

Applied Numerical Methods for Civil Engineering

CGN 3405 - 0002

Week 2: Mathematical Modeling & Engineering Problem Solving

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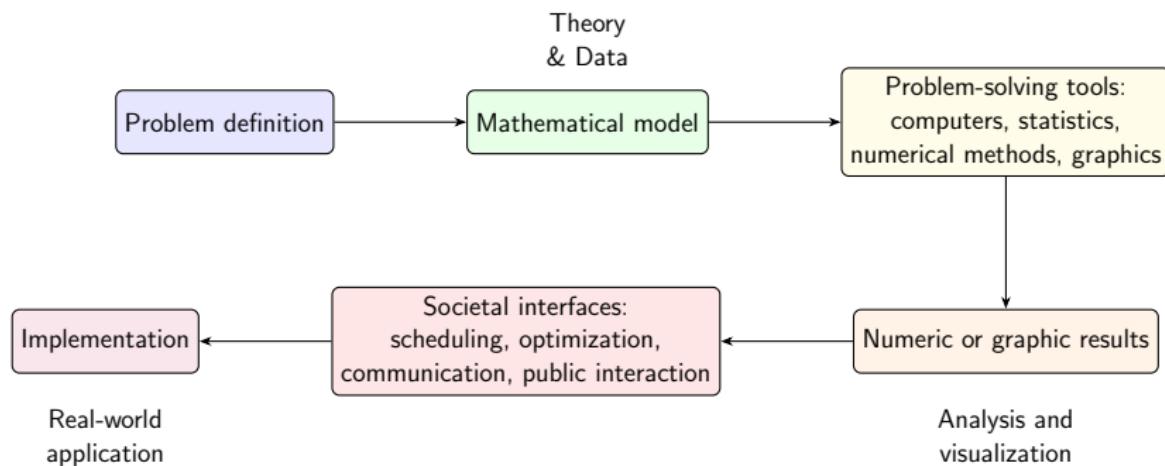
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How to understand

Applied Numerical Methods for Civil Engineering?

Numerical methods are techniques by which **mathematical problems** are formulated so that they can be solved with **arithmetic operations**.

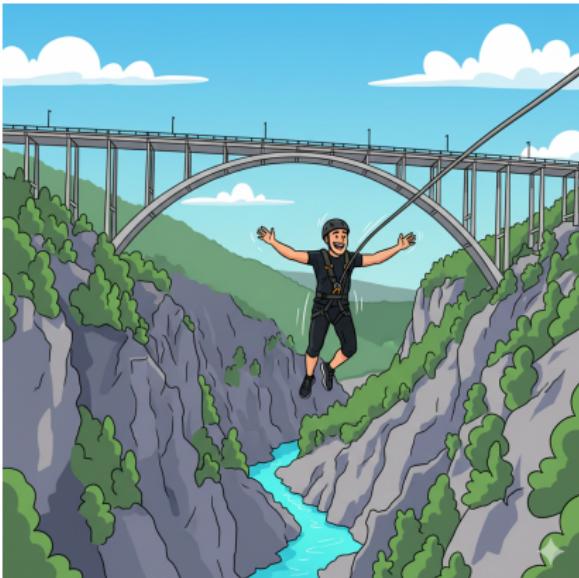
Engineering Problem Solving Process



Bungee Jumping

Engineering Task.

- A bungee jumping company needs to **predict velocity vs. time** during free fall to design safe bungee cords.
 - **Key Questions:**
 - What is the **maximum velocity** reached?
(Safe limit: 45 m/s)
 - How long until maximum velocity?
 - What cord length is needed?



Physical Forces F_g and F_a

Two Main Forces: Physical Forces Acting on Jumper

$$F = F_g - F_a = m \cdot g - c_d \cdot v^2$$

- Gravity (Downward)

$$F_g = m \cdot g$$

with

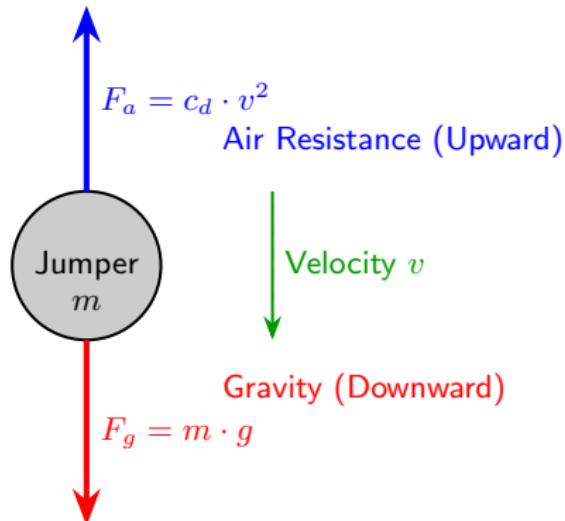
- m = mass (kg)
- $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$, gravitational acceleration

- Air Resistance (Upward)

$$F_a = c_d \cdot v^2$$

with

- c_d = drag coefficient (kg/m)
- v = velocity



Newton's Second Law

Mathematical Model - Newton's Second Law

- From $F = m \cdot a$:

$$F = m \frac{dv}{dt} = m \cdot g - c_d \cdot v^2$$

- Divide by m :

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v^2$$

Ordinary Differential Equation!!!

in terms of the differential rate of change in velocity.

- Initial condition:

$$v(0) = 0 \quad (\text{starts from rest})$$

- **Problem definition:** Solve the velocity of the jumper in free fall as a function of time.
 - **Why Numerical Methods?**

- Real engineering problems often **do not have simple analytical solutions!**

Euler's Method (Numerical)

Euler's Method - The Simplest Numerical Approach

- Essential idea:

Approximate continuous change with a small discrete time step size Δt .

- Rewrite the formula of bungee jumper velocity:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \underbrace{v_{t+\Delta t}}_{\text{new}} &= v_t + \Delta t \cdot \frac{dv_t}{dt} \\
 &= \underbrace{v_t}_{\text{old}} + \underbrace{\Delta t}_{\text{time step size}} \cdot \underbrace{\left(g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_t^2\right)}_{\text{acceleration}}
 \end{aligned}$$

from the ordinary differential equation:

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v^2$$

Euler's Method (Numerical)

Euler's Method - The Simplest Numerical Approach

- Formula of bungee jumper velocity:

$$\underbrace{v_{t+\Delta t}}_{\text{new}} = \underbrace{v_t}_{\text{old}} + \underbrace{\Delta t}_{\text{time step size}} \cdot \underbrace{\left(g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_t^2 \right)}_{\text{acceleration}}$$

- Computing **bungee jumper velocity** (step-by-step):

- Start at $t = 0$ and $v = 0$
 - Repeat across different time steps:
 - Compute **acceleration**:

$$a = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_t^2$$

- Update **velocity**:

$$v_{t+\Delta t} = v_t + \Delta t \cdot a$$

- Increment time step: $t = t + \Delta t$

A Real Case

Input. Mass $m = 50 \text{ kg}$, $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$, drag coefficient $c_d = 0.25 \text{ kg/m}$, and initial velocity $v_0 = 0$. (Given time step size $\Delta t = 1 \text{ s}$)

Output. Bungee jumper velocity v_t .

- At time $t = 1$:

$$a = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_0^2 = 9.81 - 0.005 \times 0^2 = 9.81$$

$$v_1 = v_0 + \Delta t \cdot a = 0 + 9.81 = \mathbf{9.81}$$

- At time $t = 2$:

$$a = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_1^2 = 9.81 - 0.005 \times 9.81^2 = 9.33$$

$$v_2 = v_1 + \Delta t \cdot a = 9.81 + 1 \times 9.33 = \mathbf{19.14}$$

- At time $t = 3$

A Real Case

Input. Mass $m = 50 \text{ kg}$, $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$, drag coefficient $c_d = 0.25 \text{ kg/m}$, and initial velocity $v_0 = 0$. (Given time step size $\Delta t = 1 \text{ s}$)

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- At time $t = 2$:

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$$v_2 = v_1 + \Delta t \cdot a = 9.81 + 1 \times 9.33 = \mathbf{19.14}$$

- At time $t = 3$

$$a = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_2^2 = 9.81 - 0.005 \times 19.14^2 = 7.98$$

$$v_3 = v_2 + \Delta t \cdot a = 19.14 + 1 \times 7.98 = \mathbf{27.12}$$

- • •

The Basic Syntax of a for Loop in Python

Description.

- A `for` loop in Python is a control flow statement used to iterate over items of any sequence (such as a list, tuple, string, set, or dictionary) in the order that they appear.
- It is primarily used when you need to execute a block of code a specific, predetermined number of times or for each item in a collection.

The Basic Syntax of a for Loop in Python

Fibonacci Sequence.

- Definition: Given $f(1) = f(2) = 1$, the Fibonacci sequence takes the form of

$$f(n) = f(n - 1) + f(n - 2), \quad n > 2$$

- Write down $f(3)$, $f(4)$, $f(5)$, $f(6)$, $f(7)$, \dots by yourself?

The Basic Syntax of a for Loop in Python

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$$f(n) = f(n - 1) + f(n - 2), \quad n > 2$$

- Write down $f(3)$, $f(4)$, $f(5)$, $f(6)$, $f(7)$, \dots by yourself?

$$f(3) = f(2) + f(1) = 2$$

$$f(4) = f(3) + f(2) = 3$$

$$f(5) = f(4) + f(3) = 5$$

$$f(6) = f(5) + f(4) = 8$$

$$f(7) = f(6) + f(5) = 13$$

The Basic Syntax of a for Loop in Python

Fibonacci Sequence.

- Definition: Given $f(1) = f(2) = 1$, the Fibonacci sequence takes the form of

$$f(n) = f(n - 1) + f(n - 2), n > 2$$

- Python programming

```
1 import numpy as np
2
3 def fib(n):          # Input n>2
4     f = np.zeros(n)
5     f[0] = 1
6     f[1] = 1
7     for i in range(2, n):
8         f[i] = f[i - 1] + f[i - 2]
9     return f[n - 1]
```

Python Programming for Euler's Method

- **Python programming example.** Computing **bungee jumper velocity**:

- Start at $t = 0$ and $v = 0$
- Repeat across different time steps:
 - Compute **acceleration**:

$$a = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_t^2$$

- Update **velocity**:

$$v_{t+\Delta t} = v_t + \Delta t \cdot a$$

- Increment time step: $t = t + \Delta t$

```
1 import numpy as np
2
3 def euler(m, g, cd, v0, delta_t, time_steps):
4     v = np.zeros(time_steps)          # Velocity
5     v[0] = v0                         # Initial velocity
6     for i in range(time_steps - 1):   # Repeat
7         a = g - cd / m * (v[i] ** 2)  # Acceleration
8         v[i + 1] = v[i] + delta_t * a # Velocity
9     return v
```

A Real Case

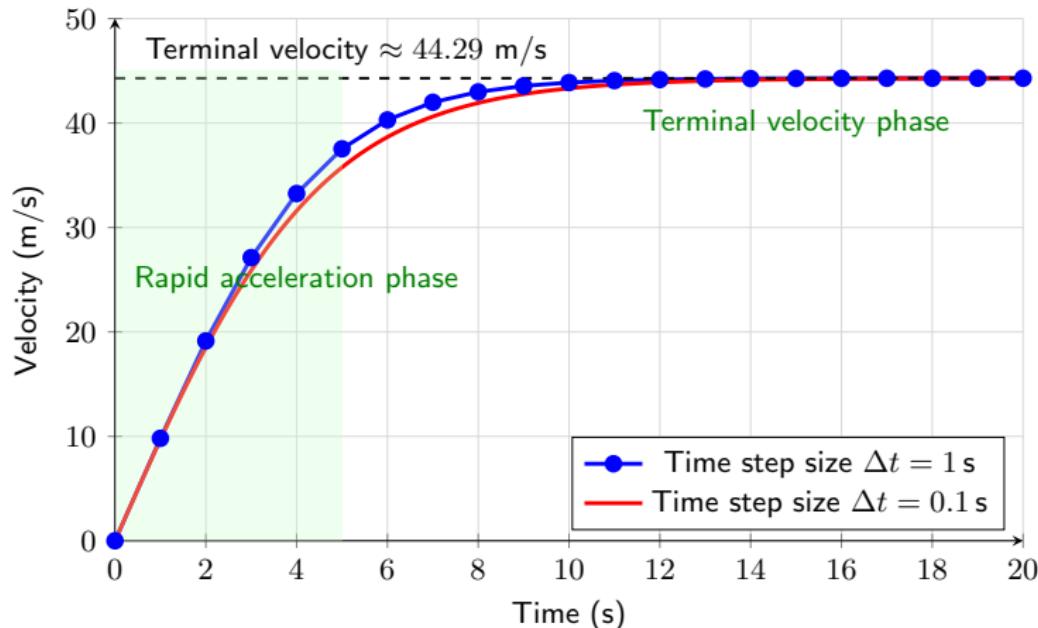
- Mass: $m = 50 \text{ kg}$
- Gravitational acceleration: $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$
- Drag coefficient: $c_d = 0.25 \text{ kg/m}$

```
1 import numpy as np
2
3 # Parameters
4 m = 50                      # Mass (kg)
5 g = 9.81                     # Gravitational acceleration (m/s^2)
6 cd = 0.25                    # Drag coefficient
7 v0 = 0                        # Initial velocity
8
9 # Time setup
10 delta_t = 1                  # Time step size
11 t_end = 20                    # Total time
12 time_steps = int(t_end / delta_t) + 1
13
14 # Euler's method
15 t = np.linspace(0, t_end, time_steps)
16 v = euler(m, g, cd, v0, delta_t, time_steps)
```

Velocity vs. Time

Bungee jumper **velocity vs. time** (w/ air resistance)

- Comparison between $\Delta t = 1\text{ s}$ and $\Delta t = 0.1\text{ s}$
- Input: $m = 50\text{ kg}$, $g = 9.81\text{ m/s}^2$, and $c_d = 0.25\text{ kg/m}$



Velocity vs. Time

Terminal velocity (solving a simple quadratic equation):

$$\underbrace{a = g - \frac{c_d}{m}v^2 = 0}_{\text{acceleration} = 0} \Rightarrow v = \sqrt{\frac{mg}{c_d}}$$

In this case:

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{mg}{c_d}} = \sqrt{\frac{50 \times 9.81}{0.25}} = 44.29 \text{ m/s}$$

Numerical method insight.

- Demonstrates **importance of time step selection** in simulations
- **Fine time steps** give more accurate results
- **Coarse time steps** are faster to compute but less accurate

Numerical vs. Analytical Solution

Going back to the ordinary differential equation:

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = g - \frac{c_d}{m} v^2$$

which has solution:

$$v_t = \sqrt{\frac{mg}{c_d}} \tanh\left(\sqrt{\frac{gc_d}{m}} t\right) \quad \text{tangent: } \tanh(x) = \frac{e^{2x} - 1}{e^{2x} + 1}$$

```

1 import numpy as np
2
3 def analytical_solution(m, g, cd, t):
4     v_term = np.sqrt(m * g / cd)
5     v_analytical = v_term * np.tanh(np.sqrt(g * cd / m) * t)
6     return v_analytical
7
8
9 delta_t = 1           # Time step size
10 t_end = 20            # Total time
11 time_steps = int(t_end / delta_t) + 1
12
13 # Computing the analytical solution
14 t = np.linspace(0, t_end, time_steps)
15 v_analytical = analytical_solution(m, g, cd, t)

```

Numerical Error Analysis

How to analyze errors?

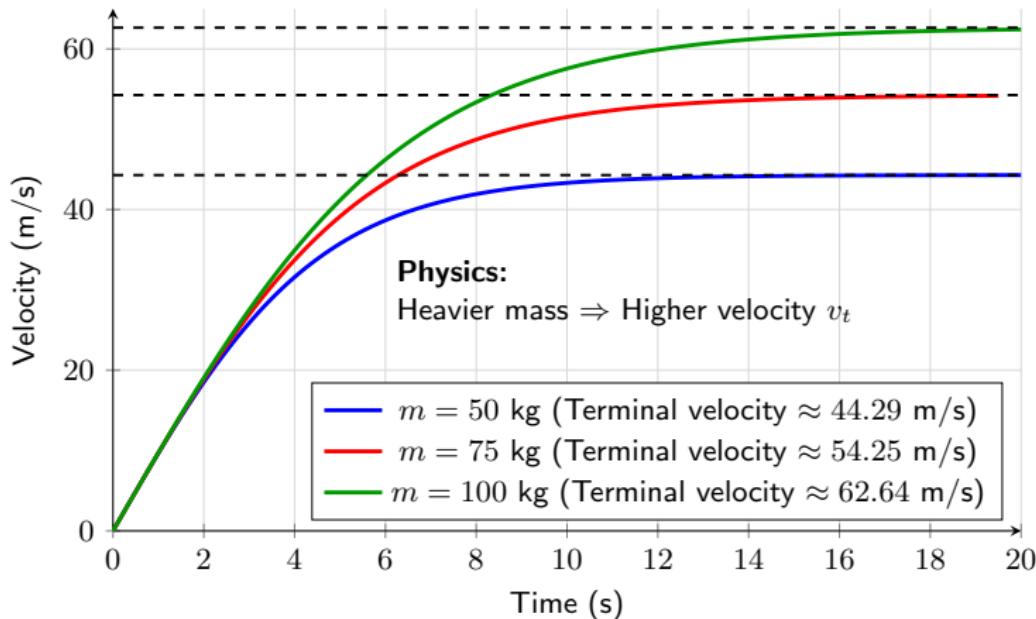
```
1 error = v - v_analytical
2 plt.plot(t, error, 'red')
3 plt.xlabel('Time (s)')
4 plt.ylabel('Error (m/s)')
5 plt.show()
```

- Why errors?
 - Euler method assumes constant acceleration over Δt .
 - Smaller $\Delta t \rightarrow$ Smaller error, but more computation.
- Time step comparison:
 - Time step size $\Delta t = 1\text{ s}$: Error $\approx 1.96\text{ m/s}$
 - Time step size $\Delta t = 0.1\text{ s}$: Error $\approx 0.18\text{ m/s}$
 - Time step size $\Delta t = 0.01\text{ s}$: Error $\approx 0.02\text{ m/s}$
- Engineering trade-off: Accuracy vs. Computational cost

Velocity vs. Time (Different Mass)

Bungee jumper **velocity vs. time** (w/ air resistance)

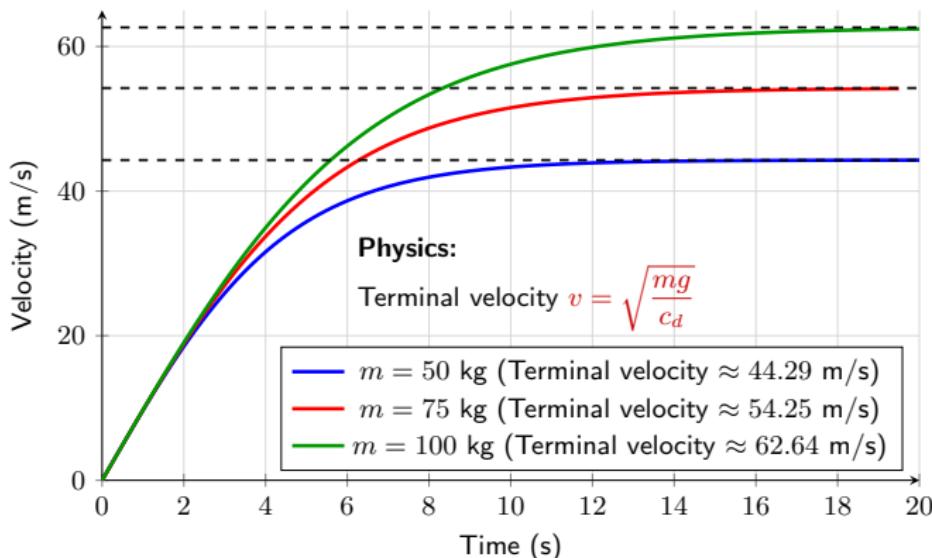
- Comparison among mass $m = 50 \text{ kg}$, 75 kg , 100 kg
- Input: $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$, and $c_d = 0.25 \text{ kg/m}$



Engineering Safety Analysis

Safe limit: Typically **45 m/s** (160 km/h) for bungee jumping

- Input: $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$, and $c_d = 0.25 \text{ kg/m}$



- Terminal velocity exceeds safe limit? Increase drag coefficient (baggy clothing); Deploy parachute earlier; Use heavier cord for more drag.

Parameter Sensitivity

How do mass and drag affect terminal velocity?

```
1 mass = [75, 100]
2 drag = [0.15, 0.25, 0.5]
3
4 for m in mass:
5     for cd in drag:
6         v_term = np.sqrt(m * g / cd)
7         print('Mass: {}'.format(m))
8         print('Drag coefficient: {}'.format(cd))
9         print('Terminal velocity: {}'.format(v_term))
10        print()
```

Results:

- Lighter jumpers → Lower terminal velocity
- Higher drag coefficient → Lower terminal velocity
- **Design implication:** Need different cords for different jumper weights!

Quizzes Now!

- **Today's participation** (ungraded survey): Please check out
"Class Participation Quiz 3"
Time slot: **3:00PM – 3:30PM**
on Canvas.
- Online engagement (graded quizzes)
"Quiz 3" (14 questions)
Deadline: **11:59PM, January 21, 2026**
on Canvas.

Quick Summary

Wednesday's Class:

- Bungee jumping velocity vs. time
 - Newton's second law $F = F_g - F_a = mg - c_d \cdot v^2 = m \cdot a$
 - Ordinary differential equation (the differential rate of change in velocity → acceleration)

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = g - \underbrace{\frac{c_d}{m} v^2}_{\text{acceleration}}$$

- Euler's method for numerical computing

$$\underbrace{v_{t+\Delta t}}_{\text{new}} = \underbrace{v_t}_{\text{old}} + \underbrace{\Delta t}_{\text{time step size}} \cdot \underbrace{\left(g - \frac{c_d}{m} v_t^2\right)}_{\text{acceleration}}$$

- Numerical error analysis
- Sensitivity across different parameters
- Python programming
 - Fibonacci sequence
 - Numerical computing

Quizzes Now!

- **Today's participation** (ungraded survey): Please check out
"Class Participation Quiz 4"
Time slot: **2:30PM – 3:00PM**
on Canvas.
- Online engagement (graded quizzes)
"Quiz 4" (15 questions)
Deadline: **11:59PM, January 23, 2026**
on Canvas.

Euler's Method

Euler's Method is the **simplest numerical technique** for solving **Ordinary Differential Equations (ODEs)**.

- It approximates continuous change using small, discrete steps.
- When to use it?
 - When you know the **rate of change** $\frac{dy}{dx}$
 - When you need a **quick, approximate solution**
 - When other methods are too complex

Euler's Method

Euler's Method is the **simplest numerical technique** for solving **Ordinary Differential Equations (ODEs)**.

- It approximates continuous change using small, discrete steps.
- When to use it?
 - When you know the **rate of change** $\frac{dy}{dx}$
 - When you need a **quick, approximate solution**
 - When other methods are too complex

Bungee jumping velocity vs. time?

- We know the rate of change in velocity:

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = g - \frac{c_d}{m}v^2$$

- We need an approximate solution:

$$v_{t+\Delta t} = v_t + \Delta t \cdot \frac{dv}{dt}$$

Mathematical Formulation

- **Example.** Given an ODE:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = f(x, y)$$

with initial condition $y(x_0) = y_0$

- **Euler's formula:**

$$y_{i+1} = y_i + \underbrace{\Delta x}_{\text{step size}} \cdot \underbrace{f(x_i, y_i)}_{\text{slope}}$$

$$x_{i+1} = x_i + \underbrace{\Delta x}_{\text{step size}}$$

- **Interpretation:**

- $f(x_i, y_i) = \text{slope at current point}$
- $\Delta x = \text{step size (small values!)}$
- $\text{step size} \times \text{slope} = \text{predicted change in } y$
- Add to current y to get next y

Simple Example

- **Toy example:** Solve

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = x + y$$

with $y(0) = 1$, find $y(1)$ using step size $\Delta x = 0.5$.

- ① Initialize $x_0 = 0$ and $y_0 = 1$
- ② First step ($0 \rightarrow \Delta x$)

$$f(x_0, y_0) = x_0 + y_0 = 1 \quad y_1 = y_0 + \Delta x \cdot f(x_0, y_0) = 1.5 \quad x_1 = x_0 + \Delta x = 0.5$$

- ③ Second step ($\Delta x \rightarrow 2\Delta x$)

$$f(x_1, y_1) = x_1 + y_1 = 2 \quad y_2 = y_1 + \Delta x \cdot f(x_1, y_1) = 2.5 \quad x_2 = x_1 + \Delta x = 1$$

So we have $y(1) \approx y(x_2) = 2.5$.

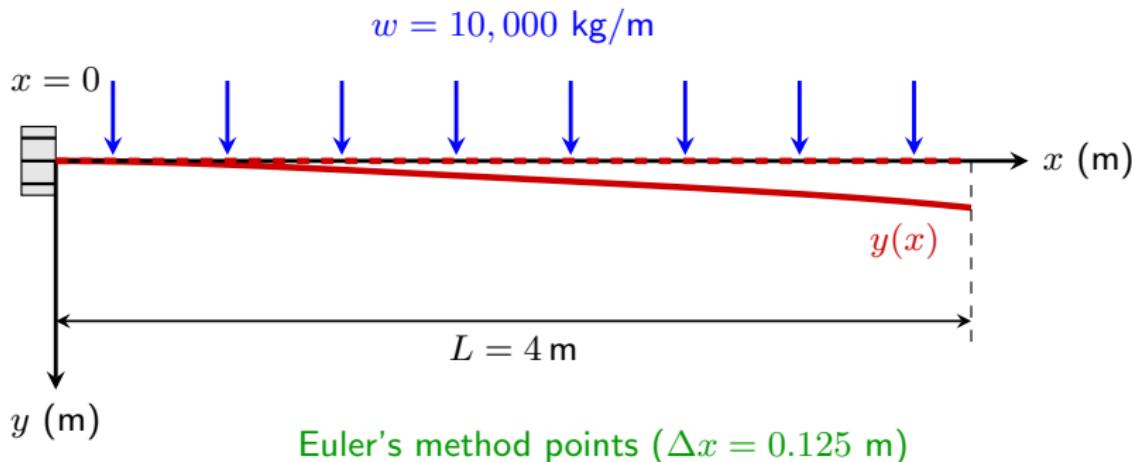
- Hint (Keep in mind!):

$$y_{i+1} = y_i + \Delta x \cdot f(x_i, y_i) \quad x_{i+1} = x_i + \Delta x$$

Cantilever Beam Deflection

Engineering Task.

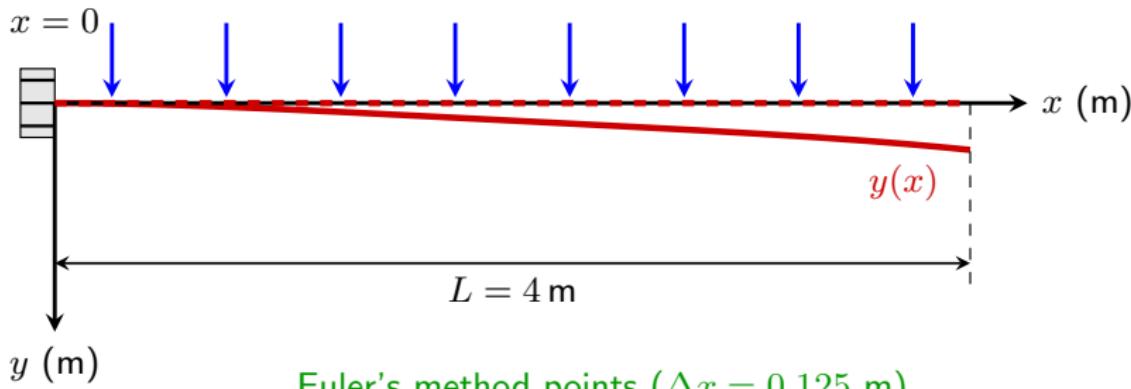
- Calculate the **deflection of a cantilever beam** under uniform load.
- Needed for: **Building codes, safety checks, material selection.**



Cantilever Beam Deflection

- Use **Euler's method** to find deflection $y(x)$ from $x = 0$ to $x = L$.
- $y(x)$ is downward deflection at point x (x is distance from fixed end).
- **Given parameters:**
 - Uniform load: $w = 10,000 \text{ kg/m}$
 - Beam length: $L = 4 \text{ m}$
 - Modulus: $E = 2 \times 10^{11} \text{ Pa}$ (steel)
 - Moment of inertia: $I = 3.25 \times 10^{-4} \text{ m}^4$

$$w = 10,000 \text{ kg/m}$$



Cantilever Beam Deflection

- Use **Euler's method** to find deflection $y(x)$ from $x = 0$ to $x = L$.

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{w}{24 \cdot E \cdot I} (4x^3 - 12Lx^2 + 12L^2x)$$

- x is distance from fixed end.
- $y(x)$ is downward deflection at point x .
- **Given parameters:**
 - Uniform load: $w = 10,000 \text{ kg/m}$
 - Beam length: $L = 4 \text{ m}$
 - Modulus: $E = 2 \times 10^{11} \text{ Pa (steel)}$
 - Moment of inertia: $I = 3.25 \times 10^{-4} \text{ m}^4$

Euler's Method (Numerical)

Introduction



Bungee Jumping Velocity
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Euler's Method



Cantilever Beam Deflection
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Cantilever Beam Deflection

Quick Summary

Friday's Class:

- Apply Euler's method to engineering problem
- Compute numerical vs. analytical solutions
- Understand error accumulation
- Implement numerical methods with Python