation, and the values sought are bracketed, so the flaky curve match should not be a problem within the interval of interest, which is 0 to 1. The text uses both linear and quadratic interpolation, with much better numbers produced by the quadratic.

```
p1 = Plot[{inpp2[x], e-x}, {x, -2, 3}, ImageSize → 300,
  PlotStyle → {{Blue, Thickness[0.008]}, {Orange, Thickness[0.004]}}]
```



```
inpp2[0.25]
```

```
0.783913
```

```
0.7839130646380448` - 0.7788007830714049`
```

```
0.00511228
```

text error reported for above is 0.0245, greater than yellow. So in this case the Mathematica method is superior.

```
inpp2[0.75]
```

```
0.467853
```

```
% - 0.4723665527410147`
```

```
-0.00451377
```

text error for above is 0.0148, greater than yellow. Again, in posting a smaller error, the linear interpolation of the Mathematica method shows its superiority.

Supposing it is okay to recognize this as Exp , or to something resembling it, there is another way to do this with **FindFit**

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

same data used in this little isolated section on experimental method of **FindFit**

```
data = {{0, 1}, {0.5`, 0.6065306597126334`}, {1, 1/e}};
```

a model is chosen similar to the appearance of the data,

```
model = a Exp[-k t];
```

and parameters are solved for, which might make the model usefully compliant.

```
fit = FindFit[data, model, {a, k}, t]
```

FindFit::mgz: Encountered a gradient that is effectively zero.
The result returned may not be a minimum; it may be a maximum or a saddle point >>

```
{a → 1., k → 1.}
```

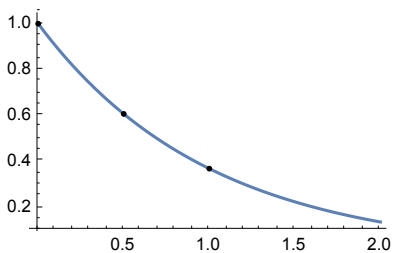
The model is calculated, resulting in a curve function description.

```
model = Function[{t}, Evaluate[model /. fit]]
```

```
Function[{t}, 1. e-1. t]
```

With only trivial parameters in this case, the method does not show to advantage.

```
Plot[model[t], {t, 0, 2}, Epilog → Map[Point, data], ImageSize → 200]
```



If I got this far I would be able to look at `Function[{t}, 1. e-1. t]` and understand that that function would put points on the curve, then define it directly.

```
m[t_] = Exp[-t]
```

```
e-t
```

```
m[0.25]
```

```
0.778801
```

```
0.7788007830714049` - 0.7788007830714049`
```

```
0.
```

In the scenario imagined, there would be no error with **FindFit**.

```
m[0.75]
```

```
0.472367
```

A barrel of shot fish. But the modeling part is intriguing. If I could recognize a curve, get reasonable *k* and *a* values, it might be a good way to do an interpolation. From the documentation I see that **WorkingPrecision**, **PrecisionGoal**, and **AccuracyGoal** are options for **FindFit**, unlike **InterpolatingPolynomial**, which could mean better performance. In problem 9 I will return to **FindFit**.

7. Interpolation and extrapolation. Find the quadratic polynomial that agrees with $\sin[x]$ at $x=0$, $\frac{\pi}{4}$, $\frac{\pi}{2}$, and use it for the interpolation and extrapolation of $\sin[x]$ at $x = -\frac{\pi}{8}$, $\frac{\pi}{8}$,

$\frac{3\pi}{8}, \frac{5\pi}{8}$. Compute the errors.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

First I try the **Interpolation** command in Mathematica, which works well, but has one significant drawback. I can't get the actual equation for the curve which Mathematica creates. There are two methods of interpolating that are built in, spline and hermite. I test them both out on the problem points.

```
f = Interpolation[
  {{0, Sin[0]}, {π/4, Sin[π/4]}, {π/2, Sin[π/2]}} , Method → "Spline"]
```

Interpolation::nr: Requested order is too high; order has been reduced to {2}. >>

```
InterpolatingFunction[
  {+  Domain {{0, π/2}}
  Output scalar
}
```

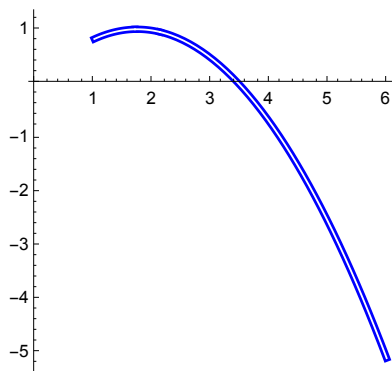
```
g = Interpolation[
  {{0, Sin[0]}, {π/4, Sin[π/4]}, {π/2, Sin[π/2]}} , Method → "Hermite"]
```

Interpolation::nr: Requested order is too high; order has been reduced to {2}. >>

```
InterpolatingFunction[
  {+  Domain {{0, π/2}}
  Output scalar
}
```

I plot the results of my tests with the two methods of interpolation. There is no visible difference between them for this set of points.

```
p1 = Plot[{f[x], g[x]}, {x, 1, 6}, ImageSize → 200,
  PlotStyle → {{Blue, Thickness[0.02]}, {White, Thickness[0.005]}},
  AspectRatio → 1, AxesOrigin → {0, 0}]
```



I put the points into a list for a linear model fit with a second order polynomial. The theory I saw on StackExchange was that the number of points indicated the necessary degree of

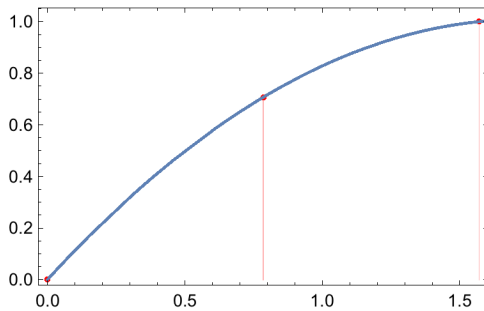
the polynomial. With three points I would then need a cubic polynomial. But I got error messages when trying to use a cubic, and the text answer only used a square.

```
data = {{0, Sin[0]}, { $\frac{\pi}{4}$ , Sin[ $\frac{\pi}{4}$ ]}, { $\frac{\pi}{2}$ , Sin[ $\frac{\pi}{2}$ ]}}
```

$$\left\{\{0, 0\}, \left\{\frac{\pi}{4}, \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right\}, \left\{\frac{\pi}{2}, 1\right\}\right\}$$

So now I call for a square polynomial, and plot it. The plots of the two approaches to interpolating show different sections of the real domain, and would be a little trouble to overlay them.

```
lm = LinearModelFit[data, {x^2, x}, x];
Show[ListPlot[data, PlotStyle -> Red, Filling -> Bottom],
Plot[lm[x], {x, 0, 1.25}], Frame -> True, ImageSize -> 250]
```



It is easy to acquire the equation for the linear model fit polynomial, which has to be a significant advantage. Except for the first, very negligible term, the equation matches the text answer, and I'm going to go green on it.

```
Normal[lm]
```

```
1.54843 × 10-15 + 1.16401 x - 0.335749 x2
```

Now I summarize my experience with the two forms of fitting by placing them both in a grid, along with test values. The test values require the function to act as extrapolating, as well as interpolating, functions.

```
g1 = {"x", "Interpola", "Sin[x]", "Error", "LinModFit", "Error"};
g2 = Table[{x, N[f[x]], N[Sin[x]], N[Sin[x]] - N[f[x]],
lm[x], N[Sin[x]] - lm[x]}, {x, {- $\frac{\pi}{8}$ ,  $\frac{\pi}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3\pi}{8}$ ,  $\frac{5\pi}{8}$ }}];
```

The interpolated function and the linear fitted polynomial, in this case, produce exactly the same results, both in terms of calculated values, and in terms of calculated errors.


```
Grid[Prepend[g2, g1], Frame → All]
```

x	Interpola	Sin[x]	Error	LinModFit	Error
$-\frac{\pi}{8}$	f[-0.392699]	-0.382683	-0.382683 - f[-0.392699]	$\text{lm}\left[-\frac{\pi}{8}\right]$	-0.382683 - $\text{lm}\left[-\frac{\pi}{8}\right]$
$\frac{\pi}{8}$	f[0.392699]	0.382683	0.382683 - f[0.392699]	$\text{lm}\left[\frac{\pi}{8}\right]$	0.382683 - $\text{lm}\left[\frac{\pi}{8}\right]$
$\frac{3\pi}{8}$	f[1.1781]	0.92388	0.92388 - f[1.1781]	$\text{lm}\left[\frac{3\pi}{8}\right]$	0.92388 - $\text{lm}\left[\frac{3\pi}{8}\right]$
$\frac{5\pi}{8}$	f[1.9635]	0.92388	0.92388 - f[1.9635]	$\text{lm}\left[\frac{5\pi}{8}\right]$	0.92388 - $\text{lm}\left[\frac{5\pi}{8}\right]$

All the cells in the grid above match the corresponding numbers in the text answer.

9. Error function (35) in appendix A3.1. Calculate the Lagrange polynomial $p_2[x]$ for the 5S-values $f[0.25] = 0.27633$, $f[0.5] = 0.52050$, $f[1.0] = 0.84270$ and from $p_2[x]$ an approximation of $f[0.75]$ ($= 0.71116$).

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

This one is kind of a disappointment. Granted, being given only three points makes it challenging for any interpolation method, but I guess what bothers me is that the text seems to do better with the three points than *Mathematica* does.

I start off with the interpolating polynomial.

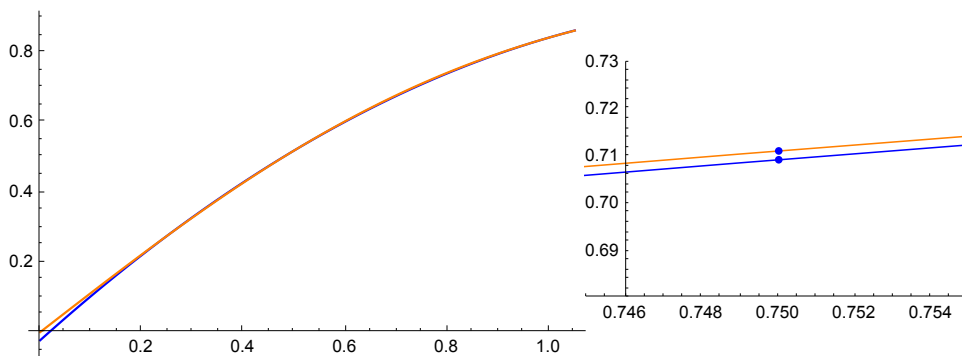
```
inpp[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[
  {{0.25, 0.27633}, {0.5, 0.52050}, {1.0, 0.84270}}, x]
0.8427 + (0.75516 - 0.44304 (-0.25 + x)) (-1. + x)
```

A plot shows the problem. On the left below, things look well, the IP is tracking the Erf function in what looks like a close manner, with just a hint of the underlying blue IP in the range of the problem values. But on the right, where a zoomed inset of the problem-specific value is shown, the IP is doing what turns out to be a poor job.

```
p1 = Plot[{inpp[x], Erf[x]}, {x, 0, 1.05}, ImageSize → 300,
  PlotStyle → {{Blue, Thickness[0.004]}, {Orange, Thickness[0.004]}}];

p2 = Plot[{inpp[x], Erf[x]}, {x, 0, 1.05},
  ImageSize → 200, PlotRange → {{0.745, 0.755}, {0.68, 0.73}},
  PlotStyle → {{Blue, Thickness[0.004]}, {Orange, Thickness[0.004]}}],
  Epilog → {{Blue, PointSize[0.02], Point[{0.75, 0.70929}]},
    {Blue, PointSize[0.02], Point[{0.75, 0.71116}]}}];
```

Row[{p1, p2}]



The two cells below tell the tale. Only one digit of significance agreement (or I guess two, if I rounded that far). I tried several other interpolation devices, but could not improve it much until I entered the Erf points for $x = 0.7$ and $x = 0.8$. Then I got agreement to four significant digits. Which seems pretty lame, contrived. If the interpolated function is not a known one, then it looks like I'm kind of walking in the dark.

```
inpp[0.75]  
0.70929
```

```
In[1]:= Table[{n, Erf[n]}, {n, {0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1.0}}]  
Out[1]= {{0.25, 0.276326}, {0.5, 0.5205}, {0.75, 0.711156}, {1., 0.842701}}
```

I decided to look into this further with **FindFit**.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

Here taking the trouble to put in longer versions of the values of the model function.

```
datai = {{0.25, 0.27632639016823696`},  
         {0.5, 0.5204998778130466`}, {1.0, 0.8427007929497149`}}  
{{0.25, 0.276326}, {0.5, 0.5205}, {1., 0.842701}}
```

Here building a Interpolation function from the more precise values.

```
f = Interpolation[datai]
```

Interpolation::nr: Requested order is too high; order has been reduced to 2. >>

```
InterpolatingFunction[ Domain {{0.25 1.}}  
 Output scalar]
```

Here getting the same old imprecision.

```
f[.75]  
0.709291
```

Getting a solution for the sine try.

```
ffd = FindFit[datai, a Sin[b x], {a, b}, x] (* using sine *)
{a → 0.884417, b → 1.26191}
```

Getting a solution for the parabola try.

```
ffp = FindFit[datai, a + b x + c x^2, {a, b, c}, x, WorkingPrecision → 20]
(*using parabola *)
```

FindFit::precw: The precision of the data and model function (MachinePrecision) is less than the specified WorkingPrecision (20). >>

```
{a → -0.023229117527556408795,
 b → 1.3089860708851408511, c → -0.44305616040786954812}
```

Getting a solution for the exponential try.

```
ffe = FindFit[datai, a + b e^-c x, {a, b, c}, x, WorkingPrecision → 20]
(* using exponential *)
```

FindFit::precw: The precision of the data and model function (MachinePrecision) is less than the specified WorkingPrecision (20). >>

```
{a → 1.2641621447600258634,
 b → -1.3121809743770445164, c → 1.1357178165686667905}
```

The exponential function

```
te[x_] =
  1.2641621447600258633826662088703013408502493800233056750939`20. +
  -1.3121809743770445164132764560080587451161751536628277667149`20.1
  e^-1.1357178165686667904505421743546779928779713927415879630267`20. x
1.2641621447600258634 - 1.3121809743770445164 e^-1.1357178165686667905 x
```

fails to give an accurate answer.

```
te[0.75]
```

```
0.7043185020187743` (* exponential fails *)
```

```
p4 = Plot[te[x], {x, 0, 2}, PlotStyle → {Green, Thickness[0.003]}];
```

```
p1 = ListPlot[datai, ImageSize → 400];
```

```
tr[x_] = 0.8844174815516758` Sin[1.2619134491291153` x]
```

```
0.884417 Sin[1.26191 x]
```

```
p3 = Plot[tr[x], {x, 0, 2}, PlotStyle → {Red, Thickness[0.003]}];
```

```

fp[x_] =
  -0.0232291175275564087954194292251486331232322306082285708689`20. +
    1.3089860708851408510611236124532297253618828340786412697562`20. x -
    0.4430561604078695481234717590268701314905913797433497845776`20. x^2
-0.023229117527556408795 +
  1.3089860708851408511 x - 0.44305616040786954812 x^2

p2 = Plot[fp[x], {x, 0, 2}, PlotStyle -> {Blue, Thickness[0.003]}];
fp[0.75]

```

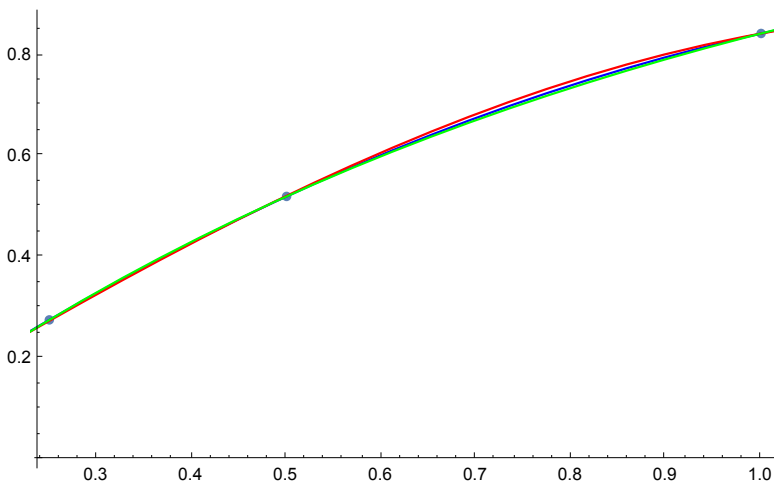
```
0.7092913454068726` (* parabola fails *)
```

```
tr[0.75]
```

```
0.7175603527695268` (* sine fails *)
```

Nothing I tried could produce the desired accuracy based on only three points. I also tried a double exponential, of the form $a + b e^{-cx-d}$ which is actually fairly close to the Erf function, but the result was even worse than any of the others.

```
Show[p1, p2, p3, p4]
```



In one final stab, I add two extra points.

```
In[23]:= Table[{n, Erf[n]}, {n, {0.0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.8, 1.0}}]
```

```
Out[23]:= {{0., 0.}, {0.25, 0.276326},
  {0.5, 0.5205}, {0.8, 0.742101}, {1., 0.842701}}
```

```
In[30]:= inppe[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[{{0., 0.},
  {0.25, 0.27632639016823696}, {0.5, 0.5204998778130466},
  {0.8, 0.7421009647076605}, {1., 0.8427007929497149}}, x];
```

```
In[29]:= inppe[0.75]
```

```
Out[29]= 0.711161
```

And arriving at essentially the same result which the text claims for its poly, based on three values of 5S.

11. Cubic Lagrange interpolation. Bessel function J_0 . Calculate and graph L_0, L_1, L_2, L_3 with $x_0 = 0, x_1 = 1, x_2 = 2, x_3 = 3$ on common axes. Find $p_3[x]$ for the data (0,1), (1, 0.765198), (2, 0.223891), (3, -0.260052) (values of the Bessel function $J_0[x]$). Find p_3 for $x = 0.5, 1.5, 2.5$, and compare with the 6S-exact values 0.938470, 0.511828, -0.048384.

Examples 1 and 2 in the text deal with the L_n quantities that hallmark Lagrange interpolation. A bit labor intensive for me. I will proceed using **InterpolatingPolynomial**, I think.

```
Clear["Global`*"]

data = {{0, 1}, {1, 0.765198}, {2, 0.223891}, {3, -0.260052}}
{{0, 1}, {1, 0.765198}, {2, 0.223891}, {3, -0.260052}}

inpp[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[data, x]
-0.260052 + (-3 + x) (-0.420017 + (-0.0926077 + 0.0606448 (-1 + x)) x)

p1 = Plot[inpp[x], {x, -4, 4},
  ImageSize -> 200, PlotStyle -> {{Blue, Thickness[0.004]}}];

gh = Table[{x, inpp[x]}, {x, data}]
{{{0, 1}, {1., 0.765198}}, {{1, 0.765198}, {0.765198, 0.861319}},
 {{2, 0.223891}, {0.223891, 0.992776}},
 {{3, -0.260052}, {-0.260052, 0.965931}}}]

inpp[0.5]
0.943654

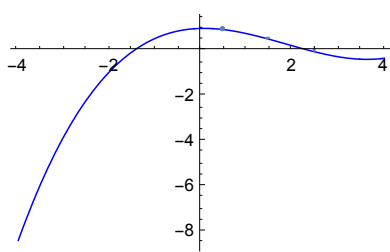
inpp[1.5]
0.510116

inpp[2.5]
-0.04799281250000004` (* text answer was -0.047991 *)

gk = {{0.5, 0.943654}, {1.5, 0.510116}, {2.5, -0.0479928}}
{{0.5, 0.943654}, {1.5, 0.510116}, {2.5, -0.0479928}}

p3 = ListPlot[gk];
```

Show[p1, p3]



The curve fit looks pretty good to me.

13. Lower degree. Find the degree of the interpolation polynomial for the data $(-4, 50)$, $(-2, 18)$, $(0, 2)$, $(2, 2)$, $(4, 18)$, using a difference table. Find the polynomial.

```
Clear["Global`*"]
```

Needless to say, I don't use a difference table on this one.

```
data = {{-4, 50}, {-2, 18}, {0, 2}, {2, 2}, {4, 18}}
```

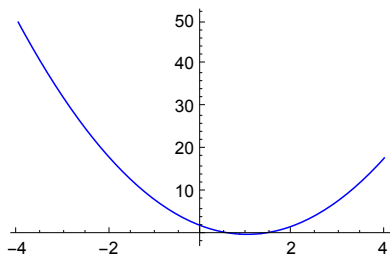
```
{{-4, 50}, {-2, 18}, {0, 2}, {2, 2}, {4, 18}}
```

```
inpp[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[data, x]
```

```
50 + (4 + x) (-16 + 2 (2 + x))
```

```
p1 = Plot[inpp[x], {x, -4, 4},
```

```
ImageSize -> 200, PlotStyle -> {{Blue, Thickness[0.004]}},
```



I have the equation of the interpolation function, and it looks like the degree is 2. No test points here though. Working with five seeds points, it might indicate likelihood of good agreement and small errors.

15. Divided differences. Obtain p_2 in example 2 from numbered line (10), p. 814.

There is a notebook with specific code of NDD at http://nm.mathforcollege.com/topics/newton_divided_difference_method.html, but since it is from 2002, I would be surprised if it worked out of the box. It does look specific though. There is a very modern but maybe too extensive SEMma discussion at http://nm.mathforcollege.com/topics/newton_divided_difference_method.html. I don't currently have the necessary curiosity to delve into how NDD can be used in Mathematica.

17. Backward difference formula (18). Use $p_2[x]$ in numbered line (18), p. 818, and the values of erf x , $x = 0.2, 0.4, 0.6$ in table A4 of appendix 5, compute erf[0.3] and the error. (4S-exact erf[0.3] = 0.3286).

I will avoid the backward difference and just go with **InterpolatingPolynomial**.

```
Clear["Global`*"]

Table[{x, Erf[x]}, {x, {0.2, 0.4, 0.6}}]
{{0.2, 0.222703}, {0.4, 0.428392}, {0.6, 0.603856}}

data = {{0.2, 0.22270258921047847},
        {0.4, 0.42839235504666856}, {0.6, 0.603856090847926}}
{{0.2, 0.222703}, {0.4, 0.428392}, {0.6, 0.603856}}

inpp[x_] = InterpolatingPolynomial[data, x]
0.603856 + (0.952884 - 0.377825 (-0.2 + x)) (-0.6 + x)

va = inpp[0.3]
```

0.329326

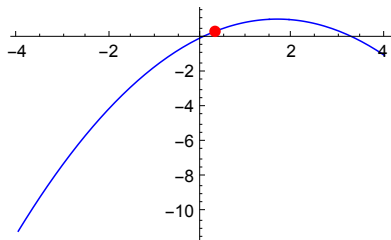
```
vb = Erf[0.3]
0.328627
```

with an error the size of

```
vb - va
-0.000698966
```

Mathematica's **InterpolatingPolynomial** came up with the same answer as the text.

```
p1 = Plot[inpp[x], {x, -4, 4},
  ImageSize -> 200, PlotStyle -> {{Blue, Thickness[0.004]}},
  Epilog -> {Red, PointSize[0.03], Point[{0.3, 0.329326}]}]
```



This problem dealt with interpolation of the Erf function, the same as in problem 9. There the Erf function was an embarrassing incident, but here it gives less trouble, with a reassuringly small error.

General comments on Interpolation.

1. My go-to method is **InterpolatingPolynomial**. (as in problem 17).

2. If IP seems to fall short, **FindFit** should be looked at. (as discussed in problems 5 and 9).
3. If these two approaches don't work, a custom **Fit** function, (using the method described in the Intro), may be worth a try.