

Chapter 1

The Black-Scholes Model

Let's review some common derivative knowledge first.

1. European option: the payoff is path independent of the underlying asset (in this chapter, we will simply call it the stock).
2. Call options have payoff $(S_T - K)^+ = \max(S_T - K, 0)$ at maturity.
3. Put options have payoff $(K - S_T)^+ = \max(K - S_T, 0)$ at maturity.

Since the put-call parity relates the price of a put option and a call option, we would focus on call options in this chapter.

We assume that the stock price S_t follows a Geometric Brownian Motion (GBM) under the real probability measure \mathbb{P} ,

$$dS_t = \mu S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t^{\mathbb{P}}, \quad (1.1)$$

where $B_t^{\mathbb{P}}$ is the standard Brownian motion (Wiener process) under measure \mathbb{P} , μ is the drift rate of S (annualized), and σ is the standard deviation of the stock's return. This equation is understood under the discrete limit

$$S_{t+\Delta t} - S_t = \underbrace{\mu S_t \Delta t}_{\text{drift term}} + \underbrace{\sigma S_t (B_{t+\Delta t}^{\mathbb{P}} - B_t^{\mathbb{P}})}_{\text{diffusion term, } \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \Delta t)}. \quad (1.2)$$

In many cases, it is easier to transform this to the risk neutral measure \mathbb{Q}

$$dS_t = r S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}}, \quad (1.3)$$

where $B_t^{\mathbb{Q}}$ is the standard Brownian motion under measure \mathbb{Q} , and r is risk free rate. [write something on the measure change, the Girsanov's theorem](#)

The value of a call option $C(t, S)$ at a specific time t is $C(t, S_t)$. Traditionally, there are two approaches to derive the Black-Scholes Model.

1. PDE: Construct a PDE for $C(t, S)$, which can be reduce to a heat equation, then solve the heat equation to get the solution.
2. Probabilistic: the fair price of a call option $C(t, S_t)$ should be the payoff $(S_T - K)^+$ at maturity T discounts to the current time t .

$$C(t, S_t) = e^{-r(T-t)} \mathbb{E}^{\mathbb{Q}}[(S_T - K)^+ | S_t = S]. \quad (1.4)$$

Here we note that the conditional expectation is conditioned on S_t is due to the Markovian of S_t .

1.1 The PDE Approach

1.1.1 The Black-Scholes PDE

Let's start by applying Itô's lemma to a call option $C(t, S_t)$ under the risk-neutral measure \mathbb{Q} , we find

$$\begin{aligned} dC(t, S_t) &= \frac{\partial C}{\partial t} dt + \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} dS_t + \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} d[S]_t, \\ &= \frac{\partial C}{\partial t} dt + \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} (rS_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}}) + \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} \sigma^2 S_t^2 dt, \\ &= \left(\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} + rS_t \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 S_t^2 \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} \right) dt + \sigma S_t \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}}, \end{aligned} \quad (1.5)$$

where $[S]_t = \int_0^t (dS_u)^2$ is the quadratic variation of S .

Consider a self-financing portfolio $\Pi_t = C(t, S_t) - \Delta_t S_t$, which is required to be risk-free, i.e. $d\Pi_t = r\Pi_t dt$. From

$$\begin{aligned} d\Pi_t &= dC(t, S_t) - \Delta_t dS_t, \\ &= \left(\sigma S_t \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} - \Delta_t \sigma S_t \right) dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}} + \left(\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} + rS_t \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 S_t^2 \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} - \Delta_t rS_t \right) dt, \end{aligned} \quad (1.6)$$

eliminating the stochastic term determines Δ_t

$$\sigma S_t \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} - \Delta_t \sigma S_t = 0, \quad \Rightarrow \quad \Delta_t = \frac{\partial C}{\partial S}. \quad (1.7)$$

Δ_t is known as the hedge ratio or Greek Delta. Substituting Δ_t back into the drift term in $d\Pi_t$ (1.6) gives

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 S_t^2 \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} = r \underbrace{\left(C(t, S_t) - \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} S_t \right)}_{\Pi_t}.$$

Rearranging then yields the classic Black-Scholes PDE

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} + rS \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 S^2 \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} = rC. \quad (1.8)$$

The boundary conditions for the Black-Scholes PDE are

$$C(T, S) = (S - K)^+, \quad C(t, 0) = 0. \quad (1.9)$$

1.1.2 The Black-Scholes PDE and Heat Equations

It is well known that the Black-Scholes equation can be solved by reducing to a standard heat equation. We will verify it in this section. To solve the Black-Scholes PDE, we introduce the log-price x and time variable τ

$$x = \log \frac{S}{K}, \quad \tau = \frac{\sigma^2}{2} (T - t), \quad (1.10)$$

so that

$$S = Ke^x, \quad t = T - \frac{2\tau}{\sigma^2}, \quad (1.11)$$

and define

$$C(t, S) = Kv(x, \tau). \quad (1.12)$$

To express the Black-Scholes PDE in terms of v, x, τ , we first compute the time derivative

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau} = \frac{1}{K} \frac{\partial C}{\partial \tau} = \frac{1}{K} \frac{\partial C}{\partial t} \frac{\partial t}{\partial \tau} = \frac{-2}{K\sigma^2} \frac{\partial C}{\partial t},$$

that is

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} = -\frac{K\sigma^2}{2} \frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau}. \quad (1.13)$$

Next, compute the first order spatial derivative

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial x} = \frac{1}{K} \frac{\partial C}{\partial x} = \frac{1}{K} \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} \frac{\partial S}{\partial x} = e^x \frac{\partial C}{\partial S},$$

that is

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial S} = e^{-x} \frac{\partial v}{\partial x}. \quad (1.14)$$

And compute the second order derivative,

$$\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left(e^x \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} \right) = e^x \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} + e^x \frac{\partial}{\partial S} \left(\frac{\partial C}{\partial x} \right) = e^x \frac{\partial C}{\partial S} + K e^{2x} \frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2},$$

that is

$$\frac{\partial^2 C}{\partial S^2} = \frac{1}{K} e^{-2x} \left(\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} - \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} \right). \quad (1.15)$$

Substituting Eqs. (1.13), (1.14) and (1.15) into the Black-Scholes equation (1.8), and use the variable transformation Eqs. (1.11) and (1.12) we get

$$\begin{aligned} -\frac{K\sigma^2}{2} \frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau} + rK \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 K \left(\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} - \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} \right) &= rKv, \\ \frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau} - \left(\frac{2r}{\sigma^2} - 1 \right) \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} &= -\frac{2r}{\sigma^2} v, \\ \frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau} = \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} + (\lambda - 1) \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} - \lambda v, \quad \lambda &= \frac{2r}{\sigma^2}, \end{aligned} \quad (1.16)$$

with boundary condition

$$v(x, 0) = \max(e^x - 1, 0). \quad (1.17)$$

The equation (1.16) still contains a first-order spatial derivative and a zeroth-order (“linear”) term. To reduce it to the standard heat equation, set $v(x, \tau) = \exp(Ax + B\tau)\theta(x, \tau)$, applying the method of undetermined coefficients to choose A and B so that both the θ and the $\partial_x \theta$ vanish. The derivatives are calculated as

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial \tau} = B \exp(Ax + B\tau)\theta + \exp(Ax + B\tau) \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial \tau}, \quad (1.18)$$

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial x} = A \exp(Ax + B\tau)\theta + \exp(Ax + B\tau) \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial x}, \quad (1.19)$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} = A^2 \exp(Ax + B\tau)\theta + 2A \exp(Ax + B\tau) \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial x} + \exp(Ax + B\tau) \frac{\partial^2 \theta}{\partial x^2}. \quad (1.20)$$

Plugging Eqs. (1.18), (1.19) and (1.20) to Eq. (1.16), we get

$$\begin{aligned} B\theta + \frac{\partial\theta}{\partial\tau} &= A^2\theta + 2A\frac{\partial\theta}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial^2\theta}{\partial x^2} + (\lambda - 1)\left(A\theta + \frac{\partial\theta}{\partial x}\right) - \lambda\theta, \\ \frac{\partial\theta}{\partial\tau} &= \frac{\partial^2\theta}{\partial x^2} + (2A + \lambda - 1)\frac{\partial\theta}{\partial x} + [A^2 + (\lambda - 1)A - \lambda - B]\theta. \end{aligned}$$

To eliminate the $\partial_x\theta$ and θ terms, A and B must satisfy

$$\begin{cases} 2A + \lambda - 1 = 0, \\ A^2 + (\lambda - 1)A - \lambda - B = 0, \end{cases}$$

which yields

$$\begin{cases} A = -\frac{1}{2}(\lambda - 1), \\ B = -\frac{1}{4}(\lambda + 1)^2. \end{cases} \quad (1.21)$$

Therefore, we have

$$v(x, \tau) = \exp\left[-\frac{1}{2}(\lambda - 1)x - \frac{1}{4}(\lambda + 1)^2\tau\right]\theta(x, \tau), \quad (1.22)$$

and the Black-Scholes equation reduces to a heat equation

$$\frac{\partial\theta}{\partial\tau} = \frac{\partial^2\theta}{\partial x^2} \quad (1.23)$$

with boundary condition

$$\theta(x, 0) = \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda - 1)x\right] \max(e^x - 1, 0) = \max\left\{\exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda + 1)x\right] - \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda - 1)x\right], 0\right\}. \quad (1.24)$$

1.1.3 The Black-Scholes Formula

The solution to the heat equation (1.23) is given by the integral formula [write a appendix for heat equation](#)

$$\theta(x, \tau) = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\pi\tau}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \theta(y, 0) \exp\left[-\frac{(x - y)^2}{4\tau}\right] dy, \quad (1.25)$$

where $\theta(y, 0)$ follows from the boundary condition (1.24)

$$\begin{aligned} \theta(y, 0) &= \max\left\{\exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\lambda y\right) \left[\exp\left(\frac{1}{2}y\right) - \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}y\right)\right], 0\right\}, \\ &= \begin{cases} \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\lambda y\right) \left[\exp\left(\frac{1}{2}y\right) - \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}y\right)\right], & y > 0, \\ 0, & y < 0. \end{cases} \end{aligned} \quad (1.26)$$

Substituting the piecewise initial condition from Eq. (1.26) into the integral solution (1.25) yields,

$$\begin{aligned} \theta(x, \tau) &= \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\pi\tau}} \int_0^{\infty} \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\lambda y\right) \left[\exp\left(\frac{1}{2}y\right) - \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}y\right)\right] \exp\left[-\frac{(x - y)^2}{4\tau}\right] dy, \\ &= \underbrace{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{\pi\tau}} \int_0^{\infty} \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda + 1)y\right] \exp\left[-\frac{(x - y)^2}{4\tau}\right] dy}_{I_1} - \underbrace{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{\pi\tau}} \int_0^{\infty} \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda - 1)y\right] \exp\left[-\frac{(x - y)^2}{4\tau}\right] dy}_{I_2}, \\ &= I_1 - I_2. \end{aligned} \quad (1.27)$$

The solution decomposes into two integrals, I_1 and I_2 , which differ only by the sign in $\lambda \pm 1$. Since I_1 and I_2 share the same form, solving one immediately yields the other. To evaluate I_1 , perform a Gaussian integral via the following substitution

$$z = \frac{y - x}{\sqrt{2\tau}}, \quad dz = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\tau}} dy. \quad (1.28)$$

Applying this substitution to I_1 gives

$$\begin{aligned} I_1 &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\tau}}}^{\infty} \exp\left[-\frac{z^2}{2}\right] \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda+1)(\sqrt{2\tau}z + x)\right] dz, \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\tau}}}^{\infty} \exp\left\{\frac{1}{2}\left[-z^2 + (\lambda+1)\sqrt{2\tau}z - \left((\lambda+1)\sqrt{\frac{\tau}{2}}\right)^2 + (\lambda+1)^2\frac{\tau}{2} + (\lambda+1)x\right]\right\} dz, \\ &= \exp\left[\frac{1}{4}(\lambda+1)^2\tau + \frac{1}{2}(\lambda+1)x\right] \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\tau}}}^{\infty} \exp\left\{-\frac{1}{2}\left[z - (\lambda+1)\sqrt{\frac{\tau}{2}}\right]^2\right\} dz, \\ &= \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda+1)x + \frac{1}{4}(\lambda+1)^2\tau\right] \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\tau}} - (\lambda+1)\sqrt{\frac{\tau}{2}}}^{\infty} \exp\left\{-\frac{1}{2}u^2\right\} du, \quad u = z - (\lambda+1)\sqrt{\frac{\tau}{2}}, \\ &= \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda+1)x + \frac{1}{4}(\lambda+1)^2\tau\right] N(d_1), \quad d_1 = \frac{x + (\lambda+1)\tau}{\sqrt{2\tau}}. \end{aligned} \quad (1.29)$$

Note that for a normal distribution, we use \mathcal{N} for the probability density function, and N for the cumulative distribution function. Similarly, we obtain

$$I_2 = \exp\left[\frac{1}{2}(\lambda-1)x + \frac{1}{4}(\lambda-1)^2\tau\right] N(d_2), \quad d_2 = \frac{x + (\lambda-1)\tau}{\sqrt{2\tau}}. \quad (1.30)$$

Finally, we express the call option $C(t, S)$ in $\theta(x, \tau)$, using Eqs. (1.12) and (1.22). Then, substitute I_1 (1.29) and I_2 (1.30) into the integral solution of $\theta(x, \tau)$ (1.27) yields

$$\begin{aligned} C(t, S) &= K \exp\left[-\frac{1}{2}(\lambda-1)x - \frac{1}{4}(\lambda+1)^2\tau\right] \theta(x, \tau), \\ &= K \exp\left[-\frac{1}{2}(\lambda-1)x - \frac{1}{4}(\lambda+1)^2\tau\right] (I_1 - I_2), \\ &= K \exp(x) N(d_1) - K \exp(-\lambda\tau) N(d_2). \end{aligned}$$

Replacing x, τ, λ by their definitions in terms of S, t, r, σ via Eqs. (1.10) and (1.16), we get the Black-Scholes formula for call options,

$$C(t, S) = SN(d_1) - K \exp[-r(T-t)] N(d_2). \quad (1.31)$$

with parameters d_1 and d_2 given by

$$d_{1,2} = \frac{\log\left(\frac{S}{K}\right) + \left[r \pm \frac{\sigma^2}{2}\right](T-t)}{\sigma\sqrt{T-t}}. \quad (1.32)$$

1.2 Probabilistic Approach

Under the risk neutral measure \mathbb{Q} , the stock price follows a Geometric Brownian Motion (previously shown in Eq. (1.3))

$$dS_t = rS_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}},$$

where r is risk free rate. The first step is to solve for S_t . Let $A_t = \log S_t$. Applying Itô's lemma yields

$$\begin{aligned} dA_t &= \frac{1}{S_t} dS_t - \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{S_t^2} d[S]_t, \\ &= rdt + \sigma dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}} - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 dt, \\ &= \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) dt + \sigma dB_t^{\mathbb{Q}}. \end{aligned} \tag{1.33}$$

Since the right-hand side is entirely known, we integrate and obtain

$$\begin{aligned} A_t &= A_0 + \int_0^t \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) ds + \sigma \int_0^t dB_s^{\mathbb{Q}}, \\ &= A_0 + \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) t + \sigma B_t^{\mathbb{Q}}, \\ S_t &= S_0 \exp \left[\left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) t + \sigma B_t^{\mathbb{Q}} \right]. \end{aligned} \tag{1.34}$$

Thus, looking from the current time t , the solution at the expiration time T is

$$S_T = S_t \exp \left[\left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) (T - t) + \sigma \left(B_T^{\mathbb{Q}} - B_t^{\mathbb{Q}} \right) \right]. \tag{1.35}$$

To better understand the distribution of S_T , we take the logarithm

$$\log S_T = \underbrace{\log S_t + \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) (T - t)}_{\text{deterministic value}} + \underbrace{\sigma \left(B_T^{\mathbb{Q}} - B_t^{\mathbb{Q}} \right)}_{\text{r.v.} \sim \mathcal{N}(0, T-t)}, \tag{1.36}$$

that is, $\log S_T$ is a normal distribution, hence S_t is a log-normal distribution. Define $\tau = T - t$, the time to maturity, and let $Y \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$ be the standard normal distribution. We have a cleaner form for S_T

$$S_T = S_t \exp \left[\left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} Y \right]. \tag{1.37}$$

Recall that the price for call options is the conditional expectation of $(S - K)^+$ at maturity discounted to the current time t , i.e., Eq. (1.4)

$$C(t, S_t) = e^{-r\tau} \mathbb{E}^{\mathbb{Q}}[(S_T - K)^+ | S_t = S].$$

We perform the following calculation

$$\begin{aligned} C(t, S_t) &= \exp(-r\tau) \mathbb{E}^{\mathbb{Q}} \left[\left(S_t \exp \left\{ \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} Y \right\} - K \right)^+ \middle| S_t = S \right], \\ &= \exp(-r\tau) \mathbb{E}^{\mathbb{Q}} \left[\left(S \exp \left\{ \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} Y \right\} - K \right)^+ \right], \\ &= \exp(-r\tau) \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \left(S \exp \left\{ \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} y \right\} - K \right)^+ \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{y^2}{2}\right) dy. \end{aligned}$$

To get rid of the positive-part operator $()^+$, we calculate the critical point of y

$$\begin{aligned}
S \exp \left\{ \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} y \right\} - K &= 0, \\
\left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} y &= \log \frac{K}{S}, \\
y &= \underbrace{\frac{\log \frac{K}{S} - \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau}{\sigma \sqrt{\tau}}}_{=l}.
\end{aligned} \tag{1.38}$$

With this information, we proceed with our calculation

$$\begin{aligned}
C(t, S_t) &= \exp(-r\tau) \int_l^{+\infty} \left(S \exp \left\{ \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} y \right\} - K \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left(-\frac{y^2}{2} \right) dy, \\
&= S \int_l^{+\infty} \exp \left(-\frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \tau + \sigma \sqrt{\tau} y \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left(-\frac{y^2}{2} \right) dy - \exp(-r\tau) K N(-l), \\
&= S \int_l^{+\infty} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left[-\frac{1}{2} \left(y^2 - 2\sigma \sqrt{\tau} y + (\sigma \sqrt{\tau})^2 \right) \right] dy - K \exp(-r\tau) N(-l), \\
&= S \int_{l-\sigma \sqrt{\tau}}^{+\infty} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left(-\frac{1}{2} u^2 \right) du - K \exp(-r\tau) N(-l), \quad u = y - \sigma \sqrt{\tau}, \\
&= SN(\sigma \sqrt{\tau} - l) - K \exp(-r\tau) N(-l), \\
&= SN(d_1) - K \exp(-r\tau) N(d_2),
\end{aligned} \tag{1.39}$$

where in the last step, we simply verify that

$$\begin{aligned}
\sigma \sqrt{\tau} - l &= \frac{\sigma^2 \tau + \log \frac{S}{K} + \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau}{\sigma \sqrt{\tau}} = \frac{\log \frac{S}{K} + \left(r + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau}{\sigma \sqrt{\tau}} = d_1, \\
-l &= \frac{\log \frac{S}{K} + \left(r - \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 \right) \tau}{\sigma \sqrt{\tau}} = d_2.
\end{aligned}$$

This result Eq. (1.39) calculated from expectation matches the result Eq. (1.31) from solving the Black-Scholes PDE.